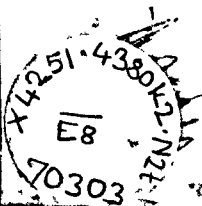


# REPORT

OF THE

Committee appointed to enquire into the allegations  
of inconvenience and hardship suffered by Deck  
Passengers travelling between Burma and India

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RANGOON

THE SUPERINTENDENT, GOVERNMENT PRINTING, BURMA

1918.

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# REPORT

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of inconvenience and hardship suffered by Deck  
Passengers travelling between Burma and India



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**Members of the Committee appointed in Government of Burma Commerce  
Department Resolution No. 4S., dated the 21st June 1917.**

---

**CHAIRMAN :**

**Mr. J. P. HARDIMAN, B A., I.C.S.,**  
*Collector of Rangoon.*

**MEMBERS :**

**Mr. J. W. A. BELL,**  
*British India Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.*

**Dr. P. J. MEHTA,**  
*Barrister-at-Law, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S.,*  
*M.D. (Bryn).*

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GOVERNMENT OF BURMA.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Burma in the Marine Department—No. 85—4S.5,  
dated the 5th April 1918.

READ—

Report on the Committee appointed to enquire into the allegations of inconvenience and hardship suffered by Deck Passengers immigrant into Burma from India, and minutes of dissent by Mr. J. W. A. Bell and Dr. P. J. Mehta.

RESOLUTION.—This Committee was so constituted that it was practically a Committee composed of two opposite parties in a controversy with a Chairman as arbitrator. In these circumstances unanimity was impossible, and the Committee agreed on scarcely anything except that the large number of immigrants was essential for the prosperity of Burma. The Chairman did his best to secure a common basis of agreement, and both Mr. Bell and Dr. Mehta were no doubt actuated only by the most anxious desire to state the facts as they appeared to them. But when two members of the Committee consisted of two contending parties and counsel on both sides were employed to cross-examine witnesses, no other result was possible than the disagreement disclosed by the report. Moreover even the principal report has not been confined to the terms of reference. The minority report of Mr. Bell is mainly concerned with defending the British India Steam Navigation Company from the assaults of its critics, while Dr. Mehta traverses the whole ground of the controversy between him and the Company upon the whole system of the passenger traffic, both on and off the ships, without regard to the terms of reference and not always with regard to the evidence taken by the Committee. It is manifest that a large number of the witnesses have been using the pretext of the inconvenience suffered by the coolies to dwell upon the inconvenience to middle class persons, who do not care to pay for second class accommodation, but dislike being crowded among the coolies who travel as deck passengers. The movement appears to have come from such persons and not from the coolies on whose behalf the representations have been made. If, however, it is shown that the deck passengers proper are subjected to unnecessary and avoidable discomforts, harassment or extortion; and if a certain system, or want of a system, results in harassment to people of this degree, every citizen is entitled to bring the facts to the notice of the authorities with a view to their being remedied. It must therefore be decided how far these immigrants and emigrants are subjected to unnecessary hardships, and what steps should be taken for their relief. It is quite clear that any hardships that such immigrants may have suffered have been aggravated by the circumstances connected with the War. Dr. Mehta's dissent from this conclusion is not justified by facts which are so evident as scarcely to require demonstration. It is also quite clear that returning immigrants have been subjected to great inconvenience in the matter of securing passage tickets and that none of the authorities concerned have considered it their business to do anything appreciable to mitigate their hardships

2. The first series of recommendations is made in paragraphs 14 to 18 of the Report to the effect that all tickets should be sold under the direct supervision of the Company, passage brokers being eliminated; that the word 'Indian' should be substituted for the word 'Native' on the deck passengers' tickets; that in respect of handling deck passengers' baggage, coolies' badges should bear the words "free cooly" (paragraph 18); and that a system of wharf admission tickets should be introduced, apparently for the benefit of the relatives of incoming and out-going passengers. The recommendations concerned with the questions of passenger space and sanitary arrangements on the ships, and regarding the arrangements which now subsist for the medical examination of passengers, are outside the reference to the Committee. In paragraph 28, the Report states that the attack brought against the British India Steam Navigation Company has succeeded on two points only, the non-utilization of vacant ground in Sparks Street

to the best purpose, and the want of sufficient supervision over the baggage coolies at the wharf. Besides these defects the Report refers to other important defects not attributable to the Company and states that the lack of proper accommodation for passengers at the wharves causes much friction. Recommendations are then made that special arrangements are necessary to handle the half million or so of passengers who pass through Rangoon every year. Of these arrangements, the main proposals are :—

- (a) shelter for passengers about to embark ;
- (b) space for marshalling them ;
- (c) a covered inspection shed for passengers disembarking, in which they may undergo medical and other examination, with an observation ward ; all the above in one place ; and
- (d) the abolition of the system by which passengers have to be transferred into flats from the in-coming Calcutta steamers and towed downstream to the inspection wharf.

It is difficult to distinguish the immediate measures from the more permanent measures recommended. The members of the Committee are unanimous that as an ultimate measure the inspection and shelter of passengers should be arranged for on a floating pontoon, extending from east of the present Lewis Street Pontoon to the Phayre Street wharf, and if this does not provide sufficient space, an inspection shed should be placed in the existing shed north of the latter wharf. As a temporary measure it is recommended that the examination of passengers disembarking should be carried out in the open shed north of Latter Street sheds Nos. 1 and 2. The suggestions regarding a railway from Burma to India, and legislation to prevent cutting passenger rates hardly come within the scope of the Committee's enquiry

3. The Lieutenant-Governor does not think that the Report brings the points at issue, and the recommendations in connection with them, to a sufficiently clear focus to enable very definite orders to be passed as to the action to be taken upon them. It is necessary to secure :—

(1) that deck passengers shall be able to get their tickets at the proper published prices without having to wait for days in rain or sun, or to go through a pandemonium of struggling people in order to get their tickets ;

(2) that in respect of embarkation and the transport of their baggage the arrangements shall be such that they are not subjected to extortion on the part of porters when it is the Company's clear and distinct policy to transport that baggage free ;

(3) that in the case of passengers disembarking, apart from necessary inconvenience during the war, the arrangement shall be such that such passengers are not unduly harassed for medical examination and for search, and that the detention of persons suspected to be suffering from a contagious disease shall not be attended with more discomfort than can be avoided

4 In order to ascertain which authorities are responsible for removing the various impediments to the achievement of these objects, and to secure that deck passengers may not be subjected to unnecessary hardships on arrival at, or departure from, Rangoon, the Local Government has decided to appoint the Collector of Rangoon to be Protector of Immigrants and Emigrants for the port of Rangoon. To assist the Collector in carrying out his duties in this respect arrangements are being made to obtain the services of a specially selected officer, of the Madras Provincial Service thoroughly acquainted with Tamil and Telugu, the languages of the vast majority of the immigrants, who will be able to win their confidence, understand their grievances and explain to them the orders and arrangements made for their better comfort and convenience. The functions of the Protector of Immigrants and Emigrants and his Assistant will be as follows :—

1. To get into touch with all the authorities and agencies responsible for the welfare and provision of facilities for the transport of deck passengers, the British India Steam Navigation Company, the Municipality, the Port Trust, the Chief Collector of Customs, the Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, and the Port Health Officer ; to arrange with them the best methods of removing the difficulties and mitigating the discomforts of the embarkation and debarkation of deck



passengers; and to report to the Local Government when in his opinion the best methods feasible are not being adopted:

II. To get into touch with employers of labour and coolie mistries of Rangoon with a view to regulating as far as possible, through their agency, the pressure of the deck passenger traffic on the shipping space available:

III. To consult the British India Steam Navigation Company as to the best methods of securing that tickets shall be sold to deck passengers at the prescribed rates, and to arrange for the adoption of such methods:

IV. To receive complaints from deck passengers as regards any grievances connected with embarkation or debarkation or with the sale of tickets, and to take the action directed under Instruction (I) above in all cases in which a legitimate grievance has been established:—

V. To see that adequate shelters for deck passengers unable to secure accommodation elsewhere are provided by the responsible agency:

VI. To assist the Municipality and the Police in the control of encampments for waiting deck passengers especially with regard to the measures necessary to secure that the shelters provided shall be occupied only by *bona fide* deck passengers.

The Lieutenant-Governor hopes that the British India Steam Navigation Company and the various public authorities mentioned as well as all business firms and companies to whom the continued flow of labour is so important will do their best to assist the Protector and facilitate all such arrangements as may relieve congestion at Rangoon and prevent the immigrants and emigrants from being subjected to the grave inconveniences and depredations from which they have undoubtedly suffered. He believes that all concerned will cordially co-operate in achieving the end desired. He does not desire at this stage to take any legislative powers in the matter, but if the efforts now being made fail in their purpose and legislative action prove necessary, he would have no hesitation in undertaking the legislation required to enforce their proper responsibilities upon the various parties concerned.

ORDERED—That the Resolution be published in the Supplement to the *Burma Gazette* and copies with a copy of the Report and Annexures, be forwarded to Mr. J. P. Hardiman, I.C.S., Mr. J. W. A. Bell and Dr. P. J. Mehta and to selected officers and local bodies for information.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma.

C. M. WEBB,  
*Secretary to the Govt. of Burma.*

# REPORT

OF THE

## DECK PASSENGERS COMMITTEE.

---

1. In Government Resolution No. 4S., dated the 21st June 1917, a Committee was appointed to enquire into the allegations of inconvenience and hardship suffered by deck passengers, immigrant into Burma from India. Complaints of ill-treatment had been made in a letter written on the 24th May 1917, by persons claiming to be representatives of various communities residing in Rangoon to Messrs. Bulloch Bros & Co, Ltd., agents in Rangoon of the British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited,\* and subsequently published in the Rangoon newspapers. The letter is printed in an annexure to this Report. It complains of the treatment of deck passengers at the office of the Company in Rangoon and on the wharves; of the delay in issuing tickets; of the sale of tickets at a higher rate than that scheduled; of deck passengers being beaten whilst waiting to obtain tickets; of their being hustled, abused and beaten, when proceeding from the wharf to the steamer; of the defective arrangements for numbering and registering seats on the steamer; of the extortionate demands of the coolies employed to carry baggage on board. To these complaints the Agents of the Company replied in a letter dated the 30th May 1917, which is also printed among the annexures. A public meeting was subsequently held, on the 13th June, to consider the reply of the Agents, and at this meeting there was formed an association styled the "Social Service League," the objects of which, as reported in the Press, were to be as follows.—

"\* \* \* to take up the work of social service, such as attending to the needs of the passengers at the wharf, and work of humanitarian nature that the League† may decide to undertake, to devise constitutional and conciliatory ways and means for carrying on the said work, and to frame such rules and regulations as would meet the requirements of the purpose in view." Dr. Mehta, one of the members of our committee, was appointed Secretary of the newly-formed association.

Other alleged grievances of the deck passengers were mentioned by the speakers at this meeting, for instance, the defective nature of the sanitary arrangements on board the Company's steamers; the separation of husbands from wives; extortion by the ship's servants; and the lack of ventilation. All of these related to the conditions on boardship. The proceedings of the meeting were communicated to the Local Government, and no doubt in part led to the appointment of the Committee.

2. The terms of reference stated in Government Resolution 4S. were as follows:

- "The enquiries of the Committee should include the following matters:—
- (i) the facilities for obtaining passage tickets promptly and without any exactions above the standard fare;
  - (ii) the methods of marshalling passengers and the allegations as to the use of sticks and canes by the wharf or steamer durwans;
  - (iii) the alleged illegal demands of wharf coolies for carrying luggage;
  - (iv) the time allowed for passengers to board the steamer on departure;
  - (v) the amenities provided for women passengers;

---

\* Referred to as the Company, throughout this Report.  
† Referred to as the League, throughout this Report.

(vi) any other deficiencies in the arrangements for the booking, embarkation and disembarkation of passengers that may come to the notice of the Committee."

Certain matters were excluded—

"The propriety of the measures taken by the Police, Customs and Health Departments of Government do not fall within the scope of the enquiries to be made, but it is open to the Committee to consult the officers of these departments with a view to effecting improvements in the methods of administration adopted and to make any suggestions concerning their work which would conduce to the comfort of the passengers."

At our first meeting on the 28th June, Dr Mehta raised the question whether the Committee were at liberty to enquire into the hardships alleged to be suffered by first and second class passengers, as well as deck passengers. The Chairman ruled that this was not open to the Committee. This question had already been referred by the League to Government, and Government intimated later that the enquiry was to be confined to the circumstances of the deck passengers.

Of the terms of the reference, only head (v) (the amenities provided for women passengers) clearly referred to conditions on board ship, but in view of the fact that at the public meeting hardships at sea were freely alleged to exist; that it was the desire of Government that the matter should be thoroughly investigated, so far as it affected deck passengers and subject to the limitation in paragraph 2 of the Resolution; that the petitioners read the reference as including circumstances on board ship, *vide* the written representations, and that examination of the conditions on board was not one of the matters excluded by paragraph 2, the Chairman ruled that evidence of the arrangements made for the comfort of passengers on board might be received.

3. On the 30th June a notice was inserted in the English newspapers in Rangoon, inviting persons who wished to give evidence to send in their names. In response to this invitation, between 300 and 400 written representations complaining of the Company's methods were received, and some few witnesses offered themselves for examination without making a written representation. The bulk of the representations were in English, and it is noteworthy, as an indication of the rarity of travel overseas among the Burmans, that no representation was received from a Burman. The petitions annexed have been printed as they stand. As it was apparent that the examination of all, besides being unnecessary, would unduly prolong the proceedings, the Chairman on the second day of hearing invited the other members of the Committee, Dr. Mehta and Mr. Bell, to select witnesses for examination. Dr. Mehta selected a number of witnesses on behalf of the League. Mr. Bell called several witnesses, but not from among those who had sent in their names, to speak to the case for the Company. The Chairman called as expert witnesses the Port Health Officer and the Superintending Engineer and Shipwright Surveyor to Government. The Committee availed itself of the permission accorded in paragraph 2 of the Resolution and consulted the Chief Collector of Customs, whose department arranges for the search of deck passengers for Customs and Police purposes. His reply is printed as one of the annexures to the report. In order that the Committee might be able to sit frequently, the Chairman was relieved of the duties of Collector of Rangoon on the 29th August 1917. Public sittings for the hearing of evidence were held on the 1st, 6th, 13th, 29th and 30th August, the 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th September. The report in draft was circulated by the Chairman on the 21st September, but the subsequent absence from Rangoon in succession of the Chairman, Dr Mehta, and Mr. Bell, has delayed its submission to Government.

Besides oral evidence, certain statistical evidence was recorded and will be discussed in later paragraphs. The thanks of the Committee are due to the Port Health Officer, the Superintendent of the Contagious Diseases and Plague Hospitals, the various Companies addressed, and the Commissioner of Police, for statistical information furnished. We also desire to express our acknowledgments to Mr. L. P. Briggs, Consul for the United States of America, for instructive information regarding the figures of immigration into New York.

We have inspected the office of Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co., Ltd., where some of the tickets for Indian ports are issued, the marshalling room for deck passengers in 40th Street, the vacant space in Sparks Street used occasionally for overflow ticket offices, and the wharves at Sulay Pagoda Road, Lewis Street and Sparks Street. Maps showing all these places accompany the report. We have also visited two ships of the Company, namely, the S S "Bangala," one of an older type of deck passenger steamer (though not of the oldest type now running) and the S S. "Arankola," one of the newest type.

4. The enquiry was in effect an indictment of the methods of the Company, ashore and afloat. It was not directed against the other steamship companies carrying deck passengers to or from Rangoon, *vide* the record of evidence. The Company was represented on the Committee by its Manager in Rangoon, Mr. J. W. A. Bell, whilst the case for the League was represented by Dr. P. J. Mehta, the signatory to the letter forwarding to the Company the original representation from various communities in Rangoon, and the first secretary of the League to be appointed. The enquiry bore some resemblance to a judicial proceeding. The League presented its case with the help of counsel, namely, Mr. Bomanjee, whilst the interests of the Company were watched by Mr. T. F. R. McDonnell, *Barristers-at-Law*. The Chairman may be permitted to acknowledge the general good temper with which Dr. Mehta and Mr. Bell approached a subject which, as between the divergent interests they represented, was highly contentious. A verbatim record was taken of the evidence given from day to day. It was ruled that no written representation could be allowed on the record unless the signatory presented himself for examination, otherwise hearsay evidence was admitted for what it was worth. In order to shorten the proceedings, it was ruled that ordinarily the League should not call more than two witnesses to speak to any one point, but this was not adhered to.

5. The importance or otherwise of the deck passengers in the economy of Burma was the first matter calling for examination. The Committee therefore requested the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce to record its views as to the importance of these immigrants in the commerce and trade of Rangoon and Burma. The reply of the Chamber was as follows:—

"The unrestricted inflow of labour into Burma is of the very highest importance. Burma has to very largely depend upon India for the all-important labour supply with which to move her harvests; to man her industries; to deal with her shipping; to provide railway servants and domestic servants and to supply coolies for general purposes. As matters stand, the supply does not equal the demand, with the result that wages in Burma are far above the Indian level, and any set of circumstances that would tend to check this supply of labour and force up salaries still higher would certainly not be in the best interests of the province."

With this view all the members of the Committee are in complete accord, and some striking instances of its correctness may be adduced. In 1873-74 the export of rice (not in the husk) from Rangoon was 475,349 tons, representing in value 223 lakhs of rupees. In 1913-14 the tonnage was 1,834,988, or three and a half times as much, and its value was 1,763 lakhs of rupees, or roughly eight times as much. In value, the export of rice, husked and unhusked, from Rangoon to foreign countries is 61 per cent. of the total value. Of exports from Rangoon to India, rice, husked and unhusked, constitutes 45 per cent. of the whole value. Rice is, therefore, by far the most important export crop of Rangoon, and so of Burma, and a great deal of the agricultural labour in connection with the rice crop is carried out by Indian deck passengers, whilst the further stages in the preparation and export of this commodity depend directly, and—so far as the white rice, the foreign export, crop is concerned—almost solely, upon them, first in the mills, secondly on the Rangoon wharves, and in the stream. In 1872, out of a total population of 98,475 in Rangoon, Hindus and Mahomedans numbered 24,892 only, or roughly one-quarter. In 1911, out of a population of 293,316, 162,984 were Indians, or well over, one-half. This increase in the Indian population coincided with the enormous increase in the export of rice, and the growth of the rice trade concurrently enhanced the value of the Burman farmer's

British  
Burma  
Gazetteer,  
Vol. II,  
page 586.  
Paragraph  
26, Maritime  
Trade and  
Customs  
Report for  
1916-17.

British  
Burma  
Gazetteer,  
Vol. II, page  
555.  
Page 19,  
Report of the Subur-  
ban Develop-  
ment  
Committee,  
Rangoon,  
1916.

Revenue Administration Report, 1889-90, page 19. Statement XI, the same Report, 1909-10.

land, bringing him prosperity and a higher standard of living. In 1889 the average sale price per acre of rice land in the Hanthawaddy district, near Rangoon, was Rs. 9'16. In 1909-10 the average price was Rs. 67. To shut out Indian manual labour would, we are convinced, most seriously prejudice the prosperity of the farmer in Lower Burma. 'Burma for the Burmans' in short meant, and means, Burma for a poor Burman

6. There are other, and important, classes of deck passengers, besides the labourer employed in connection with the rice trade in its various phases. Figures supplied by the chief organized industrial concerns in Burma, the Burma Railways Company, the Burma Oil Company, and the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, show that a large proportion of their clerks are Indians. Several of the large Government offices in Rangoon are manned almost exclusively by Indian clerks, for instance, the Accountant-General's office. Many of the skilled labourers, and practically all the watchmen in Burma are Indians who arrive as deck passengers. Comparative figures, kindly furnished by the three Companies named, give the following results: in the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, out of 8,888 skilled labourers, 7,131 are imported Indians, against 1,757 of indigenous races. The imported unskilled labourers number 2,234, against 332 of indigenous races. In other words, seven-ninths of the skilled and eleven-thirteenths of the unskilled labour employed in the largest water-transport organization are Indians, most of whom enter Burma as deck passengers.

In value, mineral oil and its products rank second to rice in the list of the exports of the province. The number of skilled labourers of Indian races employed by the Burma Oil Company, is 3,984, against 2,033 Burmans. The unskilled labourers of Indian race number 10,217, against 2,182 Burmese. In the clerical branches 182 Indians are employed, against 411 Burmese. The Company employs 5 unskilled Indian labourers, for every Burman so employed. It is only in the clerical branches that the Burman out-numbers the Indian.

The Burma Railways Company employs in its engineering department on unskilled labour 5,700 Indians, against 348 Burmans; on skilled labour 195 Indians, against 18 Burmans. The disproportion is equally striking in other departments. For instance, the locomotive department employs on skilled labour 190 Burmans out of 2,715, on unskilled labour 73 out of 2,061: in the clerical branches 24 out of 242. Ninety-two per cent of the 16,000 employes of the Company are Indians, and only 8 per cent Burmans. The railway—the largest organized land transport industry of the province—is in short practically manned by Indians. In an unorganized industry of recent growth the issue may perhaps be regarded as doubtful. There are 1,366 Indian motor car drivers registered in Rangoon, against 879 Burmans. In the important timber trade, so far as work in the forests is concerned, the Burman more than holds his own. But the conclusion, as to the other large trades, and in fact all organized urban industries, is inevitable. Burma cannot get on without the Indian immigrant. At the risk of labouring the point, a quotation may be made from the *Report on Wages in Burma* by the Commissioner of Settlements and Land Records, as printed in the *Rangoon Gazette* of the 14th September 1917. "The dearness and scarcity of labour in Burma is a common subject of complaint and is a potent factor in retarding the development of the province." Fortunately the country is large enough to accommodate any number of immigrants.

7. Of the deck passengers, in the order of their importance to Burma, the cooly, or unskilled manual labourer, comes first, the artisan and trader, second: of less importance are the clerks and professional classes. It is possible that as secondary education extends, the place of the latter may eventually be taken by the Burman, but for the wharf and mill labourer, the artisan, the deck hand, the watchman, there would seem to be no possibility of the substitution of indigenous races for the Indian, and any attempt to exclude the Indian would be attended with disastrous consequences to the prosperity of the province. In the opinion of the Chairman, in the agricultural field the Burman might easily compete with the Indian labourer, but will apparently (at any rate in parts of Lower Burma) be unwilling to do so until subjected to a degree of competition which does not at present exist.

8. The figures of immigrants and emigrants have been as follows: figures of the immigration into New York are added for the purpose of comparison:—

ARRIVALS. Passengers of all classes into Rangoon by sea from all ports (India, Burma or Foreign).					Arrivals of passengers into New York	DEPARTURES. Passengers of all classes out of Rangoon by sea to all ports (India, Burma or Foreign).				Total passengers, Rangoon.
Year.	Males.	Females.	Children under 15 years.	Total	Total	Males.	Females.	Children under 15 years	Total.	(11)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	
1901				221,385						
1902				216,262						
1903				249,738						
1904				298,073						
1905				326,832					274,643	601,475
1906				291,751					260,280	552,031
1907	215,594	15,272	8,835	239,701	1,263,042	205,807	13,427	7,632	226,966	466,667
1908	223,582	17,410	11,083	252,075	843,597	205,631	13,580	8,357	227,568	479,643
1909	224,817	16,666	14,999	256,482	894,577	191,728	600	473	192,801	449,283
1910	239,324	16,347	16,436	268,107	1,066,225	213,814	2,104	1,293	217,111	485,218
1911	259,439	18,229	14,779	289,445	919,786	217,996	2,621	1,364	221,981	511,426
1912	223,164	18,668	15,213	256,985	896,777	236,977	2,627	1,313	240,917	497,902
1913	272,593	23,664	16,782	313,039	1,199,276	24,647	2,792	1,569	271,687	584,726
1914	186,668	18,468	11,825	216,841	1,161,485	69,622	2,260	1,360	73,242	290,083
1915	261,979	186,919	13,070	291,968	...	195,773	1,023	1,319	198,715	490,683
1916	201,889	15,837	12,142	229,865	...	195,283	3,417	2,198	200,898	430,763

Among the immigrants are included persons domiciled in Burma and troops. Before the war the troping figures were small.

In 1913 the Chinese and Indian immigrants into the Straits Settlements numbered 359,562, but this was to all ports and Rangoon appears to be the second largest immigrant port in the world, New York only exceeding it. Rangoon is possibly the largest emigrant port, as we understand that the volume of emigration from New York is not great.

9. The League could have selected no more important subject for examination than the question of the emigration into Burma of the labouring class of Indians, but, the times are abnormal, it is not at the present juncture easy to gauge the hardships, if any, suffered by the immigrants in normal times, and of the witnesses selected, with one exception, all belong to the clerical, professional or mercantile classes. The exception is the second witness called on the 1st August, P. B. Veerow, signatory of a petition signed or marked by 350 Telegus. P. B. Veerow is himself a clerk in a firm in Rangoon and his father is a cooly maistry (contractor), and a perusal of his petition suggests, that it was actuated, in at any rate some measure, by regard for the clerical and professional classes, see paragraph (a) 14—

"Special accommodation may kindly be provided on the upper deck at slightly enhanced rates for those middle class people who are too poor to travel in the second; but are yet unwilling to travel in the ordinary run of third class passengers." Dr. Mehta dissents from this expression of opinion.

The other witnesses are: a typist, a medical practitioner, an Honorary Magistrate, another medical practitioner, a clerk in the Chief Court, a clerk in the office of the Chief Engineer, the secretary of the Indian Christian Association, a clerk in the Public Works Department, a school manager, a 1st grade advocate, a clerk in the Accountant-General's office, an Auditor in that office, an Accountant in the office of the Sanitary Commissioner, a Civil Engineer, a Registrar of Lodging Houses, an advocate of the Chief Court, the secretary of the Deccan Friendly Society, a merchant, a mining engineer, an insurance canvasser, a clerk to a solicitor, a pleader, a merchant, a trader, the wife of a clerk, a building contractor, a postmaster, a clerk in a Consulate in Rangoon, an interpreter of the Chief Court, a general merchant, a rice merchant, and the editor of a newspaper. A perusal of the petitions will show that in many cases, though not all, the charges are made at random and highly coloured. The representation of the

editor of the *Rangoon Mail* may be referred to as an instance of the less exaggerated presentation. That of Mr. K. B. Bannerjee, not called by the League, who has made the passage one hundred and fifty times, also carries weight. We think (Dr. Mehta dissenting) that the movement comes not from the labouring class of deck passenger, but from persons of higher social standing and education, who also at present travel as deck passengers, and that it is in the main actuated by a desire for separation from that class. The desire for separation from the coolies repeatedly occurs in the written representations and has, in another connection, deeply impressed itself upon Dr. Mehta.\* We observe that no cooly maistry (labour contractor) has presented himself for examination. We think that this class of person would quickly protest if the hardships of the deck passage were found to be so grievous to the cooly as to make the passage unpopular.

10. The existing arrangements for the sale of tickets are as follows. There are four regular ticket offices, but all are not opened for all sailings —

(1) Tickets for all ports are sold in the office of Messrs Bulloch Bros. & Co., 40th Street, see Map A. The tickets are given out through two small windows in a rear room of the main building. These windows open on to a narrow passage, about six feet wide, into which from the opposite side open two narrow doors leading from a marshalling room. This room by another door or doors opens upon 40th Street, as does the passage. The room is about 23 feet by 22, say 500 feet in area. An intending purchaser enters the room from the street, passes out of it through one of the narrow doors into the passage, gets his ticket, and passes out again into 40th Street. It is complained that there is much scrambling for tickets, that the arrangements for marshalling purchasers in 40th Street are ineffectual, and that the Company's durwans and subordinates strike the passengers in order to keep order.

(2) A temporary ticket office, or sometimes two offices, are opened as occasion arises on a piece of vacant land in Sparks Street. This piece of vacant land is shown on the same map. It is about 125 by 75 feet, something less than one-quarter of an acre in area. Tickets for Coromandel ports are sold here. A witness living in Sparks Street, Mr. Reynaud, gave evidence to the effect that the vacant land, or a portion of it, was enclosed, and in the enclosure was placed an office for the sale of tickets. Intending purchasers were let into the enclosure, made to sit down, called up one by one, and given a ticket. He spoke to hundreds of coolies waiting in the road, camping out for weeks on the roadside, eating and sleeping there, and said that there was much crowding to get into the enclosure, and that he had on several occasions seen officials of the Company striking the crowd pretty severely, and sometimes unnecessarily, in order to force it back from the enclosure on to the roadway.

(3) Tickets for Madras are sold by a passage broker, Mr. Abdul Rahman, at his private office in Mogul Street.

(4) Tickets for the Coromandel ports are sold by another passage broker, Mr. Hurry Krishna Pillay, at the main office in 40th Street and, on occasion, at a temporary office in 27th Street, and at the ticket boxes in the vacant ground.

(5) In addition, tickets for deck passengers travelling in family parties are issued at the wharf just before the steamer leaves, some tickets being reserved for such sale at the wharf. If any tickets remain over, after sale to families, the Company sells them to any one who may apply at the wharf.

11. In normal times the busy seasons for deck passengers are—outwards, from the middle of March to the middle of May, inwards September and October; but, since the outbreak of war, the busy season has much extended, and now overlaps the monsoon season, when the discomforts of sea travel are greatly aggravated. The dislocation of shipping arrangements, and the prohibition, as a war measure, of publication of intended dates of sailing in the villages of the interior and in Rangoon, have made abuses possible. Before the war, the dates of sailing were known definitely in the interior and in Rangoon, and a deck passenger would not start for Rangoon until a short time before the steamer was due to leave. Since

\* "Never before was there such a wide gulf between the classes and the masses in India as at present." *Vernaculars as Media of Instruction*, by P. J. Mehta, M.D., 1917

war broke out, he has had no means of knowing, within four or five days or more, on what date a steamer would leave, and in order to be on the safe side has had to come into Rangoon well beforehand and lodge there until the steamer departed. This stay in Rangoon, always expensive and inconvenient, has been further lengthened by the fact that the actual amount of shipping available is much reduced. Over seventy per cent. of the Company's fleet are engaged on war services, and evidence was adduced to show that at one time 12,000 deck passengers were waiting to depart from Rangoon. Evidence was also forthcoming to show that the Company, which ran three weekly sailings to Calcutta before the war, have now been compelled to reduce the number of sailings to two, and occasionally one. To Madras there was one weekly sailing before the war, and to the Coromandel ports one, whereas of late the sailings have been as few as one in three or four weeks to the Coromandel ports, and one in three weeks to Madras. Before the war the E and C class steamers, with capacity for 3,000 to 4,500 passengers, were on the run; now principally smaller types, of much less capacity, are available. No extra steamers are now available, whilst before the war they were numerous. For reasons connected with the war, ticket bookings for Calcutta can be opened only one day before the steamer leaves. The expense and inconvenience of lodging in Rangoon, the lack of shipping space available, and the fear of having to lodge for another week or longer in Rangoon, have caused excessive competition for tickets, manifesting itself in two ways—

- (a) crowding at the ticket offices;
- (b) offering a premium for a ticket.

There is no doubt that since the war started there has been great crowding in 40th Street and Sparks Street, nor that tickets have been sold at a considerable premium, nor that the officials of the Company have used sticks in order to keep order, both at 40th and Sparks Streets.

12. In the main we are of opinion—Dr Mehta dissenting—that these conditions have been due to circumstances over which the Company have not had control, namely, the war, and that the Company was alive to the peculiar difficulties is shown both by their endeavour to obtain a prosecution of persons retailing tickets, and by their successful request that Government should provide space for waiting passengers to camp out on in Rangoon. Something more might, however, we think, Mr. Bell dissenting, have been done, when conditions began to be acute, to facilitate the issue of tickets. The passage before the ticket office windows in 40th Street is, as is usual in such cases, made narrow. But the remaining accommodation in 40th Street is, far too scanty to make dealing with a rush possible, even in normal times. The smallness of the marshalling room, and the fact that the purchaser has to return into 40th Street after buying his ticket, would seem to us to make overcrowding at times inevitable. An attempt might, we think, have been made to make fuller use of the vacant piece of land in Sparks Street. This is large enough to accommodate half a dozen small enclosures and box offices for passengers, who might enter the enclosures through Sparks Street, and leave by the conservancy lane shewn on Map A. This part of the town is equipped with water conservancy, so that the lane is little used for municipal purposes, and there would be the less objection to its use as a means of exit. It is not less than fifteen feet wide. Dr. Mehta would go further. He is of opinion that all sale of tickets in 40th Street, or in the brokers' private offices, should cease and the Sparks Street land be equipped with a number of ticket offices and awaiting room, brokers, if allowed to sell tickets, being subject to supervision of a superior officer of the Company. He suggests that warrants should be issued for family parties, and that no tickets should be kept in reserve.

13. The public representation did not suggest any definite remedy for this (or any) of the shortcomings mentioned. The representation to the Company, (as printed in the *Rangoon Gazette*) ran as follows:—

“ They are satisfied that many of the troubles are due to want of a proper system and method in issuing tickets and checking them; to want of proper supervision over the employés; to keeping the passengers outside the gate until within an hour of the steamer's departure, etc.



" Many of the troubles would disappear if the Company were to issue tickets in the order in which the passengers apply , to number and register the seats for deck passengers as is done in other lines, and when one steamer is full, to issue tickets for the succeeding one and so on , to set apart separate space for women in every steamer, etc. A radical change is necessary in many of the present methods of dealing with the passengers " Dr Mehta points out that the League was not at the time formed The unparalleled practical difficulties facing the Company, and their efforts to counter an abnormal situation, were not considered, and the League, when formed, made no detailed constructive proposals for amelioration. At the hearing Dr. Mehta suggested that tickets might be issued by name, and that a percentage of the passengers entering the ship might be questioned by the ship's officers, for the purpose of finding out whether they were the actual purchasers or not. If not, it was suggested that they should be turned back ; the news would get abroad, and be a deterrent on the purchase of tickets otherwise than from the Company or its agents. But the practical objections to this appear to be insuperable. There would not be time to make a proper examination at the ship, nor, at any rate in times of rush, to record names at the ticket offices.

14. It is difficult to think of a remedy for the sale of tickets at a premium, and here again there is no evidence that the abuse existed before the war. It is true that the arrangements with the passage brokers, paragraph 10 above, are such as to leave them little or no profit ; both stated that they made their profit on other work done for the Company, and a system which in normal times is of little profit to the brokers is likely to break down in case of strain. Whilst we do not think that there is any evidence to show that the brokers themselves have participated in the extra payments received for tickets since the war broke out, we are of opinion (Mr. Bell dissenting) that all tickets should be sold under the direct supervision of the Company. This, whilst it will not make the sale of tickets at a premium impossible, will, if combined with the creation of more ticket offices, at any rate equalise the opportunity of buying a ticket. One of the witnesses complained that at present a weak passenger has little chance of getting to the ticket office. We think further, that, if Calcutta bookings could be opened two days before the steamer leaves, that would alleviate the situation Mr. Bell points out that there are practical difficulties, owing to Government reservations and other causes, in the way of selling tickets continuously until all tickets are sold. We think that prominent notices might be displayed at the ticket offices, when tickets are on sale

15. Some objection was taken to the use of the word " native " on the deck passenger's ticket, which bears the words " Native adult." This is the word used in the title of the Native Passenger Ships Act, but it has been deleted from official correspondence, and we think that the Company might be asked to delete the word from the ticket.

16 .Before the outbreak of war, Calcutta mail steamers frequently embarked their passengers at Lewis Street jetty, as well as at Latter Street and Sulay Pagoda wharves, but, since the war, embarkation has been mostly effected at the two wharves last named, practically the only exceptions being cases in which steamers, owing to the state of the tide, have had to take their passengers on board below the Hastings shoal, three miles from Sulay Pagoda wharf down the Rangoon river. In these cases passengers have been embarked on flats and launches at Lewis Street jetty. The disadvantage of this jetty is that there are no arrangements for working cargo there, and a steamer has to be brought from some other wharf to Lewis Street, when it is decided to embark the passengers from the latter place. At present the mail steamers have only from 24 to 48 hours in port, and the delay necessitated by moving elsewhere would make the fulfilment of the Company's engagements with Government impossible. Moreover, the moving can only be done at certain states of the tide, and this is a further obstacle, during war time, to Lewis Street jetty only being used for embarkation.

The arrangements for the embarkation of deck passengers at Latter Street or Sulay Pagoda wharves are as follows —

When a cargo godown is empty, it can be, and is on rare occasions, used as a shelter for deck passengers. But no godown is usually empty, and

consequently, for practical purposes, it may be said that there is no shelter for passengers, and no cover under which they can be marshalled before embarkation. In practice, barriers are erected in the intervals between the cargo godowns, and the passengers await embarkation behind these. There is plenty of evidence to show that the maistries, or headmen, employed by the baggage contractor at the charge of the Company, use sticks to keep the passengers from getting past the barriers on to the wharves. We noticed, when inspecting the "Arankola," one headman carrying, but did not see him using, such a cane as is complained of. Here again we have nothing on record to show that passengers were struck, before the war broke out. We are, however, satisfied that, since war broke out, force has been used, and frequently, but—Dr. Mehta dissenting—not that it has been used unnecessarily. If it had not been used, there would have been risk of the deck passengers either crowding one another dangerously, or making a rush to the water side which might have led to serious accident. So far then as the charge of wantonly striking, brought by the League against the Company, is concerned, a majority of our Committee are of opinion that it fails. The use of force was necessitated by the inadequacy of the arrangements in existence for the handling of passengers, and this inadequacy is a defect not attributable to the Company. The necessity to use force frequently is, however, clear proof of serious defects of system. No detailed remedy was suggested by the League, nor in fact by the majority of the petitioners. The possibility of a remedy is discussed in paragraph 28 below. It is sufficient to note here that we are unanimously of opinion that the ideal remedy is a special, separate passenger wharf, fully equipped.

17. Some of the petitions state that insufficient time is given to allow the number of passengers ordinarily seeking to embark to do so. On this point the weight of evidence is that the ordinary time allowed is three hours. We are not satisfied—Dr. Mehta dissenting—that insufficient time is allowed for embarkation. The suggestion that passengers should be allowed to enter a steamer as long as the latter is at the wharf is impracticable. Passengers cannot safely enter whilst cargo is being worked.

18. It is complained that the baggage coolies, employed by a contractor at the ultimate charge of the Company, extort exorbitant sums from the passengers, when they ought to give their services free, and delay handling baggage until the last moment, as a further means of extortion. The arrangements under which these men work is as follows :—

The Company employ a contractor, who is under a legal obligation to them to provide, as needed, for the carriage of passengers' baggage to and from British India steamers, up to 80 coolies and two cooly *maistries* or headmen, and to pay each cooly Rs. 14 *per mensem* and each *maistry* Rs. 25. The cost to the contractor is, therefore, Rs. 1,170 *per mensem*. The Company pay the contractor Rs. 1,250 *per mensem*. His profit is, therefore, Rs. 80 *per mensem*, one rupee per man. It is agreed that Rs. 14 is less than the market rate of monthly wage of a wharf labourer in Rangoon; hence, when the coolies are not needed for work on the British India steamers, the contractor either employs them himself, paying them extra wages, or else allows them to take outside employment. This is the statement of the contractor, who produced an acquittance roll, which appeared to be kept in the due course of business. Indeed, it was noticeably clean and tidy, and there is nothing on the record to show that the contractor does not pay the men. We did not verify the accuracy of the thumb impressions appearing in the roll. At a late stage in the proceedings, the League desired to call some of the men to testify that they were never paid wages by the contractor, but were left to make what they could out of the passengers. The Chairman ruled that this evidence, being adduced some time after the case for the League had been closed, could not be received. We have no doubt that the men frequently do receive gratuities from deck passengers, and that in case of a rush they are likely to serve first a passenger who offers them a higher gratuity. From one of the representations made (evidence of Mr. P. N. Malachi, for the Indian Christian Association), it appeared that the system of employing men who receive monthly wages and give their services free (or are supposed to do so), is of somewhat recent origin, and that it was on account of the exactions of unpaid,

or outside, porters that the system was introduced. We have ascertained that the system is three years old. The Association state that what is required is better supervision of the work of the men, who are at present inadequately supervised by the two headmen. We have no doubt that, owing to the delays that have taken place in the provision of ships since the outbreak of war, the men have had more offers of gratuities than when there was less anxiety on the part of passengers to get on board, and we agree—Mr. Bell dissenting—that more supervision is needed, and would lead to expedition in the handling of the baggage of deck passengers, and reductions in the demands of the baggage coolies. At present the Company's supervision of the loading of baggage is exercised through one assistant, the 'baggage assistant,' detailed by the Company to supervise the embarkation. We think that the coolies' badge should bear the words "Free cooly." The objection to reverting to the old system of outside porters is that the embarkation at present takes place in many cases at wharves where there are open cargo godowns, and there would be risk of pilfering. This objection might—the Chairman considers—be got over by a system of registered outside porters and, if it could be, he thinks, that it would be better to revert to the old system and abandon the existing arrangement, under which the baggage coolies receive a fixed pay, in addition to pay for outside work.

19. The Port Trust charge, it is stated, a due on passengers' baggage; if so, we think that receipts should be given. A system of wharf admission tickets should also we think (Mr. Bell dissenting) if no objection exists from the point of view of Government and the Port authorities, be introduced, at any rate after the war. Dr. Mehta thinks that the system should be introduced forthwith.

20. Overcrowding on board the steamers was freely alleged in the petitions and at the hearing. All the voyages made between Rangoon and Calcutta, the Coromandel ports, or Madras, are short voyages\* within the meaning of section 5 (4) of the Native Passenger Ships Act, 1887. The law as to the maximum number of passengers which a ship, performing a short voyage in the fair weather season, may carry is stated in section 18 (1)† of the Act. The method of calculation was explained to us by Engineer Commander E. E. Macpherson, Superintending Engineer and Shipwright Surveyor to Government; as an example, a ship which had altogether 100 superficial feet available between decks, and 100 superficial feet available on the upper-decks, would carry as its maximum number of deck passengers 22: namely, 16, calculated on the between-deck space ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) and 6 more ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) calculated on the balance of the upper-deck space [ $100 - (16 \times 4) = 64 = 36$ ]. The witness pointed out that it would be an unusual circumstance for the upper-deck space to be as great as the between-deck space, since the first and second class cabins are usually, if not always, on the upper-deck, and these must have certain deck space reserved for them. What is known as the "five-foot rule," providing that for certain voyages between Rangoon and the Coromandel Coast, to Negapatam and ports north of it, not more than five superficial feet need be provided for each deck passenger in the between decks, we understand is very little used, since it can be applied only when no first or second class passenger at all is carried, and this is hardly ever the case. We think—Mr. Bell dissenting—that the five-foot rule should be abolished. The complaints are to the effect that the deck passengers are greatly overcrowded, and that the ships habitually carry more than the maximum number of passengers allowed by the A Certificate, section 10 ‡ of the Act. On the other side we have the evidence of ship's officers to the effect that passengers beyond the maximum number are never carried, and the Company produced books for one year, 1916, showing the number of tickets

\* "Short voyage, means, subject to the provisions of this Act, any voyage, during which the ship performing it will not in ordinary circumstances be 120 hours or upwards continuously out of port."

† 18. (1) For seasons of fair weather a ship performing a short voyage shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, contain in the between-decks at least six superficial feet and thirty-six cubic feet of space available for every between-deck passenger, and on the upper-deck at least four superficial feet available for each such passenger and six superficial feet available for each upper deck passenger.

‡ 10. The first of the certificates (hereinafter called "Certificate A") shall state that the ship is seaworthy and properly equipped, fitted and ventilated, and the number of passengers which she is capable of carrying.

issued on each voyage. These in no case exceeded the number sanctioned. We are of opinion that the number carried in fact never does exceed the allowed maximum. We have evidence that the deck passengers carry with them a considerable amount of personal baggage, and we think—Dr. Mehta dissenting—that the overcrowding, which no doubt is felt at times, is due chiefly to this. Moreover, the complaints received have been from the more educated and exigent, not from the labouring class. We feel doubt—Dr. Mehta dissenting—whether the space allowance would be considered in sufficient by that class of deck passengers, at once by far the most numerous and, from the standpoint of Burma, the most important section of the immigrants. At the same time we note that the space allowances were fixed 30 years ago, on the experience of preceding years, at a time when the number of passengers travelling between Rangoon and Indian ports was far fewer than it is now, and, although we have no doubt that the general amenities provided by the Company have been improved, the space allowance remains the same. The question whether the allowance is now inadequate may call for examination, but the question is largely a medical one, and we are not as a body competent to express an opinion thereon. Dr. Mehta, however, feels no doubt that the space allowance is inadequate. The ticket bears the date of sailing and the name of the ship and, for each voyage, is of a distinctive colour. Tickets are examined before embarkation. If a passenger evades this examination and is later found to be travelling by another steamer than that for which his ticket was issued, he is required to pay for a fresh ticket. We are satisfied that the case is very infrequent, and that there is no risk of the maximum number of passengers being exceeded, through passengers holding tickets for one steamer travelling by a later one.

One witness testified to certain deaths having occurred on a voyage between Calcutta and Rangoon of the steamer "Aronda," in November 1913. We have endeavoured to obtain the record of the Police investigation which we understand took place on the arrival of the vessel in Rangoon, but the Commissioner of Police has been unable to trace it. We, however, file a copy of a newspaper report on the case. If the report is correct, the deaths were due to other causes than lack of ventilation. In any case the episode is an isolated one and of comparatively old date, and quite insufficient to support a general charge of inadequacy of ventilation due to overcrowding.

21. Deficiency of the sanitary conveniences on board ship was a very frequent, indeed almost universal, subject of complaint in the written representations. We have no doubt that the number of latrines required by the Act\* is in all cases provided. In this case we think—Mr. Bell dissenting—that re-examination of the rules regarding the extent of provision of sanitary conveniences is needed. Our reasons are the same as those stated above in regard to the space allowance and the further one, that the reservation for female passengers of a number of the conveniences may at times result in reducing the number available for male deck passengers to less than one per 100 men. In fact, the number of women's latrines at present is probably, in some steamers, excessive. As when dealing with the space averages, we note that the complaint comes from the educated class, and that there is nothing on the record, except perhaps in P. B. Veerow's statement, to show that the labouring class of deck passengers finds the sanitary provision insufficient or unsuitable. The distinguishing mark on the latrines should be much more prominent than at present, and each seat in a latrine should be screened off. A canvas screen would suffice.

22. The separation of female from male deck passengers is frequently recommended in the petitions, and the view was commonly expressed at the hearing that, if separate space were provided, the women occupying it would not object to the presence of the male attendants of other women also occupying it. Other witnesses thought that separate accommodation should be provided for females, but that they should not be compelled to occupy the separate space. Dr. Mehta

\* Notification No. 1354, dated the 14th March 1889.

Rule IV. Every such ship shall be fitted with not less than two privies and one more such privy for every 100 or part of that number carried in excess of 100.

dissenting, we are not satisfied that a genuine demand exists for separate accommodation for women, except in the case of the deck passengers of the better-educated classes. The deck passenger of the labouring class rarely brings his wife to Burma, and the number of female passengers entering Rangoon by sea is small. Recent figures are as follows :—

Year.	IMMIGRANTS.			
	Males.	Females.	Children.	Total.
1912 ... ..	223,164	18,608	15,213	256,985
1913 ... ..	272,593	23,664	16,782	313,039
1914 .. ..	186,008	18,408	11,825	216,241
1915 .. ..	261,979	16,919	13,070	291,968
	944,344	77,599	56,890	1,078,833
Average	236,086	19,399	...	269,708

The average percentage of females is about 7. If, as the Chairman suggests elsewhere the experiment of an intermediate class be again tried, to meet the needs of the educated deck-passenger immigrants of better social position and education, there would not remain any genuine demand for the provision of separate accommodation for women travelling as deck passengers. Dr. Mehta, however, considers that the need of separate accommodation for women is urgent, and should be provided, irrespective of the creation of an intermediate class. He also considers that an adjoining space for their male relatives or attendants should be reserved. We are agreed that the women's latrines and bathing places should not adjoin the men's, and Dr. Mehta thinks that they should be placed in the separate space recommended by him for women. We think that the practicability of employing a female sweeper for the women's conveniences, might be considered.

23. As regards disembarkation, the Calcutta mail steamers, under a special arrangement with the authorities, proceed direct either to Latter Street or Sulay Pagoda Wharves, where the first and second class passengers, and their servants, are disembarked. All inward steamers carrying deck passengers, other than the Calcutta mail steamers, proceed direct to Sparks Street Jetty, except when, owing to the state of the tide, they may have to lie for some hours outside the harbour, in which case the passengers are brought up to that jetty in flats and launches. The medical examination of deck passengers on their arrival at Rangoon, especially the liability to vaccination, is strongly objected to by many of the witnesses. The arrangements for vaccination, are being enquired into by a separate Committee, and we have not allowed evidence particularly relating to vaccination to be adduced at the hearing. The general arrangements for medical examination of passengers by the Calcutta steamers are as follows (there is no examination at present of emigrants to India) : the Port Health Officer boards the steamer in the stream, examines the ship's papers for medical purposes, also examines the servants (who are deck passengers) of first and second class passengers, and proceeds with the ship to the wharf, where the remaining deck passengers are transferred to flats and towed a few hundred yards down stream to Sparks Street Jetty. From this point the procedure is the same, in the case of all steamers. The deck passengers carry their baggage with them. The male passengers, as they arrive, proceed to a large shed, from which they pass through a turnstile to another shed, where the Customs examination is carried out, and from there to another enclosure, where they pass the Port Health doctor. The female passengers go to an enclosure on the jetty, from which, after examination, they are passed directly on to the street. The general examination, except in the case of female passengers, is done entirely by the Customs Department. The Police are there to perform their ordinary police duties. The medical examination is rapid, the average number of passengers dealt with being 100 in 15 minutes. To the voyage in the launch, and to the subsequent medical and

Customs examination, the strongest objections are raised. We have no doubt that transshipment is inconvenient and objectionable, and should be done away with if it can be. This indeed has always been recognized *vide* Annexure D. No practical suggestion for improvement of method has, however, been made by the League, which apparently takes the view that medical and other examination is unnecessary. Dr. Mehta suggests that examination might take place on board ship or at the gangway, but this, we fear, is, from considerations of time, wholly impracticable.

24. The propriety of a medical examination is outside our reference. The League, however, examined the Port Health Officer, with a view to showing that the medical examination, apart from vaccination, was unnecessarily stringent. Dr. Foy has supplied us with a statement showing the number of persons sent by his department to the Plague or Contagious Diseases Hospitals for the past three years, and Major Saigol, I.M.S., the Medical Officer in charge of the hospitals, has prepared a further statement analysing the later history of the cases :—

	Year.		
	1914.	1915.	1916.
Number of persons sent to the Plague Hospital by the Port Health Department.	123	166	592
No appreciable disease found ... ..	Nil	12	118

The figures do not suggest that the patients are unnecessarily remitted for examination. In 4 out of 5 cases in 1916 disease was found. The figures for the other hospital are as follows :—

	Year.		
	1914.	1915.	1916.
Number of persons sent to the Contagious Diseases Hospital by the Port Health Department.	23	159	233
No appreciable disease found ... ..	Nil	101	73

Having regard to the fact that the Port Health Department must make its examination in a summary manner and deals with some 300,000 persons a year, the figures do not indicate any unnecessary caution in the examination. In 2 out of 3 cases disease (not necessarily contagious) was found. Dr. Mehta dissents from the conclusions expressed in this paragraph.

25. The Chief Collector of Customs, whom we have consulted, writes as follows on the arrangements for disembarkation and search.—

"The question has been frequently discussed by me with Mr. Bell,\* Mr. Tarleton† and Mr. Holmes,‡ and we have invariably come to the same conclusion, *vis.*, that though the arrangement is inconvenient, especially from a Customs and Police point of view, in existing circumstances it is unavoidable. The true remedy is the building of a suitable arrival wharf, with rooms for examination of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class passengers and facilities for undertaking necessary precautionary health measures. It is not likely that this project could be even considered by the Port Commissioners until after the war, when financial conditions may be expected to be easier. In any case the transshipment of deck passengers is much more inconvenient for the Customs and Police than it is for the passengers themselves. So far as they are concerned they are put to certainly no more inconvenience than that to which passengers have nowadays to submit at British ports all over the world, owing to the fact that our country is engaged in war."

He has never heard of any complaint of delay on account of either Customs or Police examining officers not being ready to deal with passengers, and, since the introduction of a more rigid examination, has received only one complaint, and that from an outsider (*i.e.*, not a passenger). He continues :—

"It is absurd to think that complaints would not have been made to me had Customs officers thrown away passengers' things indiscriminately. It is possible that things may have been lost or even pilfered—things have been known to have been lost and pilfered at Indian and English railway stations, even when there was no examination. I should surely have had complaints of the thieving or pilfering, if it existed to any extent.

\* Of the Police Department.  
† Acting Chairman of the Port Commissioners.

"Women are always searched by the lady searcher in, I understand, the presence of a Lady Doctor. The Customs Department are not in a position to know what goes on, and I cannot say what methods are adopted in the search. It is fatuous for any reasonable person to suppose that in searching females, it is not sometimes necessary to get the searched persons to remove garments. In every civilised country in the world women are searched by women and smuggled articles have been commonly found, which never would have been found, had no article of dress been removed."

Dr. Mehta dissenting, we do not consider that there is unnecessary rigour or incivility in the arrangements for search

26. Many of the witnesses stated that a class of accommodation, intermediate between the deck passage and the second class passage, is needed, and that a higher fare could be paid for the same, and one of our number (the Chairman) on a review of the evidence considers that a demand for accommodation of this kind does exist. Dr. Mehta dissenting, the members of the Committee consider that the main object of the public representations was to ameliorate conditions for the better educated and socially superior class, and to secure their separation from the uneducated coolies and labourers. Dr. Mehta, however, considers that if the rates for an intermediate fare are raised, there will be no demand for the improved accommodation whilst Mr. Bell points out that, until war broke out, an intermediate class was in existence, that it has only been abandoned recently, and that it was never popular. The Chairman, however, feels doubt whether what was provided was what the better educated deck passengers wanted. The evidence shows that they want—

- (1) separation from the deck passengers of the labouring class,
- (2) separate sanitary conveniences,
- (3) a separate water-supply.

They do not want cabin accommodation. What was provided before the war was separate cabins, each accommodating five intermediate class passengers, but no separate sanitary conveniences, and no separate water-supply were given. In respect of the two last-named items, the intermediate passengers had to share the accommodation provided for the deck passengers. The experiment should, the Chairman thinks, be tried again, the amenities provided being as stated above. There is evidence that passengers would be willing to pay a higher fare than the present deck passage rate. Some of the witnesses suggested, as a proper figure for the new intermediate class fare, Rs 17 to Rs. 20. If such a class, with such conveniences, is provided, structural alterations of the existing vessels will be necessary, and it is of course fair that the passengers should pay for the added amenities.

27. We do not consider that the complaints in regard to inadequate provision of life belts, shortage of water on board, inadequacy in the number of sweepers, habitual neglect on the part of the ship's doctors, and common ill-treatment on the part of the ship's officers, have any foundation. Dr. Mehta dissents, considering that all these allegations have been fully substantiated. We consider it unreasonable to expect that the Company should allow a husband (or other relative of a woman travelling in the 2nd class) himself travelling with a deck ticket, to share the 2nd class accommodation. Nor is any case made out for the provision at the wharf of separate gangways for women, nor for deferring the preparations for working cargo, the removal of awnings, etc., until the ship has arrived. This last inconvenience is shared by every class of passenger and we have not heard before of passengers seriously complaining about it. Cargo must be worked expeditiously. We do not think, having regard to the social standing and habits of the great bulk of the deck passengers, that any need exists for registering special space for each. Dr. Mehta, however, holds the contrary view.

Dr. Mehta regards the carriage of cattle on passenger steamers as objectionable, and thinks that it should cease altogether. Mr. Bell and the Chairman are of opinion that the Company should be asked to limit the carriage of cattle on passenger ships as far as practicable, and to carry them, when possible, on non-passenger vessels.

28. The Port Health Officer and the Superintending Engineer and Shipwright Surveyor to Government, both officials of wide experience, and the Deputy

Conservator of the Port, agree in considering that the amenities provided for deck passengers on the Company's steamers are better than on any other line carrying passengers in the East. These witnesses have no reason to exhibit predilection for a particular line. We find—Dr. Mehta dissenting—that, except in two points, namely, the failure to use the vacant ground in Sparks Street to a greater extent, and to exercise sufficient supervision over the baggage coolies at the wharf, the indictment of the Company supported by the League has failed. There remain important defects of system, not attributable to the Company, which are at the present time a source of friction, and to remove which no pains should be spared. These are consequent on the lack of proper accommodation for passengers at the wharves. Rangoon has, it would appear, grown into the second largest immigrant and (probably) the largest emigrant port in the world, it may almost be said without the authorities being aware of the fact. Special permanent arrangements seem to us to be needed to handle the half million or so of

\* Furthermore, it is manifest that the type of commodity handled, whether passengers or freight, will also determine to a great extent the design of the wharf structure.

\* Passenger accommodations naturally must be much more elaborate than those for freight.

\* *(City Planning, edited by J. Nolen, 1916, Chapter XI, Navigable Waters by E. F. Goodrich, Chief Engineer of the Bush Terminal in Brooklyn; Consulting Engineer, Borough of Manhattan, etc.)*

passengers who pass through Rangoon every year, and it is apparent that the existing measures are inadequate. The desiderata seem to us to be as follows:—

As an ultimate measure, the provision of —

- (a) shelter for passengers about to embark;
- (b) space for marshalling them;
- (c) a covered inspection shed for passengers disembarking, in which they may undergo medical and other examination, with an observation ward; all the above in one place; and
- (d) Mr. Bell dissenting, the abolition of the system by which passengers have to be transferred into flats from the incoming Calcutta steamers and towed downstream to the inspection wharf.

As an immediate measure, we think that (a), (b), (c) and (d) should be arranged, so far as may be practicable.

As a temporary measure, during the war, we consider that covered shelter should be provided in which deck passengers can lodge whilst waiting for a steamer. This might be on the vacant ground where—at the instance of the Company—an uncovered camping ground has been recently assigned to them by Government. The Company, we understand, would probably contribute liberally to the cost.

29. As regards (a) to (d), space large enough to provide for the requirements is the first thing to look for, and the practical difficulty of allowing passengers inside a godown occupied by cargo makes it essential that it should be space not at any time occupied by cargo. Moreover, the transference to flats cannot—even partially—be abolished unless the temporary examination shed abuts on the Sulay Pagoda or Latter Street wharf, to which points the Calcutta steamers at present come and, for some years at any rate, having regard to the depletion of tonnage and the ensuing need of turning ships round with despatch, must, we think, come. The foreshore is shown on Map B. The second condition at once reduces the range of search to a very restricted area, namely, the foreshore between Crisp Street on the west and Phayre Street on the east. We have had the advantage of visiting the foreshore along with Mr. J. L. Holmes, officiating Chairman of the Port Commissioners. After considering other possibilities, we are unanimously of opinion that, as an ultimate measure, the inspection and shelter of passengers should be arranged for on a floating pontoon, extending from east of the present Lewis Street pontoon to the Phayre Street wharf: if this does not provide sufficient space, an inspection shed should be placed in the existing shed north of the latter wharf. As a temporary measure, we think that the examination of passengers disembarking should be carried out in the open shed north of Latter Street sheds Nos. 1 and 2. Dr. Mehta considers that the shed should be reserved for passengers only. The other members have no objection to it being used for cargo, so long as adequate space for passengers is always available.



The Port Health Officer expressed the opinion that the best place for a separate station would be the site, at present occupied by the Municipal market, since that lies between Latter Street and Sulay Pagoda wharves, and is accessible from steamers lying at either wharf. The passengers could be landed direct from the steamer and proceed with their belongings, eastward or westward as the case might be, along Latter street or Sulay Pagoda wharf fronts, to the station. The objections are —

(a) that the space is at present occupied by the Municipal market, and early action is not possible; and

(b) that when the Port Trust, as has been arranged, take over this space, they will want to convert it into cargo wharves and godowns, in order to secure a continuous cargo frontage from Sulay Pagoda Road to 27th Street.

30. For ships berthing at Sulay Pagoda wharf, it will remain impossible to disembark passengers direct, since the Municipal Strand Market intervenes. It will be necessary to transfer them in flats either to the proposed new station or, as at present, to Sparks Street. The suggestion is, therefore, a palliative only, unless the berthing of Calcutta steamers at Sulay Pagoda Street wharf can be done away with altogether. Even if it cannot, the situation will be to a certain extent alleviated. We are aware that the present arrangements were come to after close consideration by Government and the authorities concerned, and recognize that the difficulties are considerable, but the inconveniences are considerable also. At all inspection stations, water and latrine accommodation should be provided.

31. The importance of the Indian immigrant in the economy of Burma has been noticed above. There is little in the statistics to show that the most important class of immigrants, namely, the labouring classes, find the conditions of travel deterrent, and we observe that the Company, at a time when running expenses have increased enormously, and it might have made very large profits by raising the deck passenger fare to India, or by employing its steamers in the carriage of cargo, has refrained from so doing. At the same time we notice that the number of immigrants reached its high water mark twelve years ago, namely, in 1905. We think it likely that there will be competition for Indian labour for the tropical colonies after the war, and, in the interest of the development of a backward province, consider that the immigration of Indian labour into Burma should be actively encouraged. We think extension of the means of ingress into Burma highly desirable, and record our opinion—Mr. Bell dissenting—that—

(a) the construction of a railway from India to Burma; and

(b) competition between passenger steamship lines, are advisable. The latter, we think, might be encouraged by legislation directed against reduction of the deck passenger rates below a certain figure. The Company have not a monopoly of the deck passenger traffic, certain other lines carrying some deck passengers, namely:—

The Asiatic Steam Navigation Company, to Chittagong;

The Nippon Yusen Kaisha, to Calcutta,

The Seang and Hong Lines, to and from the Straits and China ports:

but we have no doubt that the Company could, if they liked, obtain a monopoly by the exercise of the process of rate cutting adverted to in the public meeting at which the League was formed. The volume of the deck passenger trade is great, the trade, no doubt, a lucrative one, and competition would be stimulated if capitalists knew that rates could not be cut below a certain figure. The remaining members of our Committee cannot consider it foreign to the reference to estimate the effect that additional means of ingress would have in removing defects which are admittedly due in great measure to shortage of ships

J. P. HARDIMAN,

*Chairman.*

*Subject to a minute of dissent; P. J. MEHTA } Members.*  
*Subject to a minute of dissent; J. W. A. BELL }*

## DECK PASSENGERS' COMMITTEE.

### MINUTE OF DISSENT

By MR. J. W. A. BELL.

With the general conclusions of Mr. Hardiman's Report which I shall refer to, in this Note, as the Principal Report, I am in agreement, but there are certain points as to which I am not in agreement. The conclusions of the Principal Report with which I differ are those with regard to —

- (1) The accommodation for selling tickets at the Company's main office.
- (2) The more extensive use of the Company's vacant land in Sparks Street for the sale of tickets
- (3) The engagement of passenger brokers.
- (4) The supervision of free baggage coolies.
- (5) The exclusion of the public from the wharves in Rangoon.
- (6) The abolition of the "Five-foot Rule."
- (7) The adequacy of latrine accommodation on Deck Passenger Ships.
- (8) The discontinuance of the present arrangement under which passengers arriving by Calcutta mail steamers are taken by flats from the discharging wharf to Sparks Street Jetty for Customs, Police, and Health Department examination.
- (9) The provision of intermediate class accommodation.
- (10) Proposed legislation with regard to Deck Passenger rates.
- (11) The construction of a railway between India and Burma

*1. The accommodation for selling tickets at the Company's main office.—*

The opinion is expressed in the Principal Report that the accommodation in 40th Street is more or less cramped. I do not consider that any evidence has been produced to show that this has been a cause of inconvenience to passengers. The accommodation was specially designed when the new office was built some eight or ten years ago, and the plans were decided upon as the result of many years' experience. It is a fact that all places designed for the sale of tickets, both at home and abroad, are more or less cramped. The object in having them so is to prevent a rush at the ticket windows, by a large number of persons at the same time, as for instance in the case of entrances to ticket boxes at Railway Stations, Tube Stations, and Theatres. At any of these places there may be, on occasions, an uncomfortable crush, as in the case of railway stations at holiday times. I do not think, however, that it has ever been suggested that Railway companies should open a sufficient number of ticket offices, and keep a sufficiently large staff, to prevent any possibility of an uncomfortable crush, and a certain amount of delay to passengers, at the seasons to which I have referred.

I understand that, in drafting the report, the question considered was not so much the extent of the enclosures round the actual ticket selling windows, as the space in the marshalling room immediately behind. This marshalling room is 23 feet in length and 22 feet in breadth, and can easily accommodate fifty persons. If a room were provided capable of accommodating a larger number of persons, a second marshalling room would be required, between it and the ticket boxes. The whole object is to have a marshalling room capable of accommodating only a comparatively smaller number of passengers, in order that they may be marshalled into the actual ticket selling space without inconvenience to themselves.

*2. The more extensive use of the Company's vacant land in Sparks Street for the sale of tickets.—*

In the Principal Report, the suggestion is made that insufficient use has been made of the British India Company's vacant land in Sparks Street. I do not think that the Committee have had evidence before them to support this. We have been told that, when necessary, two temporary ticket selling boxes are placed there. If it be remembered that each ticket selling centre is not merely a ticket box, but a ticket box with sufficient space around it is

which to have a crowd marshalled and controlled, I think that it will be conceded that there is barely room for more than two ticket boxes.

In the Principal Report it is suggested that there is enough accommodation for six spaces. If by this is meant that there is room for six ticket boxes, with space round for marshalling the passengers, I do not agree. Even if it be meant that, in addition to the two ticket boxes, which are, when necessary, placed there, there is room for six enclosures in which intending purchasers of tickets could be marshalled and controlled, I do not think that this is correct. In either case the Committee have had no evidence before them of the number of assistants required, not only to sell tickets at extra ticket boxes, but also to marshal and control the passengers. I consider that, in suggesting that greater use should have been made of the vacant land in Sparks Street, the other members of the Committee have overlooked the fact that, owing to the war, the British India Company are, in common with most other firms in Rangoon, working with a depleted staff. Several assistants would be required at each of the suggested extra enclosures. Assistants of the type suitable for this special work cannot easily be engaged at the present time. This being so, I do not think that the Committee can reasonably conclude that the Company has not provided as many ticket-selling enclosures as it might. The assistants required to control and marshal deck passengers must be men of experience. Even if temporary employees were available, it would not be in the interests of the passengers to engage their services.

3. *The engagement of passenger brokers.*—In the Principal Report, the opinion is expressed that all tickets should be sold under the direct supervision of the Company. That is, that the services of passenger brokers should be dispensed with. It is possible that the services of passenger brokers are not appreciated by the class of passengers who came forward to give evidence at this enquiry, that is, a class consisting of clerks and professional men, who travel to and from India at rare intervals, perhaps once in three, five, or ten years. Their services are, however, of much assistance to, and are greatly appreciated by, the *bonâ fide* Deck Passengers, that is labourers and others, who travel regularly once or possibly twice every year. These brokers do not merely sell tickets. By sending agents into the districts they advise passengers of the probable dates of sailing of steamers. In Rangoon they keep them advised of any changes of sailing dates, arrange, in the case of Madras passengers, for shipment of their luggage, and generally assist them. So far as I am aware, all the Steamship Companies engaged in deck passenger traffic between India and East Africa, the Persian Gulf, Mauritius, Ceylon, Burma, and the Far East, work through passenger brokers, as this has been found to be the most suitable method in the interests of all concerned. I am strongly of opinion that, to dispense with the services of passenger brokers, would mean serious inconvenience to that class of deck passengers who are of most importance to this Province.

4. *The supervision of free baggage coolies.*—I do not consider that the Committee have had evidence before them to show that the free baggage coolies engaged by the British India Company to assist passengers have not been sufficiently supervised. We have been told that these coolies, while working directly under their maistries, are under the supervision of the assistants of the British India Company who attend all steamers, embarking or disembarking passengers, and that there is one special assistant, whose only duty is to supervise baggage coolies. We have had evidence to show that complaints have been made to these passenger's assistants, which have resulted in the dismissal of the coolies demanding gratuities. In a question of dealing with 1,000 to 4,000 passengers, it would be very difficult to institute a system of supervision, even if a very large staff were employed for that work only, by which the movements of each of the 80 coolies, among the large number of passengers referred to, could be absolutely supervised. The British India Company, in providing a special baggage assistant, are probably going further than Railway Companies do in large Railway stations. The actions of the porters and baggage coolies in a railway station are not closely supervised. If any passenger has any cause for complaint, he makes it to the Station-master or someone in authority. This would be the

natural procedure in the case of any person having any complaint to make against the British India Company's baggage coolies, and this has been done. It is quite possible that the coolies take gratuities. I have never known persons of that class who did not do so. But I am of opinion that, in placing a baggage assistant over them, and in exhibiting a notice in all vernaculars in a prominent place, warning passengers that coolies are supplied by the Company to assist them with their baggage free of charge, the British India Company are doing all that can reasonably be expected of them.

5. *The exclusion of the public from the wharves in Rangoon.*—I do not agree with the recommendation that a system of wharf admission tickets should be introduced. The present arrangement for the exclusion of the public from the wharves is a measure which has been adopted by Government, presumably after the fullest consideration, and I am not prepared to suggest that it should be altered.

6. *The abolition of the "Five-Foot Rule"*—The "Five-foot Rule" applies only to voyages between Burma ports, and ports on the East Coast of India from Negapatam to Gopaulpore. It only applies to steamers which do not carry either first or second class passengers.

It was introduced by Government about 1889, with the special object of facilitating transport of coolly labour between India and Burma. Its withdrawal would undoubtedly restrict the facilities for maintaining a supply of Indian labour in Burma, which is of vital importance to the Province. As it was introduced by Government, as it has been given effect to under the supervision of experienced Government officials, as these officials are in a position to know whether its application has caused any hardship to Indian deck passengers, and as they have never indicated that there is any objection to it, I do not think it is for this Committee to suggest, without evidence, its abolition.

7. *The adequacy of latrine accommodation on Deck Passenger Ships.*—The scale of sanitary conveniences in Passenger Steamers, is fixed by certain rules laid down by Government, and it is the duty of a Government Officer to see that these are given effect to, in connection with the granting of "B" certificates. As the present rules were framed, and as they continue to be given effect to, by experienced Government Officers, I do not consider that the Committee are justified, in view of the evidence which has been placed before them, in criticising their adequacy.

8. *The discontinuance of the present arrangement under which passengers arriving by Calcutta mail steamers are taken by flats from the discharging wharf to Sparks Street Jetty, for Customs, Police, and Health Department, examination.*—I quite agree that this arrangement is a source of inconvenience to deck passengers. It is, however, a measure that will be in operation only throughout that period during which the present shortage of tonnage exists. It only applies to Calcutta Mail Steamers, and was come to by Government, in consultation with the Chief Collector of Customs, the Commissioner of Police, the Port Health Officer, and the British India Company, in view of the short time which, owing to the present shortage of tonnage, the Calcutta Mail Steamers have in port, as has been explained to the Committee. It would not be possible to maintain the present mail service, were Calcutta steamers compelled to go to Sparks Street Jetty to land their passengers, and then proceed to the loading wharves, as this would mean losing several hours out of the 24 to 36 hours which are available for working these steamers in port. This being so, I do not think that it is for this Committee to suggest any change in an arrangement made by Government after full consideration of all the interests concerned.

9. *The provision of intermediate class accommodation.*—My opinion is, that the question of the provision of an intermediate class in the steamers of the British India Company, is not one that should be dealt with by this Committee, which was formed to consider alleged grievances of deck passengers. The fact that there is not an intermediate class cannot be described as a grievance. It is possible that there may be a class of passengers who would like to have somewhat better accommodation than is allowed for the ordinary deck fare, at a rate under the ordinary and class fare. If this be so, it seems to me, that the proper

procedure would be for that class to make a representation to the British India Company on the subject. They would then be told whether it would be possible to fit up such accommodation as they require in the Company's passenger steamers, and, if so, what the probable cost would be. They would also receive some indication as to what the cost to them would be of such accommodation, and they might be asked for some guarantee that, if such a class of accommodation were provided in the Company's steamers, it would receive sufficient support from the public to justify its existence.

So far as I am aware—and I have a certain knowledge of the subject—no Shipping Company East of Suez which carries deck passengers, has intermediate class accommodation. If, therefore, the Committee were to recommend to Government that the British India Company should be asked to provide intermediate accommodation, they would not only be making a recommendation which was not based on any grievance of deck passengers, but they would be recommending that the British India Company should be asked to provide a class of accommodation which is not provided by any other Steamship Company in the Eastern Deck Passenger Trade.

With regard to the paragraph in the Principal Report dealing with the subject of intermediate accommodation, I do not think that evidence has been placed before the Committee to show that, if there were such accommodation in the Company's steamers, it would be supported by the public. A number of witnesses have mentioned it, but they have obviously been witnesses who have been anxious to formulate grievances against the British India Company, and who possibly have thought that they could make a grievance of the fact that there was no intermediate accommodation in the Company's steamers. One witness, I think, went the length of saying that he believed that 50 per cent. of the deck passengers who travel by the Company's steamers would travel in the intermediate class if it were provided.

Against this we have the evidence of the British India Company, that intermediate class accommodation was fitted up in four of their largest passenger steamers, that it was hardly ever used, and that, after being in existence for a considerable time, the accommodation was dismantled, simply because it did not receive the support of the public.

It is one thing for a few witnesses, of the class who appeared before this Committee, to state, in an off hand manner, that there is a need for intermediate class accommodation, and that it would be taken advantage of by a large section of the travelling public, but, as has been shown by the experiment made by the British India Company, it is quite a different matter when it comes to these persons making use of the accommodation when it is provided, and—incidentally—paying for it.

10. *Proposed legislation with regard to deck passenger rates.*—The Principal Report recommends that Government should introduce legislation directed against the reduction of passenger rates below a certain figure, with a view to encouraging competition against the British India Company. I am of opinion that to make such a suggestion is entirely outside of the province of this Committee. The course suggested would involve an interference with private enterprise, which I feel sure Government would not contemplate. So far as I know, there is no instance, throughout the British Empire, of steamship rates being artificially fixed by Government except as a war measure. Where rates for transport are fixed by Government, such as railway rates, the equivalent is the grant of a monopoly. Had such a measure as that recommended in that Principal Report been adopted by Government, although I am certain that Government would not adopt such a measure, I think it possible that the British India Company might not have had that interest in the deck passenger trade of India, which has led them to construct, at great cost, a special class of steamers expressly designed and built in order to provide the greatest comfort to deck passengers, to retain, at a time when they could have made very much higher earnings in almost any other trade, owing to the enormous increase in freight rates, some of the largest ships, left at their disposal, in the deck passenger trade, and to refrain from raising deck passenger fares above the level at which they stood

prior to the war, notwithstanding the fact, that has been brought out in evidence, that other deck passenger lines have raised their rates, and that the British India Company could have obtained almost any rates they cared to ask; and that too at a time when the working expenses of steamers have increased, owing to the war, in different directions, from fifty to five hundred per cent.

11. *The construction of a Railway between India and Burma.*—There may be good reasons for the construction of a railway between India and Burma, but I am of opinion that the question is not one for a Committee formed for the purpose of considering alleged grievances of deck passengers. The Committee have not had any evidence placed before them to support a recommendation to Government that such a railway should be constructed. As a Committee they do not know what the probable cost would be, what the engineering difficulties, if any, are, and what amount of support a railway between India and Burma would probably receive. A large majority of the deck passengers who arrive at, and leave, Rangoon, travel between Rangoon and Madras, and Rangoon and the Coromandel Coast. The steamer fare to Madras is Rs. 12 and that to Coromandel Coast Ports Rs. 10. The railway fares from Rangoon to say Coconada and Madras, arrived at by adding together the present fares from these places to Calcutta, that from Calcutta to Chittagong, and the estimated fare from Chittagong to Rangoon calculated on present mileage rates, would be about Rs. 25 and Rs. 31 respectively. The Committee have not had any evidence submitted to them to show that these passengers would be willing to pay Rs. 25 for transport to Coconada, and Rs. 31 for transport to Madras, as against the steamer fares of Rs. 10 to Coconada and Rs. 12 to Madras.

In submitting this minority report I wish to emphasise that the greater part of the evidence which has been submitted to the Committee has been that of a class of persons who do not represent the very large majority of deck passengers, that majority which the Chairman has described in the Principal Report as being of most importance to this Province. Not one of the Indian witnesses has been of the labouring class. They have been clerks, doctors, pleaders, and professional men of sorts, most of whom have made very few voyages to and from India. The real deck passenger is the Indian labourer, who works in the rice fields, in the mills, on the wharves, on the railways, on the roads, and on the river, and who usually travels to and from India once a year. Not a single witness of this class has been brought before the Committee. Far from representing this class, one of the principal grievances of most of the witnesses, who were brought forward, seemed to be that they had to travel and associate with such persons, and were not given better accommodation. Had witnesses of the labouring class been brought forward, it might have been possible to ascertain whether there was any desire on their part to have accommodation superior to that at present provided on board the Company's steamers, keeping in view the fact that superior accommodation would naturally involve payment of higher fares, in order to recoup the Company for the extra expenditure incurred. The Committee have had no evidence whatever that such a desire exists.

With regard to most of the witnesses who were brought forward by the Burma Social Service League, I regret to have to remark that, as a perusal of the shorthand notes of the proceedings will show, much of their evidence was obviously exaggerated or incorrect. Their cross examination indicated that many statements had apparently been made at random, without reasonable enquiry with regard to, or knowledge of facts.

J. W. A. BELL.

RANGOON, 23rd November 1917.

## DECK PASSENGERS' COMMITTEE.

### MINUTE OF DISSENT.

BY DR. P. J. MEHTA.

I am obliged to write a minute of dissent, as I am not in agreement with some of the conclusions which Mr. J. P. Hardiman, the Chairman of the above Committee, and Mr. J. W. A. Bell, my colleague thereon, have arrived at, as a result of their deliberations on the complaints brought before the Committee by Indians residing in Rangoon.

At the outset I may be allowed to mention that I have a great respect for the ability, energy and patience of Mr. Hardiman, the Chairman, of the Committee. From the point of view of the complainants, the Government, in my humble opinion, could not have given them a better Chairman. He gave ample opportunities to the public to bring forward their grievances against the B.I.S.N. Company, before the Committee, and heard everybody who appeared personally, with a great deal of patience.

On referring to the records of the case, it will be seen that almost all people, who had complaints to make against the Company, were given the opportunity of doing so. We have had representations from most of the Indian Associations in Rangoon, such as the Bengal Social Club, the Brahmin Association, the Chattal Samity, the Bengal Club, the Malabar Club, the Indian Christian Association, the Jain Bandhu Samaj, the Indian Roman Catholic Association, the Deccan Friendly Society, etc. Each of these associations has a considerable number of members on its list. Many of the prominent Indians are members of one association or another. Then, we had representations jointly signed by several individuals. The petition of the Hindusthanies was signed by 1,383 persons, that of the Koorangies, by 359 persons. There were joint representations by certain Tailors and Kolies of Gujrat. Amongst the individual representations, there were many from English knowing Indians, mostly employed as clerks in Government and other offices. Some of the lawyers, doctors, merchants and traders sent their representations, and gave their evidence before the Committee. I may say, that a very considerable majority of the Indian population residing in Rangoon took keen interest in the matter, the Committee was called upon by Government to investigate. Many of them sent individual statements or did so through their associations. My opinion of their representations and evidence is that they put forward their case before the Committee with truthfulness and a great deal of moderation and caution. I do not think that they came before the Committee, except to state what they had felt, suffered, seen, or heard. As will be seen in the following pages, their statements in most matters have been corroborated by independent witnesses—some of them Englishmen—who never travel as deck-passengers, but who keep their eyes wide open, when going about. For many of the statements they made before the Committee, there is ample corroboration from the witnesses produced by the Company themselves. On the whole, I am of opinion, that the statements made in the letter dated the 24th May 1917, to the Agents of the B.I.S.N. Company by the signatories, most of whom are substantial men—men who never travel as deck-passengers—as well as the statements made by the speakers at the public meeting, held on the 17th June 1917, in the Karen Hall, are fully substantiated. I propose to divide the subject under the following heads and deal with each head separately:—

- (1) *Tickets*—Difficulties in obtaining them and beating at the Company's ticket office.
- (2) Difficulties at the wharf, and shutting out of passengers.
- (3) Baggage coolies.
- (4) Overcrowding in steamers.
- (5) Latrines.
- (6) Water-supply.

- (7) Intermediate accommodation for men.
- (8) Separate accommodation for women.
- (9) Neglect and ill-treatment by Company's officers and subordinates on board.
- (10) Minor points.
- (11) Medical examination.
- (12) Customs and Police examination.
- (1) *Tickets.—Difficulties in obtaining them and beating at the Company's ticket offices.*

The complaints of the people under this head are as follows:—

That passengers cannot get their tickets from the Company or their Agents at their face-value, particularly when the demand for them is larger than they can carry in their ships, and they have to pay from 30 per cent. to 75 per cent. more for them. The witnesses alleged that the Company's employees derived large profits from the illegal sale thereof.

That hours of selling tickets are very irregular and not known to passengers, and that they have to hang about the Company's office for the whole day and sometimes for days together.

That there being no shelter for the crowds of people, that often have to congregate near the Company's Office in 40th Street to purchase their tickets, they suffer very much on account of sun and rain.

That the waiting room near the Company's ticket office is too small for the number of passengers, that are often shoved in there, and that consequently there is often too much stuffiness therein.

That the Company's ticket office in 40th Street, the passage and the waiting room are altogether unsuited for meeting the requirements of the large number of passengers with whom the Company have to deal from day to day.

That passengers are often beaten unnecessarily by the Company's employees at the ticket offices. That the sale of tickets at five different places leads to greater corruption and jobbery, and that there should be one ticket office with about half a dozen windows, provided with proper enclosures for the marshalling of passengers and selling tickets in the order in which passengers apply for them.

That the time allowed for the sale of tickets, particularly for the Calcutta run, *vis.*, 24 hours before the departure of a steamer, is too short, and it should not be less than two days in any case.

I consider that the witnesses who appeared before the Committee have fully substantiated the case put forward by the Rangoon public, under all the above heads. The various complaints mentioned above are closely connected with each other and therefore I propose to deal with them together.

Practically all the allegations have been either wholly or partially admitted by the Company. Their contentions mainly are that they are passing through most abnormal times on account of the war, and have had no control over the circumstances under which the passengers had to suffer. One of their arguments is that those things happened because they have had less tonnage to supply the needs of the passengers. Looking to the figures supplied by the Company (see page 11 of the written statement) as to the number of passengers carried in 1916, it is quite clear that, that has been the case for only a very short time of the year, and that the majority of ships carried much less than the full complements allowed under the Native Passenger Ships Act. Then again, the ships during that year did not carry the public only, but they carried both the soldiers and the public. It is not necessary to mention here more than that, as the tonnage decreased, so the number of passengers decreased also. From the figures supplied by the B.I. as to the shipping provided in Rangoon during that year, it is apparent that the full complement of passengers provided therein comes to about 418,000 passengers, whereas they actually carried therein about 151,000 passengers on an average.

So that, they actually provided space for almost three passengers, but they got only one to carry. If we take off the number of soldiers and sepoys that travelled therein, the number of passengers, that travelled by the ships, was very much smaller than before. Except for the busy months, they carried very much fewer



passengers than they were able to provide room for. Under the circumstances, I am bound to hold that want of tonnage over which they had no control formed a very very small part of the causes, which created so much chaos and confusion in their dealings with passengers. So for the great hardships and troubles, of which almost every witness, who gave his evidence before the Committee, complained and narrated thrilling accounts of what he suffered or saw others suffer, we must look to causes over which they had control. The case for the B.I. as to the sale of tickets is briefly as follows :—

That for the steamers on the Calcutta run, they begin the sale of tickets a day before the departure of a steamer, particularly since the war started in order to meet all requirements of Government which are often not communicated within a day or two of its departure.

That for the Madras and Coromandal Coast port runs, they begin to sell tickets four to six days before the departure of a steamer.

That they have made a rule to give only one ticket to one passenger. They give batches of them to known customers only.

If a man asked for tickets for his wife and children, he would be asked to wait until the day of departure of the steamer, when it would be given to him at the gangway. Mr. Mathieson, Assistant, Passage Department, said that for this purpose, they reserve about 100 tickets in each steamer.

That at one time in the year 1916, there were quite 12,000 persons waiting to get their tickets.

That they are able to sell 450—500 tickets in an hour, one man doing it, and commence the sale in the morning at 7 o'clock, the day previous to the departure of the steamer, and the procedure was thus described in the case of the "Bangala" carrying about 2,000 passengers.

"I would go on selling freely up to my limit. If the Government requirements were, say 300, and if the "Bangala's" capacity was 1,400, I would deduct the 300 from the 1,400, that would leave me 1,100. I would then make further reservations for women and other Government requirements and sell up to 900, any surplus would be sold afterwards."

Both Mr Mathieson and Mr Hudson, Assistant Managers, B.I.S.N. Company, admitted that they knew, that there were many centres in the town, from which tickets were retailed by several people unconnected with the Company. Mr. Hudson said :—

"I am aware of there having been complaints of tickets being retailed at enhanced rates. It is not surprising in view of the conditions described in paragraph (B)—it refers to shortage of tonnage during the war—that this should be the case. Whenever complaints have been made, the complainant has been invited to identify the vendor.

"The complaints usually refer to touts and others, who hang about the bazaar, and the vicinity of our ticket offices, and employ coolies who are not *bona fide* passengers to purchase tickets on their behalf, which they subsequently re-sell. It is not possible for the staff to discriminate as to whether anybody who presents himself and asks for a ticket is a *bona fide* passenger or not. . . . I can suggest no further means to prevent tickets being sold outside for more than their value"

Mr. Mathieson's evidence was to the same effect. In answer to the question to him as to how it was possible to have lots of places in the town, where tickets were sold at a higher value and how the sellers managed to get the large number of tickets, he replied :—

"Quite simple matter that. A man sees a coolie going along the road; he stops him and says "go to that office, and buy me a steamer ticket and for your trouble I will give you 2 or 4 annas" He sees another cooly and does the same thing." In answer to the question whether coolies for a matter of 2 or 4 annas, go and wait so long at the ticket office, he said "Possibly if they have night work, and they would only be too glad to earn a few annas extra in this way."

Mr. Abdul Rahman, one of the passage brokers to B.I. in answer to the question whether he knew of tickets being sold at premium said "I was told that people were selling outside" and in answer to the question whether he could

suggest a way to stop it said "impossible to stop it." In answer to the question how he sold these tickets, he said "Some take one, and others with a family take four or five." And in answer to the question, if some one wanted one hundred, said, "they are not given except only to well known maistries" and later on, he stated that "he would not sell more than 20 to any one" He said, when there was a crowd, he sold tickets himself. Mr Hurry Krishna Pillay, another passage broker, stated that he never sold more than one ticket to one man, and that if a man asked a ticket for his wife, he would have to produce her. He said "most of the time I am there" Tickets are not sold at the B.I. office without myself and a B.I. officer being present, both in Sparks Street and in 27th Street, and in answer to the question, whether there was a possible chance of his clerk selling batches of tickets without his knowledge, he said "No." In answer to the question whether he made any profit out of the passage brokerage he said "No" I believe both Mr. Abdul Rahman and Mr Hurry Krishna Pillay overstated the case, out of their zeal to please their patrons. It is hardly possible for them to spare themselves from their own work, and to be personally present at all times, as they said, when sale of tickets was going on—a business from which they made nothing. Their evidence on other matters also cannot be relied upon. They depend upon B.I. largely for their profits in stevedoring and coal business.

Both Messrs. Mathieson and Hudson were quite clear on the point, that touts were selling tickets at premium in the various centres of the town, and that they managed to procure the tickets through coolies who happened to pass by the B.I. office at the time of the sale thereof. The issue as to the sale of tickets at enhanced prices is narrowed down to this, *viz.* that the touts were selling tickets at premium, and that they procured them through passer-by coolies.

Apparently the Company took pains to find out how the tickets were retailed. They even engaged the services of Mr G. W. Mcready, Inspector, Detective Department, to institute proceedings in respect of the illicit sale of tickets. He said he knew of several persons who sold tickets at premium, but whom he could not prosecute, because retailing tickets by an outsider was not a criminal offence. The Company, however, never asked him to find out whether their employees sold them at a premium, and in answer to the question whether he made any inquiry on that head, he said, "No" They never suspected that some thing was going wrong inside the office, though complaints were sent to that effect by many people, as admitted by the agents in their reply to the letter of the Rangoon public dated the 24th May 1917. The Company thought it quite enough to mark prices on notice-boards, inside and outside the office, written in six different languages, and thereby warning people against paying higher rates for their tickets, and in the aforesaid letter stated that "if a passenger notwithstanding the warnings, we have published both by notice-boards and in the press, pays for a ticket to any one, not in our employment, a sum in excess of the actual cost, this company cannot protect him."

The Company did not go below the surface. They believed the stories of Messrs. Mathieson, Hudson and their other employees. But they did not take the trouble to find out how far the story, related by them as to the stray coolies purchasing tickets for the touts, could hold water.

The most important question to consider is whether the story told by Messrs Mathieson and Hudson as to touts employing passer-by coolies to buy tickets for sale at premium can be true. The sale of tickets at enhanced prices was possible, only when the demand for them was great. The time, when there were huge crowds waiting to purchase their tickets, was the time when tickets used to be sold at premium in a number of centres in Rangoon. The larger the demand for them, the higher was the price obtainable. When the demand was less, the prices also fell down. We have it on record that tickets that could be obtained on one day for Rs 13 or 14, rose sometimes in value even the next day to Rs. 17-8-0 for Calcutta. For Madras the prices used to go up much higher.

We have it on record also that for weeks together, during the passenger season, there used to be crowds waiting near the ticket office to buy tickets. Many of them encamped in Sparks Street near the B.I. office, and on their vacant ground, and that was their home during the time they were waiting

for their steamers. Camping near the ticket office, they were in a position to be the earliest on the spot in order to buy the tickets when their sale began.

It does not require any stretch of imagination to see that the crowds who were waiting day and night on the spot to buy the tickets, would never allow an outsider to get in amongst them, and to go ahead of them for purchasing the tickets. What chance, then, has a passer-by coolie to get ahead of the crowd, and buy a ticket before the thousands that were already waiting there for their tickets for days and weeks together? It is on record, that the crowds sometimes blocked the whole of the 40th Street in that locality. If a stray coolie or any other person wanted to buy a ticket, the only way open to him was to go at the tail end of the crowd, take his turn and obtain his ticket, when he could, perhaps hours after getting in amongst them. It was impossible, under the then conditions, for any one to be able to purchase a ticket without being there for hours, if not days, and even then it was a very very poor chance indeed. He could get his ticket after the thousands before him had got theirs, and if those before him failed to do so for days and weeks together, what chance had a stray coolie, who was there to earn two or four annas, from his employer for buying a ticket for him, to get any at all? And what about the beating in addition? Both the passengers and the Company's durwans would have come down upon him, if he had tried to get ahead of the waiting crowd. Would any cooly have put up with their beating for a promise of two to four annas, on his succeeding in getting one? A passenger who is anxious to reach his destination at the earliest possible opportunity may put up with all the troubles and hardships for such a purpose. But would a cooly do it for a third party on a prospect of making two to four annas therefrom? I have no doubt that the story is got up for the purposes of this case. It is unbelievable.

Witnesses have stated that intending passengers intent on getting their tickets have had to wait ten or fifteen days, before they could get their tickets, and that also very often after paying premium. In this place I may quote the experience of Revd. W. Courtenay. He, in his evidence before the Committee, said that in March 1917, a servant came to him saying, that he could not get a ticket for Calcutta at the normal price. He knew one of the assistants in the office, and he wrote to him a letter, and asked him to get the boy a ticket at the ordinary rate. This assistant took some interest in the boy, and took him down, and left him, where tickets are issued, but he did not wait there. But no sooner had he left, than the official in charge abused and threatened him, and the boy had to leave the place. The boy had to wait fifteen days, before he got the ticket. In the meanwhile, three of his friends had come from Moulmein, and they also wanted to get away to Calcutta and they succeeded by paying Rs. 17 each for a ticket.

The time taken up in selling tickets is generally very short. We have it on record that one man can sell 450—500 tickets in an hour. If two men are working, they could sell from 900—1,000 tickets in an hour. Some tickets are reserved for Government, and some for sale on the wharf to women and children. In most cases, they sell off the remaining tickets at their office in an hour or two, and after that they stop selling altogether, until within twenty-four hours of the departure of the second steamer. So that it is quite apparent, that during the short time the tickets are for sale at the B.I. office, there is not much chance for these stray coolies to buy an appreciable number of tickets for their masters—the touts. But they were sold in large numbers in the different centres in the town. How, then, could they have found their way there? And these tickets used to be sold in the town, even for the Calcutta run days before the departure of a steamer. Such sales were not possible unless the tickets were sold by those in charge to touts, long before they were given out to the public at the ticket windows.

As to Madras and Coconada runs, it is even more difficult for any stray coolie to go near any of the ticket offices, when thousands of others are already waiting for them. The intending passengers, many of whom have no shelter anywhere, and no spare cash to while away their time, have only one business during the day and that is to buy tickets in order to be able to go to their respective destinations without loss of time. Many of them are desperately in need of doing so, and they would never allow any body to go ahead of them to buy the tickets.

Taking all these matters into consideration, the story that touts, selling tickets in the various centres of the town of Rangoon, obtained them through stray coolies is a mere invention of Messrs Hudson and Mathieson, and it cannot stand the test of close scrutiny for a moment.

The story must be looked upon as a mere myth, and for this additional reason. According to the story, the touts employed passer-by coolies, utter strangers to them, for the purpose of buying the tickets, and entrusted them each with the price of one ticket at least. If such transactions were possible, it would speak volumes for the honesty of the coolie-class in general, and for that of the coolies employed in particular. However honest they may be in dealings with their own people, it is hardly possible to believe, that all touts, who were carrying on this business, would implicitly believe in the honesty of the stray coolies, and entrust them, from day to day, money for the purchase of tickets, for carrying on such a vast trade, as was going on for months together in Rangoon during the passenger season.

I cannot believe the story that has been put forward by the B.I. Company. In the first place, there does not exist in the town of Rangoon a cooly who would accept such a job for a paltry remuneration of two to four annas or even eight annas and beating in the bargain. He has to wait for hours in order to get it, and even then, he may fail to do so and obtain his remuneration. Then again I cannot believe that touts would be so foolish as to entrust their money to a passer-by cooly, one after another, for the purchase of tickets, as was said by the B.I. witnesses

When all possible sources of leakage of tickets are fully considered, there remains only one which the Company ought to have thought of, and which they have failed to think of, and it is that the men in charge of the ticket department made common cause to defraud the public. The only channel, through which the large number of tickets could pass out to the touts, would be through the ticket clerks. If the story, that all the ticket clerks and durwans were searched before and after the sale of tickets be true, those in actual charge of the tickets must have employed the various touts for the sale of tickets at premium. But it cannot be believed that the clerks and durwans could be quite innocent of all that was passing. The allegations made by the passengers were, that the tickets could be obtained through the durwans as much as through the other dealers in town. I have no doubt whatever in my mind, that in this traffic of selling tickets at premium, the B.I. employees of almost all grades were involved, and that such a traffic could not continue for a day without their sharing in the spoils. Over 200,000 passengers buy their tickets from the Company in Rangoon. If even over 20 to 25 per cent. of them could be sold at enhanced rates, and that is not too large a percentage considering all the circumstances of the case, the total proceeds would not take long to mount up to six figures during the passenger season. There is no doubt whatever, that a huge traffic had been going on in this line, and that the Company had done nothing to stop it beyond employing a Detective Inspector, threatening to dismiss their servants, who sold them in that manner, and asking the public to catch the thieves, and bring them up before the Company for prosecution and punishment. It was hardly a reasonable attitude for the Company to take up. In the very nature of things, the public could not catch the thieves. They have not the power which is necessary for this purpose. The only one, who could do that, was the Company with all its large staff and power over the men in charge

The way in which the tickets leaked out of the office or offices was by sale of batches of them to the ticket-clerks, friends or agents. The Company also sell tickets in batches, but they said only to known employers of labour, and they keep their numbers. But there is ample evidence on record that tickets were sold in town in various centres. Mr. Mcready said in his evidence that he knew of many such places where these tickets were sold at premium. To say that these tickets were bought by outsiders to sell at a premium without the knowledge of the ticket clerks, is to believe the impossible. The tickets at the window for the Calcutta run are offered for sale only a day before the steamer departs and during that day tickets are sold for hardly a couple of hours, during

the whole of which time there is a huge crowd waiting outside. Mr. Mathieson and others say, that they allow one man one ticket, and refuse to give any one more than one ticket, even though it may be required for his wife or child. For this, he states that 100 tickets are kept apart for sale at the wharf before the steamer sails. If this story be true, there is no chance for any body to be able to buy two tickets in a day. If a man, after once buying a ticket, came a second time in the crowd for its purchase, he would have to go last, and buy it after the whole crowd.

The complaints of the people are, that at all the ticket offices—five in all—the majority of passengers cannot buy tickets at their face value, at certain times of the year. At all these places, the procedure adopted was to sell a few tickets at their face value to a few passengers, and the rest to persons, who have been called touts before the Committee. That is, the tickets were passed in batches to them by those in charge, to be sold at higher prices for the joint benefit of the Company's ticket sellers and their agents—the touts. For the purposes of this inquiry, it is unnecessary to enter into details any further on this head. It is enough to say, that those concerned were able to defraud the public on a pretty extensive scale, and that a way must be found to stop the nefarious business.

In answer to the question whether the Company had made all attempts to prevent the selling of tickets at excess rates, Mr. Hudson answered that they had. And in answer to the further question whether they knew of any means by which it could be stopped, he said "Not until we have a sufficient supply of tonnage." He was then asked whether they had tried the selling of tickets by writing down the names of passengers thereon, he said, "in the case of coolies, it would be practically impossible; you would have to get their father's name, their name and their thumb impression and so on. I have had a considerable experience at rice-mills, and I find that they have about half a dozen names, and hundreds of them again have the same identical name, Ramaya, Chinaya, and so on. The registration of the deck passengers would be impracticable." To this Mr. Bell said, "This may be one of the remedies, but Mr. Hudson has suggested a better. Do you, Mr. Hudson, consider it feasible or not?" He said, "Quite impracticable." In answer to the question why it was impracticable, he said, "Supposing you have 4,000 passengers. It would probably take five minutes to examine each deck passenger, to get his name, his thumb impression, for him to take out his fare, count his change, and so on, and that means 20,000 minutes for embarking these 4,000 passengers or 333 hours," and further said, "it would mean detaining the ship 14 days after taking in her cargo." If there are any exaggerated statements in the record, this beats all hollow. Mr. Bell said, "You would have to keep an extra staff, and that would mean the doubling and trebling the price of tickets." It need not be so. The Company need spend nothing more for writing the names. In answer to the question what would be the difficulties in selling the tickets with names of passengers thereon, Mr. Hudson said "the first is additional time to sell tickets, additional delay that would be caused by the examination of passengers at the gangway even a percentage, and the impossibility of finding out whether the man is telling the truth, you would then need a thumb expert and that would take days."

I may at once say that the difficulties and delays in writing down names of passengers are very highly exaggerated. There is no need of thumb impressions, and it would never be necessary to call a thumb expert. The object of adopting the procedure I have suggested is to prevent the fraudulent sale of tickets at premium, and if that is to be stopped at all, the names of passengers should be written on the tickets. It is unnecessary to write their father's names thereon. This may mean about five seconds more in each case at the most. The other processes, *vis.*, "to take out his fare, count his change, etc." would remain just as they were before.

The very same coolies, who travel in the B. I. steamers, work in large numbers at many of the mills, factories, etc. Their roll-call is taken every day to prepare their pay abstracts. We never hear of coolies complaining that their wages were given away to other coolies of the same name by their employers. To say, that the scheme of writing names of passengers on the

tickets is impracticable, because in the words of Mr Hudson "they have about half a dozen names, and hundreds of them have the same identical name," is to say, that the Company are indifferent to the hardships of the poor passengers, who, from their scanty and hard earned savings, are obliged to pay from 30 to 75 per cent more on the purchase of tickets to reach their homes. If one coolie's wages cannot be paid to another coolie—and no coolie would let it pass—surely he may be trusted to keep the ticket that he has bought for his own use and benefit, and mentioning his name correctly, when it is being inspected. Coolies have a great deal more intelligence than they are given credit for.

As to inspection of tickets taking a long time, I suggest, that this may take place on board after the steamer has left, and in one or two per cent. of the passengers only. After a time, it may even be dispensed with.

The object of writing names on the tickets is, that once it gets abroad, that deck tickets are not transferable, and that passengers found travelling with other men's tickets would have to pay the fare a second time, the illicit sale would stop at once. If buyers, the *bonâ fide* passengers, refused to buy such tickets, the seller's business would go away at once. Then there would be no need to stop it or to worry about it.

We did not go into the question, whether the tickets were sold at premium before the war. Many of the witnesses narrated their hardships of recent dates. In this place, I may mention, that the formation of the Bengal and Madras Steam Navigation Companies was due to the hardships and troubles experienced by the passengers, while travelling by B I. boats, and while those were plying, the passengers could travel most comfortably for much less than half the rates. If there was a competing line, many of the hardships would automatically disappear. The Companies would vie with each other in providing better accommodation and comforts.

So long as there is no competing line, to prevent fraudulent sale of tickets, it is necessary, that names of passengers should be written on the tickets. The present system should not be allowed to continue any longer.

When a passenger is travelling with his family, he should be given a warrant for himself and his family instead of one ticket for himself and tickets for his wife and children at the gangway.

The retaining of about 100 tickets for the wives and children of passengers and about 100 for Government until the last hour, is a potent source of corruption and jobbery. If warrants are given for family parties, there would be no need of retaining any tickets for passengers. The passengers, who have not applied for tickets up to the day previous to the date of sailing of a steamer, have no reason to complain. As far as I can judge, there would be no need of retaining tickets for Government purposes up to the last moment, because they would have intimated their requirements at least a couple of days before the departure of a steamer. If Government knew, what troubles passengers are put to on account of this uncertainty, I am sure they would give necessary instructions to the Company in the matter, so far as their requirements are concerned, in proper time.

As they sell tickets at the gangway, many more intending passengers come there in the hope of getting tickets with all their baggage, and have to go back disappointed. Only, when the Company have not been able to find buyers for all of them, after having kept the office open the whole of the previous day, that they should bring the remaining tickets for sale on the wharf. Such sale should take place at the entrance to the wharf, and not at the gangway.

On account of the sale of tickets being irregular, and passengers' inability to get them within a reasonable time, some of them, while waiting for the tickets, were reduced to poverty and consequent beggary. We have evidence to show that this happened in a few cases within the knowledge of the witnesses. The complaints on this head are, that the Company do not give them any intimation of when tickets are going to be sold for the next steamer, and the probable date of its departure.

When questioned about the public not being informed of the time for selling tickets and of the departure of a steamer, Mr. Mathieson said "when they come for tickets, we ask them to come on a certain date." Is it at all likely that for

thousands of inquiries made on this head, the Company's servants are obliging enough to give a proper reply? The fact is that they do not do so.

It is just, because they do not give proper replies, that almost at all times of the day and in all seasons people are to be seen in 40th Street in large numbers, not to miss the chance of getting the tickets, if the Company sell them. Then again they could hardly ask them to come on a certain day, as very often, they themselves have no authentic information of a steamer's departure from Rangoon, until after its arrival at the Pilot brig or in port.

But it would not be too much to expect of them to put up a notice board at the ticket office, giving information about the time of selling tickets, and the probable date of the departure of the steamer for which the tickets are to be issued. I do not think that the recent Government orders on the subject preclude the Company from doing so. All that they are required to do by Government is not to mention the names of departing steamers beforehand.

As to the number of ticket offices being too few, there is hardly any complaint. A large number of ticket offices in the different parts of the town is not required. What is wanted, is a number of ticket windows at one office open during business hours. The almost universal complaints before the Committee were, that whenever they went to purchase the tickets at any of the five offices, they were told, particularly in the busy season, that they were sold off. And yet we have it on record, that on the intercession of the Manager himself or some one else, they were afterwards procured by those, who took greater pains to secure them, without paying any premium.

In paragraph 10 of the main report, and in the plan attached, the situation and size of the B. I. ticket office, the passage and the so-called waiting room are well described. The office, the passage, the waiting room and the street are all unsuited for the purpose of dealing out tickets to passengers, who at times are obliged to congregate there by thousands, and who have to remain there under the blazing sun or pouring rain. The waiting room could never have been intended as such. It is too small with a low roof, and very small doors and windows. The door, through which passengers have to pass to the passage, is just broad enough for one passenger to get through. The dimensions of the room are 23' x 22'. According to the evidence given by Mr. Mathieson, when he went with Mr. Chowdhry in this room, there were already 120 men therein. The number soon swelled to between 150—200. In his statement before the Committee dated the 26th June 1917 he said:—

"At Mr. Bell's request I took Mr. Chowdhry to the deck booking office to identify some durwans, who, he said, were assaulting the passengers. The entrance to the booking office is from 40th Street. On arrival, Mr. Chowdhry asked (me) to enter by the waiting room in which there were about 120 Coromandal passengers, waiting their turn to purchase tickets—most of them seated down. At the two exits leading to the booking windows were two maistries, (Cooringees) who were maintaining order in the room, and Mr. Smith was controlling the queue at the ticket windows." The words "most of them seated down" are particularly significant.

We have no evidence, that there is any employee kept at the entrance door to stop people from congregating in still larger numbers. If after letting in as many as the room could hold—and according to evidence that was what they generally did—the outside door and the doors leading to the passage were closed, there would be hardly any difference between this waiting room so packed, and the historical Black-hole of Calcutta. The overcrowding leads to stuffiness, and consequently intenser desire on the part of the passengers in the room to get the tickets quickly, and get away. This desire leads sometimes to scuffling. For the account given by Mr. Mathieson about scuffling, etc. see the evidence where Mr. Chowdhry complains of the beating of passengers. This was possible, because of the overcrowding in the room.

Mr. Churchward in his evidence before the Committee spoke of the pandemonium in 40th Street, whenever large number of coolies were waiting to purchase their tickets. Before the war, he said, scenes were worse, because the number of passengers and steamers was very much larger then. On one

occasion he said "I saw coolies storm the place. They pushed and trampled each other, and some fell into gutters. They were however driven out by the durwans. I think they were the durwans of the B I S N. Company, that were imperious, but they only do that, when they see a white man" When questioned as to the size of the crowd in 40th Street, he said "the crowds so often block up the roads, block up the pathway" When told by Mr. McDonnell, that the reasons for the number of coolies having to wait was the shortage of steamers, he said, "It was worse off before the war, it is so at the present time, and would be the same when peace comes." Mr Churchward negatives the Company's contention, that what is happening now, is due to the abnormal condition on account of the war I am of the same opinion.

Mr. Reynaud, Headmaster, Randeria School, stated that he was living for three years close to the vacant piece of land on Sparks Street, belonging to the Company. That during the months of April and May, hundreds of coolies gathered together waiting their turn to get into that place to buy their tickets, that they camped out in Sparks Street on both sides of the road for weeks until they were able to get their tickets, and that they ate and slept there To the Chairman's question whether he saw the men giving any serious trouble, he said "they submit very easily."

Proceeding further he said, that he had seen three or four Eurasians, perhaps more, employed by the Company to disperse the crowds gathering round the ticket office, and in doing so, beating them pretty severely and sometimes unnecessarily. Mr McDonnell suggested to him that the violence used was not great. He said "they were beaten on the back and legs and a man sometimes receives several strokes" The Chairman asked him whether in controlling a lot of coolies it might not be necessary to use some physical force, and he said "there is no necessity for any force." When further questioned as to what he meant by beating severely and unnecessarily, he said, "you see these men are all crowding near the area allotted to the coolies, and when they see one or two of these Eurasians coming towards them brandishing their sticks and making a noise, they turn and make for the other side of the road, where they are gone after still and beaten." And in answer to the question whether they follow them right over to the other side of the road, he said, "Yes, that is why I say unnecessarily." He said that he saw such scenes several times, "there is a great commotion in the street and then I rush to my window to see what is going on, and I see this beating" He said that the other inmates of his house can testify to this severe beating

Many of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee have complained of that kind of beating both at the ticket offices and the wharves

The Company admitted the beating by their employees, but their plea was that on account of the abnormal traffic and the unruliness of the crowds, their men were obliged to do so

I do not believe the plea. If abnormal traffic and unruliness of the crowds were the causes, how was it, that all the beating ceased, though the conditions were still the same, immediately the public moved in the matter. I hold that the public have proved this part of their case to my entire satisfaction.

The B I. officials and subordinates have thought beating of passengers both at the ticket office and at the wharves a great panacea for all evils—evils due to their own acts, either of omission or commission. There are no arrangements or rules for marshalling passengers, who go to buy tickets at their office or at the time of embarkation. None of the Company's witnesses have stated that they have The passengers are allowed to congregate in 40th Street as they like, to file there as they like, and to enter the waiting room as they like. They have an idea, that all they have to do, is to keep a durwan at each door leading to the passage to the ticket-windows and perhaps a couple of durwans in the street who mismanage the whole show From the evidence of the B I. men, that were produced before the Committee, it is apparent that there has never been a proper attempt to marshal the crowd outside the ticket office, that they never had any one there to keep discipline over the vast crowds, that often congregated there, that they have not even thought it part of their



duty to do so. In answer to a question to Mr. Mathieson, whether there was any way to control the crowd without beating, he said :—

“One suggestion is to get a large army of policemen to give these people to understand that they are to get into a queue and come up two by two, buy their tickets at one door and leave by the other.” How lightly has he considered the matter? This comes from a responsible officer of the Company. Why call for an army of policemen, when the people submit to authority quietly and calmly. And when questioned about putting up railings he said “if railings could be put round the place for sale of tickets at the wharf, it would be better.” Then why not do it, where it could be done? To a further question on the same subject, he said that there was no such arrangement in the 40th Street, but that they were kept in a queue in the waiting room from which they came up singly. Mr. Mathieson seems to have very curious notions about the formation of a queue. He apparently thinks that when men are crowded together pellmell in the waiting room, it is the proper formation of a queue. To form a queue some sort of railings are necessary which are non-existent therein. As Mr. Mathieson stated in his evidence, when he went with Mr. Chowdhry in this small room, there were already about 120 seated therein, and later on the number went up to 150—200. If there was a durwan at the exit door to allow passengers one by one, that certainly could not be called marshalling passengers in the room in queue. We have no doubt whatever, that no queue is formed in the room, or can be formed therein, and people are at liberty to scramble to get in front as best as they can. The result is that the people in the room try to over-reach one another, and it becomes only a question of survival of the fittest. Both in the street and in the room, when anxiety for getting tickets is very great, strong men push out the weak, and healthy men, the sickly, Men in the higher social grade are obliged to keep out of the crowds altogether, and have to buy their tickets second-hand at enhanced rates, which are quite easily obtainable through the Company's subordinates.

It will thus be seen that the first and foremost cause of all the mischief and sufferings, the people have to undergo, are due to the street, where they congregate to purchase their tickets, being narrow, the smallness and stuffiness of the waiting-room, the smallness of the passage and the obscure corner of the main building in which B. I. ticket office is situated. The street being more like a private street than a public one, inasmuch as it is used by a very small number of the townspeople and not being open to the view of the passers-by, the B. I. men are able to treat poor passengers there as they like.

The system of ticket-selling by the company is like hide and seek. They do not inform the public about the day and time of selling tickets. There is never any notice board put up in any part of the building to that effect. The people go there from hour to hour, and from day to day, and only those who happen to be present when they dole out tickets, are lucky enough to get them without paying a premium for it. The system is still going on. It is not true that they always sell tickets a day before the departure of a Calcutta steamer. On the tenth of November 1917, they started selling tickets for a steamer which was not to leave before the 13th, and are reported to have sold 500 in about an hour. At 8-30 a. m., the same morning an M. A. student in the University of Calcutta went to buy a ticket, and he was told that all tickets were sold. He came to me and told me what had happened, and his urgent need about going to Calcutta by the next boat. I advised him to go to the Manager and he went, but he did not get one on that day. He, however, succeeded in getting one at the gangway, just a little while before the steamer's departure. Under the present system, one has to remain under suspense until the last moment.

Generally the tickets are not available before 24 hours of the departure of a steamer for Calcutta, and the ticket office is opened either for an hour or two on that day. At the time a large crowd is waiting for them. But after selling a few, the window is closed. The crowd does not know, when it will be opened again, and many of them wait there, and clamour, or go away, and return there after a time. There are a few of them who are able to pay the extra amount, and manage to get the tickets through the Company's durwans at higher rates. We have ample evidence on this ground. Many of the witnesses have said so. Even

when the ticket windows are closed, the Company's durwans go about in the crowd, and offer to sell tickets at higher prices. No doubt this happens mostly when the demand for tickets is larger than the supply. Many of those who are anxious to go by the first available steamer, are thus obliged to pay higher rates through the durwans.

We have evidence to the effect, that instead of marshalling passengers properly, the durwans on duty when some *bukshies* is paid by any one, take him out of the line, and either buy a ticket for him, or put him before others, so that he may be sure of the ticket without waiting his turn.

When a case like this happens, other passengers try to get out of the line also. But men not paying *bukshis*, when they try to move out of the line, get caning, and a lot of knocking about. The Company's servants instead of helping the crowds to marshal properly, practise all sorts of irregularities and partialities, and the result is confusion worse confounded.

If the beating of the passengers and the undue preference in the sale of tickets is to cease, if the ticket clerks and the durwans are to behave towards the intending passengers, as if they were men, the ticket office should be removed from its present most unsuitable position, to the B. I. site on Sparks Street. Sparks Street being a public thoroughfare, it would have some deterrent effect on the clerks and durwans in playing many of their tricks on the passengers. Fancy railway stations having to deal with thousands of passengers in a week, having no waiting room for passengers—and the present room is no waiting room at all—and all having to wait for hours and days in the open street like the 40th street. Such a thing is unimaginable. If it is so in the case of Railway Companies, why should it not be so in the case of the B. I. Company, whose turnover from passenger traffic alone reaches, as Mr. Vedmurti, the Editor of the *Rangoon Mail* says, to 70 lacs of rupees in Rangoon alone. It must not be forgotten that this Company has reached its present position principally on account of Indian patronage and Government subsidies paid out of the public funds.

The late Mr. Mackinnon of the firm of Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co. started the B. I. line from savings out of a very poor salary for which he was working in Calcutta, by purchasing one sailing ship in 1855 and after a time another. He died leaving colossal wealth. The present fleet of the B. I., of which he was the largest shareholder, has been built from the monies got from the Indian deck-passengers and Indian and Government patronage. Under the circumstances, it is not too much to expect that the Company showed greater consideration to the feelings and the needs of their patrons.

2. *Troubles at the wharf, and shutting out of passengers.*

The complaints under this head are :—

That there are no facilities for marshalling passengers at the wharf.

That they are kept out of the wharf gate, until within an hour or two of their ship's departure, although the Company advise them to come much earlier on the wharf, sometimes six hours before the ship sails.

That they are beaten by the Company's durwans and police.

That they are sometimes shut out from steamers, for which they purchased tickets.

That the Port Trust employes collect money from them for their luggage, without giving any receipts for them.

That there being no passenger shed on the wharf, the people suffer great hardships.

Before the passengers are allowed to proceed to their steamer, they have to wait a long time at the outside gate of the wharf under sun and rain. They are asked to attend for embarkation, sometimes six hours before the departure of a steamer, but they are not allowed to enter the wharf before an hour or two of its departure. In the meanwhile they are occupying the streets and footpaths, much to the inconvenience and annoyance of the pedestrians. After they are allowed to go in, they have to wait in one of the spaces between the godowns facing the river. Here they are made to sit down in long rows from one wall of the godown to a parallel wall of another godown, and they do so very quietly, until allowed to proceed to the steamer one by one. The Indian passengers are known to be

docile and submissive to authority. But when those in charge show partiality for one reason or another to some of the passengers, and allow them to go ahead of the rest, which is not unusual, the crowd gets out of order. Some of them follow those who are given preference, and others clamour. In such a state, while the officer is engaged at one corner of the long line, trying to bring order by the use of his cane, some passengers in the other corner, seeing him thus engaged elsewhere, get out of the line, and make a rush towards the steamer. The officer has to return to this corner, before he has brought order in the other corner. While he is at one corner, those at the other corner get out of order again. In such a state, the B. I. officers and durwans lose patience and control over themselves, and occasionally beat passengers mercilessly. Confusion becomes worse confounded. At the bottom of it all, is the desire of the B. I. men to make as much out of the passengers as they possibly can. Mr. Helps of the B. I. Company has been frequently mentioned as one of the thrashing assistants by a number of witnesses. It was his merciless beating, that drew the greatest attention of the Rangoon public. Messrs. Kothari and Bhimani have given particulars of the beating by him. Attempts were made to photograph him, while in the act of beating, but the photographing was not successful, as Mr. Helps came to know of it.

Mr. Churchward in his evidence said "on many occasions I have travelled to India and have seen batches of deck passengers being pushed."

One reason why passengers sometimes make a rush towards the wharf-gate, is that while all are quietly waiting outside, some one out of them wishes to get ahead of the rest, tips one of the Company's employees and manages to get inside. Immediately those, who are near him, follow him and make a rush for the gate, and their places are taken by those behind them. But the durwans push those who have so advanced, and then ensues a great deal of knocking about; and if there are women and children in the crowd, they get more hurt than the rest.

Mr. Malachi, Secretary of the Indian Christian Association, in his evidence before the Committee, stated that when he went to see a friend off in November 1915, the steamer was to leave at 11 A.M., and up to 10-30 people were not allowed to go. In answer to the question, whether the time allotted to the passengers was not enough, he said, "It was not that so much, as the behaviour of the durwan at the gate, which is supposed to let in the passengers. He would open one gateway, which is barely two feet wide, and there would be a rush made by men, mothers with children in their arms, coolies with their loads on their heads knocking against women, and he would just forcibly bang this gate against them, to keep out the crowd, with the result that men stumbled, women fell and children screamed, and that is the gate letting them into the wharf."

Mr. Cardno, officiating Deputy Conservator of the Port Trust, and at one time in the service of the Company, stated in his evidence that "he had seen on several occasions passengers beaten but not severely. . . . the blows were on the body with sticks; there was a great crowd. The men who struck the coolies were Eurasians. The one who used the stick mostly was the coolie maistry." In answer to the question why the passengers were caned, he said "to prevent a rush." "The rush is because each tried to get to the boat first, as far as I can see, to get the best seats." In answer to the question whether they cannot regulate the crowd without the use of sticks, he said "I suppose it is not beyond the wit of man to devise a scheme." As a matter of fact, there is no organisation, no discipline, and no method in the Company's employees dealing with passengers. If the crowds were properly regulated, there would be neither rush, nor crush, and consequently no need of beating them.

A great deal has been said on the question, that passengers could not have been much hurt by the blows and canes. That some of them must have been much hurt by them, goes without saying. But whether they were much hurt or little hurt, the Company has no justification whatever in using force on the passenger's persons. At the time of the hearing, it was apparently contended, that the Company could use such force, and they used it in order to prevent a rush. Nowhere in the world, are private companies allowed to use the force that the B. I. has been using against their passengers. It they are not much hurt by the blows and canes physically, no one can say that their feelings were not

hurt. It is an offence under the Indian Penal Code to do so. The Company has allowed its men to use canes and sticks, to terrorise the passengers into meek submission, even when the disorder was of their own creation. If the Company had exercised better supervision over their own subordinates, and had taken all reasonable precautions to stop them making illegal gains out of the passengers, their employees would never have thought of using canes and sticks against the persons of passengers. Mr. C. C. Kothari in reply to a question by Mr. McDonnell whether his complaint was, that by paying *bukshish*, special accommodation could be obtained, he said "nothing can be got without paying" and Mr. McDonnell asked him "Is that not so all over the world" meaning to say that accommodation, etc., was got all over the world by payment of money. He further stated that "durwans and others take gratuities in the presence of European officials and are not stopped. I allude to Mr Helps" Under the circumstances, it would have been better, if the Company had taken the necessary steps to disabuse the minds of its employees on this head, and strictly enforced the rule, that no illegal gratification would be allowed to them under any case, instead of encouraging them, as it were, to go on, as they have been all these years, which remarks of the above nature are likely to do. The Company underpays most of its subordinates, and have to connive at their making money from passengers.

I hold that the witnesses, who appeared before the Committee, have satisfactorily proved, that the beating of passengers by the Company's employees and policemen at the wharf-gates and on wharves was unnecessary, and that it should be stopped altogether.

In my opinion, the Company should see that the wharf-gates were opened to passengers by the time fixed for passengers to be present on the wharves

Almost every witness before the Committee has complained, that the time allowed to passengers to board their steamers is much too short. In most cases they allow just the bare amount of time to get on board. There were some cases in which the allegations were made at the time, that they did not allow enough time for it, and some were shut out. In 1916, there was a loud complaint raised in a letter signed by about 700 persons, and addressed to the Rangoon and Calcutta Offices of the Company as well as to Lord Inchcape, President of the Board of Directors of the Company in London, stating how, many of the passengers were shut out, how, wives and husbands and passengers and their luggage were separated from each other while embarking in the S.S. "Euryalus" on the 13th February. It is on the file of unprinted statements. In the statement it is stated that:—

"The S.S. 'Euryalus' which was advertised to sail for Madras was moored below Hastings, and the passengers as usual assembled at Lewis Street Jetty, on the 13th February 1916 at about 8 a.m. The first launch left with a few passengers, taking only a portion of their packages, and the rest being left behind on the jetty. The rest of the great crowd of passengers on the pontoon of the Lewis Street Jetty and outside the gate with their packages were all asked to transfer themselves and their packages to the Sparks Street Jetty, as the Company decided to reserve the said jetty for the steamer bound for Coromandel Coast."

"The dense crowd including women and children were left without any coolies to convey their belongings, and in great confusion had to shift themselves to the Sparks Street Jetty. This could have been easily avoided by timely notice issued beforehand to the effect that all passengers should embark from Sparks Street Jetty."

"Another launch with two flats to carry the hundreds of passengers came alongside Sparks Street Jetty. How these passengers struggled to reach the pontoon to get into the launch in the great rush may be better imagined than described. The sufferings were indescribable, and only those, who had actually experienced it, would realise. Hundreds of packages of the passengers that had already gone into the launch, and of those that were struggling on the pontoon, to get into the launch were lying on the pontoon when the launch heaved off and left for the steamer."

"There was then a great commotion since a large number of passengers had already got into the launch, but found their packages lying on the pontoon, and a good number of passengers too were left behind on the pontoon bridge."

"These passengers vainly expected that another launch would take them and the heap of packages on the pontoon, but to their bitter disappointment they were told by the Company's authorities who were at that time supervising the embarkation, that no more launches could be provided."

"The disappointment, annoyance, waste of time and money formed the result of a most inadequate arrangement conceivable."

"In one or two instances, husbands were left without their wives who had also secured the passage tickets, and *vice versa*."

"When the passengers that were left behind, represented their grievance to the officer in charge of the passenger department of the Company immediately, he replied he would not send any launch as it was too late then."

"The Company could have avoided this lamentable state of affairs by issuing a limited number of tickets. Further the coolies worked in a most perfunctory manner. A coolie in his first trip would take a load of packages of one passenger, and in his second trip, instead of carrying the other packages of the same passengers, started taking packages of another passenger leaving the first man's packages for a further trip and so on. The coolies do their utmost to exact as much money as possible by means of such devices. It was through the coolies' extortionate method of working that those passengers and packages were left behind."

Comment on the above is unnecessary. It reveals a dreadful state of the management of passenger traffic by the Company. Such treatment was possible, because there was no other competing line, by which passengers could travel.

In a letter, on the same subject, by Mr. Attwool of St. Augustines, Moulmein, he says: "The boat was advertised to sail at 2-30 p.m. We reached the jetty about 2-40 p.m. and found she was to sail at 3 p.m. I went on board with Clarke. The wharf was crowded with deck passengers, and their luggage, waiting to be allowed on board. I enquired why they were not allowed on board, and was told that they would be allowed to come on board at 5 minutes to 3. Accordingly at 5 minutes to 3 precisely, one gangway was put down for the deck passengers. They came on board as fast as it was possible to do so by one gangway guarded by one or two officials. At three o'clock the gangway was taken up, in spite of all protests. An officer came along the deck, and insisted on the gangway being hoisted up and removed. By 5 minutes, or perhaps 10 minutes past three, the steamer was clear of the wharf. When I left the wharf—about 3-10, certainly not later than 3-15 p.m.—I had considerable difficulty in making my way through the crowd of deck passengers, who were left behind on the wharf with all their worldly belongings around them. They appealed to me in Hindustani, which I did not understand. There was nothing to show that the steamer was crowded. In fact they were, I suppose, only those few passengers who happened to be near the gangway, who were able to get on board during that 5 minutes. It struck me as outrageous, and I wanted to bring it to somebody's notice, but had no means of doing so. I had no idea that such things happened, otherwise, I would have taken more careful notice of things with a view to furnishing evidence."

As to people being shut out sometimes, Messrs Abdul Rahman, Hurry Krishna Pillay and other witnesses of the B.I. have admitted that they have been occasionally shut out, after the war broke out owing to Government taking up accommodation. Whether they were shut out on account of Government taking up accommodation or the Company's convenience, the allegation of passengers that they were occasionally shut out is true, and has been proved to my satisfaction.

In answer to the question, whether the time allowed to passengers to embark was adequate, Mr. Cardno, said "He did not consider that the time given to passengers to embark on board was sufficient."

Many witnesses have said the same thing.

I have no doubt whatever that on some occasions, the Company had issued more tickets for a particular steamer than they could take them in, and had to shut them out at the last minute. As the sufferings have been well described in the

above mentioned statement signed by about 700 persons, I need say nothing more than that, by the long usage of bad treatment of the passengers, the Company has become callous to their sufferings. The war has been used as an excuse for a great deal of apathy and indifference towards their feelings. With a little care and sympathy, many of the troubles and hardships can be avoided, even in time of war.

The Company should take greater care in issuing tickets. They should sell no more than what the ship can carry.

About the Port Trust employees collecting money from passengers for baggage, they should do so without being too strict, and give receipts. It would be better if no collection was made from deck passengers, since the first and second class passengers are exempt from it. The former can ill afford to pay the charge.

As a passenger shed has been recommended in the main report, I need say nothing more on the point. There should be a shed for outgoing passengers also.

There should be the following marshalling arrangements on the wharf:—

A queue of not more than four or five people going abreast should be formed.

Women and children should be allowed to proceed to the steamer by a separate entrance, and should not be mixed up with male passengers.

There should be an Enquiry Office, where people, who have complaints to make, can go and do so. Both the Ticket Office and the Enquiry Office should be at the entrance to the wharf, and not at the gangway.

3. *Baggage Coolies.*—The complaints against the baggage coolies employed by the B.I. are as follows:—

That the passengers have to pay exorbitant charges to the coolies for carrying their baggage on board, though they are supposed to work free.

That the coolies put away their baggage in places on board, where it would be difficult to get at. To recover it, the passengers are obliged to pay further extra charges to them.

That the coolie maistries carried canes, and they joined the B.I. durwan, and policemen in beating passengers.

To disprove the above allegations, the Company produced the contract with the coolie contractor, Venkata Redy, and the latter as a witness. There is no doubt whatever that the Company paid the contractor Rs. 1,250 for the services of 80 coolies for the free carrying of the passengers' baggage. No witness alleged that the Company did not pay the amount. What almost every witness stated was, that though these coolies were paid for the free carriage of the passengers' baggage, as a matter of fact, no baggage was carried free, to the knowledge of the Company's officials in charge of that business. They all stated that the coolies would not carry any baggage without bargaining for it, and they extorted much larger sums for doing so, than they would get anywhere else, if unpaid for such work. Almost all the witnesses stated that they had to pay from Re 1 to Rs. 4 or 5 for the work, in the presence of the B.I. officials, and with their knowledge.

There is no doubt, that having had the monopoly, the coolies were able to exact their own terms. If one coolie refused to carry a passenger's baggage, no other coolie would handle it. The coolies, knowing that no other coolie, nor even a passenger's servant, was allowed to go on board, carried the baggage of those who agreed to pay them well. Those, who refused to pay such exactions, had to carry their own baggage, or remain behind with the other passengers.

The Contractor, Venkata Redy, in his evidence stated that out of the Rs. 1,250, he paid Rs. 1,170 at Rs. 14 per month to each coolie and Rs. 25 to each of the two coolie maistries, and retained Rs. 80 for himself. He produced a book showing payment to each coolie and coolie maistry during the last three years. The book was a brand new one, got up for the purposes of this case. He was asked to give the Committee a copy of it, which, I believe, he has not done so far. Those coolies, who were supposed to have received payment of their wages, either signed their names, or put their thumb impressions against their names.

For extra work, he said, he paid them at the rate of one rupee a day. In answer to the question whether he ever heard, that coolies charged passengers for carrying their baggage, he said "never," and to the question whether it was the first time he heard of it, he said "never heard of them exacting money." In answer to

the question whether he was doing that work for Rs. 80 only, he " said yes, but on other work of the B.I. there is more profit—import and export cargo in sheds Nos 1 and 2." He was asked whether the coolies' statement, that they got nothing from him was true, he said "it would be a lie" and that they never complained to him, that they were not getting enough. He said, that he supplied the uniform consisting of coat and pant, bought second hand, and charged each cooly Rs. 2 or Rs. 3, every six months.

The above evidence was given on the 8th September. On the 11th September Mr. Bomainji, Counsel for the Social Service League, was informed that 33 coolies had presented a petition on the 31st August to Mr. Bell, as manager of the B.I., stating that the coolies had received no wages whatever during the last three years from the contractor, that they were told to collect money from the passengers in lieu of their wages, that they had to pay to the contractor Rs. 2 per month for the said privilege, Rs. 8 on admission, besides Rs. 2 to the coolie maistry, that they had to purchase their own uniform at Rs. 7 to Rs. 8 each, that they had to give free services to him for carrying out his contract with Messrs. Graham & Co., and the Port Trust, and that on account of the complaints by the public, they were stopped from collecting money from passengers during the last three months.

The said petition of the 33 coolies was published in the local papers. They controvert therein every one of the statements made by the cooly contractor before the Committee; they totally deny signing receipts for their wages or giving thumb impressions in any book. If Mr. Bell had not objected to the admission of this document on the record, the allegations of the passengers would have, I believe, been proved up to the hilt. The coolies' petition to Mr. Bell was as follows:—

Through MATHEWSON, Esq., Passage Department, Messrs. B.I.S.N. Co., Rangoon, to J. W. A. BELL, Esq., General Manager, B.I.S.N. Co., Rangoon.

We, the undersigned baggage coolies of your Company, most humbly beg to bring the following grievances for your kind and favourable consideration; and that your goodself will be so kind as to take such steps that would evade us from these troubles.

1. Since we are employed as baggage coolies, we do not get any payment as wages from the contractors.
2. We are told by the contractors, that we are allowed to collect money from passengers for our benefit instead of our wages since the appointment.
3. We were compelled to pay Rs. 2 each, every month, to the contractors as a compensation for allowing us to collect money from passengers from the time of our appointment in this baggage work. And now the contractors have informed us that we need not pay to them the said amount Rs. 2 for the last two months, and should not collect any money from the passengers owing to an order passed, that if we collect any money, and if it is traced out, not only the contractors would lose their contract, but also the coolies who committed the offence would be prosecuted.
4. That they said they would arrange in a month's time for collecting money again from the passengers, otherwise they would pay us the wages after the said time. But till now, neither they could arrange as promised, nor did they pay us our wages.
5. For the first month as desired by the contractors, we waited patiently for that time without collecting any money from passengers, but nothing has been done. After seeing this, we asked them for our wages, when they promised to pay us later on, and took our signatures and thumb impressions as usual in their payment register, but they never paid us. Now third month has come in, we see nothing favourable.
6. Notwithstanding the above troubles, we are forced to work on gratis any other private work of theirs such as working at Messrs. Graham's godowns, Port Trust wharf and so forth.

7. Further we beg to state, every new cooly entertained by the contractors as a baggage cooly, has to pay to them an entrance fee of Rs. 8 each and Rs. 2 to the Maistries as *bukshis*, and also we have to purchase the khaki uniform (the dress complete at our own cost which comes to Rs. 7 or 8)

8. That since the day after your goodself has gone through the contractor's payment register, and other necessary books, they changed the badges of some coolies which would indicate in the following sheet, where we have set our signatures and thumb impressions

9. That as we are very much afraid that the contractor might hold prejudice against us, and harm us if this matter goes to their ears, we would request your goodself to be so kind as to keep this matter in secret, until such time that your goodself may take to investigate the matter thoroughly.

10. That on being your goodself ascertained of the fact, we would request your goodself to kindly make such arrangement as to allow us to draw our wages from the office directly.

For which act of kindness we shall ever pray for your long life and prosperity.

Dated the 31st August 1917.

Against the allegations made by the coolies—and these appeared in the Press—the contractor has not said a word. If they were untrue, he should have taken action against them. The men, who signed the letter, are still supposed to be in his employment though now their wages are paid directly by the Company. At least, I understand, that they were so paid for the month of August

It is alleged in the above petition, that during the whole of the contract period, not a single pice passed the hands of the contractor to the coolies for doing the work as Company's baggage coolies. They were simply told to make what money they could from passengers, and they did so. The whole of the Rs. 1,250 remained with the cooly contractor, and those who assisted him in withholding the amount from the coolies. On the contrary, the latter had to pay every month Rs. 2 to him for the privilege of doing his work

Mr. Bomanji requested that the said petition or its copy be placed on the record, and those coolies who signed it, and were present to give their evidence be examined by the Committee. The Chairman said: "You closed your case some days ago, Mr. Bomanji, and unless Mr. Bell agrees, I do not think this evidence can be admitted." Mr. Bell objected to the letter going in, and the witnesses being examined. I drew the Committee's attention, that as the League had no means of knowing the state of things as revealed in the said document until yesterday, and as the cooly contractor had in his evidence point blank denied the charges made therein, it was necessary that the letter should go in the record, and the witnesses that had presented themselves to substantiate the allegations contained in the said letter, examined, to find out the truth, and that if what the coolies stated be true, the cooly contractor had committed gross perjury and forgery.

In the said letter the coolies made distinct allegations against the contractor, it was easy to verify them. No two thumb impressions are alike, and had the matter been investigated by Mr. Bell, as he ought to have from this standpoint, the truth could have been found out without any difficulty

I am sorry to have to criticise adversely the action of one of my colleagues on the Committee—I mean Mr. Bell. On the 31st of August he had before him a document, in which grossest allegations were made against the Company's cooly contractor. As a member of the Committee, hearing evidence against him from day to day, he should not have withheld this most important information from the Committee. The document revealed a state of things, which went to show, that the people's complaints against him were genuine, and that they were fully justified in making them. Mr. Bell not only did not bring this fact before the Committee, but he had him as a witness after the above revelations, and before he made a full and proper enquiry into the matter. He did not give the cooly complainants even a chance to substantiate what was contained in their letter. It was only after the coolies had struck work, that they were paid their wages of August from the



Company's office. If he had conducted a proper enquiry, he would have found out, that some officers of the British India Co. were also involved in the fraud against the public. It cannot be believed, that the contractor was allowed to keep the whole amount of Rs. 1,250 for his own personal advantage. It would be too much for what little service he was actually rendering to the Company.

The Chairman did not allow the statement to go in on the ground, that the case of the Burma Social Service League was finished before, and that it could not be allowed to put it in at that late stage. I am sorry to have to defer from his view in the matter. In the first place, this was not a judicial enquiry, where all strict rules of evidence could be applied. But even in a judicial enquiry, if a document, whose existence was unknown to the party producing it, before he finished his case, came into his possession or knowledge at a later stage, it would be allowed to go in the case, as an exhibit, and he would be allowed to prove it. The fact, that 33 coolies had written to Mr. Bell, stating the exact circumstances under which they were working, was brought to the notice of Mr. Bomanji, the counsel for the League, only the previous evening, and before the B.I. case was finished, was quite a good ground for its admission in the record. The examination of the evidence of the coolies, that appeared before the Committee to give their evidence, supporting the statements made in their letter to Mr. Bell, would have cleared the whole atmosphere. In my opinion, the Chairman would have done better, if he had not shut out this most important evidence, particularly in view of the fact that in deference to his wishes, the League had refrained from calling a number of witnesses, who had put in their statements and were anxious to give their evidence to support their allegations. If the B.I. had been asked to produce the original letter, or if Mr. Bomanji had been allowed to file a copy of it, as he proposed to do, and if the baggage coolies had been examined, the conduct of the contractor and those who were in league with him, would have become quite as clear as day-light. The Committee was appointed by the Government to find out the truth—the real truth, but in shutting out that evidence, a most valuable opportunity to do so was almost lost.

I have no doubt in my mind, that the allegations of the coolies in their letter of the 31st August are true, and that the exactions, that the coolies made from passengers, could not have been carried on for a period of three years, without the knowledge and direct participation in the profits of that business by some of the B.I. officials.

As to the second allegation, that the coolies put away passengers' baggage on board, where it would be difficult to get at, and to recover which, the passengers were obliged to pay further extra charges, I hold that that was so. In my opinion, the coolies used a number of tricks in their handling of baggage, and the above was one of them. I have no doubt that they employed all sorts of devices to make money from the passengers, and did so successfully.

As to beating by cooly maistries, as the subject has been dealt with in another place, it need not be discussed here.

**4. Over-crowding in steamers.**—There were very loud complaints on this head, before the Committee. Almost every witness complained that the space, provided for passengers on ships plying in Indian waters, was quite inadequate for themselves and their small belongings. In the majority of cases, the baggage is just as much as one man can carry on his head. Generally speaking they are not too much burdened with earthly belongings to carry about with them. Some have a box in which they carry them. A few carry more than one box. The majority have, besides their clothes, their beddings, cooking utensils, jugs for storing water and provisions required during the voyage. If a passenger carried a box 3' X 1½' or 2' dimensions, containing his wearing apparel and personal effects, he would certainly be allowed to carry it free on any ship. But in that case, he would have hardly any place in the ship to sit and to sleep upon. His space would be taken up by his baggage. Of course he can sit on his box, but he cannot sleep thereon.

The complaints of passengers were, not that the Company carried a larger number of passengers than they were licensed to do, under the Native Passenger Ships' Act of 1887, but they were against the over-crowding licensed under the law.

Many of them, seeing the licensed over-crowding, thought that the Company was carrying more passengers than it legally could. Many of the witnesses had no knowledge of the law on the subject. Besides, ordinary passengers had no means of knowing that the Company was at any time actually carrying more passengers than allowed. Most of them felt the over-crowding, and gave their rough opinion thereon.

The complaints in fact were that the space allowance was too small and too trying for a voyage taking more than 3 days to Calcutta and 10—12 days to Madras and Negapatam *via* the Coromandel coast ports.

The real grievances of the passengers were, that even when the number of passengers was less than the licensed number, the over-crowding was unbearable. S.S. "Chilka" was mentioned by several passengers as having been so over-crowded in one of its voyages, even when she was carrying actually about 300 less passengers than the licensed number. Many passengers mentioned that, on account of the over-crowding in the ship, some had to take their places in the ship's boats. I do not think, that the officers forced those passengers to go therein, neither did the passengers say so. The latter must have done so out of choice, seeing that almost every available foot of space was taken up by other passengers. The steamer is licensed to carry about 3,700 persons. This is much too large a number of passengers in any one ship, to think of with equanimity. It means carrying the population of about ten decent-sized Indian villages, perhaps more, thereon.

In such a ship, carrying such a large number of passengers, whatever may be the number of latrines, whatever may be the number of sweepers engaged to clean them, and to sweep the floor-space occupied by passengers, whatever may be the number of taps and pumps for water for the supply of water to them, the whole atmosphere in the tween-decks must soon get impregnated with effluvia of all sorts, and the health of the passengers must suffer, when it is not actually undermined, before they arrive at their destination. Any one, who is not obliged to travel as a deck-passenger, in his visits to the tween-decks of steamers carrying their full load of passengers, must have noticed, how helter-skelter they lie all over the floor, most uncomfortably close to each other, leaving hardly a foot of space anywhere for anybody to move about. The whole of tween-deck floor space is literally covered with mats, beddings, baggage, provisions and men amongst them. There are no racks to place the things on. There are no bunks under which to shove them. There is no place to throw the remnants of provisions, the rinds of fruits. The port-holes are unapproachable to many. There is no place therein, where they can clean their hands or rinse their mouths, except at the taps or pumps placed far away on upper decks, and not even there, because there are crowds waiting to draw their water-supply. The sweeper cannot get in to remove the refuse. Most of it remains there the whole of the time and rots. It is not necessary to dilate further on this head. The situation can be properly understood by those who have tried to move amongst the motley crowd, and their belongings lying haphazard all over the tween-deck spaces. Of course, it is a very difficult feat to make way therein, unless one has sufficient patience and time to do so. One may think, I have drawn too much upon my imagination in putting such a picture of the case. It is, however, not so. These are facts which have been mentioned by witnesses and which any one, who visits a ship carrying a full complement of passengers, can easily verify for himself.

In ships carrying the full complement of passengers, sometimes deaths take place, occasionally from suffocation. Mr. Halkar, one of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee, mentioned six deaths from suffocations in S.S. "Aronda" on its voyage to Rangoon in November 1913, in which he was a passenger. Immediately it came to his notice, that people were so dying in the ship, he implored the authorities, that the other persons who were in a part of the ship, where there was too much crowding, and hardly any ventilation, and where they were gasping their last breaths, be removed to the upper decks for fresh air. The authorities took no notice of the suggestion at first, but ultimately brought them on the upper deck, and immediately they revived. In the meanwhile he had sent a wireless message to the Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, stating the fact,

and the over-crowding in the steamer. About fifteen witnesses were examined by the Commissioner of Police on this head. They all testified to the facts being correct. It was found on examination of the ship's papers, that there were 23 less passengers on board than the full complement, and so no further steps were taken in this matter. The Committee requested the Police Commissioner to produce the records of the case, and his reply was that he could not trace them anywhere in his office. It is strange that this important case should have been lost from the office. If it had been produced, it would have revealed a most horrible state of things.

Though only one such case was brought to the notice of the Committee, there is no doubt whatever, that in the ships that carry such large numbers of passengers, as the "Aronda," such cases must be happening occasionally. Generally Indians who come to Rangoon, travel when in good health. They come for work, and unless they were physically fit to go through their respective portions, they would not venture upon such a voyage. Most deaths that take place on board must be due to over-crowding and its consequent ill-effects. On referring to Table E on page 195, it will be seen that from 1908 to 1916—a period of nine years 166 deaths or 18·4 per year took place on board during voyage. That means that there are conditions on board the steamers which are detrimental to health, and which cause sickness and death. The present licensed over-crowding is, I believe, the principal cause thereof, and requires immediate legislation on the lines indicated in this report.

The Chairman has remarked in the general report that "we feel doubt—Dr. Mehta dissenting—whether the space allowance would be considered insufficient by that class of deck-passengers at once by far the most numerous, and from the standpoint of Burma, the most important section of the immigrants." In my opinion, the Chairman, on his own initiative, should have called a few cooly-maistries and coolies, who sent a joint statement signed by 359 persons, if he had this in mind at the time of hearing. They too have complained like the rest on the subject. But whether they were examined or not, the question of space is one for hygienists to decide. The large number of labouring people that travel by these boats is an inarticulate class. It is known as such. Even amongst the better informed Indians, there are not many, who know the ways, and can go through the troubles which ventilation of their grievances involves under the present state of things. In many cases nothing comes out of it. The official replies are stereotyped. And so far as the labouring classes are concerned, unless they are helped just as in the present case, they will live so long as they can, and if they cannot live, they die without a murmur. They are fatalists to an unusual extent. I wish, however, that some of the cooly maistries and coolies, who really did appear at one time before the Committee, had been given a chance of being examined on this head. I am sure, that they too would have complained just as loudly as the men of the articulate class did. Even coolies are human beings. They too have the sense—organs as others. It would be strange if they did not mind the conditions, in which they have to live in an overcrowded steamer. They require nature's bounty, *vis.*, air, as much as any body.

I said before, that there are no bunks for passengers. In steamers like the "Arankola," the "Bangala," the "Bharata," etc., there are a few platforms provided where some passengers are accommodated. Those, who are perched on them, look a comparatively happier lot. In one of the hatches, I counted 40 passengers. The rest, *vis.*, 300—400 passengers in that hatch had to occupy space, under the platforms and other parts of the floor. The platform accommodation is certainly good for those who can buy the use of them during the voyage, from those who are in charge of the hatch—for it is inconceivable, that they get them, because they were the first to arrive. The complaints are, that those who pay for good seats, can get them. Invariably, the men, who occupy them, are better off materially. The condition of the men who have to creep under them, and pass a few days thereunder, with hardly any sunlight and with very little ventilation, is certainly pitiable. They generally are a very poor lot financially.

The proper arrangement should be a bunk for each person, instead of the lucky few. He can put in his things underneath and lie thereon. Racks

should also be provided for keeping things on. I shall take up this subject again.

Mr. Bomanji, the Counsel for the League, questioned almost every B.I. witness, whether he would give a living man less space than a dead man, and each of them said that it was not for him to criticise and to express an opinion in view of the fact, that Government had decided, that that space was sufficient. As a matter of fact, every dead person is given at least 12 square feet of space in the cemetery, the coffins being 6' X 2'. That this is a reasonable space for a living man also, will be seen from what follows. If this space be allowed, I propose bunks of that size for every one of the passengers. If this be done, many of the difficulties and troubles would simultaneously disappear. Provided with a bunk, each one would have his place for sitting and sleeping, and for keeping his things. The floor could be easily swept, and all rubbish removed immediately it was noticed. With better ventilation and more cleanliness, small-pox, cholera, etc., would disappear also. The hatches can be properly cleaned only, when the floor-space is free from men and things.

Captain McPherson, in explaining how the deck passenger space was measured, said, in case there was 100 feet vacant space on the upper deck, and 100 feet on the lower deck, that "the 100 feet space on the "tween deck" would be divided by 6, that would give 16 passengers. For each passenger, 4 feet of airing space on the upper deck would be reserved."

"Four times sixteen gives 64 superficial feet leaving a balance of 36. This 36 feet would again be divided by 6 which would give the total number of passengers as 22 (sixteen plus six). This calculation was for the fair season."

It is apparent that in the above method of calculation no space is deducted for the passage of passengers or ship's officers, and yet the latter do claim it, when passing to and fro, occasionally by kicks, as some of the witnesses stated before the Committee.

Captain McPherson was questioned whether the 6 square feet on the tween-deck was quite as much as a man can reasonably expect for his health, or whether he would make it higher, said "I have no power to express an opinion on this point." Captain M. Barrett, Marine Superintendent of the B.I., also said that "that was a matter for Government to decide."

\* Captain Grey of S.S. "Bharata" was asked whether 6 superficial feet of space was sufficient, and he said "it is not my position to criticise the Government of India's work as regards their survey" and further he said "if I say to you I did not consider that space sufficient, I am criticising the work of Government."

The space allowed to an Indian deck passenger, according to the Native Passengers Act of 1887, is 6 square feet in the tween-decks and 4 square feet air space on the upper deck in fair weather. In foul weather, the space allowed in the tween-decks is 9 square feet. This space is too little for maintaining good health in the steamer. The air in the tween-decks, when the steamers carry their full complements, must necessarily get heated in a short time, and surcharged with the impurities of respiration and cutaneous exhalations, the effluvia due to all sorts of provisions in all sorts of conditions that they carry and throw about, uncleanness of persons, and the solid or semi-solid excreta such as vomiting, and occasionally other discharges, on account of some of them losing control over themselves, particularly when sea-sick. The reason, why small-pox and cholera cases sometimes break out on board, is want of sufficient space and cleanliness thereon.

The voyage from Rangoon to Calcutta, or from Moulmein to Negapatam *via* the Coromandel coast-ports and Madras, which often, as I have said before, takes more than 10—12 days, is according to the present law, considered a short voyage. When a steamer is, carrying a full complement, such a voyage to the passengers of all grades of life is bound to be full of troubles and hardships of all sorts. The passengers have to be inconveniently close to each other, and for many of them, it is not possible to have proper rest. The area allowed is so small, that they have to huddle themselves together, as best as they can. As it is, the stuffiness, the heat, and the smell in tween-decks are often so great, that no one, who is not obliged to remain there, would like to stay there even for a quarter of an hour without minding it. Very

often, and particularly during the rainy season, the port-holes have to be closed, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, and sometimes both, and the hatches are invariably kept covered. The only channel left for air to enter there is through companion ways. That can allow very little of it. The tween-decks, under these conditions, become quite unbearable, and deaths even from suffocation take place.

Ordinarily, the tween-decks are ventilated through port-holes, perhaps a couple of ventilators in some of the hatches, and the hatches when they are kept open. In some of the steamers like "Aronda" and "Arankola" there is tween-deck accommodation under the first and second class cabins with only one hatchway. The passengers, who have to go to the farther end under first or second class cabins, are far away from the hatch and sometimes from port-holes, and get very little ventilation indeed. It was there, that the six deaths by suffocation mentioned by Mr Halkar took place. The passengers who are near the port-holes, or an open hatch may get sufficient ventilation, but the rest get hardly any pure air. I may say, that the question of ventilation for the majority of deck-passengers, who have to go in the tween-decks, has not been much thought of in building the ships. If anything, the builders seem to have been afraid of the possible draughts, thinking that the passengers may get chill. The ventilation provided in the tween-decks may be enough in cold countries, where the air velocity is larger, and cold air easily displaces hot air, but for ships plying in Indian waters, particularly when the air is still—and it is often so—a great deal more of it is wanted in the ships. I think that ships for carrying Indian passengers to and from Indian ports should be built with far greater ventilating channels, than they have at present. Until that is done, it would be better to provide electric punkhas in those parts of the ships, where air gets stuffy and impure.

I may just casually mention that the minimum area allowed in prisons and barracks is 600 cubic feet, and that in hospitals 1,000 to 1,200 cubic feet. The Rangoon Municipality has fixed 24 square feet per person for registered houses, though the latter is certainly too little. Taking all these facts into consideration my opinion is that necessary changes may be made in the Native Passenger Ships Act, which was framed so long ago as 1887, when, as the Chairman rightly, says "the number of passengers travelling between Rangoon and Indian ports was far fewer than it is at present" and when there was no public opinion whatever. What is most necessary is, to alter the definition of "short voyage."—If instead of calling the voyage from Rangoon to Calcutta or Moulsain to Negapatam, *vid* Rangoon and Coromandal coast the voyages were classed as "long voyages," the passengers would get the necessary relief. In my opinion, a voyage of more than 24 hours ought to be classed as "long voyage", because even during that short period, sleeping accommodation is required, and should be provided for.

Dr. Parkes in his manual of Hygiene says "A certain amount of fresh air has to pass through a given air space in a fixed time in order to maintain a certain degree of purity. The amount has been fixed at 3,000 cubic feet for each healthy person in an hour. Before considering the appliances of moving this air, we must consider what should be the minimum size of the air-space through which the fresh air has to pass."

"This will entirely depend on the rate at which air can be taken through the space without the movement being perceptible or injurious."

"Thus a space of 100 cubic feet must have its air changed thirty times in an hour, if 3,000 cubic feet of air are to be given while a space of 1,000 cubic feet need only have it changed three times in an hour, for an equal ventilation."

It is apparent from the above, that where the area allowed is 36 cubic feet as is the case under the Native Passenger Ships Act of 1887, the air would have to be changed about 84 times in an hour without the movement being perceptible or injurious. In my opinion, the air in the ship cannot change 84 times in an hour, but if it did, it would be very injurious to health. I am therefore of the opinion, that so far as the required ventilation is concerned, 36 cubic feet is too little in ships, as the passengers are obliged to breathe impure air for the whole of the voyage.

I therefore propose that when a voyage takes more than 24 hours, it should be considered a long voyage, instead of a short one as at present. The said alteration in the present law will give each passenger 12 square feet, or 72 cubic feet of space. I also propose, that bunks and necessary racks should be provided for every one of the passengers, that each hatch should have ample ventilating appliances, so that the atmosphere in the hatches may always remain fresh and pure.

Many passengers have complained to the Committee that once they went in the tween-decks, they were not allowed to go on the upper-decks for airing, unless they paid *bukshush* to the men in charge. The Native Passengers Act provides, besides, six square feet of tween-deck space, 4 square feet of airing space. Under the law every passenger is entitled to have airing on the upper-decks whenever he desires it. The Company should give distinct and definite instructions to their subordinates on this point, so that no passenger is prevented from going on the upper-deck for airing.

5. *Latrines*—The complaint of the witnesses that appeared before the Committee were—

That the number of latrines provided on the steamers was too small.

That they were not cleaned as often as they ought to be.

That they were not properly screened off

That the seats were too high and unsuitable for the class of people who travel as deck passengers

That in certain ships, there were no separate latrines for women or if there were, there was nothing to show that they were for them

That the latrines for women were used by men

That in some of the ships there were canvas latrines which did not give sufficient privacy.

That there should be a sea water tap near the latrines for the use of passengers.

That no urinals were provided on any of the Company's ships for deck-passengers.

According to the Native Passengers Act of 1887 there is one latrine fixed for 100 passengers. This number is too small.

Captain Ames, Commander, S S. "Bangala," in answer to the question, whether the number of latrines provided on the steamers was too small for the whole lot, said "one per hundred is too little—there ought to be more" That is the complaint of almost every witness that appeared before the Committee.

Captain M. Barrett, Marine Superintendent, when asked whether one per hundred was sufficient, said "that is a matter for Government" Other witnesses on behalf of the Company have stated that they cannot criticise the Government in this matter. There is no doubt that if they considered themselves free to express their opinion on the subject, they would have stated that the number of latrines provided on the steamers, though according to law, is too small to meet the requirements of the passengers.

If each passenger on an average took only five minutes in answering the call of nature, which is really not much, and if each seat was used about five hours a day, the number can provide for only 60 passengers. As a matter of fact, many passengers take much longer than five minutes, and each seat is in use for longer than five hours a day. After full consideration of the matter, I hold that the number should be increased by 50 per cent.

Captain M. Barrett was asked whether the seats of the privies to his knowledge were sometimes very foul, said "it is their own—meaning passengers'—fault. There is a full supply of water in every closet running through day and night from the main service-pipe. If the latrines are used in a legitimate manner, they cannot possibly become foul." As a matter of fact water is not running as mentioned in most of the ships.

It cannot be said of the class of passengers, that travel by these steamers, that they would not use the privies in the way they should, if they could do so. On the contrary if they did not ordinarily use it in the way they should, the

condition would be horrible. It is only when passengers have no control over themselves, particularly in cases of sea sickness, that other parts of them besides the seats may be fouled. In all such cases, if the seats and other fouled parts of the latrines were immediately cleaned by the Company's sweepers, there would have been no great cause of complaint.

The witnesses have not complained, that the Company did not engage a sufficient number of sweepers for the purpose. Their complaints were, that the sweepers did not clean them often enough, and not even when their attention was drawn to the state of things.

If there was better supervision over these men, the complaints on the subject would not have been so loud.

Dr. Foy in answer to the question, whether during his inspections of the B.I. steamers, he found latrines in a filthy condition, said "sometimes" and to the same question again he said "very often" and he further said, that the temporary latrines on the old ships were not so good as the permanent ones on the new ships. When asked whether he himself found latrines quite offensive to go to, and whether it would not be prejudicial to health to use them in that condition, he said "they would be."

*From the evidence before the Committee I am of opinion that the latrines are not cleaned as often as they ought to be, and that is due to lack of supervision by the responsible officers over the sweepers.*

The complaints, that they are not properly screened off, so far as old ships where canvas latrines are put on, have been fully substantiated. As regards permanent latrines on the new ships, though there is a door to a row of latrines; each one of the seats is exposed to the view of the passers-by, and therefore as recommended in the main report, at least, each one should have a canvas screen to maintain privacy.

As to the seats, they are too high and unsuitable for the class of deck-passengers that travel by these steamers. Those who know Indian custom in the matter, are bound to hold, that they should be changed and made low enough for them. If they are about nine inches high, they would be less fouled. Dr. Foy in answer to the question, whether the type of latrines is the best that could be adopted, said "some have complained that the seats are too high, and that they would be better kept clean if the seats were low." The best pattern for latrines on the steamers would be that adopted by the Rangoon Municipality in houses occupied by Indians.

The complaint that in certain ships, there are no separate latrines for women, or if there are, there is nothing to show that they are for them, has been fully substantiated by the witnesses who appeared before the Committee.

Even in the ships, that have brass plates to indicate whether they are for men or women, they are written in English.

It would be better, as was suggested by the Chairman, to have on each door the figure of a man or woman to indicate for whom it was meant.

It is not possible to have sign-boards written out in all the different languages of the people that travel in these boats. Besides, many of them do not know how to read and write.

To prevent indiscriminate use of the latrines by men and women, it is necessary that the device above mentioned should be used in all passenger steamers.

There were complaints that there being no distinctive sign-board or device, the women's latrines were used by men. Whether the number of women passengers be small or large, in no case should women's latrines be allowed to be used by men. It is recommended in the main report, that the latrines for women should be near the separate accommodation provided for women. It is quite essential that it should be so. They should not be built by the side of those for men, as is the case at present. As it is, many women do not like to pass through the crowds of passengers—often there is hardly any space to pass through—and are obliged to suppress the call of nature.

Mr. Ramanathan, one of the witnesses examined before the Committee, complained as did many others, that the canvas latrines on some of the steamers did not give sufficient privacy, as sometimes the pieces of canvas flew off when

it was windy. Mr. Bell asked him whether it was usual to have great privacy in connection with deck-passengers, and the witness replied "why not," and then he asked him whether he saw in India natives using the side of a street as a latrine, and the witness replied "in village parts." If some Indians used the side of a street as a latrine, the passengers, who never did that, would certainly feel uncomfortable, when exposed to the gaze of the passers-by. That is how in many cases Indian opinion, Indian feelings and Indian susceptibilities have been treated by the Company's employees. Even if all the Indian passengers on a ship were in the habit of using the sides of streets as latrines, while at their own homes, though as a matter of fact, it is the case here and there only, it is no excuse for the Company to put up such canvas latrines on board as give insufficient privacy to passengers, while inside. Many of the passengers are quite as well-behaved and respectable as those in the West, are simply horrified at insufficient privacy of latrines, and avoid their use altogether, or use only at night time, when they cannot be seen from outside.

The complaint, that in some of the ships, there are temporary canvas latrines, and that they do not give sufficient privacy, has only to be mentioned, to be attended to. These temporary latrines should be done away with, and permanent ones erected in suitable places.

That there should be a sea water tap near the latrines for the use of passengers. As the Indian passengers use water, it is necessary, that there should be water available at all times of the day and night in these taps.

The complaint, that no urinals are provided for deck-passengers on any of the Company's ships, is one that should be attended at an early date. From a sanitary point of view, it would be a great improvement to have urinals conveniently placed in the ship, that would obviate the necessity of using latrines for the purpose. As it is, passengers have to pass long distances through impassable crowds to go to latrines, for both purposes. For women, the urinals should be near their separate accommodation.

I have no doubt that passengers of all classes feel the necessity of improving upon the present state of things, in the way I have suggested above.

6. *Supply of Drinking Water.*—The complaints of the witnesses that appeared before the Committee were :—

That the number of taps or hand pumps on the passenger steamers was too small, that on most of the steamers water was given twice, and for a couple of hours each time at the most, and that the water-supply was cut off altogether before the passengers were landed on shore.

The Company's case is, that on new boats water is allowed day and night, and that on old boats only twice a day. The Captains of the S.S. "Arankola," "Bangala" and "Bharata" were asked if they could stop the water-supply in their ships at any time. And they all said it could not be. They were asked about any contrivance by which water-supply could be cut off at any time, and they said none existed. They were asked whether Chinese carpenters applied padlocks, etc., or anything of that kind, and they said "No." At our inspection of the S.S. "Arankola" and S.S. "Bangala" we particularly inquired whether water-supply could, by any means, be cut off in those ships, and they distinctly stated that it could not be, and it was never done. As almost every one of the witnesses had clearly stated, that the water-supply used to be cut off from ships they travelled by for many hours of the day, I was particularly anxious to see, if it was done or not, and I have subsequently seen it myself in S.S. "Bharata" in which I lately travelled twice. S.S. "Bharata" is a sister ship to S.S. "Bangala." In this ship there is one tap and two pumps available for distribution to all the passengers. Captain Gray said that in his evidence. The tap is in one corner of No. 4 hatch. It is fixed to a tank. In the hydrant which discharges water in it, there is a cock which when turned off by a wrench cuts off its supply. I have seen this cock turned off by a Chinese carpenter of this ship, and water-supply cut off for hours, and yet Captain Gray, to the question whether the tap could be removed or locked, said emphatically "No." There is another tap near this one connected with the same tank, the connection of which is permanently cut off. Out of the two pumps on the foredeck, the supply



could be cut off by simply removing the handle of the pump, and as a matter of fact the handle of one of them is removed some time in the morning, and is never replaced until next morning. So that in the S.S. "Bharata," there is only one pump that is really serving the whole lot of passengers for the major part of the day, and the statement that water is supplied whole day and night by two pumps and a tap is not true. The Committee would have been saved a lot of time in examining and cross-examining on this point, if the various witnesses of the B.I. who were examined on this point, had honestly stated the truth, that they did cut off the supply at certain times of the day in order to stop wastage, and that they could do it by turning off the cocks in the hydrants or pipes or removing handles of pumps. I am satisfied that the complaints of passengers, that water-supply is cut off, even in new ships for a greater part of the day, are fully substantiated.

S.S. "Bharata" has the carrying capacity of 2,000 passengers. The tap in No. 4 hatch supplies water to deck passengers in that hatch as well as all first and second class passengers. The pump or two pumps when both are working, supply all the remaining deck passengers. It is stated by witnesses, that there is always a large crowd waiting at the tap or the pump to receive water, and that they have to make way for the saloon stewards and ship's men, sepoys, etc. The latter, when they are on board, have it all their own way. The present arrangements in this ship as to water-supply are far from sufficient. And if it is so in one of their good ships, in those, where admittedly water is allowed only twice a day, it must be far from satisfactory. I consider that all the complaints of the passengers before the Committee on this head were fully justified and that they have satisfactorily proved this part of their case.

If the passengers cannot get sufficient supply in a ship like the S.S. "Bharata," when she carries a full complement of passengers, other ships where its distribution is limited, the difficulties are still greater.

Captain Ames, Commander, S.S. "Bangala," in answer to the question whether in other ships in which he was Captain, water-supply was limited, said "Yes," "in the very old ships we had to limit the water-supply. . . . They are only entitled to one gallon a day. We give them as much as they could take in the forenoon, or afternoon. We have never measured it out. There is the tap, we say, take as much as you want. In very old steamers water used to be given out two to three hours in the morning and two to three hours in the evening—there was no limited quantity." There is no doubt whatever, that the Company's ships carry a plentiful supply of water. There is no complaint that the ships do not carry sufficient quantity of it. The complaints are, not that the taps and pumps are quite insufficient, but that the Company's servants switch off the supply before all had their requirements. In ships, where water is given out twice, some of the passengers—particularly those who have not got tins or utensils for storing the supply, and weakly persons must go without water for long hours.

Another complaint on this head is, that when steamers, in which water is supplied at certain hours of the day, are approaching the harbour, the supply is cut off long before they land. The supply of water is left to crew, and they occasionally play with the requirements of passengers.

What is wanted in this line is to fix the number of available taps, say one for every 300 to 350 passengers, to be kept open, at least three times a day for two to three hours at a time, when they are not giving it the whole day, and to keep proper supervision over the crew. In the mornings, there is a very much larger rush for water, and therefore the taps and pumps must remain open for at least three hours, and at noon and evenings for about two hours each time.

7. *Intermediate accommodation for men.*—There is no doubt that some of the witnesses desired better and separate accommodation for people of their class. I believe, however, that that is not a large class. There are not many Indians in Burma, who can afford to pay very much higher prices for their tickets, than they have to pay now. Those who can go by first or second class do so. Most of the Indians, who come to Burma, and who would like separate accommodation, are employed on salaries ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 60, and some a little more. They cannot afford the luxury of travelling in a higher class. A few

only are better paid, and they may be able to afford about Rs 5 to Rs. 7 over the present prices of tickets. But this class is so small that, in my opinion, it would not be worth the while of the Company to provide the kind of accommodation they desire. The Company had an intermediate class in the E class of steamers before the war, but it was very little patronised. The prices were prohibitive except to a very small number. If the rates had been from Rs. 15 to Rs. 17 to Calcutta, there would have been a little larger demand. In my opinion, the question is one of business and the Company may view it as such. If they can give the kind of accommodation that some of the witnesses desired, *viz*, accommodation separate from deck passengers, separate latrines, separate water-supply and separate baths, there would be a certain demand for it.

The majority of the English knowing witnesses, who gave their evidence before the Committee, desired, as far as I can understand, accommodation separate from the labouring classes, well cleaned latrines, sufficient and more frequent water-supply, and bath rooms, and all that, at the same rates as for other deck passengers.

In my opinion the Company cannot provide separate hatches for different classes of people, and that is, what I believe, they meant. In the nature of things they cannot discriminate between one class and another. They must treat all those, who pay the same rates, on a footing of equality. To provide better or larger accommodation for them, would mean cheating the poorer passengers of their just and legal dues. The latter would, then, be still more cramped for space. The deck passengers of all grades must take their places in the steamer in the order of priority, and no man, because he belongs to the working classes, should be deprived of his place. In these days of democracy, such an idea cannot be tolerated, much less encouraged. The passengers, who have had more education, should learn to fraternise with their humble brethren, and teach them to respect themselves. The demand for separate and better accommodation without paying extra for it made by some of the English-knowing Indians, has been made, I may say, without full consideration of all the circumstances and must be rejected. In this respect I agree with the view that Mr. Bell has put in his minute of dissent. The Chairman has remarked in the main report that "the main, if not the sole, object of the League is to ameliorate conditions for the better educated and socially superior class, and to secure their separation from the uneducated coolies and manual labourers." One of the objects with which the Social Service League was started, and I can say it with authority, was to ameliorate the condition of deck-passengers of all classes and creeds. In the letter of the 24th May 1917 written over the signatures of many of the leading persons of Rangoon to the Rangoon Agents of the Company, there is not a word on this subject, neither has that question been ever brought before the League as a body up to now. No doubt several members of the League also would like to have accommodation separate from the labouring classes without paying more for it. But as far as I know, the question came before the Committee incidentally, and the opinion expressed by witnesses on the subject was individual opinion.

The Chairman has quoted an opinion of mine from my pamphlet No 1 on "Vernaculars as Media of Instruction," that "never before was there such a wide gulf between the classes and the masses in India as at present." So it is, I believe. It was different before, because the classes and the masses spoke the same language. Now-a-days those who know English invariably use that language in their daily affairs. The result is that they hardly come in touch with the masses. Even if two sons of the same father spoke two different languages, they would, in course of time become greater strangers to each other than mere neighbours, speaking to each other in the same language. I expressed the above view to show the contrast in the relations, as they were at one time and as they are now, between the classes and the masses. But I am glad to say that there are still many amongst the English-knowing Indians who feel it, and work to lessen the breach. We have in the Social Service League many members who are not anglicised to that extent. Some of them do not know English at all. They are inspired by fellow feelings for their countrymen of the lower classes, and give them a helping hand, when they can, to ameliorate their condition.

So far as sanitary arrangements are concerned I have stated my views in another place. The English-knowing deck-passengers may not have much to complain about the latrines, when their number is increased, when the inside seats are made suitable, when sufficient privacy is given to them, and when they are well cleaned and flushed. Such latrines could not be objected to by deck-passengers of any class. As to water-supply, I have mentioned my view in another place. I am of the opinion, that when water is given at least three times, where it is not given whole day, when a sufficient number of taps and pumps are placed for the sole use of the passengers (the crew should not be allowed to draw their water-supply from the taps for passengers' use, and to interfere with them), I believe that the class of people who complained most before the Committee would have their needs well supplied.

*Bath-rooms.*—This has been a sore point with many of the passengers. Almost all Indians, and particularly of the class, that appeared before the Committee, are in the habit of having daily baths. The Brahmins bathe before every meal. With many it is a religious duty. But on the steamers, they are obliged to go without it. Out of the steamers running at present, the only one, that has bathing accommodation to meet the requirements of the passengers, is S.S. "Arankola." The members of the Committee visited it as well as S.S. "Bangala." On the latter ship, we were shown a room as bath-room. I understand that the room is usually occupied for storing ropes and such other articles for the ship required for daily use thereon. It is so, certainly in S.S. "Bharata"—a sister ship. I particularly enquired why the bath-room was not put at the disposal of the passengers, and was told, that if allowed to be used, it would lead to a great deal of friction amongst the passengers. I can quite believe it. There is only one bath-room, and that too very small, and the candidates for it are many. I think however, that until better and larger bath-rooms are supplied on the ships, those that are meant for them, must be put at the disposal of the passengers. If passengers are likely to quarrel amongst themselves, its use must be regulated. The names of persons wishing to have their baths must be duly noted down in the order in which they apply, and they must be allowed to have their ablutions accordingly. If the Company would see to it, the passengers—even those knowing English—would have their requirements in the matter supplied. One bath-room—even a small one—is better than none at all.

I believe that the Company can satisfy the requirements of all classes of passengers by attending to the above notes in a sympathetic manner. Even the English-knowing Indians, who are not able to travel in the second-class, would have most of their grievances redressed, if the ship's officers take little more trouble than they do at present.

*Separate accommodation for women*—This is most urgently needed on every ship plying in Indian waters. Though many of the women passengers, who are obliged to travel as deck-passengers, are very poor, none the less, they belong to the respectable classes. Many of them are Purdasnashin. In their homes, they do not appear in public, and could not be seen or talked to except by their near relatives.

These women, as it is, have to sit and sleep and dress in the ships near strangers, sometimes too close to them. They mind it very much. There is no privacy whatever to be had in any part of it. They are obliged to pass through strangers—and very often there is no passage to pass through to answer the call of nature. If they are not attended to by their male relatives, they have to undergo tremendous hardships and even tortures.

Women are sometimes delivered on board. We have had complaints that for such cases, there was no provision on board. That in some cases they have been delivered in the midst of passengers. Of course as an ultimate measure, they have had screens improvised from their sheets, and other clothes and some privacy observed.

We have also had complaints, that even in such cases, doctor's services were not available. No doubt if the Company had come to know of it, they would have taken serious notice of the doctor. But how very few of the passengers can do so? What happened during recent years, was that the supervision of the

Company over their subordinate, had been very lax, and consequently the Company's officers became quite indifferent and even callous to the needs of passengers in their ships. Want of a competing line has been at the bottom of all the hardships, that people have had to undergo

The conditions precedent to the providing of separate accommodation for women are :—

(a) That their male relatives should be provided with accommodation, near the separate accommodation for women.

(b) That no woman passenger be forced to go there against her wish.

As I have said before, latrines in the ships for women are placed close by those for men. Many women dare not pass through the crowds of passengers on board, and have to suppress their desire to answer the call of nature almost the whole of the voyage. The latrines for them ought to be provided near their separate accommodation. A bath-room for women is an equal necessity. Under the Native Passenger Ships Act, the Company have to provide a bath-room for them. As a rule, none is available. But if there be any on any ship specially reserved for women, it is situated in a part of the ship which is inaccessible to them. The bath-room should not be far from their separate accommodation.

The Company laboured a great deal to prove, that the women passengers would not want separate accommodation, as they required constant attendance of their menfolk, and that the other women passengers would object to their male relations going in. As all the women passengers in the separate accommodation would be almost in the same predicament, they would easily settle matters amongst themselves. The need of attendance of the male relatives would be common to all, and none would mind the occasional visits of a fellow passenger's relatives. The male relatives are not to occupy any space therein, and they do not need to do so. A couple of witnesses before the Committee thought, that women could be better looked after, when they were in their midst. They were afraid that the women would be altogether separated from their male relatives, and would consequently suffer greater hardships, and perhaps insults from the ships' subordinates. But if the male relatives are placed close-by, or within hearing distance, and if ships' subordinates are prevented from entering their sacred precincts, they would all gladly put their women in the separate accommodation. The place should be properly partitioned upto the ceiling, and should have doors which can be bolted from within, when they wish to do so. It should have sufficient light and ventilation

Such separate accommodation, I am told, is provided in the steamers running in the rivers of Bengal. As almost all Bengalee women are purdanashin, the owners of the ships thought it better to provide separate accommodation for women therein. Though the percentage of women passengers to men coming to Burma is small, the number of women passengers coming by B.I ships is almost 15,000 a year. By itself, it is a large number. The Company should have no hesitation in meeting the requirements of such a large number of women travelling in their boats. What they ask for is comparatively a small concession, and it can be granted without much outlay, at an early date.

What I have stated here is merely to emphasise the need suggested in the main report.

In paragraph 27 of the main report, it is stated that "we consider it unreasonable to expect, that the Company should allow a husband (or other relative of a woman travelling in the second class) himself travelling with a deck-ticket to share the second class accommodation." I have gone through the whole of the records, and I have not found therein any such claim advanced therein. Such a claim, if made, can certainly not be entertained by the Company. What the witnesses stated in the matter was, that because they travelled as attendants of their womenfolk with deck-tickets, they were not allowed to go near them, and have any communication with them or afford them any help whatsoever. If a husband or relative of a woman chooses or is obliged to travel as his wife's or relative's attendant, the woman passenger cannot be made to forfeit her right of attendance on her. The Company has not to decide the question of the morality of a husband or relative travelling as an attendant upon her. He has purchased

his ticket as such (for the time being he treats himself as his wife's or relative's attendant), and as such he should have as much access to her, as any servant of a second class passenger has to his master. He wants to go to her mainly as an attendant. He does not go there to share her accommodation. The latter is not possible either. Unless a cabin is reserved, there are other women passengers therein, and it is out of question to share her accommodation. What the witnesses meant was that they should be allowed to go to see to the comforts of their womenfolk, as much as the servants of the second class passengers do, and no more. I hold that second class women passengers should not be debarred from having the services of their menfolk travelling as deck passengers.

I think it necessary that there should be at least one female servant employed for the services of women deck-passengers.

9. *Neglect and Ill-treatment of Passengers by Company's Officers and Subordinates on board.*—The complaints on this head are that the Captains and Chief Officers are rarely seen taking their rounds in tween-decks

That some of the doctors do not attend to cases of serious illnesses, or hurt in time, and that they do not attend to them, unless fees are paid in the first place.

That some of the company's officers and subordinates abuse, assault and kick passengers without any fault on their part.

That the Company's servants reserve certain spaces, and allot them to those who pay for them, and try to extort money from them on one pretext or another.

That the Company's supervision over their employees is very lax.

As I have dwelt on some of the points in previous pages I need not dilate upon them here.

We have had Captain Ames of S S "Bangala" as a witness before the Committee. He was asked whether during the whole time he was in the Company's employment, he had any complaint made to him by passengers, he said "never." The other Captains said much the same thing.

I think the answer of Captain Ames is very suggestive. It is hardly likely that out of the hundreds of thousands of passengers that travelled in ships, in which he was Captain or Chief Officer, not one of the passengers had any complaint to make. Such an answer may mean one of two things, *vis.*, that everything is so perfect on the ship, and that every passenger is so well-behaved, that no one has anything to complain of during the voyage: or that Captains and Chief Officers make themselves so unapproachable that people cannot convey their complaints to them. We have had ample evidence to show, that things were not perfect on the Company's ships. There are many complaints about the behaviour of the Company's servants towards them. In overcrowded ships, many things must go wrong, many people cannot find space for them—they are already occupied by other passengers, perhaps in a larger area than they are entitled to—and unless they paid extra money, nobody would take trouble to find space for them. Several witnesses have stated, that the Company's employees of almost all grades behave insolently and rudely, and sometimes they make their way in the crowds by kicking. Occasionally thefts take place in the steamer. Some have stated, that the khalassis give much trouble at the water taps, and prevent passengers from going to the upper deck, or moving about. Some have stated, that they steal passengers' things at night. Sometimes there is a row between one passenger and another. There are several disturbing elements and persons on board. If the passengers knew to whom to complain, and if that person gave them opportunities to mention their complaints, they would seek their assistance. But if the Officers made themselves unapproachable as many witnesses stated they did, there would be no complaints whatever: and that is why Captains never had any complaints from passengers.

It is unnecessary for me to dilate further on the above points. I have no doubt in my mind that what the witnesses stated on the above heads is true. The remedy lies in the hands of the company. If the company's employees were better supervised by them, there would be considerable relief to passengers, who, for want of it, are put to the hardships mentioned above. In these matters the legislature can do nothing. Sympathy can do a lot. If the company desired, that their passengers should be treated as men, they should send all necessary

instructions in the matter, and see them carried out. If that is done, most of the abuses now practised by their men would be lessened before long.

As a rule the Captains and other Officers do not know the language of the people, particularly those coming from Tamil and Telegu districts. I understand that at one time the Company used to entertain the services of interpreters.

In my opinion the Company should have an Indian interpreter on each ship knowing Hindustani, Tamil and Telegu, well-educated and of high social order, and that a place be set apart on board to serve as "Enquiry Office" within easy reach of deck-passengers, where people could go and make their complaints known to the authorities.

10. *Minor points.*—That provisions for sale by the bazaar man on board are of a very inferior quality, and sometimes unwholesome and his prices are very much higher than they should be. The Company should exercise proper supervision in this matter.

That for vegetarian cooking, preference should be given to a Brahmin bazaar man instead of a non-Brahmin, as most of the passengers would have no objection in taking things prepared by him.

That no liquor should be allowed for sale to deck-passengers.

That the cooking rooms, for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians, are, as a rule, placed side by side in the ship. The vegetarians object to go near where meat is cooked. The vegetarian cooking room should be at some distance from the place where meat is cooked. In building ships in future, this point may be noted by the Company.

That no slaughter of animals should be allowed in parts of the ship used by passengers.

*Carriage of Cattle on passenger ships.*—Animals are carried side by side with men. They are carried both on the upper-deck and tween-deck. The passengers complained that goats and sheep were allowed to roam about in the tween-decks, and they gave them much trouble. So also with regard to buffaloes, cows, and horses. Mr McDonnell, in asking Dr. Rao whether his syce slept by his pony, and whether coolies did so, or not, would have led one to believe, that the Company was doing on board, what many of the passengers did on land, and that there was nothing wrong about it. In the first place, the Rangoon Municipality does not allow men and animals to live side by side in the town, but if any person did so on land, it does not follow that the same can be done with impunity on board. In many of the ships, there is plenty of overcrowding, leading to insanitary conditions. The cattle make the place absolutely insanitary and filthy. In my opinion, the carriage of cattle on passenger ships should be prohibited altogether.

As to Burma being a second immigrant port, I am not sure that it is so. We requested the Port Health Officer of Rangoon to give us the figures showing that it was so. But he has not been able to give us any other figures. In my opinion Bombay and Calcutta have many more passengers landing there than Rangoon. It would be better to have these figures for comparison before taking Rangoon as a second immigrant port.

#### *Medical, Police and Customs' Examination.*

According to the Government resolution appointing the Committee, the propriety of the measures adopted by the Police, Customs and Health Departments of Government do not fall within the scope of the inquiries to be made by them; but it is open to them to suggest improvements in the methods of administration thereof, which would conduce to the comfort of the passengers.

The Committee requested the Collector of Customs whose Department does both the Customs and the Police search, to inform them of the measures that they adopted in dealing with passengers. But we were told that they were confidential. It would have been better for our investigation to have been informed of the measures adopted for the purpose. In that case, we should have been in a better position to suggest necessary improvements.

Most of the complaints before the Committee on these heads, however, are not so much against the measures, as against the methods - That Burma should be kept free from the importation of infectious diseases, sedition and contraband, every one will admit. But what the witnesses objected to, were the methods of the Port Health, Police, and Customs Departments. Whatever may be necessary to achieve the end may certainly be done. But in doing so, nothing should be done, that would be irrational and irritating. First of all, I will show how far they are so, and suggest proper remedies to prevent such importation.

So far as the Police Department is concerned, the particular complaints are, that the Police use sticks and canes unnecessarily in dealing with passengers. It has only to be mentioned, that this should stop. The Commissioner of Police may be requested to issue necessary instructions in the matter.

I shall deal with the Medical Examination first and then with the Customs and Police Examination carried on jointly.

11. *Medical Examination on Wharf.*—The procedure adopted by the Port Health Officer on arrival of ships in harbour is well described in the main report of the Committee. The complaints of passengers against the Medical examination by him are as follows:—

That by the end of the voyage, many of the passengers are quite done up, and long to go to their respective homes without delay. A large number of Hindu passengers takes hardly any cooked food while on board. Many of them live upon roasted gram, forced rice and such other articles, that can be prepared without water. Some of them, particularly Brahmans from Northern India, fast absolutely during the whole of the voyage, and are not in a fit condition to go from steamer to launch, from launch to Sparks Street Jetty, and thence to the Examination Shed, carrying all their luggage on their heads.

That in the launch there is too much overcrowding.

That after the arrival of a ship in harbour, when there is a large number of passengers, they are detained for hours without food or water, often for six to eight hours.

That in the shed, every one of the passengers is asked to take off all his clothes except his dhoti or pyjama, in all seasons, irrespective of his station in life and his constitution.

That everybody's groins and armpits are examined for bubo, and his person for fever, rash, etc., and that those who have the slightest fever or rash, even of prickly heat or itches, or suffering from gonorrhœa or syphilis are sent to the Plague or Contagious Diseases Hospitals.

That those who refuse to take off their clothes are kept last, and have to wait until every one else has been examined.

That no consideration whatever is shown to the feelings of the passengers and they are often spoken to very brusquely and rudely.

That women passengers are separated from their husbands and relatives on arrival at the Jetty, at a time when they require their services very badly.

As the members of the Committee are of the opinion, that transshipment of passengers is inconvenient and objectionable and should be done away with, I need not dilate further on the point. I am of the opinion that medical examination of the kind is unnecessary and unscientific and should be done away with altogether; and instead, the doctor on board—every one of the passenger ships carries a doctor on board—should be made responsible for reporting all cases of infectious diseases on board. On every ship, there is a space reserved for isolating every such case, and immediately a case of the kind comes to the notice of the ship's doctor, he should isolate it. The ship's doctor is in a better position to find out such cases, as he is with the passengers the whole time. If they were responsible for reporting such cases, they would pay their visits to the passengers oftener in the day, and would hardly allow a case to escape their detection. A small remuneration paid by Government for doing this work more carefully than they are required to do at present, would save the Port Health Officer all the time and trouble and the passengers all the worry, anxiety and discomfort attendant on long detention as is the case at present. In none of the Indian ports, such as Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, where passengers arrive in much larger numbers than in Rangoon,

medical examination of the kind is ever held. The procedure adopted in all those ports is that the ship's doctor has to wire to the Port Health Officer from the ship any case of infectious diseases found on board, and has to hoist a quarantine flag on arrival in the harbour. The Health Officers of those ports board such ships only on which there are cases of infectious diseases.

Burma is a province of India and is ordinarily as much affected by plague, cholera, small-pox and other infectious diseases as every other province of India. There is hardly a time when Burma is free from any of these diseases. They are quite as endemic as in the other provinces. Why then, should passengers have to undergo all the avoidable hardships and troubles? Dr. Foy in his evidence before the Committee stated that passengers are only taken to the quarantine station, if there was a case of plague on board, and for several years there has been no case of plague on any of the in-coming steamers. In Burma, however, the number of cases occurring every year is quite a large one as will be seen from the following figures—

1906	8,637	1910	7,741	1914	7,448
1907	9,429	1911	6,060	1915	4,640
1908	6,752	1912	3,014	1916	7,702
1909	6,949	1913	4,308		

And none of these could have been imported cases. If, notwithstanding, any examination of the passengers is desired, all that the Port Health Officer should do is to let the passengers pass by him, and if he suspects any person suffering from an infectious disease, he may stop him and examine him further later on.

The number of plague cases that take place in Burma from year to year is simply appalling, when we consider that the Sanitary and Port Health departments have left no stone unturned to prevent it getting in this country from India. They have had quite a free hand to deal with the problem as they thought best. Quarantine, isolation, disinfection, segregation, inoculation, etc., have been freely used without any reference whatever to the hardships suffered by the people or cost involved in carrying them out. And yet plague as well as the other infectious diseases, are as rampant in the country as ever. In my opinion the Government would do well to consider the whole question from the stand point as to how far these measures have done any good as preventives and how far poverty of the people and insanitation and filth in which they are obliged to live are the real causes of this and the other infectious diseases. The hardships inflicted on people in carrying out the preventive measures and their cost must be commensurate with the results obtained. It is quite necessary to inquire at this stage how far this is the case. In my humble opinion, the economic condition of the people is the cause of the epidemics of infectious diseases, and it is to this and the improvement of the sanitary condition that all Government measures should be chiefly concentrated. The epidemics of small-pox and other infectious diseases now raging in Russia are attributed to the economic condition of the people.

Passengers should be dealt with according to their physical condition and status in life. A labourer does not mind having to expose his person, because he works bare-bodied at home. But a passenger coming from the non-labouring classes, say working as a clerk in a Government office, if perspiring and exposed, would catch cold and other diseases. Such persons do mind being kept in a semi-nude condition along with others, while being examined.

My opinion is that even for a thorough examination it is unnecessary to have the persons of passengers exposed, sometimes for hours. This is not done anywhere else. It is unnecessary to have the persons of all passengers exposed, and made to stand in a line for hours, or to feel their groins or armpits in order to find out whether he is suffering from plague or other infectious diseases. Buboec in plague cases appear at a stage when the passenger is hardly able to get up, walk or go from steamer to launch, from launch to jetty and from jetty to the examination shed. A man who has been able to walk like that, can never be suffering from plague. A case of plague is detected at once by one who has seen such cases, from his very appearance and gait. A medical man, before whom a person suffering from plague, passes, would at once detect it without feeling his armpits



and groins. Then again, there is the fever. A man with the fever due to plague is hardly able to walk. He feels collapsed even in its incipient stage, and if he has no delirium which is not uncommon in such cases, he feels himself in a helpless condition, and cannot go through the different stages, he has to pass before he appears before the Port Health Officer. No plague case can escape the detection of an observant doctor, and therefore all such examination, that the Port Health Officer holds in the Port of Rangoon, is altogether unnecessary and uncalled for, so far as plague is concerned.

It is the same with cholera. A person suffering from cholera cannot walk from steamer to launch, from launch to jetty and from jetty to the examination shed, without being detected. What has been said above for plague applies equally to cholera. Where is the need for exposing the persons of passengers to detect cholera or plague? The same may be said about small-pox. A man suffering from small-pox is bound to have it on the face. Then there is the fever which collapses him. If he is watched from a distance, he is sure to indicate it by his general appearance and his walk. Where is the need of examining every person, exposing his body and feeling his groins and armpits? The manner of conducting medical examination of passengers by the Port Health Officer is thoroughly unscientific and unnecessarily harassing. Such an examination is held nowhere else. What is usually done at all places in the world, and I say this from personal knowledge acquired during my frequent travelling to Europe and occasionally to some other parts of the world is, that when ships arrive from infected ports, they fly a quarantine flag. The Port Health Officers examine ship's papers, and if no case is found on board, the ship is allowed pratique. The world's affairs would be greatly hampered, if examination were conducted in the unscientific manner in which it is conducted in Rangoon. Only when there are cases of infectious diseases on board, the passengers are submitted to any examination at all, and that is merely to pass by the Doctor. He sees his appearance and gait from a distance, and allows him to go. It is only when he suspects anything wrong with one, that he asks him to submit to a further examination.

So far as Burma is concerned, there is no reason whatever to depart from the practices adopted in this line all over the British Empire.

If Port Health Officers in other ports are able to detect infectious diseases without exposing the persons of passengers, and without feeling their armpits and groins, the Rangoon Port Health Officer ought to be able to do that too.

As to plague, the present theory is that it does not spread from person to person, and that the infection is given by the bites of rat fleas. Plague is a disease produced in insanitary and filthy areas, where plague infected rats abound. The first thing that happens in a house before a person gets it, is dead rats. If the inmates leave the house, in which a dead rat is detected, immediately, they escape getting it. It is only when they stick on, notwithstanding, that some one of them gets it.

Dr. Foy in answer to the question as to what percentage of his suspect cases turned out cases of infectious diseases, said "supposing out of 500 (sent to hospital) we get one case, that justifies our action in sending away the good," and in answer to the further question whether there was any time when small-pox was not in existence in Rangoon, he said "it may be regarded as endemic. The number of cases have dropped from August last year, before that it went up to nearly eight cases a week."

It is not just to the passengers, that he could safely say (and what he says is to that effect) that "it is true that I have not had a single case of plague on board during the last several years, and I have not sent any persons to the Quarantine Camp all that time, it is true that I have detected almost all small-pox and cholera cases on board through the ship's doctors, but who can say that the persons who have the slightest rise of temperature or some kind of rash that they may not develop into some kind of infectious disease, and therefore I am justified in sending what I call suspects to the Plague and Contagious Diseases Hospitals."

The following statement shows the number of persons sent to the Plague and Contagious Diseases Hospital and their diagnosis by Major Saigol, the

Medical Officer thereof, during the years 1914, 1915 and 1916 On examination of the cases, I hold that the above argument is not at all weighty :—

*Statement of Contagious Diseases Hospital, Rangoon*

No.	Diseases.	1914.		1915.		1916.	
		Passen- gers.	Crew, etc.	Passen- gers.	Crew, etc.	Passen- gers.	Crew, etc.
1	Small-pox	3	6	1	12	44	17
2	Chicken-pox	1	3	4	3	17	11
3	Measles	1	2	2	1	21	2
4	Cholera	1	1	4	1	9	6
5	Mumps	1	1	1	2	1	1
6	Dengue	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Erysipelas	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	Diarrhoea	1	1	1	1	12	2
9	Pyrexia of uncertain origin	1	1	5	5	1	1
10	Syphilis	1	1	1	1	3	1
11	Malaria	1	1	1	1	1	1
12	Bronchitis	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	General debility	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	Pneumonia	1	1	1	1	2	1
15	Skin diseases	1	1	2	5	2	1
16	Rheumatism	1	1	1	1	1	1
17	No appreciable disease	1	1	94	7	66	7
18	Dysentery	1	1	2	1	1	1
19	Enteritis	1	1	1	1	1	1
20	Scabies	1	1	1	1	1	1
21	Itch	1	1	1	1	3	1
22	Dyspepsia	1	1	1	1	1	1
23	Ringworm	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Total	12	13	122	36	186	47

R. D. SAIGOL, Major, I.M.S.,  
Medical Officer,

RANGOON, 13th September 1917.

Contagious Diseases Hospital, Rangoon

*Statement of Government Plague Hospital, Rangoon.*

No.	Diseases.	1914.		1915.		1916.	
		Passen- gers.	Crew, etc.	Passen- gers.	Crew, etc.	Passen- gers.	Crew, etc.
1	Malaria	16	12	8	6	37	14
2	Simple continued fever	1	3	1	1	1	1
3	Mumps	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	Constipation	42	10	7	1	1	1
5	Pneumonia	3	5	3	5	4	8
6	Phthisis	2	1	1	1	2	1
7	Gonorrhoea	1	4	1	1	7	1
8	Abscess	1	1	1	1	1	1
9	Pyrexia of uncertain origin	9	3	94	21	347	31
10	Inflamed gland	2	3	1	1	1	1
11	Myalgia	2	1	1	1	1	1
12	Orchitis	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	Plague	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	Enteric fever	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	Bronchitis	1	1	1	1	1	1
16	Syphilitic bubo	1	1	1	3	3	3
17	Secondary Syphilis	1	1	1	1	3	1
18	Diarrhoea	1	1	1	1	1	1
19	No appreciable disease	1	1	11	1	104	14
20	Dysentery	1	1	1	1	1	Nil.
21	Gum boil	1	1	1	1	1	1
22	Scrofula	1	1	1	1	1	1
23	Not yet diagnosed	1	1	1	1	1	absconded.
	Total	78	45	129	41	517	76

R. D. SAIGOL, Major, I.M.S.,  
Medical Officer,  
Government Plague Hospital, Rangoon.

RANGOON, 13th September 1917.

From the foregoing statement it is plain that out of the 12, 122 and 186 cases sent to the Contagious Diseases Hospital by the Port Health Officer; from amongst the passengers there were 3, 1, 44 cases respectively in 1914, 1915 and 1916 of small-pox, and 14 cases of cholera, and they were rightly sent there. Out of the remaining, that is 258, there were 22 cases of chicken-pox, 23 of measles and 2 cases of mumps, which are not notifiable infectious diseases and which ought not to have been sent to the Contagious Diseases Hospital. The rest, *vis.* 211 cases, were cases of non-infectious diseases, such as diarrhœa, pyrexia of uncertain origin, syphilis, malaria, bronchitis, general debility, skin diseases, rheumatism, no appreciable disease [and of this the number is very large, *vis.* 94 and 66 in 1915 and 1916, dysentery, enteritis, scabies and itch (the same disease) and dyspepsia].

As to cases sent to the Plague Hospital, except 2 cases which seem to have developed into plague, the rest, *vis.* 722, were cases of non-infectious diseases such as malarial fever, simple continued fever, constipation (of this the number is 49), pneumonia, phthisis, gonorrhœa, abscess; pyrexia of uncertain origin (of this the cases were 450), inflamed gland, myalgia, orchitis, enteric fever, bronchitis, syphilitic bubo, secondary syphilis, diarrhœa, no appreciable disease (of this the number was 115) dysentery and scrofula. No medical man with reputation to lose would say, that he was not sure that those were cases of non-infectious diseases, and so he sent them to the Plague Hospital. The Contagious Diseases and the Plague Hospitals are most dreaded by people. "We have it on record that people dread to sit in ambulance cars, and when asked to go therein, they refused to do so, and preferred to go on foot. People suffering from any serious illness would have preferred to go in any conveyance. For such persons to walk a distance of about a couple of miles, would have been an impossible feat. The very fact that they preferred to walk the whole distance, shows that they were not suffering from any serious diseases, much less infectious diseases, and they ought never to have been sent there.

The people dread the very name of Plague Hospital. It is horrifying to them. Plague is one of the most fatal diseases. Those, who are told to go there, believe that they are being sent to the death chamber. They believe that the Plague Hospital is the home of plague, and hardly anyone who is sent there ever returns.

When Dr. Foy was asked whether it would not be better to put suspects aside, and examine them afterwards, he said: "We have to pass on to other work. We have no time and staff for detailed examination." In my opinion it is not too much to expect of the Port Health Officer to examine each and every case most carefully, and to send to the Plague or Contagious Diseases Hospitals only such cases as are likely to develop into infectious diseases. Why should any of the 722 cases or say even 90 per cent. of them have been sent to the Plague Hospital? The majority were cases, which could have been easily diagnosed. I do not think, that the perfunctory examination of the cases that are sent to the said hospitals without regard to the feelings of the people, by the Rangoon Port Health Officer, could be tolerated in any other part of the world. Where is the fear of cases of constipation, gonorrhœa, syphilis, scabies, scrofula, etc., developing into plague? Are the sufferings of the people nothing and the time and leisure of the Port Health Officer everything? His answer that he has to pass on to other work, and that he has no time and staff for a detailed examination means, that he is indifferent to the feelings of the people. And after all, the number of cases sent to the Contagious Diseases and Plague Hospitals were never so large as would have required more than a few minutes for a more careful examination. The total number sent to both hospitals in 1914, was 90. That works out on an average of less than two cases a week. Could not the Port Health Officer have devoted a little more time for their examination than he actually did? The number for 1915 and 1916 is a little larger no doubt. But in no steamer could he have more than a couple of cases, certainly less than half a dozen at the most, to deal with under this head.

As a rule, Indians that return to Burma are in far better health than when they go. They come for work and they would not do so, unless they were

physically fit for it. A large number of them come from villages, where conditions for health are better than in towns. The sooner the idea that India is full of infectious diseases, and that Indians bring them to Burma is banished from the minds of those who have to deal with them, the better. If India has cases of infectious diseases, Burma has also. Are there not plague, small-pox, cholera epidemics in Burma? Have they not flourished therein, notwithstanding the fact that medical examination of Indian passengers has been carried on rigorously for years?

Then there are passengers of all classes and creeds coming in the deck. There are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, etc. But they are treated as if they came from the lowest classes. As stated in paragraph 6 of the Main Report Indians are employed in many other lines than as labourers. Do not these men feel irritated and annoyed at the kind of treatment they receive at the hands of the Port Health Officer? Many of them consider it quite humiliating to have to stand in a semi-nude condition in a crowd, wherein there are others of a much lower station of life, and to have their armpits and groins felt, as if there was no other way of detecting a case of plague.

The Port Health Officer stated that he finished the examination of about 400 persons in an hour, and that, under the circumstances, it cannot be called stringent. In this calculation, he has made no allowance whatever for the time that passengers have to pass from the time they are taken off the ship, and brought to the examination shed. But granting that it is 400 an hour, it does not take as long anywhere else in the British Empire or on the Continent. The examination in those places takes a little longer than passengers take in walking past the doctor.

In my opinion, it is quite time, that the Port Health Officer was given strictly to understand, that such perfunctory and unscientific examination of passengers that he has hitherto been conducting, was out of date in the year of grace 1917.

Dr. Foy stated that as a result of his examination of passengers, he detected a few cases of infectious diseases on board, which the doctors on board had failed to do. There is nothing strange in it. If the ships' doctors had the same opportunity of examining the passengers, they too could have detected them before the passengers were allowed to go to their homes. As a matter of fact, they do detect all such cases at Calcutta. What they do there, is to stand at the gangway, while passengers are landing, and if they find any cases of infectious diseases amongst them, they send them to the Infectious Diseases Hospital. What is wanted is to make them responsible for it, and get them to do the work thoroughly. As they are not responsible for such work, so far as Rangoon is concerned, they do not feel bound to do it well. Besides responsibility teaches responsibility, and if they are expected to do the work well, they would do it. They are all qualified medical men.

There is another advantage in getting this work done by ships' doctors. They are men in actual practice of the profession, and are much more in touch with it, than the Port Health Officer of Rangoon, who is out of practice, at least during the period he has been working as such. If anything, the inspection work would be better done, by ship's doctors than by him. I am sure no man in actual practice would send 722 cases of non-infectious diseases out of 724 to the Plague Hospital, as he did during the last three years. A doctor in practice would never send cases of syphilis, gonorrhœa, constipation, itches, etc., to an Infectious Disease Hospital. He has his reputation to lose as a medical man, and would consider twice before sending one to the Plague or Contagious Diseases Hospitals. No man who was not suffering from an infectious disease would be sent to such hospitals by doctors in actual practice. Sending to an Infectious Disease Hospital would be, his last resort. They would not send a case to such hospitals in such a light hearted manner as Dr. Foy has done. Besides the feelings of the passengers have also to be consulted in the matter. Dr. Foy has never troubled himself on this score. Ships' doctors, who are mostly Indians, would really supply all the needs of the case.

In Calcutta, Madras and other ports, where the Rangoon passengers land, there is as much danger of infection from Burma, as there is from India to Burma. Plague, cholera and small-pox are as much epidemic in Burma as in India.

There is no time when these diseases are altogether non-existent in either countries. As no examination of Burma passengers is carried on in any of the Indian ports, so also no such examination should be held in Rangoon.

I strongly hold that the present system of medical examination in the Examination Shed at Sparks' Street is very harassing without any corresponding advantage, and should cease, and instead, ships' doctors should be made responsible for carrying out the necessary examination and detection of infectious diseases cases, as is done in Indian ports.

The Chairman thinks that the figures of cases do not indicate any unnecessary caution in the examination, as in two out of three cases disease was found. The Port Health Officer had nothing to do with diseases other than infectious diseases. If the cases sent were of infectious diseases in two out of three cases, I would have nothing to say. But he sent to the Plague and Contagious Disease Hospitals cases that ought not to have been sent there. It was not right for him to send every case of indisposition, skin disease or slight pyrexia to the Plague and Contagious Diseases Hospitals. On these grounds I beg to differ from the conclusions that my esteemed colleague has arrived at in the matter.

As to women passengers, they are generally few. They are separated from their men-folk, and are sent out of the wharf before men. Many of them, thus isolated, do not know where to go, and take to weeping as is wont with them. Many have no idea, as to where their husbands or relatives are. The last of the male passengers is often allowed to depart hours after the women passengers are allowed to go. Women thus left stranded, as it were, are liable to be molested by street loafers, of whom there is a large number in Rangoon.

The remedies that I suggest are as follows:—

That medical examination on the wharf be done away with, and instead the ships' doctors should hold the examination of passengers on the ship and at the gangway.

That for real suspects, an observation ward be erected on the wharf where the cases may be kept under observation, until they are fit for discharge. If any cases develop into infectious diseases, they may be sent to the Plague or Contagious Disease Hospitals as the case may be. Those who can put themselves under the surveillance of a qualified medical man should not be kept in the observation ward, but they should be allowed to go to their respective places.

*12. Police and Customs Examination.*—The complaints of the witnesses that appeared before the Committee may be summarised as under:

That the personal inquiries, made by Criminal Investigation Department Officers, are done in a rude and insulting manner, and that some of the passengers are detained too long. That Congress men and Muslim leaguers are particularly singled out for such inquiries.

That the search of baggage, carried on jointly by the Customs and Criminal Investigation Department, is carried on without any discrimination as to whether the person whose baggage is marked for examination, is likely to be a seditionist or a smuggler.

That invidious distinction is made in the examination. All luggage of European and Eurasian passengers is allowed to pass without any examination, and that of Indians, no matter what their position, status, etc., may be, is searched very rigorously, and that, the authorities doing it, behave very insolently and rudely towards them.

That their private correspondence, including that between husband and wife, and diaries are read, notwithstanding their protests.

That sometimes letters, papers, etc., are taken out of one's pockets and read.

That most of the Criminal Investigation Department men doing this work are very poorly educated. All publications by Indian authors are, in the first instance, taken as seditious.

That the search is carried out without any regard to passengers' goods being spoiled.

That their things are sometimes stolen while being searched.

That the luggage of Indian passengers, who pay gratuities to Customs and other subordinates, is allowed to pass without any examination.

That most galling of all and the most resented is the search of the persons of women passengers.

We have had considerable evidence on the above points before the Committee. In my opinion it is not necessary to quote individual evidence here of which there is a large mass. The record on the subject speaks for itself.

The Criminal Investigation Department examination and the Customs search of the passengers are carried on with two objects. The first is to watch seditious persons, and to prevent seditious literature being introduced into Burma, and the second is to prevent smuggling of opium, morphia, cocaine, etc., and arms and ammunition. Burma being an Indian province, there is no duty leviable on merchandise or personal effects of passengers.

*As to Sedition.*—There could be no difficulty in recognizing seditious persons. They are well known to the police all over India, and their movements and whereabouts are very rigorously watched. If such a man started from an Indian port for Burma, the Criminal Investigation Department would at once wire to the Burma police to keep him under observation. So that there is no chance of a seditious person entering Burma from India without being reported.

*As to seditious Literature* — It is not likely that every passenger can bring in such literature. Only seditious persons may have this kind of literature with them. If such a person is reported to have started for Burma, let him and his baggage be rigorously searched.

In Burma, there is no sedition. What, however, is looked upon as sedition is generally Congress and Muslim League literature. All, who take interest in the constitutional agitation carried on by these two bodies, are looked upon as suspicious and their effects are minutely searched. If the passengers have newspapers containing speeches of Congress men and Muslim leaguers, they are taken away from them.

Those who are working constitutionally for the political uplift of their people ought not to be treated, as if they were seditious. Unless the police have good grounds to believe, that a person is working on unconstitutional lines, or unless there is definite information against him to that effect, sent by the police from his place of embarkation, his person and his things should not be searched.

Wholesale searches, as they are carried on at present, indicate distrust of the whole Indian people, and leave rankling memory in some minds at least. This should be avoided by all popular governments.

It cannot be the desire of the Burma Government, that the population entrusted to their care, should remain ignorant politically. Political knowledge and political advancement of the people is as helpful to people as to Government. People soaked in ignorance of their rights and privileges, may make the work of governing easier, but they would never be their bulwarks.

Burma is a part of India. The Customs and other regulations are framed by the Government of India, and are applicable to every part of it. People, who go from Burma to any Indian Port, mark the contrast between the treatment meted out in this country on arrival, and on landing there. There is no search of things or persons in any part of British India, unless it is called for by the behaviour of the person himself.

Not only there is no sedition in Burma, there is not even any political activity. To promote active loyalty in the minds of the people, they should be allowed to grow politically also. The Government and their officials should welcome such activity rather than discourage it, by methods usually adopted in Burma. Politically advanced India including Burma would be a source of strength to the British Empire; whereas a politically dead part of the Empire would be bound to remain a source of weakness to it.

If the views expressed above be recognised as sound, the methods of searching persons and things, now adopted be so modified as not to create distrust towards Government. It is by trusting the people that trust for Government would ensue.

I wish to say a word about the searching of women's persons by the lady inspectress. As to this search the Chief Collector of Customs says: "Women are always searched by the lady searcher if, I understand, the presence of a Lady

Doctor. The Customs Department are not in a position to know what goes on, and I cannot say what methods are adopted in the search. It is fatuous for any reasonable person to suppose, that in searching females, it is not sometimes necessary to get the searched persons to remove garments. In every civilised country in the world, women are searched by women, and smuggled articles have been commonly found, which never would have been found, had no article of dress been removed."

It would have been interesting to have evidence from the Customs Department before the Committee as to how many Indian women passengers had been found with smuggled articles on their persons. The examination has been going on for a sufficiently long time, to have proofs that Indian women are capable of doing so. The only evidence on the subject is of Mr. K. B. Bannerji, an old resident of Burma, and one of the oldest advocates in the Rangoon Bar. He said: "To my recollection, there have been two cases of smuggling on board by passengers; one was an English woman who was convicted for three months at the time of Mr. Agnew, the Recorder of Rangoon, and another was a Chinese woman, who was convicted about 3 years ago. This is what led the Commissioner of Police to make this appointment." He meant the appointment of a Lady Inspectress. There is no evidence before the Committee, that an Indian woman has been found smuggling either seditious literature or arms or opium, morphia, etc. Why then examine the persons of Indian women passengers at all? Most of the women passengers though they are obliged to travel in the deck, belong to most respectable classes. They are Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas. Whatever may be the conditions in the West—we hear of such cases in America, where ladies of fashion even have been detected smuggling jewellery in order to escape the payment of 60 per cent. duty thereon—Indian women, of the classes that come to Burma, are far too respectable to smuggle things, and would never stoop to do so. That no such case has been found during the course of the whole period, during which they have been coming to Burma, is a proof positive that they are incapable of doing so. Why suspect every Indian woman passenger under the circumstances?

The smuggling of which the police are so watchful amongst the Indian passengers, both men and women, is going on under their very nose from day to day in Burma.

There are, to the knowledge of the police, opium and cocaine dens all over the town. They also know who the smugglers are. Why not go to the very source of the mischief, and catch hold of the criminals, who are carrying on a roaring trade in the contraband articles? Why examine the persons of innocent women passengers? An honest and sympathetic servant of Government ought to be able to discriminate between a smuggler and a *bona fide* passenger. But the men who are entrusted with the work live in a different world to that of the Indian passengers. There is nothing common, and no sympathy between them. If they like, they can catch the smugglers, whom they know, and ought to know.

It is not by searching the passengers' persons and luggage that smuggling can ever be prevented. To prevent smuggling, what is wanted is intelligent and honest work in unravelling the intricate methods, that smugglers of Burma employ in their nefarious business. What practically happens is, that thieves escape scotfree, and honest people are harassed. The result is corruption and bribery, amongst the subordinates, who are set to this work by Government.

On the above grounds, I hold that the examination conducted by the Criminal Investigation Department and the Customs is rigorous, and uncalled for, and the sooner it is done away with, so far as the general run of passengers is concerned, the better for all. We are not called upon to say what methods are to be adopted to catch real smugglers, and thieves from amongst the passengers, when any, and we refrain from saying anything on the subject. Neither are we competent enough to do so with our present knowledge on this subject.

Subject to the reservations contained in the above pages, I have great pleasure in accepting the Main Report.

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The best thanks of the people are due to the Chairman, who, throughout the whole case, showed them great consideration, and gavē them a patient hearing, and for making many valuable suggestions for improving the conditions, both on the wharf and on the steamer, under which passengers travel between India and Burma at present.

Their very best thanks are due to the Burma Government for giving them this Committee, to investigate their grievances, and suggest remedies to ameliorate the hardships that they suffer in travelling to and from Burma.

P. J. MEHTA,

*CALCUTTA, 11th December 1917.*



## DECK PASSENGERS COMMITTEE.

### WITNESSES' WRITTEN STATEMENTS.

LETTER from Mr. S. A. TYABJI, Rangoon, to the Chairman, B.I.S.N. Committee, through the Secretary, Burma Social League

Rangoon, 26th July 1917.

On the 3rd July, I went to the Soolay Pagoda Wharf at 7-30 a.m. and found men and women deck passengers waiting along the tramway line, and I was informed that some had been there since 4 a.m. I was also informed that had it been raining, the deck passengers with their wives, children and luggage would have had to wait there without any sort of shelter. I was there till 9-30 a.m. and till then, although the first and second class passengers were allowed to go on board, the deck passengers were not allowed. I could not find out any reason for this, though I made inquiries from B.I. officers there.

On my three or four trips to India from Rangoon and back since 1908, I have noticed some of the hardships the deck passengers had to undergo. —

1. The deck passengers who wish to sit near to the hatches have generally to pay bonus to the Khalasi in charge, and if they do not do so, such passengers have to vacate their seats and others are brought in, in their place, who can pay. This has been told me by several passengers while travelling.

2. Indian passengers, travelling with or without European diet, are not allowed to use the second class deck unless a bonus is paid to the man in charge. European deck passengers have no difficulty in this respect. I am informed that no deck passenger, Indian or European, with European diet or without, is by rules allowed to utilise the second deck. In practice, however, it is entirely different, as above stated. This is so to my personal knowledge.

I would suggest a new class called "second deck ticket" be started by B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd, as there is a distinct demand for it, and limited number of tickets may be issued by the Company. This will remove any jobbery and give such ticket-holders the right to be on the second deck.

3. Last time coming from Calcutta, a second class passenger was struck by an officer of B. I. on the second deck, as he thought the passenger was travelling on deck, and he took that action without asking the passenger for his ticket. This was before the boat started. Immediately the ship started a number of deck passengers were allowed the full use night and day of the second class deck.

4. Coming from Chittagong in 1914, a Bengali gentleman and his wife came on

board. The lady had a second class passage, her husband had a deck ticket. Although there was a ladies' compartment for "European ladies" only and though there were no European ladies occupying the cabin, the lady was refused the cabin, and the purser wanted the lady to occupy another cabin already occupied by a man. It was only after a deal of trouble that we could induce the purser to allow her the use of the cabin. He, however, would not allow her husband to go to her cabin nor to see her on deck. I would call such treatment "refined cruelty." My servant travelling on deck could come to my cabin and on deck, her husband could not.

5. Travelling from Rangoon to Calcutta all the cabins were quite full, as far as we knew. One of the passengers paid Rs. 5 to the butler, and he was given the use of a cabin in the dining saloon all to himself. There could be no reason to overcrowd the cabins, and keep one empty except for making an illicit gain.

6. When boats come in, European and Anglo-Indians, and Indians in European clothes and hat, are allowed free access to the jetty to receive their friends. But Indian ladies, and most of them purdahashin, are not allowed the help of their relatives and friends as they are not allowed to go in.

It is most galling to the Indian to see such distinction made.

I have had this experience myself, and my clerk, who had on an English dress of the worst type, was allowed in and I was kept out, and this was neither the first nor the last experience.

7. When deck passengers are allowed to get on board, about two hours or so before the boat starts, very often only one gangway is put up, and some couple of thousands of passengers have to get on board, with coolies going up and down with luggage also. The B. I. officers are surprised at the utter wickedness of passengers in rushing the gangway, but with one gangway and about 2,000 passengers to get on in two hours' time is not easy. The rush is not only seen on jetties, the same phenomenon can be witnessed at the Jubilee Hall at the end of the performance. The B. I. officer uses his cane freely, and for this I can vouch personally. Another reason for the rush is that the space available is insufficient when large numbers of deck passengers are travelling, and it is but natural for each passenger to try to secure a good place for himself. If

every passenger could be assured of a comfortable seat, if more gangways were put up, or longer time allowed for embarkation, the rush would be greatly reduced.

8 I have heard again and again of shameful discomforts which the deck passengers have to put up with. For instance, women and men are huddled up together, perhaps in the vicinity of cattle, they have to eat and sleep there, with the insanitary condition arising from the proximity of the cattle.

9. The men have to use the latrine with no doors, and this is repugnant, a little cost would remove the complaint.

10. There is no place for the women to bathe or to change the clothes.

11. At the places\* where the men and women have to wait for the doctor for examination there is no latrine and water is not laid on.

*Translation of the written statement of witness No. 23.*

WRITTEN STATEMENT of Mr. VALJI VIRJI.

Rangoon, 20th July 1917.

I submit that the wife of my son Jivaraj and his daughter left Calcutta on the 13th October 1916 per S.S. "Bharata" They arrived here on the 16th. The troubles they had to undergo after landing from the steamer are detailed as under.—

1 The lady had been previously suffering from scrofula for four or five months before her arrival here. The medical treatment in the country proving ineffectual she was called down to Rangoon from her country with the intention of providing better medical treatment here. On her coming down from the steamer she was made to sit down on the wharf platform for full one hour. And after all the other passengers had been passed out, this lady was taken to a hall on one side. Although all the other passengers had been allowed to go away, she was not allowed to leave this hall. After all had gone the lady found herself left alone with only one companion who was a Punjabi lady. On this she began crying. We were standing outside. And we heard the crying. But we were helpless as the peons would not allow us to go in. We got tired of standing outside. We then offered some inducement to the peon (or peons) and we went in. We saw the lady still weeping. We requested the doctor to let the lady go. On that the doctor replied that it was a plague case and that the lady would have to be sent to the plague office (? hospital). We told the doctor it was not plague but scrofula with which she was suffering for the last four or five months and that she had been treated even on board the steamer by the doctor there and that Mr. Kalidas Hansraj, who was a fellow passenger on board with her, also knew about it. However the doctor would not listen to us. He filled up a form to be sent to the plague office (? hospital) and ordered the lady to be taken there. On that we sent Mr. Hemchand to bring some English knowing gentleman from the firm of Messrs. Amarchand Madhewji & Co. But there was

some delay in his coming up. In the meantime the doctor gave the order to take the lady away.

2. Immediately the order was given, the peon caught hold of the lady by the hand, brought her out and ordered her to walk on. The lady kept on weeping and was telling the peon that she could not walk because she was ill and had undergone the fatigue of four days' railway journey and of four days' steamer voyage. Beside she could eat nothing on account of pain in the mouth due to scrofula. Besides she had a suckling daughter at the breasts. All these causes had made her whole body weak, and, in addition to these, her case having been erroneously set down as a plague case, it instilled nervousness into her. And this circumstance added to her weakness still more. She walked about two or four paces and felt giddy and sat down. The peon was requested to inform the Sahib (? the doctor) that the lady was unable to walk. But the peon replied that that was not within the orders he had received and that the lady must walk, that if she refused to walk, he would have to push her and take her to the place. We remonstrated with him, persuaded him much, but he would not listen to us. The result was that I went to the doctor and told him the facts. He said that plague patients must walk out the distance and that no gharry-wala would take in such a patient as his fare. I told him the lady was fasting for the last eight days, that she was weak in body, that the afternoon two o'clock sun was full ablaze and that the lady would surely die on her way. The doctor replied that he could do nothing. We offered to hire a gharry and to take her ourselves to the place. The doctor refused the offer and persisted that the peon must take her to the place and ordered us to go away from there. We refused to leave. After much altercation the peon informed the doctor that the lady was unable to walk. On that, the doctor ordered the peon to take gharry-hire from her and then to take her in a gharry to the place.

We hired a gharry for her. And the peon made this lady and the other Punjabi lady to get into that gharry and took them both to the place.

3. I hired another gharry for myself and ordered it to follow the first gharry. In the meanwhile Mr. Hemchand who had gone to bring a man from the firm of Messrs. Amarchand Madhaji met us coming from the opposite direction with Mr. Sakloth. I requested him (Mr. Sakloth) to get into my gharry and to accompany me to the plague hospital where the lady was being taken to in the gharry ahead. He kindly consented and got into my gharry. Following the first gharry we reached the Plague Hospital. Unfortunately the senior doctor was not there. And the junior doctor said that in the absence of orders he could do nothing. He expected that the senior doctor would arrive there at 4 o'clock and he asked us to be present then. We returned and the lady was taken into the hospital.

4. We returned home and at 4 o'clock again went to the Plague Hospital. We there learnt that the ladies were made to get out of the gharry which was washed with water and the ladies (or the persons) were also bathed with water and only then they were allowed to come out. On receiving this information we caused inquiries to be made inside. We learnt that the senior

doctor had not arrived. We were prohibited from going inside. But we could hear from outside the crying of the lady and her daughter. Therefore we sent word to the lady from a distance yet loudly to be within her hearing that we were there and that we would soon get her released on the arrival of the senior doctor. In the meantime a lady doctor came up walking about the compound. We requested her to let us know if the lady brought there was suffering from plague or any other disease. She replied it was not plague but a throat abscess which had been opened with a lancet. She further said that the senior doctor on his arrival would examine (the abscess) and then let the lady go. On this assurance we felt satisfied and had word sent to the lady not to be nervous and that there would be soon an end to all troubles on the arrival of the senior doctor.

5. It was already past five, but the senior doctor was not yet come. We again made our request to the lady doctor who referred us to another doctor nearby. We sent word to him who, after consulting the lady doctor and feeling pity for the lady who was weeping bitterly and for the daughter who was crying for mother's milk, allowed them to go. Then at five o'clock we brought the lady home in a gharry.

These were our troubles. I pray for their removal.

MEMORANDUM of suggestions by Mr S. VEDAMURTHI, B A., Editor of the "Rangoon Mail."

Since 1908 when I first came to Rangoon I have travelled eleven times, five times as a second class passenger and six times as a deck passenger.

My suggestions are these:—

1. The accommodation for women must be separate; in some ships the aft, and in others that portion which is small might be made into screened accommodation reserved for ladies, with separate latrine arrangements. Confinement and miscarriage have occurred sometimes on board the open deck. To my knowledge a birth occurred on board the "Ekna" in November 1915 between here and Madras. It was with great difficulty that a cabin was secured. Medical arrangements are very poor, and medicines not in proper quantities. I would suggest the appointment of a midwife or a qualified nurse on board each steamer. The ship's doctor does not take his usual rounds as he used to do. Misconduct has occurred on board, and I had brought a case to the notice of the Company and had the men dismissed. Women who travel alone are not safe at present.

2. Water is doled out twice and sometimes once. It must be strictly enjoined that the water should be given thrice, two hours each time.

3. The ship's men levy high rates for comfortable places. In the SS "Arankola" which came here from Calcutta in the first week of November last I was a deck passenger on the aft, on the port side of the ship with dozen others. The clerk and the gunner demanded Rs. 5 from each of us. I refused to pay, but my fellow passengers paid Rs. 5 each. This practice should be put a stop to.

4. Cattle, about 30 buffaloes, were tied next to us with an apology for a fence. We had to pass through dung and through sacks of fodder to reach the latrines which were on the lower deck. These goats and sheep were huddled up close to the ladder, and we had to wade our way through, over a slippery ground. I would suggest that passenger vessels should be prohibited from carrying cattle. They must be taken on cargo boats. It was raining one day at midnight and the rain water brought in dung and fodder and flooded our places. Our bed and clothes were drenched in this dung water and we had to keep awake the remaining portion of the night.

5. The latrine accommodation is very inadequate and the latrines are always filthy. Sweepers should be posted who should be

made to clean them as often as possible. It would be a great convenience to passengers if latrines are built one in the fore part and the other in the aft in every deck intended for deck passengers.

6. The one hotel that is on board is not enough. Poor badly cooked food is given and the charges are sometimes exorbitant. I would suggest that there should be two hotels in every steamer, one kept by a Brahman for vegetarians and the other by a non-Brahman for non-vegetarians. They must be made to have enough provisions, coffee, tea and cool drinks at some fixed tariff which should be exhibited in prominent places. One hotel might be in the aft and the other might be in the fore part.

7. Drink is given to the third class passengers. I was a deck passenger on a Madras going boat in January 1913. A fellow passenger got himself drunk and when I had asked the butler to stop giving him liquor the clerk of the steamer helped him to get drunk.

8. The ship's crew hide passengers' luggage and they are returned only after payment. I would suggest that shelves or racks should be built on board the steamer to keep the passengers' luggage which otherwise occupies the sitting space.

9. The difference between a second class fare and a deck fare is so great that respectable middle class people who can't afford to travel second class have the choice of paying the higher fare and getting comforts or of paying the lower fare and suffering inconvenience. My suggestion is that an intermediate class should be opened and that such cabins could be arranged as third class cabins are on overland steamers.

10. The Customs examination is very humiliating. My box was opened, and the contents were thrown about hither-skithere. My diary was read by the Customs officials and the pockets of the Editor of the "Swadesa Paripalini," a Tamil daily publisher in this town, were searched by this official and the private letters of my friend were read. I understand this official's name to be Mr Thompson. A declaration from respectable passengers that they have no arms or seditious literature should be enough even in these times of war, in the absence of any information about them from the port of embarkation. At present Indians are treated as smugglers or bomb-throwers.

11. Women passengers are examined by the lady doctor in a way harassing to them. I was at the wharf to receive a respectable family which consisted of an elderly lady, a girl of age and three other children. The girl said that she was vaccinated, but the lady doctor insisted on the girl taking out her bodice to see the marks of the vaccination and examined her in other ways. This was done in a room whose doors were open. The women inside could be seen by men who were

standing out. Such an examination is regarded by us as a great humiliation. The elderly lady assured me that the lady doctor had a small cane with which she tapped some and beat others to keep them in a line.

12. The wharf coolies make exorbitant demands and we have to pay them. I understand the system to be that the Company engages a maistry who should supply the Company with a certain number of coolies on monthly pay.

This maistry engages them, perhaps not the required number, and does not pay them their monthly wages. These coolies are allowed to exact as much money as they could, and all the collections are pooled and distributed, out of which also the maistry has his share in addition to their monthly wages. It would be better if the coolies are made to draw their monthly wages direct from the company's office.

13. The ticket office accommodation is very imperfect. I would suggest that a large shed be erected with half a dozen ticket windows in it for the tickets to be sold under the immediate supervision of the officers of the Company.

14. The selling of tickets at a premium can be remedied to a great extent by the Company itself undertaking the sale of tickets. I do not stand in the way of the Company giving any commission to its agents or brokers, but I am convinced that allowing them to sell tickets in their private offices without the controlling influence of the officers of the Company is leading to jobbery and corruption. Much of the people's complaints would disappear if the Company itself would sell tickets in their office.

15. I would plead for the erection of a waiting room on the foreshore on a grand scale. The Erooking Street wharf might be utilised for the purpose. There must be first, second and third class waiting rooms with pipes, latrine accommodation, food stalls and other conveniences. Passengers who come from upcountry could be allowed to stop there for a few days before a steamer sails and preference of first tickets should be given to them. All Steamship Companies who use the wharf could be asked to contribute their share for the erection of this waiting room. The Companies themselves would gain some income by letting these stalls to the highest bidder.

19. Lastly I would suggest that an officer of the Company who is well conversant with Indian languages be appointed who should be asked to travel periodically by different steamers to look after the comforts of the passengers.

The cost that the Company will have to incur in carrying out these suggestions is comparatively small, for if my information is correct the Company makes about 70 lakhs of rupees a year from the deck passengers.

and spends only 30 lakhs. There seems to be a profit of forty lakhs from deck passengers alone.

To me it seems that the only panacea for

all these troubles is a state railway to run through Akyab and Chittagong which should be undertaken by the Government soon after the war.

PETITION from certain Deck Passengers.

The 13th September 1917.

We beg to represent the intolerable grievances that we had to put up with while performing voyage between Rangoon and Calcutta, on account of excesses on the part of employees of the Steamship Company and hope that the good committee which is appointed to remove our said grievances will, in their exertion for their removal, perform a noble act while fulfilling their duty. We state below our said grievances in a serial order —

1. The time and place of getting tickets have been so limited that the passengers get confused and have to suffer whipping in the manner of beasts. Not only that. On the time for purchasing tickets being over absolute necessity requires them to purchase tickets through brokers on payment of a price in excess of Rs. 10.

2. Passengers are called about four hours before the steamer would weigh anchor. But there is no place whatever where they would wait. If they, while putting up with the troubles of heat and rain, were to go to the public road, the police would remove them in order that the "road may not be obstructed." If they go there (i.e., towards the steamer) they cannot even get on to the 'paul' (wharf); while the load of luggage on the head and whipping by the "Sahib log" on the back would be harassing them.

3. Passengers themselves cannot take care of their bundles on account of crowding. Nor can they take a helpmate with them. At such a moment, licensed coolies carry the bundles on obtaining four or eight times the (usual) hire. Inasmuch as other coolies cannot even go there, payment has got to be made through helplessness.

4. After the passengers had got on board, the officers on steamers do not go to see the third class passengers on board even out of mistake in order to enquire whether they had any difficulty. There is no perfect arrangement as regards cleanliness. Water, vomitings, saliva, expectoration, etc., accumulate in gutters. And when the boat rolls on account of waves, the latter pass over and wet the bedding and luggage of passengers. At every place, passage, etc., you will see flies buzzing over vomitings, saliva, expectoration, etc., whereas the latrines remain in such a filthy condition that one is obliged to pass and re-pass over the night soil.

4. As regards water for drinking it is available only for an hour or two during 24 hours for thousands of persons. Who could talk of bathing? Even in spite of a lot of

worry, most of the people are not able to obtain even a 'Lota' full of water. They remain tossing about restlessly throughout day and night in consequence of thirst. And on the top of it, the Khalasis, while passing and repassing would trample upon their bedding and for greed of money they would be wetting the luggage at the time of washing on board. On remonstrance, they would start pushing and abusing. No one who could redress the grievances of those helpless passengers would be available.

6. There is no arrangement on the landing places and on board the steamers for the sake of females. And when "Purda" women arrive on the jetty they have to put up with more than one hardship inasmuch as the males who accompany them are separated from them. At the time of embarkation it is all right. They are seated at a place pointed out (to them) where the males could go and find them, but at the time of disembarkation males are stopped and females are let down in the first instance. There is no place appointed for them where they could take their seat. In such a condition, they keep on moving about here and there. If the 'Thug' protectors of modern days would so desire, they could say to those confused women "come here, we will enable you to rejoin your male friends (or husbands)." On such a pretext they could take them away to another place. Thereafter when the males are landed from steamers, they begin to run about here and there on not finding their females. If none of their relations had gone and seated near those females, great hardship is suffered in finding them. It is, therefore, prayed that some special "Bandobast" be made for females and that they may not be separated on landing places from their husbands or relations—may their males also should be landed together with them.

7. On alighting from steamers, passengers are confined like sheep in a very narrow space where there is not the least chance of obtaining fresh air, for purposes of vaccination. On arriving there, they are obliged to stand there like puppets (or dummies). On the slightest movement, the batons of merciless policemen begin to smack on the head. We raise a voice in pitiful words, we entertain a strong hope that the said good Committee will certainly listen to our present voice and make a speedy attempt to deliver us from these grievances.

8. It is immensely and strongly necessary that latrines for females should be kept separate with partition from those for males.

and that bathing rooms should be provided so that the infants who travel with them and who have to maintain themselves on their mothers' milk may not be prejudiced in their health on account of their mothers' milk available under irregular condition (on

board). Some of the females undergo trouble on board and remain sick for months. It is strongly prayed that the Committee will first of all direct their attention towards this improvement.

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WRITTEN STATEMENT of Mr. MATHIESON, Rangoon, Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co., Ltd., to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 26th June 1917.

At Mr Bell's request, I took Mr Chowdhury to the deck booking office to identify some durwans whom he said were assaulting the passengers. The entrance to the booking office is from 40th Street. On arrival Mr. Chowdhury asked to enter by the waiting room, in which there were about 120 Comandiel passengers waiting their turn to purchase tickets—most of them seated down. At the two exits leading to the booking windows were two maistries (Coringhees) who were maintaining order in the room, and Mr Smith was controlling the queue to the ticket widows. I told Mr. Smith to leave and Mr Chowdhury and his witness (an Indian) pointed to the two maistries (these men are in the employ of the passenger broker). I withdrew the men and explained to Mr. Chowdhury who they were and what their duties were, *viz*, to control the crowd, and that being men of the same district they are better able to talk to the coolies. Mr Chowdhury in reply said there is no need to beat the passengers, that there is another humane way of getting them to do what is required, *viz*, the use of sweet words.

I asked the passengers to support Mr. Chowdhury's allegation. In reply several of them said that the coolies in front were being beaten by the two maistries, but no one would say that he was beaten. I then asked if they could point out any man who had been beaten, the reply was all those in front. I then turned to Mr. Chowdhury and asked him to go to the front with those who had spoken and pick out the beaten coolies. Mr. Chowdhury went forward but could not get anybody to support him. Meantime the coolies had grown impatient and the small room was a chaos of shouting coolies round the two exits. On this Mr. Chowdhury came out to me with his handkerchief to his nose and expectorating. I then asked him to use his influence and get some order. He very kindly volunteered, but was unable to do anything with the crowd. By this time both exits were blocked and the small corridor in front of the booking window packed to overcrowding. I then took Mr. Chowdhury, after pushing my way through coolies and reached

the booking window—Mr. Chowdhury and I tried to get them into order by words and failed. I then asked Mr Chowdhury not to do anything but stand alongside of me in the corridor and watch them, when left to themselves.

It was not three minutes later when Mr. Chowdhury was hustled and had to leave, and I had a man push his hand into my face, compelling me to follow Mr. Chowdhury. Mr. Chowdhury remarked "It is certainly our own fault, we do not respect our own kind—there is no doubt that the force used by the durwans is reasonable. I drew Mr. Chowdhury's attention to the fact that there were only about 150—200 present and asked him to consider a similar state of affairs with 6,000 wanting tickets; and again the trouble caused when different castes and religions form the mass.

Mr. Chowdhury remarked that he certainly did not realize the difficulties we had to contend against and was pleased to have had this opportunity to enlighten himself.

I then took Mr. Chowdhury with the two Maistries in to Mr. Bell, but Mr. Chowdhury was unable to prove his allegation against the maistries.

Mr. Chowdhury also spoke about passengers being charged Rs. 10-6-0 and Rs. 10-8-0 for tickets. It was explained to him that the annas were boat charges for landing on the other coast. Mr. Bell asked him if he had read the notice boards outside advertising these charges, he said that he did not see any notice boards. Mr. Bell then took Mr. Chowdhury and showed him both boards. And also examined a few tickets held by coolies, pointing out that the fare was marked on the ticket and the boat ticket said what it was for. Mr. Chowdhury stated that the tickets he had seen in the morning were not thus marked. Two of the tickets taken from passengers had the marks and he was handed two bundles of the unissued tickets in which not a single ticket was unmarked. Mr. Chowdhury could not have carefully examined the tickets as he said that he thought the tickets he examined were for passage to Madras, whereas the numbers of the tickets showed they were issued for Bimlipatam and Coconada.

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WRITTEN STATEMENT of Mr. T. HUDSON, Assistant Manager, Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co., Ltd, Agents, B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 8th September 1917.

The written and oral evidence which has been admitted in the enquiry regarding deck passengers' alleged grievances may be summarised under 11 different headings.

They are as follows:—

1. Tickets —
  - (a) Selling of tickets.
  - (b) Inability to secure tickets.
  - (c) Tickets sold in excess of accommodation.
  - (d) Retailing of tickets
2. Insufficient time for embarkation of passengers.
3. Beating of passengers during embarkation.
4. Doctors on passenger ships.
5. Overcrowding on steamers.
6. Latrine accommodation.
7. Carriage of cattle on passenger ships.
8. Supply of drinking water during voyage.
9. Separate accommodation for women
10. Intermediate accommodation.
11. Extortion by baggage coolies.

Before dealing with these complaints in detail it might be as well to point out that a number of them are subjects which are legislated for in the Native Passenger Ships Act, 1887, the compliance with which it is in the ordinary routine of the authorities at all ports in India to enforce. All B.I. Company's steamers engaged in the coasting passenger traffic come within the provisions of this Act. The management of this Agency is constantly in touch with its expert marine adviser to ensure that all Government regulations with regard to passengers are complied with.

I will now deal with the alleged grievances as summarised above:—

1. *Selling of tickets*—It is stated that the facilities for purchasing tickets are inadequate.

Tickets may be purchased—

*For all ports* from the ticket office in 40th Street.

*For Madras* from (1) the ticket office in 40th Street (2) Messrs Abdul Rahmau's office in Mogul Street.

*For Coromandal ports* from (1) the ticket office in 40th Street and (2), when there is an accumulation of passengers, two ticket boxes on the Company's vacant land in Sparks Street; (3) a temporary office opened as necessary in 27th Street.

The main ticket office attached to the Company's office in 40th Street is provided with an entrance and exit for passengers who pass through and purchase their tickets from two pigeon holes *en route*. The passengers go in at one door and out at another. It will be seen, therefore, that the allegations of some witnesses to the contrary are untrue.

Ticket-sellers are searched before entering the selling rooms and again searched on leaving, in order to ensure that they have not accepted or extorted unauthorised charges from passengers.

I consider that the arrangements for selling tickets as described above are more than sufficient for normal times, but the accumulations of passengers for reasons explained in paragraph (b) are such as would strain any system.

Some witnesses have complained that tickets are not sold sufficiently long before the steamers sail. In the case of Coromandel and Madras steamers selling of tickets is commenced generally five days and sometimes one week before the sailing dates. The selling of tickets on these lines is spread over several days in order to relieve the congestion at the ticket offices. As regards the Calcutta mail steamers tickets are sold the day before sailing. On this line the requirements of the Military authorities for space are often very large and sometimes extend to the entire space in the steamer. Their requirements are frequently not made known until within 24 hours of sailing and consequently it is not possible to limit the bookings to the steamer's capacity unless the Military requirements are first ascertained. Any other procedure would involve the shutting out of passengers who had purchased tickets and result in serious inconvenience to them.

(b) *Inability to secure tickets*.—This is no doubt a great inconvenience to passengers, but it is one which is solely due to war conditions. With about 70 per cent. of the Company's fleet requisitioned for Government employment in war services it has been quite impossible to keep an immediate supply of tonnage ready to meet the large migration of labour which moves yearly between this province and India. This has resulted in accumulations of passengers in Rangoon during the emigrant season. At one time, according to estimates received from passenger brokers, there were as many as 12,000 persons in Rangoon at one time awaiting transport.

The tonnage available was quite inadequate to deal immediately with such numbers and the consequence was severe congestion and considerable inconvenience to passengers. This shortage of tonnage causes inconvenience not only to deck passengers but to 1st and 2nd class passengers as well. The situation has been aggravated by the prohibition by Government of advertisements of sailings, with the result that large numbers of coolies who would ordinarily have remained up-country until the dates of sailing were advertised, have come down to Rangoon on the chance of getting passages and have had to wait as long as two weeks, in some cases, before accommodation for them was available.

This situation was foreseen by the management early this year, and on 1st February last a letter—a copy of which is produced—was addressed to the Commissioner of Police. As a result the Local Government have now provided a large open space in the neighbourhood of Thompson Street, East Rangoon, fitted with a water-supply and latrines, as a resting place for passengers awaiting steamers. No overhead shelter has so far been erected. I am authorised to state that the B I S N. Company is quite prepared to subscribe liberally towards the cost of the erection on this land of a suitable shelter, temporary or otherwise, for the accommodation of passengers.

It must be remembered that even under the present abnormal conditions the severe congestion of passengers does not last more than about 2½ months in the year.

After the war when tonnage should be plentiful, and the off take of passengers regular, there should be no congestion such as has been experienced during the last two or three years and the period of congestion should not exceed about six weeks in each year.

A point which I desire to emphasize is that whereas freights on cargo homewards have reached a point during the war about ten times greater than pre-war rates, the fares for deck passage tickets between Rangoon and Indian ports have in no cases been raised.

The market rate of freight from Rangoon to Europe before the war was about 25s. per ton. It is now 250s. to 275s. per ton. The deck passenger rates from Rangoon to Calcutta, Coromandel and Madras were Rs 10, Rs. 10 and Rs 12 respectively. They are the same now. Had the Company cared to utilise the tonnage placed at the disposal of passengers for the carriage of cargo they would have received a much greater return. Instead of doing so they have, in the interests of the deck passengers who annually travel between here and India, and in the interests of the country generally, placed this tonnage on their passenger services at direct loss to themselves. They have, as pointed out above, refrained from increasing fares although on the Calcutta line there has been little opposition, and on the Madras and Coromandel lines, none, although they well knew that almost any fares asked for could be obtained. I understand that passenger rates on the China coast have been largely enhanced. Before the war the fare of a deck passenger—Hongkong to Singapore—was something like \$7. It has been raised from time to time and is now \$ 25.

I consider that it is no inconsiderable achievement for the Company to have transported a number of passengers almost equal to that moved in previous years, at a time when communications in other directions, both by land and sea, have been greatly curtailed, and in some cases abandoned altogether.

(c) *Tickets sold in excess of accommodation*—With two recent exceptions in

no cases have tickets been sold for steamers in excess of the number which Government permits the steamers to carry. In these two cases it has been due to the Military authorities having taken up space at the last moment after tickets to the full complement of the steamers had been issued. In these cases a careful tally was kept during embarkation to ensure that no passenger was allowed to embark in excess of the steamers carrying capacity. Those who were shut out were immediately given passes for the following steamer.

(d) *Retailing of tickets*.—I am aware of there having been complaints of tickets being retailed at enhanced rates. It is not surprising, in view of the conditions described in paragraph 1 (b), that this should be the case. Whenever complaints have been made the complainant has been invited to identify the vendor.

Had the vendor been proved to be an employee of the Company he would have been instantly dismissed.

I cannot recollect any instance of an employee of the Company having been so accused.

The complaints usually refer to touts and others who hang about the bazaar and the vicinity of our ticket offices and employ coolies who are not *bond fide* passengers to purchase tickets on their behalf, which they subsequently resell. It is not possible for the staff to discriminate as to whether any cooly who presents himself and asks for a ticket is a *bond fide* passenger or not.

For some considerable time it has been a rule that only one ticket is to be sold to each applicant. This is naturally not a hard and fast rule, and special circumstances must be and are considered.

I can suggest no further means to prevent tickets being sold outside for more than their value. When the war is over and there is plenty of tonnage available there will be room for all, and tickets will no longer have a scarcity value.

This matter has been a constant source of discussion not only amongst ourselves but with Indian gentlemen who it was thought might be able to assist us with their advice.

An attempt was made some time ago by the B I S N. Company to institute a prosecution by way of example to stop this practice, but we were advised that retailing a ticket at over face value is not a criminal offence and consequently there would seem to be no remedy unless the law be altered.

2. *Insufficient time for embarkation*—The time allowed for embarkation of passengers varies according to tidal conditions in the Rangoon river, but the ordinary time allowed is about three hours, and in many cases six hours or more.

The circumstances under which a shorter time has to be fixed are exceptional.

3. *Beating of passengers*—I visit every passenger ship some time before she sails and I constantly see passengers being em-



barked by the passage department staff. I have never witnessed the indiscriminate beating such as is alleged by some of the witnesses

Only in cases where a rush is made for the gangway have I seen anything in the nature of force used, and, when this occurs, strong measures must be taken on the spur of the moment to protect the weaker passengers and prevent serious accidents such as the weak being trampled under foot or a number of persons being precipitated over the side of the jetty into the river.

The Company's durwans are not allowed to carry canes, and I always make a point of seeing that they have no canes in their hands when they are on duty at the wharf. A number of witnesses have alleged that they have seen durwans striking passengers, but that they have been unable to say whether they were the Company's durwans or not. All B I. durwans wear white with a black and red chuprass (belt) and a brass plate with the exception of the jemadar, who is dressed in black with three red sergeant's stripes on his arm. It is, therefore, difficult to understand how there can be any difficulty in identifying these durwans

4. *Doctors on passenger ships*—The terms of the Native Passenger Ships Act do not compel steamers engaged on the Calcutta, Madras and Coromandel lines to carry a doctor, but the Company invariably provides a doctor on all ships regularly engaged on these lines for the comfort and convenience of passengers. It has been stated that the doctors of ships demand fees for services rendered to passengers. This is against the Company's rules, which are that they shall attend all passengers gratuitously. Any doctor found demanding fees from passengers would be dismissed. It may be noted here that the doctors carried on other Company's lines, notably Home line passenger boats, are permitted to charge fees on a fixed scale for medical services rendered to passengers

5. *Overcrowding on steamers*.—There have been allegations by numerous witnesses that steamers are overcrowded. During a long experience of British India work I can recollect no case in which any steamer of the Company has carried more than the complement allowed her by Government. Had such been the case Government would undoubtedly have intervened and applied the penalties provided for in the Native Passenger Ships Act.

The numbers of passengers steamers can carry are ascertained from what is known as the "A" Certificate, issued under the provisions of Section 10, Native Passenger Ships Act, 1887, which certifies to the seaworthiness of the vessel and gives the total complement of passengers as ascertained by measurements taken by the Government Surveyor. Copies of all "A" Certificates are kept in the office and are consulted in every case before a steamer is booked, and

tickets are never issued in excess of the number allowed. I attach hereto a statement of sailings this year showing in each case the steamer's complement and the booking of passengers.

6. *Lairine accommodation*—This is a matter which is also legislated for in the Native Passenger Ships Act and any infringement of the rules which lay down the number of seats to be provided would lead to the Port Authorities withholding the "B" Certificate issued under the provisions of Section 11 Native Passenger Ships Act, 1887. This certificate is granted every voyage and refers particularly to the equipment of passenger vessels. Without it the ship could not sail. In all cases separate lairine accommodation is provided for women.

7. *Carrage of Cattle on passenger ships*.—This is permitted by rule 6 of the Rules made under the Native Passenger Ships Act, subject to certain conditions as to penning which are always carried out. I admit it would be more comfortable for a passenger, whether he be a deck passenger or a 1st or 2nd class passenger, to travel by a ship carrying no cattle than by one which carries cattle in addition to passengers. There is a considerable trade in cattle, sheep and goats between Calcutta and Rangoon, and in pre-war times when the supply of tonnage was normal there were frequent opportunities for shipment on the decks of non-passenger ships which were coming with coal to Rangoon or in ballast to load cargoes at this port. Under present conditions these opportunities have practically ceased, and there remain only the regular mail steamers to implement this traffic. To refuse to carry the animals would mean that the trade would have to shut down, and as I understand that Rangoon supply of mutton is largely dependent on the animals imported from Calcutta, it would cause considerable hardship to the large European and Mahomedan communities. It is only on the run from Calcutta to Rangoon that cattle, sheep and goats are carried

8. *Supply of drinking water during the voyage*—Rule 1 of the rules under the Native Passenger Ships Act stipulates that one imperial gallon per head shall be supplied daily for the use of passengers. Actually quantities far in excess of this allowance are carried by all the Company's passenger steamers. The Calcutta mail steamers seldom leave with less than 300 tons and frequently with 500 tons of drinking water. The lowest of these two figures would give 2,000 passengers over 10 gallons per head per diem during the voyage to Calcutta. The evidence of steamer Captains will testify that there are ample opportunities for drawing water at all times of the day and night, except in the case of one or two older ships which are only in use in the passenger trade for the period of the war. In these ships water is supplied twice daily in quantities very largely in excess of the requirements of the Act.

The modern ships such as "Arankola" have taps which, are accessible to all day and night. The "Bs" ("Bangala" and (Bharata") have pumps and taps in two separate places, also accessible day and night.

9 *Separate accommodation for women.*—Several witnesses have made complaints that there is no separate accommodation for women on the Company's steamers. In my opinion if separate accommodation were provided, it would necessarily have to be to the complete exclusion of male passengers. otherwise the system might lead itself to serious abuses.

This is apparently the view taken by Railway Companies, who will not permit a husband to travel in a ladies' compartment with his wife. It is admitted that Indian ladies when on a sea voyage require the constant attention of their husbands or male relatives. On railway journeys they can attend to their wants through the carriage windows at stopping places. On a steamer they would be separated from the commencement of the voyage till its completion. In these circumstances it seems to be doubtful if they would be in any way benefited by separate accommodation. Separate latrines for women are provided on every steamer.

10. *Intermediate Accommodation* Several witnesses have made suggestions in regard to intermediate accommodation. Four of the Company's modern steamers "Ellenga," "Elephanta," "Edavana" and "Ellora," which I think were built and came out from home in 1911, were specially fitted up with intermediate accommodation as an experiment. It consisted of partitioned cabin spaces in the tweendecks without fittings, each compartment capable of accommodating 5 or 6 passengers. Beyond this reservation of space they were treated in all respects as ordinary deck passengers. The fares charged for this special reservation were Rangoon to Calcutta Rs 22-8-0 and Rangoon to Madras Rs. 29-8-0 the charge being based

on half the second class fare without diet. The experiment was not a success and the intermediate class was seldom availed of, passengers preferring to travel ordinary deck or second class. These steamers are now all engaged in Government transport work and their present whereabouts is not known to me, but from office records I find that the compartments were removed from the "Edavana." Although there was no definite record, it was the impression in the office that this accommodation had also been removed from the other three steamers. To make sure a telegram was despatched to Calcutta which elicited the following reply.

"Yours to-day. Intermediate accommodation fitted in "E" steamers practically all dismantled simply because no use was made of same by passengers—Mackinnons"

11. *Extortion by baggage coolies*—A notice board (photograph produced) is exhibited at every embarkation informing passengers that coolies are provided by the Company gratis for the purpose of handling their baggage, and warning them not to give gratuities. A contractor is employed and is paid Rs 1,250 per month for the purpose of supplying 80 coolies to each steamer. His receipts for this amount are produced.

He keeps a book (also produced) in which are recorded the individual receipts of each cooly for his monthly pay. If a cooly is caught accepting gratuities from passengers he is instantly dismissed. Some cases have been brought to my notice through Mr. Mathieson of the passage department and instant dismissal has followed.

I have no doubt that in spite of the safeguards provided by the Company, passengers tip baggage coolies to secure preferential treatment over fellow passengers. The same thing goes on in every part of the world. The public have the remedy in their own hands, and if they disregard the warnings which are exhibited, it is difficult to know in what way the Company can help them.

#### *Coymandel & Madras Native Passenger Traffic*

LITER from Mr. J. W. A. BELL, Asstt. Manager, for Bulloch Bros, Ltd, Agents,  
B I.S.N. Co., Ltd., to the Commissioner of Police, Rangoon.

*Rangoon, 1st February 1917.*

We have the honour to remind you that the time is approaching when the Indian coolies who have been engaged in agricultural and other pursuits in Burma, during the cold weather months, will return to their homes. Since the war commenced, the greater part of this Company's fleet has been taken up by Government for war purposes, and it has not been possible to maintain the regular services, which were in operation before August 1914. The result of this, in connection with the Indian passenger traffic, has been that for the last two years, at the season when the coolies return to their homes, large numbers have come

down to Rangoon, and have been detained, in some cases for several days, for want of steamers to take them to their destination. The result has been that the streets round our office have been used as a camping ground by these coolies, and there have been numerous complaints both from private individuals and from the Municipality. We understand that last year complaints were made to you, and we shall be glad to know whether you propose to take any steps during the current season, with a view to dealing with these passengers. The position may be even worse this year than last year, because whereas last year the Company's sailings were advertised, and therefore became known to persons residing

up-country, this year no advertisements may be published, and, in the districts, from whence these passengers come to Rangoon no information with regard to sailing dates will be obtainable. The intending passengers will therefore probably have to come to Rangoon more or less on chance.

We would suggest that a camping ground be allotted by you to which they could be directed by the police.

We need hardly point out to you that, in

view of the importance to this province of a regular supply of labour from India, everything possible should be done to facilitate the transport of these coolies between Burma and India. The trouble referred to is merely a temporary one, and when the necessity for the use by Government of the large number of ships at present on transport service no longer exists, conditions will again become normal, and there will be no inconvenience.

*Deck Passengers to Calcutta, Madras and Coromandel Coast for 1916.*

Date sailed	Steamer.	To Port.	Steamer's capacity.	Number carried.	Remarks.
4-1-1916	Katoria ...	Calcutta ..	1,435	333	
5-1-1916	Palitana ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,210	721	
8-1-1916	Dunera ..	Madras ...	2,164	478	
8-1-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	2,438	874	
10-1-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,361	90	
11-1-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	390	
15-1-1916	Gregory Apcar	Madras ...	2,122	186	
15-1-1916	Katoria ..	Calcutta ...	1,435	379	
18-1-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,438	513	
22-1-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	2,421	366	
24-1-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,361	1,025	
25-1-1916	Dunera ...	Calcutta ...	2,164	1,074	
29-1-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,438	414	
1-2-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	2,421	489	
7-2-1916	Fazilka ...	Do. ...	1,942	575	
8-2-1916	Itola ...	Do. ...	2,159	662	
8-2-1916	Dunera ...	Do. ...	2,164	1,174	
13-2-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ..	1,361	1,387	
13-2-1916	Euryalus ...	Madras ...	2,297	1,110	
15-2-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	2,438	803	
18-2-1916	Palitana ...	Coro. Coast and Madras	1,210	908	
22-2-1916	Bangala ...	Madras via Coro. Coast	2,421	206	
22-2-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	1,483	
29-7-1916	Dunera ...	Do ...	2,164	1,284	
7-3-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,438	1,517	
7-3-1916	Palitana ...	Coromandel Coast and Madras.	1,210	1,185	
8-3-1916	Japan ...	Calcutta via Gopalpore	2,748	16	
10-3-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	148	
10-3-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,361	1,318	
11-3-1916	Zaida ...	Do. ...	1,069	1,559	
14-3-1916	Dunera ...	Calcutta ...	2,164	1,381	
15-3-1916	Euryalus ...	Madras ...	2,297	799	
17-3-1916	Zira ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,183	928	
18-3-1916	Fazilka ...	Madras ...	1,942	1,499	
20-3-1916	Bharata ...	Coromandel Coast ...	2,438	1,177	
21-3-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	896	
22-3-1916	Shrula ...	Coromandel Coast ...	2,167	1,368	
27-3-1916	Vivawa ...	Do ...	1,693	1,722	
28-3-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	2,438	1,246	
4-4-1916	Dunera ...	Do. ...	1,641	1,252	
7-4-1916	Bangala ...	Coromandel Coast ...	2,421	1,780	
11-4-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	2,438	1,214	
12-4-1916	Euryalus ...	Madras ...	1,757	2,420	
13-4-1916	Palitana ...	Coromandel Coast and Madras.	* 1,130	1,036	
18-4-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	1,223	
18-4-1916	L. Apcar ...	Coromandel Coast ...	* 1,353	1,127	
18-4-1916	Fazilka ...	Madras ...	* 1,230	3	
20-4-1916	Dunera ...	Calcutta ...	1,517	1,059	
22-4-1916	Katoria ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,644	1,227	
25-4-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	2,438	896	
27-4-1916	Itola ...	Do. ...	1,323	1,045	
29-4-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,748	1,025	
3-5-1916	Dunera ...	Do. ...	1,353	909	
8-5-1916	Palitana ...	Madras ...	1,644	996	
3-5-1916	Euryalus ...	Coromandel Coast ...	* 1,350	941	
6-5-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	* 1,850	1,186	
9-5-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,323	1,116	
9-5-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	1,850	
9-5-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	917	
9-5-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	953	

\* 5' Rule.

## Deck Passengers to Calcutta, Madras and Coromandel Coast for 1916—contd

Date sailed.	Steamer.	To Port.	Steamer's capacity.	Number carried.	Remarks.
10-5-1916	C. Apcar ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,230	1,228	
12-5-1916	Fazilka ...	Do. ...	* 2,052	2,040	
13-5-1916	Dunera ...	Do. ...	1,644	1,644	
16-5-1916	Arankola ...	Calcutta ..	2,086	1,678	
17-5-1916	Palitana ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,130	1,084	
18-5-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	1,323	979	
22-5-1916	Japan ...	Do. ...	2,179	1,972	
23-5-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	971	
24-5-1916	Santhia ...	Madras ...	1,771	1,550	
26-5-1916	Arankola ...	Calcutta ...	2,086	1,642	
29-5-1916	Palitana ...	Coromandel Coast ..	1,130	1,126	
29-5-1916	Dunera ...	Madras ...	1,644	1,128	
30-5-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	1,323	912	
30-5-1916	C. Apcar ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,230	1,225	
3-6-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ..	1,353	792	
6-6-1916	Arankola ...	Do. ...	2,086	1,372	
6-6-1916	Ujma ...	Coromandel Coast ...	921	921	
7-6-1916	Fazilka ...	Madras ...	1,547	1,119	
10-6-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	1,323	765	
13-6-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	960	
15-6-1916	C Apcar ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,230	1,223	
15-6-1916	Palitana ...	Madras ...	1,130	1,103	
18-6-1916	Arankola ...	Calcutta ...	2,086	1,681	
20-6-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	1,323	892	
24-6-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	951	
27-6-1916	Arankola ..	Do. ...	2,086	941	
1-7-1916	C. Apcar ...	Coromandel Coast ...	* 1,230	1,224	
2-7-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	1,323	580	
4-7-1916	Fazilka ...	Madras ...	1,547	972	
5-7-1916	Arankola ...	Calcutta ...	2,086	* 1,178	
7-7-1916	Taroba ...	Do. ...	2,240	326	
11-7-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	900	
16-7-1916	Shivala ...	Do. ...	1,758	?	
17-7-1916	Euryalus ...	Do. ...	1,757	692	
18-7-1916	Arankola ...	Do. ...	2,086	754	
18-7-1916	C Apcar ...	Coromandel Coast ...	* 1,230	1,102	
19-7-1916	G. Apcar ...	Madras ...	1,667	551	
20-7-1916	Taroba ...	Calcutta ...	2,240	227	
24-7-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	588	
26-7-1916	Arankola ...	Do. ...	2,086	707	
30-7-1916	Fazilka ...	Madras ...	1,547	474	
1-8-1916	Taroba ...	Calcutta ...	2,240	574	
5-8-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	550	
5-8-1916	C. Apcar ...	Coromandel Coast ...	* 1,230	707	
8-8-1916	Arankola ...	Calcutta ...	2,086	1,017	
12-8-1916	Euryalus ...	Madras ...	1,757	756	
13-8-1916	Taroba ...	Calcutta ...	2,240	495	
15-8-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	684	
16-8-1916	Japan ...	Do. ...	2,179	3	
19-8-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	1,323	642	
22-8-1916	Taroba ...	Do. ...	2,240	1,172	
26-8-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	576	
28-8-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ...	* 1,230	1,263	
30-8-1916	Arankola ...	Calcutta ...	2,086	910	
2-9-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,458	508	
3-9-1916	Fazilka ...	Madras ...	1,612	1,148	
5-9-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,221	915	
9-9-1916	Arankola ...	Do. ...	2,867	911	
12-9-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	* 2,458	856	
13-9-1916	Euryalus ...	Madras ...	2,297	919	
16-9-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ..	2,421	859	
16-9-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,361	960	
19-9-1916	G. Apcar ...	Calcutta ...	2,122	936	
21-9-1916	Santhia ...	Do. ...	2,204	3	
23-9-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,458	840	
20-9-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	2,421	857	
4-10-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	1,323	889	
5-10-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,361	1,233	
5-10-1916	Euryalus ...	Madras ...	2,297	882	
6-10-1916	Taroba ...	Calcutta ...	2,240	584	
10-10-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	910	
12-10-1916	Cocorada ...	Madras ...	3,033	436	
15-10-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	1,323	947	
17-10-1916	Sangoia ...	Do. ...	"	5	
18-10-1916	Shivala ...	Do. ...	1,758	668	

## Deck Passengers to Calcutta, Madras and Coromandel Coast for 1916—concl'd.

Date sailed	Steamer.	To Port.	Steamers capacity.	Number carried	Remarks.
19-10-1916	Taroba ...	Calcutta ...	2,240	1,370	
24-10-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	1,353	863	
26-10-1916	Bulimba ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,361	1,326	
26-10-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	1,343	333	
30-10-1916	Coconada ...	Madras ...	3,033	1,111	
1-11-1916	Arankola ...	Do. ...	2,867	1,190	
3-11-1916	Bangala ...	Do. ...	2,421	339	
4-11-1916	Taroba ...	Do. ...	2,838	285	
7-11-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,458	865	
11-11-1916	Arankola ...	Do. ...	2,867	527	
11-11-1916	Euryalus ...	Do. ...	1,757	520	
12-11-1916	Virawa ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,360	1,118	
14-11-1916	Ban ala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	804	
18-11-1916	Taroba ...	Do. ...	2,838	452	
18-11-1916	Palitana ...	Coromandel Coast ...	946	127	
18-11-1916	Coconada ...	Madras ...	3,033	323	
21-11-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	2,458	565	
24-11-1916	Virawa ...	Coromandel Coast ...	1,360	575	
25-11-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	653	
26-11-1916	Palitana ...	Coromandel Coast ...	946	402	
29-11-1916	Taroba ...	Calcutta ...	2,838	496	
2-12-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,458	474	
4-12-1916	Arankola ...	Coromandel Coast ...	2,086	466	
4-12-1916	Virawa ...	Do. ...	1,360	158	
6-12-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	2,421	773	
9-12-1916	Taroba ...	Do. ...	2,838	541	
12-12-1916	Bharata ...	Do. ...	2,458	589	
12-12-1916	Coconada ...	Coromandel Coast ...	3,033	699	
12-12-1916	Euryalus ...	Madras ...	1,757	824	
16-12-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	1,353	650	
17-12-1916	G. Apar ...	Do. ...	1,378	434	
21-12-1916	Taroba ...	Do. ...	2,838	794	
22-12-1916	Fazilka ...	Madras ...	1,547	46	
23-12-1916	Bharata ...	Calcutta ...	2,458	415	
24-12-1916	Chilka ...	Madras ...	2,836	288	
26-12-1916	Bangala ...	Calcutta ...	1,353	696	
26-12-1916	Coconada ...	Coromandel Coast ...	3,033	1,582	
30-12-1916	Arankola ...	Calcutta ...	2,867	617	

## Extract from Mr. Hudson's Diary dated 26th June 1917.

Mr. Chowdhury called 11-45 a.m. He stated that tickets were being sold at above advertised rates. When asked what prices were being paid he said Rs. 10-6 and Rs. 10-8 for Coromandel Ports and Rs. 12-4-0 for Madras. It was explained to him that the annas 6, 8 and 4 were for tolls and boat tickets. It was shewn to him that these charges were advertised on the notice boards outside the office displaying the fares to different ports, and that separate tickets were given for the charges for toll and boat hire. He then admitted he was wrong in his assumption that tickets were being sold at over schedule rates.

He further stated that passengers were being beaten outside the ticket office in 40th Street by the durwans employed by the

Company's passage broker, Hurry Krishna Pillay. He admitted that he asked coolies who had been struck to come forward and identify the striker but that none would do so. Questioned he admitted he could find no marks on any coolies who complained to him that they had been struck.

He stated that Mr. Mathieson had accompanied him to the ticket office, where the durwans were controlling the influx of passengers. He admitted that when Mr. Mathieson withdrew the durwans and allowed him to try to control the crowd he had been unable to do so and had been severely hustled. He stated that hitherto he had not realized the difficulties there were in controlling passengers. The number purchasing tickets on this particular occasion was not more than 150.

LETTER from Mr M S A. MUDALIAR, Stenographer & Typist, Messrs. Jamal Bros. & Co., Ltd., Rangoon, to the Chairman, The British Indian Deck Passengers' Enquiry Committee, Old Public Buildings, Rangoon.

*Rangoon, 16th July 1917.*

Taking advantage of the invitation to the public to submit any evidence they might choose to do before the Deck Passengers' Enquiry Committee, I take the liberty to narrate hereunder my own experience with a view to draw the attention of the Committee to what severe hardships the deck passengers are put whilst travelling per B I Boats

1. I was a deck passenger with my family, consisting of a wife, a boy and a baby of 11 months, on board the S S "Fultala" which left Madras for Rangoon on 9th February 1915. We were quartered in the fore-deck of the steamer, the congestion was so great that we had scarcely room to sleep. I had to lie down sometimes with the baby on me for want of space

2. Drinking water was supplied only once every morning, so that one had to take a provision of water for the remainder of the day, and therefore the rush for water every morning could better be imagined than described.

3. The lavatories, if we can call them by that name, were of course doorless and filthy beyond description emitting the most horrible obnoxious smell; this and the vomiting of the passengers, which was left uncleaned till the next day, made it nothing less than a veritable hell, sickening the very heart in a strange manner. There were two lavatories at each end of the steamer—intended for men and women separately—but owing to the

distance between the two, no distinction could be made; both sex using the same. I had never seen a more vexatious sight. The hardpressed passengers had to bear such conditions until the last hour of landing

4. We were brought, after 4 days' tedious journey, not to land, but to be content with the landscape. The steamer cast anchor in the river at about 7 a.m., the 1st and 2nd class passengers were disembarked by a launch, and the tarpaulins covering the deck were immediately and mercilessly removed, leaving women, children and all under a scorching sun to roast. The watersupply having been stopped the previous day none had a drop of water to put down their thirst, which grew more and more intense as the sun got higher and higher. The cranes on the deck were at work, which added to the heat of the day, increased the passengers' thirst to a pitch. I had to beg for water of many before I could get a little for my boy. Thus it was 3 p.m. before we could set foot on land although the steamer anchored in the river at 7 a.m. What a period of suffering!

These are all solid facts without the least exaggeration and could be easily verified. Human patience could not be exploited further and it is high time that the voice of the poor beggars of deck passengers who, bye-the-by, bring in more revenue to the shipping company than the fortunates of the higher classes, should be heard, if not for any other reason, at least for the sake of humanity.

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LETTER from Mr A. C. CHATTERJEE, Pleader, Pegu, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

*Rangoon, 28th July 1917*

Finding from the local papers that a committee is appointed to enquire into the matter of treatment accorded to the Indian passengers arriving at Rangoon by the B.I.S. N. Coy.'s steamers by the Medical, Customs, and Police authorities, I beg to state these few facts which are personally known to me.

I am a resident of this country for the last 27 years and have been practising as a pleader for 24 years. I am a traveller as a 2nd class passenger by the B. I. boats at least once a year between Rangoon and Calcutta.

I have sometimes noticed the treatment accorded to the deck passengers both at the time of embarkation and debarkation is anything but humane and the troubles and hardships they suffer in the voyage on the boat owing to overcrowding is distressing. Their sufferings can be to a great extent removed by a little forbearance, tact, and prevention of overcrowding by the B. I. authorities.

But the hardships, the troubles and annoyances of the Indian passengers irrespective of class and sex become extreme at the time of debarkation at Rangoon. Some of the measures adopted by the authorities (the medical, the police, and the customs) in the name of their so-called rules are, I dare say, unnecessary, so much so, that any self-respecting man generally takes them as gratuitous insults. I shall give here few instances —

(1) The invidious distinction made between an Anglo-Indian and an Indian 2nd class passenger as to the issue of debarkation tickets. I have seen that these debarkation tickets are meant only for Indian passengers, who are not allowed to disembark without the production of such a ticket, whereas his Anglo-Indian fellow passengers are free to disembark whenever they like.

(2) The police enquiries and the subsequent activities of the C. I. D. authorities on board.

(3) The manner in which the medical examination of the deck passengers is conducted is, to say the least of it, insulting and annoying to the extreme. I have noticed that respectable Indians, who were compelled to travel as deck passengers for want of 2nd class accommodation, were treated as coolies inasmuch as all of them were made to stand in a row, stripped of upper garments of all descriptions.

(4) The coolies said to be employed by the Agents of the B. I. Coy. always charge exorbitant fees for handling passengers' luggages.

(5) The most annoying and insulting measure of this episode is the personal searches made of respectable Indian females for contraband which the Indians feel

and resent very strongly, as their Anglo-Indian sisters are not so subjected to.

(6) Then the searches by the Customs officers and their menials and the C.I.D. men. It is an open secret that people can get exempted from the most annoying mode of search on paying some gratuity. Those that do not pay this expected gratuity have to suffer their things in the boxes to be scattered all over the place in the course of the search.

(7) The C.I.D. officers and their subordinates also cause the detention of passengers most unnecessarily by pretending to examine even the ordinary common every-day books and correspondence. This indiscriminate search is insulting to the extreme and has no other effect but wounding the feelings of the Indians deeply.

LETTER from Mr J. M. CHOWDHURI, c/o Messrs. The Burma Trading & Agency Co., 75, Mogul Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Inquiry Committee, Old Public Buildings, Rangoon (Witness No. 173).

Rangoon, 191 .

I beg to submit the following statement for your information regarding the hardships and troubles I endured during my voyage from here to Calcutta.

That in October 1914, I was bound for Calcutta by S.S. "Lama." I applied for the second class pass but could not get any. Having no other alternative, I had personally been to the office of Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co. for a ticket either of European deck or ordinary deck. After two hours' waiting I had the good luck of obtaining one ordinary ticket with great difficulty. The passage to the ticket counter being nothing but a pass was overcrowded by the hundreds of passengers; every one was anxious to get his ticket. After much toil and toil I had managed to go through the mob and reached the clerk who was selling the ticket. From the manner in which booking clerk spoke to me, he seemed to be one like the Lord of Destiny of so many passengers. I being hustled down by the rush of passengers spoke to him in a very plaintive voice to favour me with a ticket. After a long coaxing I got one. The horrible scene I saw at the entrance, it makes one's heart rend to describe. I saw the durwans standing at the gate as a second god of death with sticks in their hands and driving and beating the passengers as if they were cattle or as the shepherd drives and beats their flock of sheep and also showering on them like the showers of rain the most abusive languages. On obtaining my ticket I got away from them. As the steamer was timed to leave at one o'clock I went to the Lewis Street wharf at 12 noon; but after waiting in the burning sun for four hours in standing I was allowed to proceed to on board the ship. The reason why I was not allowed so long to go to on pontoon even is widely known to all who suffered. The passenger who could afford to pay something to the gate-keeper

was at once allowed to go to the shelter on the pontoon. These repressions were being carried on, on the very nose of the officer then present at the wharf. I had with me a small box and a bedding, but the coolie refused to carry it to the steamer until I agreed to pay Re. 1-4-0 for the same. The steamer was far away from the jetty owing to there being ebbtide. The passengers had to be carried on by a launch to the steamer with their luggages. Here again I had the mortification of being subjected to more hardships than I had already endured. The coolie whom I engaged on payment of Re. 1-4-0 had already disappeared with my box in which I kept my money and valuable things, that I had all at the time. The anxiety of uncertainty of getting my box was not relieved until 10 minutes before the removal of the gangway when the said strange figure appeared to me for some *baksiss* (reward). I reported this fact to an officer of the steamer who happened to pass by, but I believe, ordinary courtesy, I am sorry to say, was wanting in the behaviour of the said officer; so I had to pay another four annas to the coolie, that is, altogether Re. 1-8-0 for carrying a box. On board the ship there was hardly any room left to make a bed to sleep,—nay a place to stand as the passengers were packed up like sardines. I reported this to another officer, who was a perfect contrast to his fellow officer in the first instance, refused help with a sullen look. Having no other alternative I had to put up with the inconveniences all through my voyage.

On my downward voyage from Calcutta to Rangoon I was put up off for 10 days to procure one second class ticket for my wife and one deck ticket for myself as an attendant to her. My wife, on going into the cabin, found one European lady occupied her berth also by spreading her belongings on it. Being told of her difficulty I hastened to the cabin but was kept outside of it with the words "Don't

come in" to which I replied that I should like to go inside to see my wife sit on the berth. A few minutes later I was allowed to go there. Besides this time I had never been allowed to go into the cabin to look to the comfort of my wife although it was written in my ticket as attendant. From this event I understood what terrible sufferings of which I had a taste on my previous voyage would have to be endured once more. My wife was thereby obliged to pass her time in the awful apprehension of being frightened by the constant peeping of the khalasis and the cabin boys. In every steamer of the B I. S N. Company, I believe, the Indian passengers (including ladies) had the good luck of having many semi-lords like those who exercise tyranny over the passengers at their different freaks. The feelings of uneasiness and discomfort at the treatment to which I had been subjected was not diminished until I arrived at Rangoon. On our arrival at the wharf at Rangoon, no sooner I had handed over the ticket than we were switched off to the mercy of the Customs police-officer who scrutinisely examined by luggages which took him not less than 40 minutes to finish. In the course of the search he repeatedly indulged not merely his individual function and curiosity by perusing my private scribblings but showed them to some other officers for their entertainment. This dutiful functionary was not merely lacking in manners but was positively rude and insulting to us. I had with me a tin box full of sweet-meats which the said officer suspected to have contained some contraband things. This officer in spite of my repeated request had it opened by a Mahomedan chap and thereby spoiled them.

Sometimes in year before last I had to go to Calcutta on some urgent business. I tried my best to get one deck ticket but could not get. Having failed in my attempt in obtaining ticket from the booking clerk, I, having been told off, had been to the wharf where I found a man loitering or strolling on the street near the wharf now and then asking the intending passengers whether do they require any ticket or not. I told him to get one for me for Calcutta. He said he could give me one if I would pay him Rs. 12. Having had the necessity of going to Calcutta I had to pay him Rs. 12 in presence of one Mr. M. M. Mazumdar. The troubles I had on this voyage are unspeakable. It was, as I remember, the month of November. The winter season was about to set in. I took my seat on the upper deck. On the second day of my departure from Rangoon before day-break, the khalasi opened the water pipe to wash the deck. Finding the spray all over my bed I at once got up and found the belongings of the passengers as well as mine got wet. I reported this to the Captain of the steamer, but he did take no notice of it.

The latrines were all filthy and stench come out of them always. There is no water

tap inside the latrines in some of the steamers. The passengers have to wait at the door of the latrine for a length of time for his turn to come suppressing his strong tendency for the call of nature which is inexorable as the debt of nature. The drinking water is supplied to the passengers at fixed hour, besides if any passenger dies of thirst no body cares for.

On my return journey I met Babu Sulalit Ghosh, the supervisor of Rangoon Municipality on board the ship. He was coming with his family and children. One day during the voyage he had gone to bathe. Before he half-finished his bath the khalasis closed the hydrant and began to abuse him for nothing. Then from words they came to blows. But for some other passengers and myself he would have been killed. This sort of occurrence is not infrequent on board the ship.

I know from a recent case that one of my friends named Mr. R. K. Mitter was going home with his son and some relatives. He had with him lots of luggages. He, along with all his companions, had gone to the Sule Pagoda Wharf two hours before the departure of the steamer. The coolies demanded of him Rs. 10 for carrying the luggages to the steamer. His refusal to pay so much to the coolies caused his son to be left behind with his luggages and also he had to leave behind him at the wharf one box in which he kept about Rs. 500 and valuable things, without the knowledge of his son who thought that box was taken with his father. Later on the Superintendent of the wharf finding no claimant of the box kept it under his custody. It was afterwards discovered that one box out of the whole luggages was missing. After a day or two the box was traced to have been in the custody of the Wharf Superintendent who refused to deliver the box until its contents were declared by the owner. Had there been any good arrangement for the conveyance of the passengers' luggage from the wharf to the steamer there would have been no catastrophe like this. Travelling by sea is too troublesome to the passengers for the want of proper arrangement and care now-a-days.

There is no separate accommodation on board the ship for the Indian ladies. The Indian ladies those who observe the *parda* system are invariably exposed to shame and subjected to molestation. The Indian ladies ought to be treated with as much courtesy as European ladies are. Gentleness is always wanting in the behaviour of the staff of the steamers. The deck passengers are treated no better than dogs and cats on board the ship although they are the men who pay the Company.

On the 16th April 1915, as I remember, while I was the Headmaster of Natram Rambux Hindu seminary, I along with my colleagues and students had been to the wharf to receive the proprietor of the said school who was coming by S.S. "Edavana" from Calcutta. While I with others was



standing beyond the barriers at the wharf one Mr. P. D. Peter, an employee of Messrs. B.I.S.N. Company, came up to us and told us in an angry mood to move back which we did. After all he began to push the bystanders which caused me to fall on another gentleman. Then I told him not to be rude to us and push us down. At this, he, being fumed with rage, abused me and insulted me for which I had to go to the Court of Law for justice. The gentlemen, those who are obliged to go to the wharf to receive their friends who may be coming by sea, are always harassed and insulted for nothing. Many respectable gentlemen, for the fear of trouble in attending the court, pocket up the insult. In this connection I wrote an article which appeared in the issue of the *Rangoon Times*, April, 1915, suggesting for the introduction of platform ticket system as in the railway, so that persons intending to attend their friends on arrival and departures of the steamers may make themselves *bona fide* on purchasing the platform ticket and be free from troubles and molestations.

About a month ago one Marwari gentleman aged about 60 years had been forcibly vaccinated for nothing and that old man is still suffering from the effect of the vaccination. The system in which the passengers including females are vaccinated is very offensive and need modification.

In conclusion I beg to make a few sugges-

tions in connection therewith for the kind consideration of the Committee.

The system in which tickets are sold at present is to be changed. The passengers whether deck or otherwise should be treated with more politeness and courtesy. Better arrangement should be made on board of the ship to alleviate the troubles and hardships of the passengers.

Two gangways should be provided, one exclusively for the females and the other for the males. Separate accommodation for the ladies should be made on board the ship.

Some racks to keep the luggages of the passengers should be provided on board the ship to save them from getting wet at the time of washing the deck and also timely warning to be given to the passengers.

Platform ticket system should be introduced for the admission into the wharf to avoid unnecessary harassment to the public.

Above all I beg to submit that these inconveniences can be removed at once if the Government of Burma open a line of their own. Unless or until the monopoly of the B.I.S.N. Company is broken up the treatment towards the passengers will remain just the same as is at present. I therefore humbly request the committee to urge the benign Government of Burma upon the necessity of opening a line of their own for the amelioration of hardships of the passenger public.

SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY'S  
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Witness No. 177.

LETTER from Mr. V. S. KOTHUNDAPANI, Trader, No. 57, 50th Street, East Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, the 31st July 1917.

I beg to submit the following grievances on some of the important points for the consideration of the deck passengers' committee.

The result of my experience and investigation into the various aspects of the steamers' trouble experienced while embarking and disembarking by the passengers to and from the Coromandel coasts, it leads me to treat the matter a little elaborately.

The only questions for me to consider are, did the alleged abuses really exist, and if so what are the means of removing them?

1. The discontinuance of notification of the exact date of the steamers' departure to any port in the Coromandel coasts. Of late, the exact date on which the steamer leaves from Rangoon or from which jetty the steamer is going to carry the passengers is not notified beforehand. This is due to war regulation. The major portion of the persons who travel by steamer are of a poor class, mostly of agriculturalists and labourers. They, on receiving scanty information from their friends living in Rangoon, come to Rangoon from far remotest places of Burma to catch the steamer. To their disappoint-

ment, the departure of the steamer is postponed indefinitely, with the result that these poor class of people after coming a long way to meet the steamer is disappointed and they are obliged to remain near the vicinity of Rangoon indefinitely spending a good sum here. When they find that they have not sufficient funds to defray further expenses for the remaining part of the journey they sometime march to bankruptcy. A few of them convert the little property in the shape of "paw" and some of others who have no property to raise loan, return to their original place. To remedy these defects, the authorities should find a device.

2. *Passage tickets.*—In Rangoon passage tickets of B. I. steamers are sold by the sub agents of the Company. Invariably the passengers rush to the sub-agent's office appointed by the Company to purchase tickets. The passengers who happen their lot to reach the office, stretch their hands into the counter erected for the purpose. They are neither served or told to wait outside and before they get the tickets and quit the place, the others get in and the crowd at the counter is so much as to give a sufficient chance for the pickpockets to play the game with the poor passengers while their attentions

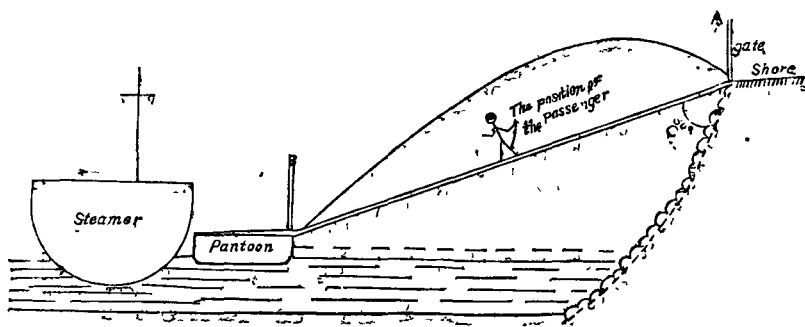
are diverted at the counter. Sometime, some men, somehow or other, manage to sell a number of tickets to illiterate passengers at a cost more than the face value of the ticket.

I think if the B.I.S.N Company sell tickets themselves directly to the passengers at their office as is done in Calcutta and Madras, the defects above referred to will be remedied.

3. Want of proper temporary accommodation at the shore for the passengers, before they get into the steamer. Passengers very early come to the shore with the hope of getting admittance into the steamer, and flock at the shore where there is no covered space. They have to remain long hours at the shore before they are let into the steamer. Consequently they are obliged to remain in the intense heat of the tropical sun in the hot weather and in the rainy weather are exposed to cold and damp. To obviate this long-felt want either the Government or the Company would kindly take steps in providing a covered shed similar to one erected at Madras harbour.

4. *Admittance into the steamer.*—Invariably all the steamers that carry passengers to Coromandel ports take their berth at pontoon jetty. At the time of full tide the floating pontoon of the jetty gains the level of the shore, and at the time of tide returning, the pontoon gets down below the level of the shore level. From the rough sketch given below it will be seen that at the time of tide returning the gradient of the passage that bridges the floating pontoon and the shore takes to a greater downward slope. When signal is given by the steamer authorities to let the passengers into the steamer, the passengers are allowed in the following manner. Generally the passengers are allowed into the steamer, only when there is a couple of hours for the steamer to leave the port. The passenger is let first from the first gate marked A (*vide sketch*) on production of the pass by the gate-keeper who belongs partly to the Company agents and partly to the police authorities. On the assumption that either the steamer may leave soon the jetty or the passengers would not get sufficient accommodation in the steamer

they flock together in large numbers and try to get through the gate into the steamer ahead of their co-passengers. The gate-keepers who do not realise the grave position of the passengers molest and insult them by using all kind of indecent languages. On any remonstrance, the passengers are caned. After getting admittance into the first gate, they are not allowed to enter the second gate marked B (*vide sketch*) unless the pass produced again to another gate-keeper standing at that gate. It would not be out of place to mention here that if any female member happened to be a passenger, she is not allowed to accompany up to the steamer with her male member. Consequently the hardships experienced under the system are intensified in some cases owing to the fact that the female passengers remain at the shore until such time as she can be accompanied to the steamer by any co-passengers known to her or some of her male members. Popular feeling is strongly against the practice of allowing women to go alone in the steamer and in many cases a female passenger is compelled to defer her departure till some male member can accompany her. I therefore urge that all the passengers should be allowed a free access into the steamer before she leaves the jetty at the announced hour, so that the passengers could select proper accommodation in the steamer either for themselves or their female member. By this innovation it may lead to a question that some passengers without tickets may travel in the steamer. Granting that some persons do travel in the steamer without tickets, such persons can always be detected while the operation of collection of the tickets from the passengers takes place by the steamers' authorities after the steamer leaves the port. Such persons who travel without tickets should either be made to pay the double fare of the journey or should be brought to the yoke of law, strictly, and there is no reason why 999 passengers should undergo all kind of fuss and haggling brought by the steamer authorities at the port of embarkation for the sake of one culprit who tries to escape himself without a ticket being purchased.



3. *The nature of the jetty*—During the time of the tide returning the long and narrow passage that connects the floating pontoon and the shore inclines to an angle somewhat below 30 degrees. This could be seen from the sketch marked C. If the steamer happens to carry the passengers (during the time of tide returning) at these jetties most of the passengers whose desire is to get into the steamer at any cost run along the inclined passage and fall—losing their balance with the result that the package which is either on the head or on shoulder rolls and falls into the water, before he could run for it. It may also be added that in some instances the steamer does not take her berth at the jetty already mentioned to the passengers she takes her berth at some other jetty or wharf and all passengers who already gathered with their packages have to carry and walk a mile or two, and this abuse is of so grave a character it entails an additional hardship on the passengers. Since the advent of British rule, Rangoon has been developing as a port of importance like its sister ports. Consequently the labourers come in great number from India and return to their respective places after a certain period. Year after year as the number of immigrants increase, corresponding number of emigrants also increase. At the present stage to allow such large number to pass through the narrow passage of the pontoon jetty to the steamer is decidedly very dangerous to the life of the passenger. It would therefore be advisable that the steamer should take her berth at a permanent wharf, such as Latter Street or Soolay Pagoda or Brooking Street wharf, so that the passengers who flock in large numbers say more than 2,000 passengers at a time may proceed to the place where the steamer has taken berth without experiencing any inconvenience within the limited time fixed by the steamer's agents.

6. *Packages of the passengers*—The packages of the passengers are invariably carried to the steamer with the assistance of the coolies kept for the purpose by the B.I.S.N. Company. His demand for carrying the packages of the passenger does not base on any proportion. At that nick of the moment he demands rate and rules over the passenger, who is so helpless that he is not allowed to engage a private cooly as his admittance is not allowed in the steamer. Notwithstanding this the coolies of the B.I.S.N. Company are so careless, and indifferent in their duties, they do not care for the safe arrival of the passengers' packages and they handle them as they like. These coolies throw the packages into the steamer at any corner, with the result that the passenger after getting into the steamer has to take the trouble of investigating as to where their articles are thrown away. In several cases by the carelessness of these coolies, who fail to keep the packages at a proper place, the packages are broken open by some culprits and contents from it are taken away.

I am made to understand that the labour for carrying the packages of the passengers are supplied free of charge by the B.I.S.N. Company. Under the circumstances, there is no necessity why the coolies should demand extra money from the passengers for the service rendered to them. It seems that many of literate as well as illiterate passengers are not aware of this fact. It may be added that the B.I.S.N. Company have provided with the uniform clothes to these coolies and in order to make it more prominent that these coolies are kept by the B.I.S.N. Company for the free use of the passengers, a badge in the words of "Free coolies" as is now supplied to the Binny coolies at Madras should be supplied to these coolies by B.I.S.N. Company and insisted to wear these badges, and some of the responsible officer of the Company should see that coolies do wear these badges.

7. *Accommodation in steamer*—The accommodation provided for each passenger in the steamer is very deplorable. There is hardly any space for them to sleep properly with legs stretched, and keep their packages safe. A female passenger (without a male assistant of her own) and male passenger are huddled in one place irrespective of any hardship the former may experience. The inadequate accommodation now given to the passengers is very injurious to the health of the passengers. The passenger, during his long and tedious journey in the steamer, experiences some temporary physical deterioration for want of sufficient accommodation. As the law of land is applicable to all human beings in the world, proper accommodation should be provided for the passengers, or if there is no proper accommodation for the passenger more than any hatch could reasonably occupy, number of the passengers to be carried by the steamer should be restricted, as is done in the case of first and second class passengers. To enforce these rules on the steamers' agents, a representative of Government belonging to medical department, carrying a decent higher salary, might be deputed to see whether each steamer before leaving the port carries the exact number of passengers as laid down in Shipping Acts. Accommodation provided as raised wooden platforms similar to those fitted in S.S. "Chilka" is preferable to that provided on ordinary damp floors of the hatches of the steamer.

8. *Ventilation*—Most of the hatches is badly ventilated. Of late all the passenger steamer carries a large number of passengers. The hatch of the steamer is so badly ventilated that a peculiar smell is perceptible. This is due to the atmosphere in the hatch soon becomes very vitiated and also to the greater accumulation of carbonic acid and other impurities of the respired air in the atmosphere of the hatch. This makes most of the passengers to vomit, though it is an admitted fact that this may be partly due to the roughness of the sea. It therefore

requires no demonstration that long journey in such foul air that fills the hatch is very injurious to the health of the passengers. Some mechanical appliances should be used in the hatches to obviate this danger, and there is no reason why such appliances should not be inserted wherever they are needed. The authorities should lay down a standard of ventilation for steamers.

9. *Lights*.—Hatches in the steamers are very badly lit. At times the electric lights are put off in nights without a previous notice being given to the passengers. This has on many occasions given opportunity to culprits in the steamer to steal the property of the passengers while they are fast asleep. It is believed that war regulations have restricted to a very limited lights for the use in the steamer. If war regulations have not been applied with regard to lights used by the steamer that ply between Burma and Ceylon ports the number of electric lights should be increased.

10. *Privy*.—Privy for the deck passengers are so badly arranged, that many during mornings have to wait outside for admission to the privy. The scale of seats provided in the privy is very inadequate. Owing to this hardship, a passenger who goes last and who is unable to avail himself of any seat in the privy owing to the same being occupied already by his co-passengers, sits where he likes as he is unable to control the nature of call. In certain steamers, the seats of the privy are so raised from the floor that very few use them and others who cannot climb to the seat, use the floor below the raised seat and make it more unclean and filthy. As many steamers have got such an insufficient privy, it is kept in a very insanitary condition as to be positively injurious to the health of the passengers who had to use them. There are also no urinals in the steamer for the use of deck passengers. It is therefore necessary that the seats in the privy always be proportionately increased or a new privy should be erected and seats provided therein. The seats in the privy should also be lowered a little, they should be fixed at such a height, so that every passenger could get on it and use it comfortably. All the privy should be connected with the drainage system with efficient arrangement for flushing. From a medical point of view separate urinal accommodation should be insisted on.

*Water*.—Drinking water which is stored in tank is supplied to the passengers. This tank is located at an isolated place. All the passengers at a fixed time have to flock at the tank to receive the water. The person deputed by the steamer authorities regulates in giving required water to a passenger. All the passengers have to suit his whims, and if any of the passenger disputes to his right of demanding the required quantity of water he is driven out of the place and on some excuse he is not supplied with the water. It is therefore desirable that on all

occasions water should be freely supplied to the passengers, and each hatch should have a separate tank for the use of the passengers located in that particular hatch, else the passenger had to carry buckets of water a long way, if only one tank is kept in the steamer at one place for the use of the deck passengers.

12. *Oven for cooking*.—Sufficient oven is not provided in the steamer, invariably a place measuring about 6 feet by 3 feet or double that size is allotted to all passengers irrespective of any caste and creed. Firewood or coal is scarcely supplied and it is not known whether passengers have any right to demand these from the steamer authorities.

Though a private Indian hotel is opened in the steamer, a portion of the passengers welcome it, while others who for some reason or other intend to prepare their own food, avoid using the cooking place either for want of sufficient place or want of sufficient firewood or finding that too many passengers have already occupied the cooking place ahead of them. It is therefore necessary that sufficient ovens should be provided.

13. *Doctors*.—A doctor who is in the steamer does not generally understand the complaints of the passengers as he does not know the particular language of the mass of the passengers who travel in the steamer. Nor are there any interpreters in the steamer kept by B. I. S. N. Company who could be a spokesman to put the passengers' grievances to the officers of the steamer. It is therefore very necessary that the doctor who could converse with the passenger in the language of the latter is a very essential qualification of the appointment and such person should be engaged by steamer authorities. The steamers that ply to ports to Madras and below should have a doctor speaking in Tamil and so on.

14. *Civility on the part of the servants of the steamer towards the passengers*.—Passengers in the steamer are often molested by the servants of the steamer, more so when a female happens to travel alone in the steamer without her male relative. The obvious reply to this will be, why don't they complain to the steamer authorities on the spot. But any one, who knows the difficulties that a poor woman has not the courage of proving her allegation before the authorities, will recognize the probability of her more often failing to establish her case than of securing the punishment of the culprit. It is not a uncommon result in such cases for the female complaint to come out with her moral reputation damaged and for the cowardly servants of the steamer whenever may be to escape all censure or punishment. It is therefore left to the authorities to rectify the matter as they deem fit.

15. *Difficulties experienced by the passengers during disembarkation*.—On arrival of the steamer, a relative or a friend of a passenger is not allowed to meet their in-coming passengers at the steamer until the

latter comes out of the last fence of the jetty, if a passenger be a female member—travelling alone—finds a great difficulty at the place of disembarkation. To remedy this difficulty, a system of allowing a certain member to receive his in-coming passenger by a pass into the jetty may be advantageously adopted.

10. *The provision of life belts.*—Considering the danger of fire, etc., in the steamer and the rapidity with which they spread, it is very essential that all the passenger steamers should be provided with sufficient number of life belts kept in each hatch of the steamer at a conspicuous place under lock and key. In a recent instance it is believed that many passengers travelled in S.S. "Chilka" lost their lives for want of sufficient belts not being provided in that particular steamer.

Suffice to mention that such are the conditions under which the passengers are labouring and I consider that it is the duty of Govern-

ment on both economic and humanitarian grounds to prevent the continuance or the recurrence of these defects above referred to.

Though in fact I do not possess sufficient knowledge which other members may possess, but all the same I thought it my duty to place before you my views on question which I had the opportunity of closely studying the troubles which I as well as other members like myself are experiencing in the steamer. I have looked at the question more from the point of view of ordinary citizen of this Province.

I have attempted to investigate and study the question referred for the consideration of the Committee to the best of my ability. And the conclusion arrived at and embodied in this report on the result of my studies and sincere conviction.

I regret the delay in submitting this within the required time, and apologise for the length of my report.—I have, etc., V. S. KOTHUNDAPANI.

Witness No. 157.

LETTER from Mr. G. N. SIRCAR, Contractor, P.W.D., Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, the 30th July 1917.

During last 28 years I have made more than 30 voyages between Calcutta and Rangoon in the B.I.S.N. Company's steamers. Although I was a 2nd class passenger, in one or two occasions I had to sleep on the deck as per separate condition under which 2nd class tickets were issued to me by the Company. I beg to state few facts which are personally known to me about the deck passengers' troubles and sufferings:—

1. Deck tickets are not easily procurable at the Company's office.
2. Some of my acquaintances had to wait for three weeks in Rangoon to secure a deck ticket for Calcutta.
3. In one occasion one of my workmen and his brother has paid Rs 15 each for a deck ticket at the Company's office.
4. I have seen the Company's durwans are whipping the deck passengers at the gate at the time of embarkation.
5. Respectable Indians are not allowed to enter the wharf to see their friends off whereas the Eurasians have got access.
6. The B.I. coolies always charge exorbitant fees for handling passengers' luggages.
7. In October 1911 when I was travelling by S.S. "Ellora" from Calcutta to Rangoon our steamer was caught in a cyclone and the lid of the fresh water tank was blown away, consequently no fresh water was available for drinking for about 40 hours and the deck passengers were made to pay annas for a bottle of soda water.

8. The troubles and hardships deck passengers suffer in the voyage owing to overcrowding and for want of space are distressing.
9. Deck passengers suffering from sea sickness, etc., are not allowed to go off to sleep in the promenade deck unless they pay some money to officers or crews.
10. There is nobody in the Company's steamers to look after the comforts of the deck passengers and the passengers are entirely left at the mercy of the crews.
11. The measures adopted by the Port Health Officer at the time of disembarkation at Rangoon when the passengers are forcibly taken to the Sparks Street wharf by a special launch for the purpose of vaccination and ordered to stand there bare bodied in a row with the coolies for hours together are most inhuman.
12. The mode of examination by the Police and Customs is most annoying and insulting. Last year when I was coming from Calcutta a subordinate police-officer asked me some impertinent questions regarding my identity and through his instigation a Custom officer took away my daily "Prayer book" written in English and Bengali which was returned to me by the Collector of Customs, Rangoon, after a week.

I have made a tour round the world and travelled by almost all the eminent Steamship Companies' boats but never witnessed such hardships of deck passengers as by B.I. boats from Rangoon to Calcutta.

LETTER from Mr. M. A. SUNDARA AIVAR, 19B, Bigandet Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Grievances Committee, Old Public Buildings, Rangoon.

Rangoon, the 27th July 1917.

With reference to the enquiry which your Committee is going to hold, I beg to submit the following for favour of consideration—

*First*, as regards facilities for buying tickets, it is a fact that for some months, passage could be secured only with great difficulty. Though this is principally due to the war, better arrangements can be made to minimise the difficulties. I would suggest (a) announcements regarding the availability or not of tickets should be made by means of a notice board hung up outside the ticket office, (b) prepayment and booking in advance should be allowed; (c) a guarantee or assurance should be demanded of persons buying a large number of tickets to the effect that the tickets are not for the purpose of retailing at enhanced rates; (d) a class intermediate between the second and deck be introduced. Second class fare being nearly five times that of the deck fare and second class accommodation being seldom available even middle class Indians are compelled to travel by deck. Some of us buy deck with diet tickets paying Rs 5 extra, without the least idea of taking steamer diet, but solely with the idea of finding better deck accommodation than is provided to the ordinary deck passengers. Very often even the extra payment fails to bring any advantage. If the B.I.S.N. Company will see its way to provide an intermediate class accommodation charging twice the present deck fare, many of the present difficulties would disappear. Such passengers would be content with a separate deck or screened portions of a deck but would require separate bathing and latrine arrangements.

*Secondly*, as regards marshalling passengers, it is a fact that passengers and others are compelled to crowd together near the wharf on the side of the gate for deck passengers and when, seeing the gate opens to admit them, they make a rush in their eagerness to secure good accommodation, they are maltreated. My suggestions would be (a) passengers should be allowed to embark as they come and as soon as the steamers are ready to receive them, (b) wharf permits like Railway platform tickets should be issued to friends of passengers who desire to render help. These may or may not be subject to payment but available to all irrespective of race. Formerly in Rangoon friends who wanted to receive passengers had to produce telegrams received by them about an expected passenger and permission by Port authorities used to be endorsed on the telegrams. I hear that four annas is charged at Madras when one wants to board a vessel to see his friend off. Any such arrangement will do.

*Thirdly*, as regards cooly-hire, I myself paid cooly-hire in April and September 1916 when I journeyed to Madras and back, not knowing then that the coolies had no right to demand a hire. I suggest (a) notice boards (I understand there are some already), drawing attention very prominently to the fact that no hire need be paid; (b) passengers should be compelled to make over to a particular official of the Steamer Company their heavy luggage in an identifiable condition so that such luggage may be conveyed and stored in the holds and delivered back at destination; (c) the conveyance of luggage should be under the supervision of one of the Company's officials who should detail a separate batch of coolies for deck passengers' luggages, as otherwise the coolies delay carrying until the steamer is about to start, so that they might extort money.

*Fourthly*, as regards the time allowed for embarkation, I suggest that passengers should be allowed to begin boarding steamers at least two hours before the sailing of the vessel.

*Fifthly*, as regards women passengers, it is not desirable to provide for them a separate gate, separate time of admission or even separate portion of the steamer or any other form of separation or seclusion, *unless they ask for the same. Madras women are best looked after when they are in the midst of their acquaintances.*

And lastly, as regards other deficiencies, I beg to bring to your kind notice that—

(a) It sometimes happens that during the voyage deck passengers are illegally called upon to pay for their luggage by one of the officers abetted by a gunner. No receipts are given though demanded. I suggest all charges, if any, for excess luggage should be recovered before embarkation and none during the voyage.

(b) Latrine arrangement for deck passengers in some steamers is extremely bad—

(i) The latrines are improvised by means of canvass screens which do not keep from view the individual who is inside. Those who have any idea of decency have to wait for nightfall when they could be less seen from outside.

(ii) Indians need water to clean themselves after they had been into a latrine. For this purpose even sea-water will do. But no water is to be had in or close to the latrines.

(iii) The seats are 3 feet above the deck and passengers have to mount 2 or 3 steps and sit on their haunches in a room not 3 feet square, which is not easy for sea sick passengers to do, more especially when the steamer is rolling.

(iv) There is nothing to distinguish a latrine for men from one for women, so that much indecent confusion ensues.

(v) The latrines are not cleaned as frequently as necessary. When a steamer is full of deck passengers, some of them have to find accommodation just outside the latrines.

The odours the unfortunate passengers have to put up with may be imagined.

(r) The bazaar-man who supplies food to the deck passengers is under no one's supervision and generally wanting in cleanliness. Separate cooking places should be provided for groups of high caste Hindus to cook their own food.

(d) The distribution of drinking water on board some of the steamers is very unsatisfactory. The quantity is generally inadequate and the intervals are so infrequent that at the time of distribution there is much crowding, rushing and confusion. Sea water should always be available from taps to passengers who want to bathe or otherwise use the water.

(e) When passengers on their arrival in Rangoon are transferred from steamers to flats, no care is taken of sick or weak people. All have to go down a steep ladder, I had very nearly fallen into the river last September.

(f) All work such as loading should be completed and the canvas awnings spread before passengers are allowed to board a vessel. Similarly no work of unloading or removal of the canvas awnings should be done before passengers disembark. Failure to do as above results in injuries or inconvenience to passengers. Lascars must be made to understand that most Madrassis do not understand Hindustani and that a mere shout of *khabardar* may not convey any warning to passengers.

(g) Deck passengers while on board are very insolently treated by gunners, khalasis and even sweepers. Decks are washed and swept sometimes suddenly without giving time to passengers to move off or to remove their things. More considerate and courteous treatments should be inculcated.

(h) During many months in the year the steamers are overcrowded. It is requested

that statements may be called for from the B. I. S. N. Company's office showing the tonnage of vessels used and the weight of cargo and number of passengers carried during the last five years.

(i) *Delays on arrival of steamers*—It very often takes place that steamers come into the river with the tide but anchor near Monkey Point for various formalities such as the (leisurely) arrival of the Harbour Master, Health Officer and Customs, Police and Postal, etc., officials. By that time the tide is lost and the 1st and 2nd class passengers are sent away by launch for otherwise they shall have to be fed on board. The deck passengers are left behind to be taken with the next tide to the shore with the cargo or to be transferred to the flats. No one seems to mind the delay caused to the deck passengers, everything being done in a very callous way.

(j) *Search (i) by Customs officers and durwans*.—No discrimination is shown as between people likely to bring contraband and those not. Customs officials do not seem to know that people of South India have nothing to do with opium, etc. But passengers dressed like Anglo-Indians are as a rule exempt from search.

(ii) *by Criminal Investigation Department*.—Gentlemen making a search and suspecting any publication must have a wide education. I brought some copies of a purely religious magazine whose pages were turned over for several minutes and which were ultimately made over to me, apparently because the contents were not understood. It should also be enforced that when the Criminal Investigation Department retains books for leisurely inspection, it should give proper receipts.

(k) *Vaccination*.—On 23rd September 1916 all deck passengers from Madras including myself were marched into the shed, while their things were lying uncared for on the wharf. I was then wearing a tweed suit, boots and furban and I was marched from pen to pen and detained for 20 minutes and then let go. The Port Health Officer should first let go the apparently non-cool class and then proceed with the rest.

WRITTEN STATEMENT by Mr. V. KUMARASWAMY PILLAY, Postmaster, Syriam,  
Witness No. 293.

Rangoon, 5th August 1917.

The undersigned was Postmaster at Nyaunglebin. He applied and obtained leave for six months to go to his country in the month of May 1916. He came to Rangoon on the 2nd of June and from the 3rd up to the 6th he attended the ticket selling office at Mogul Street and was told every day to come on the following day. On the 6th

a young Brahmin, who, it was said, was employed at the office of Abdul Rahman & Co. informed him that he could not go by that week's steamer and that he would have to wait for the following week's steamer. Undersigned requested him to get him a note stating this fact, so that he might induce the Postmaster-General to apply to the British India office straight and get him the required ticket, which he refused. The said Brahmin also told him that if the undersigned

paid Rs. 20, then he would be able to get as many tickets as the undersigned wanted. Then he went to Mr Bell, Manager of the British India Steam Navigation Company at their office on the very day, and made a complaint to him, he at once sent an assistant whose name undersigned believed is Mr Philips, though undersigned was not certain, to go to Mr. Abdul Rahman's office and to enquire into the matter. Abdul Rahman and the Brahmin, who wanted Rs. 20 denied the fact of his going to the office for the ticket, though undersigned went every time with Mr. Muthukumara Pillay who is at present posted as Postmaster at Prome; any how undersigned was given three tickets at the usual rate of Rs 12-4-0 with the help of the above said Mr. Philips

On the 7th of June when the steamer started the undersigned and his family together with innumerable passengers had to stay on the wharf for about three hours continually getting wet in the rains and seeing the

others paying money to the gatemen and some other Brahmins to allow them to go on board, I had also to pay Rs. 4 to the same person to get entrance into the steamer. When I went on board my things were removed from place to place at the direction of every one who appeared to have any authority on board the steamer and had to pay Rs. 4 to end this trouble and further being harassed by a man who was employed in the capacity of gunner, to whom money was paid by some people to procure comfortable places. I had also to pay Rs. 7 though his demand was Rs. 10 to secure and sit down without being wet. The name of the steamer is "Fazilka." Seeing in the papers, an enquiry is being held concerning the treatment of the 3rd class passengers I thought it was my duty to report to you. I am at present stationed as Postmaster at Syriam. I may also inform you to avoid any ambiguity I and my family travelled on deck,

MEMORANDUM BY MR. S KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR, No. 30, 49th Street, Rangoon, of  
Grievances of Deck Passengers arriving in and departing from Rangoon on British  
India Steam Navigation Boats.

I.—(a) The difficulty in getting the tickets till the last moment.

(b) The sale of tickets at an enhanced price at the last moment

(c) The most inhuman treatment accorded to the passengers that go to purchase Calcutta deck tickets at Messrs. Bulloch Bros.' Office by the Office Staff and the Police on duty that are requisitioned perhaps to maintain order.

II.—(a) The want of a shed at embarking and disembarking wharves to shelter ourselves from rains and sun.

(b) The non-admission of passengers as they keep on coming which would not only put a stop to the rush of all passengers at the last moment, but save a lot of trouble who manage affairs at the wharves

III.—(a) Admission of friends and relatives on wharves and on board the steamer, which privilege is freely enjoyed by the Anglo-Indians and some white Indians who put a hat on

(b) The illegitimate collection of fees from passengers by the steamer servants for accommodation on board. These servants reserve some portions on the deck and when passengers go to occupy the place they refuse to allow people to occupy the place saying that that portion is reserved. After all the people who reserve the place are no others than these who tip them

IV.—(a) The insufficient supply of drinking water on board.

(b) The most insanitary and dirty state of the steamers, as they are never cleaned, which results in the outbreak of epidemics.

(c) Insufficient number of privies and want of the same separately for lady passengers. These latrines are used by hundreds of passengers and these require necessarily cleaning constantly, which is not properly attended to.

(d) The provision for bathing and washing purposes of deck passengers

(e) The difficulty in getting hot water for preparation of coffee or tea which is the only food for the Indian deck passengers for the days they are on board. This arrangement should be made since the passengers are not allowed to use stoves on steamers.

V.—(a) The difficulty in getting coolies by deck passengers and the exorbitant wages demanded by them.

(b) The unnecessary worry and indiscreet search of the Police and Customs authorities.

(c) The unusual delay caused by the Port Health Authorities by detaining the passengers to suit their convenience and times.



Witness No. 176.

From Mr. R. SUPALITHAM, Sanitary Commissioner's Office, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Grievances Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 31st July 1917.

I beg to forward herewith, for your information and favour of such disposal, a complaint which I wrote in November 1916 and which I unfortunately did not issue.

LETTER from Mr. R. SUPALITHAM, Sanitary Commissioner's Office, to Messrs. MACKINNON MACKENZIE & Co., Agents, British India Steam Navigation Company, Calcutta.

Rangoon, 29th November 1916.

I beg to bring to your kind notice the following for favour of such action as you may deem necessary.

2. I was a passenger with a "Deck with European Diet" ticket by S.S. "Kazilka" on the 18th to 22nd April 1916, from Rangoon to Madras, and 23rd to 27th June 1916 from Madras to Rangoon.

3. I should have taken a 2nd class ticket, but no ticket was available, and hence they could not be taken.

4. The inconvenience felt by me, having had to sit while on voyage among almost coolies and for want of a proper place, was indescribable. I first thought that there would be a separate place for these ticket-holders, so that they might take at least their food, if served, little conveniently, and in a particular place. It is no untruth when I say that, although I paid for my diet on my return journey also, I did not even get a single meal from the steamer. The Steward himself did not know where these ticket-holders were seated, nor did he care to enquire whether they were served with their diet. One man came and took away our tickets, and to our surprise, one evening previous to our disembarkation, the Steward was searching for me and a friend of mine to provide us with our tickets or passes, and when I spoke to him about his indifference towards us all along, he was so kind as to tell me that my diet was given to some one else, whom he said, he could not identify, I wittingly told him then that I should claim a refund of the amount I paid for my diet, not with a view to get my money back, but with a view to let the authorities know the inconvenience to which the public are put on account of the indifference of the subordinates in the steamer, and of the defect in the arrangement in her.

5. If an arrangement to provide at least a small area anywhere on the hatches or any other place somewhere little closer to the 2nd class cabins where they could be accommodated separately from other ordinary

passengers, I should think that there would not have been any cause for any omission of the kind or for any representation of this nature.

6. The steamer was almost all the way rolling and we were all more anxious about our lives than our food. I and my friend had provided ourselves with our own provisions, such as bread, biscuits, fruits, etc., and consequently we were not put to much inconvenience, even though a portion of them were robbed by some of the crews, of whom I very carefully caught in one night.

6. Further again, we had to look more to the crew for their mercy for water than to the Steward and his men. The treatment that we had at their hands, when we asked them for a glass of water to drink, was so unsatisfactory that we had to pay two and three annas on each occasion; our servants were not allowed even to approach the pumps or pipes to fill the small tins which we preserved for washing our faces.

7. The officers appeared to be very gentle and kind. But seeing their trouble and responsibility, we did not wish to trouble them with any complaint of this kind. In one case, the clerk had received some remuneration from some of the passengers, and on a representation being made by means of a written petition,\* to the Chief Officer, he was so kind as to order the refund of the amounts to the parties concerned.

Under these circumstances, I only beg that you will be so kind as to make some arrangements for the accommodation of the passengers of the description above mentioned.

Awaiting a reply as to the arrangements made in this respect and thanking you in anticipation.

Please address me as follows.—

Mr. V. Supalitham,  
Assistant to the Accountant,  
Office of the Sanitary Commissioner,  
Burma,  
Secretariat Buildings,  
(Post Box No. 252), Rangoon.

\* On the 26th June 1916, by ticket-holders Nos. 2137 to 2139, 2150 & 2151 and 12 others, my ticket No was 2148.

Witness No. 165.

LETTER from MR. J. K. GHOSE, L.C.E., Civil Engineer, Architect and Surveyor, Rangoon, to the Chairman, British India Steam Navigation Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 30th July 1917.

As a committee is appointed to enquire into the hardships and sufferings of Indian deck passengers by British India boats, I beg to state that I have been practising as a Civil Engineer in Rangoon for the last nine years. Since the year 1907, I have made about five or six voyages from India to Rangoon and back mostly by British India boats, sometimes on deck with diet and sometimes in 2nd class. During this period, I have the following experience of treatment by officers and inconveniences in travelling by British India boats.

1. *Treatment of staff—*

(a) In my first voyage by S.S. "Goa" from Chittagong in the year 1907, when I was on board the ship, I saw an officer whipping the deck passengers coming in from the bridge, the scene being new to me I hurried forward to see it and in doing so I accidentally had to dash against an officer coming from the opposite direction for which I said "sorry" but he replied, "Do you want some 'baksis', I asked him "What do you mean"; he stopped, stared at me and went away.

(b) The steamer deck is generally washed every morning. The crew start their business by splashing water on deck without noticing and without caring for the properties of the sea-sick passengers. The officers do not seem to take any notice of the matter.

(c) I have invariably noticed that Anglo-Indian deck passengers are quite differently accommodated and treated from any Indian deck passengers.

2. *Extortion by the staff—*

I am personally aware of an instance of the kind once in my last voyage, two deck passengers had to pay Rs. 3 each because they occupied the European deck and any receipt for such payment was refused. The officers, in many occasions, charge for luggages without granting receipts.

3. *Accommodation of deck passengers—*

The deck passengers are accommodated, huddled together in the holds (lower-deck)

sometimes with cattle. Females of respectable poor gentlemen had to pass entire voyage in a condition far from decency. The deck is ill-ventilated and ill-lighted, with awful stinking smell and it is nothing short of the notorious "black hole."

The latrines are insufficient producing obnoxious smell.

4. *Exorbitant charges by coolies of the British India Company at embarkation and disembarkation who will not turn up to carry the luggages unless they are paid to their satisfaction.*

5. *Unusual charge for deck tickets—* I am aware of many instances of this kind. No separate provisions for respectable Indian female deck passengers are made either for embarkation and disembarkation or in accommodating them separately from males.

6. I am aware of an instance when an Indian widow with 4-5 children to be sent by me to Calcutta, had deck tickets, I could not pass them through the 2nd class bridge as the officer refused in spite of my entreaty, and had to pass along with the crowd through the bridge used by deck passengers.

7. *Treatment by the Police—* During my last voyage from Calcutta, last January, when the steamer arrived at the port, especially the Bengalees were separated and all the particulars about them were noted down by a subordinate and again all the Bengalees were called to appear before Mr. Bell, one by one, and I was asked some silly questions of identity by Mr. Bell, who said, "How do I know that you are a civil engineer? Have you got papers with you?"

8. *Customs.*—This staff detain passengers over 2 hours, scattering one's things all over the wharf

9. *Medical examination—*I noticed that Indian deck passengers are made to stand in a row half naked and anyone refusing is separated and detained, this is most insulting and annoying to any self-respecting man

In the above facts I trust, Sir, some means will be decided on by the Committee to alleviate the sufferings of the deck passengers.

LETTER from Mr. N. S. ROW, Registrar of Registered Buildings, Rangoon Municipality, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon

Rangoon 21st July 1917.

I have the honour to send herewith a memorandum of hardships experienced when leaving or arriving to Rangoon:—

1. My friends and relatives, who wished to see me off, were prevented from entering the precincts of the wharf, whereby I was

deprived of their assistance in embarking the steamer. A permit system will obviate this difficulty

2. Despite the knowledge, that wharf coolies are forbidden to receive any money for carrying luggage, etc., to the steamer, I was obliged to meet their extortionate demands, for the simple reason that I would

have long been detained, if I had only persisted in not complying with their demands.

3. The accommodation given to me was anything but satisfactory, in point of light and ventilation, and I observed that animals were put side by side with men, the most insanitary feature ever met with. As regards sanitary conveniences, they are quite inadequate. Some sort of bathing accommodation for deck passengers is absolutely essential.

4. Deck passengers are treated very badly and put to petty annoyances, by both the officers and the menials of the steamer, especially the latter, only to exact money out of the passengers.

5. Since recently, debarkation in Rangoon has become extremely difficult, and to deck passengers in particular, almost an impossibility. A passenger, before he bids adieu to the wharf, has to undergo strict examination by the Police, the Customs and the Port Health authorities. It is fortunate that the Police do not show their over-zealousness on the ignorant, but any respectably educated passenger, who would naturally resent the

Zoolum and Zubberdust of the Police is at once marked and put to every kind of annoyance before he is let off.

(7) Leaving aside such of the passengers, who carry luggage on their person, others having plenty of it, have to trust it to the honesty of the coolies engaged by the passengers, before they proceed to get themselves examined by the Health authorities.

(8) And now to the examination and vaccination itself, it should be set at the very outset, that it is conducted in an unscientific manner, in an ill-ventilated, stinking, stuffy godown, crowded to excess with passengers. The passengers have to arrange themselves in a row and each has to appear before the Port Health Officer or his assistant, in the order of priority, and if before or during the examination, he budges an inch, down comes a box from the Officer or the constables. Such of the passengers as are passed on to the Vaccinators, have to submit themselves without a murmur to the crude and unscientific vaccination performed on their persons, not washed for some days and starved for days together.

Witness No. 150.

LETTER from Mr. P. B. MAYEKAR, President, Maharashtra Mitra Mandali,\* Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Grievances Committee, Secretariat Buildings, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 30th July 1917.

I have the honour to forward herewith, for the Committee's perusal and necessary action, a statement giving side by side—

(a) the hardships which the members of this Association have suffered in their voyages between Rangoon and Calcutta and Madras ;

(b) the suggestions to remedy the grievances.

2. The statement was recorded at our Meeting of the 22nd July 1917. Messrs. P. B. Mayekar and B. K. Kamat, two members of our Association, who were present at the meeting, will, if necessary, appear before the Committee to substantiate the grievances.

Grievance.	Remedy.
<b>I. Embarkation and Disembarkation.</b>	
(a) Passengers are asked to be present at the wharf several hours before the departure of the steamer, and there being no waiting rooms, they have to stand in the sun and rain.	(a) Passengers should not be asked to be present at the wharf more than one hour before the hour fixed for the departure of the steamer, and, like railways, waiting rooms should be provided.
(b) B.I.S.N. Company's coolies refuse to carry packages (i.e. the passenger's luggage) to or from the steamer unless they are promised the remuneration which they demand and which is generally exorbitant. If the steamer does not touch the wharf and the passengers have to go by launch, the coolies demand double remuneration.	(b) As the coolies are paid for the work by the Company, a demand for additional remuneration is not justified. The coolies should, therefore, be warned.
(c) Passengers' friends, if not in European dress are not allowed to go up to the steamer. This is most inconvenient, especially to persons travelling with families.	(c) Like railway platform tickets, wharf admission tickets should be issued.
(d) At the entrance to the wharf, passengers are struck with cane at the gate.	(d) The practice is most provoking and cruel and there can be no justification for it.
(e) Tarpaulins, which keep the sun and the rain away from the deck passengers, are removed several hours before the steamer touches the wharf and the passengers land, with the result that passengers either bask in the sun or get wet in the rain.	(e) The practice should be stopped.

\* Deccani Friendly Society.

Grievance.	Remedy.
<p>(f) On landing, passengers are made to stand for several hours, almost in a naked state, for purposes of the medical examination.</p> <p>2. <i>Accommodation.</i></p> <p>(a) Most of the passengers are not accommodated on the deck for which they pay, but are put in holds which can hardly be said to be fit even for cattle. The holds have port holes through which fresh air can come in, but these holes are closed in the rainy season for fear of the water of the sea waves getting in. The open portion at the top of the holds, which appears to be intended for the inlet of fresh air in the holds, is also closed and passengers are seated there. The result of all this is that passengers suffer for want of fresh air.</p> <p>(b) As only one deck and holds are allowed for passengers there is too much crowd and room cannot be found to stretch oneself. This is most inconvenient for passengers who have to travel continuously for more than a few hours.</p> <p>(c) There is no reserved accommodation for women.</p> <p>(d) Cattle are kept near passengers, which is injurious to the passengers' health.</p> <p>3. <i>Watering arrangements.</i></p> <p>(a) There are only a few water pipes and consequently passengers have to wait (standing on their legs) very long before they can find their way through the crowd to the pipe.</p> <p>(b) In some steamers the way leading to the water pipes is dark, the lights not being burnt.</p> <p>(c) Water is stopped several hours before the passengers leave the steamer.</p> <p>4. <i>Sanitary arrangements.</i></p> <p>(a) There are no bath rooms.</p> <p>(b) Latrines have no doors.</p> <p>(c) Nearly three hours are occupied from the commencement of the washing of the deck to its completion, and the passengers have to stand on their legs all this time.</p> <p>5. <i>Medical treatment.</i></p> <p>The doctor does not go round the steamer and see if any medical aid is required.</p> <p>6. <i>Food arrangements.</i></p> <p>(a) The hotel-keepers do not keep good eatables.</p> <p>(b) There is no schedule of prices of articles available in the hotels.</p>	<p>(f) The practice should be stopped. The examination can be carried on in a convenient way. It should not be necessary to make the passengers stand in an almost naked state for hours together.</p> <p>(a) The practice of putting the passengers in the holds should be stopped and the necessity of fresh air for man's health should be recognized.</p> <p>(b) Each passenger should have a well-defined area to accommodate himself. Passengers should be distributed on all the decks. Heavy and bulky luggage should not be allowed to remain with passengers, as it occupies much space. Luggage arrangements should be like those of railways.</p> <p>(c) Passengers with families should be accommodated separately from those travelling alone.</p> <p>(d) The practice should be stopped. Arrangements should be made like railways to carry live stock separately.</p> <p>(e) More water pipes should be provided.</p> <p>(b) The water pipes should be situated on the open deck and if the way leading to them is dark, lights should be burnt.</p> <p>(c) Water should not be stopped until after the passengers land.</p> <p>(a) There should be separate bath rooms for males and females. Cleanliness is next to godliness and very necessary for health.</p> <p>(b) Doors should be provided for latrines, as is done in the case of 2nd and 1st class lavatories. Decency should be preserved.</p> <p>(c) The work should not occupy more than an hour, and it can be arranged accordingly.</p> <p>It should be the doctor's duty to take a round in the morning and in the evening and see if any persons are sick and to attend to them.</p> <p>(a) The hotel-keepers should be warned. Like railways, there should be good refreshment arrangements, cleanliness being insisted upon.</p> <p>(b) There should be a schedule of rates hung in a prominent place in the hotel.</p>

Witness No. 166.

LETTER from Mr. CHHOTALAL CHHAGANLAL KOTHARI, C/o The "Burma Paper Mart" 11, Sule Pagoda Road, Rangoon, to the Chairman, the "Deck Passengers, Committee," Rangoon.

Rangoon, 30th July 1917.

travelled as a deck passenger once with my wife

I am a merchant dealing in stationery as a manager at the Burma Paper Mart at No. 11, Sule Pagoda road. I have travelled seven times on the B. I. boats, from Calcutta to Rangoon. I have always

TICKETS.

I have gone several times to secure tickets for my friends and have seen how tickets are sold whenever I had an occasion to go to

Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co., for getting shipping orders in connection with my office. I have seen on two or three occasions assistants of the Company who beat the people when they were purchasing tickets in the 40th Street. The ticket office is opened only for an hour or so when there will be a great crowd. After issuing some tickets the office door will be closed and hundreds of people go away without tickets. One or two durwans had told me that they would get tickets but at higher rates if I wanted. People are made to seat in a line in the street and I have seen them staying from morning 8 to 12 o'clock noon, if any man gets up from the line he will be roughly handled by the durwans, but if any *Baxish* is paid him he will take him away out of the middle of the line and purchase tickets for him. Many a time I had offered to be a witness to such cases of assault and, taking *Baxish* but the passengers, partly in a hurry to go away and partly out of fear that they would be punished for giving bribes, refused it.

#### EMBARKING.

Within the last two years I had been on the wharf to see my friends off, or to receive and on one occasion to see my wife off by a steamer. I have always seen people wearing European clothes or people who pay *Baxish* to the men at the gates they were allowed to go inside the enclosure on the wharf. On several occasions, I have seen the Police, the company's assistants mostly, and the durwans beating the people with canes and pushing them roughly; I have seen one assistant whom I can now recognise as the man who takes special delight in using the cane mercilessly on the deck passengers. On the occasion of sending my wife away who was in a very delicate state of health, and who was going home for confinement accompanied by my brother-in-law, I heard that the steamer was to leave at 9 o'clock in the morning, I took them at 7 o'clock. First I went to the first gate and was refused admittance, I remonstrated with the man at the gate that "These are Zananna ladies and that they cannot stand outside with the crowd and that they had therefore to go in." Leaving these ladies in the street I tried another gate which was closed and where stood the notorious beating man of the company with two durwans. These durwans after payment of *Baxish* took the luggage of the passengers over the railings and allow them to climb over the railings; these was done in the presence of the assistant of the company. Afterwards I tried to go through No. 3 Latter Street Wharf, where also people were let in who were in European dress. From there I saw my own class of people with ladies on board the steamer, when I asked one of my countryman how they managed to be there before other deck passengers were let in? he replied in a jocular

way that *Sir, Baxish makes everything right*. Thus myself and the ladies had to stand in the street for three hours. When I was about to take my people to my house back, a friend suggested that he had a taxi with him and asked me to use it. I put the ladies in the taxi and drew in without any more trouble. Then for the carrying of the luggage was demanded rupees four only for six packages but I refused at first. On finding that there was no use in quarrelling with him, that these coolies were not allowing others to do the work, I asked them to carry the luggage, I offered in vain to the beating assistant, who said it was not his business to interfere with the demand of the coolies. Afterwards I paid the coolies only six annas and refused to pay more.

On one occasion I was on the wharf at Sparks Street Jetty with Dr. P. J. Mehta, Mr. Mansukhlal Dolatchand, Jeweller, and Mr. A. R. Bhimani, we saw there the same beating man of the company using the cane freely on the deck passengers, when I suggested that a photograph of the beating could be taken and we had arranged with Mr. T. N. Ahuja to have it done, Mr. Trikamal came with his man and camera to take a photograph that very day, but it was not possible, the beating assistant saw our game and stopped the beating task and said laughingly "How will you now have a photograph of my beating as I am not going to do now?"

#### ON BOARD THE STEAMER

I had always to pay a big *Baxish* to men on board the steamer for securing seats. The lavatory arrangements are not at all satisfactory and they are not enough for the large number of passengers.

A separate accommodation for ladies is very necessary as the middle class people are very respectable and are not, according to the custom of the country, accustomed with other males.

Separate kitchens are necessary and they must be large in numbers, sufficient for the passengers. The Indian hotel arrangements on board is very bad, worst food is given to people and that, too, not at the proper time and in proper quantities. I suggested that a high caste men should be entrusted with hotel management and he must be made to employ high class cooks alone, in this case, other classes of people will have no objection.

#### DISSEMBARKING.

In disembarking there is not much trouble and inconvenience except that we have to pay a very good amount to the coolies, that there is the vexation of vaccination on all passengers, when with women and children, that there is an unnecessary delay, sometimes of three or four hours.

LETTER from Mr. A. TIRUVENKATASWAMY MUDALIAR, B.A., Mining Engineering & Consulting Geologist, Wolfram Mines, to the Secretary, Burma Social Service League, Rangoon, No 36, 52nd Street, East Rangoon

Rangoon, 13th August 1917.

DEAR SIR,—I have returned last night from camp in a hill in Thatôn District and I have heard of the formation of the Deck Passengers' Enquiring Committee. I was one of the cabin passengers in S S "Chilka" that left Madras on Tuesday, the 23rd January 1917, and arrived at Rangoon on Thursday, the 1st February 1917, after touching the various ports. It is not a surprise to me to hear the sad fate of S S "Chilka", knowing as I do fully and completely, the utter carelessness, indifference, cruel-heartedness, inhumanity, and gross apathy of all the

Officers, servants and the so called Doctor of the steamer. The Captain was the most reckless and inhuman officer that I ever met in my life. I recorded all the facts in the Diary then alone, with an intention to move the subject to the Government of Madras, soon after my arrival at Madras. Nearly 3,200 passengers were huddled and the women's head was inevitably placed on men's thighs. If your Committee cares to record my statement with facts and figures, I shall gladly spend a few hours for the purpose.

I hope to hear from you very soon —I have, etc., A. TIRUVENKATASWAMY MUDALIAR.

LETTER from Mr. A. T. MUDALIAR, Rangoon, to the Chairman, the Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 17th August 1917.

I am one of those that started in the S S Chilka that left Madras for Rangoon on Tuesday, the 23rd January 1917, and arrived at Rangoon on the 1st February. I noted carefully some gross irregularities with the object of moving the subject to the Government of Madras. Now that I heard of the formation of the Deck Passengers' Enquiry Committee, I shall be glad to place some of the facts before you, if the Committee cares to enquire of them

(1) Binny & Co., Madras, made me definitely understand that the steamer was to touch only Coconada port and thence directly to Rangoon but she touched every blessed port and thus caused greatest inconvenience to the passengers.

(2) The Captain of the steamer in my opinion was most unsympathetic and reckless. She started at Madras with about 1,600 passengers and landed in Rangoon with about 3,000 passengers, so much so there was not slightest room for the women to move about and I often observed women had to place their hands on the legs of man. What scarcity was another scarcity on board.

(3) The charge demanded by the coolies both at the Madras and Rangoon wharf are exorbitant and prohibitive to the poorer classes.

(4) After four or five days' voyage, when passengers were informed that the steamer will take another five or six days to arrive at Rangoon, the passengers came in a body and requested me to act as an interpreter to the Captain to permit them to go to the coasting town and to get provision as they never thought that she would take so many days to arrive at Rangoon.

The Captain told me as follows:—

"Make them definitely understand I will write to the Port Officer not to admit them free in any steamer in case this steamer

should leave the port and they can go at their own risk." Whereas he allowed the European passengers (ladies and gentlemen) to go to the town on boats and return

(5) I am an eye-witness to the following incident:—

When a passenger was beaten on the forehead with a stick by another passenger and when he was bleeding he was brought to the Doctor of the steamer, when the Doctor coolly answered "come to-morrow" and he was very careful to attend to those that paid him some coins.

(6) There was an European Captain of another steamer that travelled in the cabin also came as passenger. Mrs Raju (Head clerk, Custom Office, Rangoon), who was also a cabin passenger with her husband nursed him on board. She told me that the Captain also remarked of the irregularities of the steamer and that he would report them to Messrs Bulloch Bros soon after his arrival.

(7) Rangoon servants of the steamer demanded *Bukhsis* on the last day of the voyage. I was not indebted to the boy that served meals in my cabin for purchasing a ticket without diet; yet I paid each eight annas while others paid one rupee and two rupees each. The boy (whom I can identify) came to me after an hour and asked me to open my trunk for his inspection as he missed a spoon. After I paid him another eight annas he let me go. If I had not paid eight annas more I would have been subject to greatest inconvenience and trouble of opening my boxes and showing the contents to him.

(8) Soon after the steamer arrived at Rangoon we were all examined on board by the Health Department and the Police. We had given our name, residence, etc., to the Police on board.

When we got down on the wharf one Mr. Thompson of the Customs asked me to open my trunks which was in strict accordance with his duty and I had nothing to complain

against him, though I felt it was greatest inconvenience to me after my sufferings for ten days on board I asked him to take away the newspaper bundles which he was scrutinising and he had done so accordingly and returned them to me after two days at my residence. The Police Officer whom I subsequently found to be one Mr. Bell and he who had already examined me on board came again on the spot and asked me to stop when Mr. Thompson permitted me to go. His tone, his behaviour and words of expression were harsh and repulsive. He told his constable "Don't leave him and take his address." Mr. Thompson, while going, told him that he had been satisfied with me and

that he saw some letters addressed to me by the Government. I told the Police Officer "Sir, I am quite tired please allow me to go, to which he said "Don't talk," I will neck you out if you talk more". If I had remained longer at Rangoon without going to my Wolfram mines, I had a great desire to report about his treatment to our Lieutenant-Governor.

(9) I know that a passenger, who he stated that he lost his ticket, paid five rupees to a peon, who wore a badge of Bulloch Bros. and who came to the steamer with his master at Rangoon wharf to collect tickets, and he gave him ticket secretly on receiving Rs. 5.

LETTER from Mr. R. BHIMANI, 70, Mogul Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman, the B. I. Steamers' Grievances Committee.

Rangoon, 28th July 1917.

I beg to submit my statement as under with reference to the hardships of deck passengers by the B.I. Steamers.

*Buying tickets.*—They have a room in their office having a window in a very narrow lane which can hardly accommodate eight men at a time, so all have to stand outside on the public road. From morning buyers have to go to buy the tickets as there is no fixed time for it.

Strong men always stand near the window but men of weak constitution can't go to the window through the crowd.

Sometimes they are kept in line. A man can't stand for a long time and if he moves from the space durwan and sometimes officers use their sticks mercilessly on the man.

In such hardships many persons of weak constitution are compelled to buy tickets at very high rate from others.

On wharf tickets are sold but once I have seen personally that a man wanted a ticket and he requested the durwan in charge but he refused and said "no tickets available"

Soon after a Marvadi came and offered a ticket at Rs. 18 but at last after some hesitation he is compelled to buy at Rs. 15, as he had to go to his native place on urgent business.

*Entrance to the gate.*—The gate for the deck passengers is opened only two hours before the sailing time of the ship, so all the passengers are compelled to wait outside. Mostly carriages are not allowed in so passengers have to put their packages in open space.

In summer, passengers have to suffer the scorching heat of the blazing sun over their heads and in the rainy season their packages are damaged by the pouring rain.

A small number of coolies has been kept in proportion to the passengers, so the deck passengers can't get coolies unless they pay money to the coolies as much asked for.

When the gate opens coolies are rushing in with the goods of those who have paid

them and so it is very difficult to go with females inside the wharf in heavy rush. Further, men without tickets are not allowed in and so far the females who have to travel alone it is very difficult to go in the wharf as far as all passengers may go in.

*Entrance to the steamer.*—Under such hardships when passengers enter the steamer they find that most of the good part has been covered with the mats of the crews and balance has been engaged by strong persons who have come first, so men of weak constitution and the ladies can't get space and have to sit wherever there is space only to sit and they have to pass the travelling days without rest.

Ladies have to sit among such people whose faces they may not dream to see, and hear rude talk of them.

*Water.*—Water is supplied only for few hours and that also passengers have to pump and get water. In the beginning it is engaged by the crews. Meanwhile strong men come and take full supply for them. Before they complete their work it is stopped, so weak men and ladies have to pay money to crews or beg from strong men for water.

*Latrines*—are the worst which can't be described by pen, but I must say that I have never gone to these latrines for use in my travelling and I may not go if I die without going to latrines. In my travelling I am compelled to flatter boys and meeters for the use of second class latrines.

*Urinals.*—There are no separate urinals so people have to go to the latrines which are totally defaming the present civilization.

*Kitchens*—Kitchens for Hindus and Mahomedans are side by side and they are so dirty that surely a man may vomit at this scene.

*Sickness.*—In sea sickness passengers are not at all treated, but when a man is in point of death the doctor hardly comes in time although requested by many.

I have travelled many times as deck passenger with my family and I have suffered too much which I can't describe. When I

bring the scene opposite to me I am resolving not to travel if necessity may not press

Recently before a public complaint has been sent to Messrs. Bulloch Brothers & Co., Ltd, I had been to Lewis Street wharf in the morning Dr. P. J. Mehta, Mr. Mansookhlal Dolatchand and Mr C. C. Kothari were present at the time One B.I officer with specs. (I think Mr -Helps) was beating the passengers and the coolies who carried goods of deck passengers so mercilessly that I could not bear and at once ran to Messrs. T. N. Ahuja & Co with Mr. C. C. Kothari and brought one operator to take the photo of

the scene. As soon as camera was arranged he came to know that he is trying to take his photo, so he came to operator and told him that he has come to take photo but he will not succeed as he won't beat now.

He did not beat afterwards up to the time I remained there with camera.

At last I request your goodness to go deeply in the matter and advise B.I. officers to make necessary changes at once and give your opinion to appoint a committee to report often on the position of the passengers and instruct B. I to make changes whenever reasonably required.

LETTER from Mr. V. RAMANATHAN, 68, Thompson Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman, the Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 26th July 1917

I beg to give below the difficulties I experienced during my journey from Madras to Rangoon in June last year by SS "Fazilka".

On the 18th June 1916 I started from my native place and reached Madras on the morning of the 19th. On the same evening I proceeded to Messrs. Binny & Co. to procure two deck tickets for the above steamer which was to sail on the 22nd. On applying to them for the tickets they told me that they were in the habit of issuing tickets only to 1st and 2nd Class and not for the deck. They also told me that I should go to Sastri & Co., to get the deck tickets and that they were the agents authorized by them. In accordance with their instructions I proceeded to their agents and asked them for the tickets. They told me that the money must be paid in advance and that I must be going to them every now and then, so that I may get my tickets as soon as they receive from Binny & Co. Some of the passengers who came to Madras a day or two after my arrival also applied for tickets, but they were told that the tickets were not available. On the contrary, some of the people who had friends in Messrs. Binny & Co. got tickets even two or three hours before the embarkation. By this act many were either obliged to take another boat or to take Calcutta route

The steamer did not sail on the 22nd, but sailed only on the 23rd. This fact was not intimated to passengers. Some passengers went to wharf on the 22nd thinking that the steamer would sail, but were disappointed to hear at the wharf that the steamer would sail only on the next day. By coming to wharf and back to house, passengers were put to too much inconvenience and trouble at the hands of coolies, and wasted their money for nothing.

On the 23rd noon all the passengers arrived at the wharf with their baggages and things, and were whispering each other that the steamer would be attached to the wharf. The wharf too was not engaged, but was free.

The concerned authorities told us that the steamer would not touch the wharf, and that the passengers must go by boats. As the steamer was not alongside the wharf, the passengers had to incur heavy expenses such as payments to coolies, and engaging their own boats. The coolies, taking advantage of this situation, demanded exorbitant rates and the passengers had to submit to all these troubles. Not being satisfied with this the coolies threatened us that if they were not given more money, they would not put the things in a proper place in the steamer. As soon as I got into the steamer two of my friends joined me, and we all asked the coolies to put our things and baggages in a separate place. As soon as they placed all the things, they demanded from us a very unreasonable sum and insisted upon the sums being paid. We told them that the rates they demanded were too high, but they would not listen. They went on blabbering. The police constables were informed of this difficulty, and they did not care to enquire into the matter. As the troubles of the coolies were beyond expression, we paid them the money they urged on us to pay. The coolies' trouble in Madras is beyond expression. At a time it makes people to make up their mind not to travel hereafter. Reports of the conduct of the coolies toward the passengers to anybody bear no fruit whatever, but certainly increase the annoyance still.

After the passengers procured their accommodations, they were asked by the steamer authorities to vacate their places saying that they were all for Indian sepoys. The passengers did undergo a great inconvenience owing to this sudden shift. If the places had been intended for the sepoys, the passengers ought to have been informed of this before they begin to put their things.

In the steamer people suffered much owing to water scarcity and there were only three pipes on the whole. The pipes were opened only at limited hours from 0 to 7 a.m. and from 5 to 6 p.m. During these short hours how could all people store up water in their vessels for their use? Sometimes the



man in charge of the pipes used to close the same before the fixed hours, and neither entreaties nor requests could influence him to allow us some more time to store. The officers too paid a deaf ear to all our complaints.

During the day time the sepoy made hell of a noise, and was chitchating with each other using as many slang and vulgar languages as they were aware of. Then they got hold of a goat which was set apart for their meal and began to slaughter the animal in an open centre round which all sorts of people were sitting. The sight was a horrible one, and all of us requested them not to do this kind of business in the midst of all classes of people, but requested them to seek some corner in the steamer for this purpose. This they did not listen to, but went on killing the animal in the same place. After the head was severed from its body, the blood was gushing forth from its body which caused a small blood rivulet and was running near the places where the passengers were sitting. One man began to dance, singing purely vulgar songs, of which he thought he was an expert, while another played the part of a band master and a third as a piper and so on. These acts were all annoying to all passengers. The officers of the steamer were approached with these complaints, but alas, they paid no attention to our grievances. As no one came forward to put a stop to this nuisance and inconvenience, the passengers had to endure all these, feeling very much for their lot.

The sufferings that passengers undergo for procuring accommodation on board is beyond expression. Money has to be spent on board like water, to get a little convenience. Strictly speaking the British India authorities on board except officials, who naturally turn a deaf ear to all sorts of complaints, torture the passengers like anything to get money. How can poor people pay money for nothing in these hard days?

The insufficiency of latrines is the next thing to be attended to. This is the complaint by almost all the passengers. There are only four latrines, and they were not fitted with doors, but only pieces of canvas were

hung like curtains in house and disclosed all secrecies from inside. The latrines were not cleaned properly and were left to the mercy of mehters. This is naturally the cause that some diseases arise on board. Sanitation is an important thing to be considered especially in the steamers, as large number of people who may have various diseases, are to use the same fixed number of latrines.

The khallasies quarrelled with a fellow-passenger, the words came to blows, till at last they fell down on a passenger who was sleeping then. This fact was also reported, but to no purpose. A certain man must be deputed to supervise all the khallasies.

On alighting at the Rangoon Lewis Street wharf, the same coolly trouble arose, but to a lesser degree. All the passengers were asked to go to a shed where the Medical authorities of the Port Trust asked all the passengers to stand in rows and were asked to take away all their shirts and coats on. Then the passengers were put to lot of unnecessary medical examinations which are very shameful to mention here. Then a certain Doctor passes each man saying "Vaccinated" and when he came to a certain passenger, who looked very much tired on account of journey, the Doctor asked the man to go to the vaccination shed which was nearby. The passenger told the Doctor that he had been vaccinated already, but the Doctor did not listen to.

The police constables treated the passengers in a brutal way and used canes which all the passengers objected to strongly.

Generally the treatment which the passengers receive in steamer as well as at the wharf is inexplicable. The passengers are treated like domestic beasts by the authorities concerned and I request you to be so good as to suggest some remedial measures for these, so that the passengers may at least be free from all these troubles and inconveniences in future. Messrs. Loganatha Iyer and Ramasamy Iyer, who are working as clerks in the office of Accountant-General, Burma, were my companions in the steamer who will also give evidence if required.

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LETTER from Dr. R. C. CHAUDHURI, Private Medical Practitioner (Regd.) 65 and 66, Mogul Street, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Enquiry Committee, Rangoon.

*Rangoon, 23rd July, 1917.*

In January 1917 I had an occasion to go to the Latter Street wharf to see the family of a friend of mine leaving for Calcutta.

I saw a durwan of the British India Steam Navigation Company striking the Indians who had gone there to see their friends, with his cane.

The Europeans, Eurasians and Indians with European dress were not molested.

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PETITION from Mr. P. B. VEEROW bearing 359 signatures and marks—all of Telugus, to the President of the Committee appointed by the Local Government to enquire into the grievances of Deck passengers.

Rangoon, 16th July 1917.

The undersigned beg to submit the following petition on behalf of Telugu maistries and coolies. At the time of embarking at Rangoon for Coconada and other ports on the eastern coast of the Madras Presidency, and at the time of disembarking at Rangoon on arrival from those ports, we suffer many hardships which we beg leave to submit for your favourable consideration in the hope that necessary measures will be taken to redress our grievances

(1) A.—*Hardships experienced by us at Rangoon and in the course of voyage from Rangoon to Coconada and other ports on the eastern coast of the Madras Presidency.*—

(1) With a view to proceed to their native country, hundreds of coolies arrive at Rangoon from districts. From the day of arrival here to the day of departure of the steamer, our people consisting, as they are of males, females and tender children, suffer untold miseries for want of a shed to hide their heads in. If such of them as may have friends here choose to go to their friends' houses for temporary residence, or if they go to lodging houses, the Rangoon Municipality prosecutes them all for overcrowding. Afraid of prosecution, their friends totally refuse admission into their rooms. There is no doubt, a free rest-house in the Strand Road, but unfortunately they are refused admission whether for love or money. In spite of inclemency of the weather or scorching sun or the damage done to their scanty property, they should feel grateful if they are allowed to occupy unmolested the open space round the rest house or any other vacant plot of ground near the port. But no; they are beaten and mercilessly driven out and thieves pilfer their scanty belongings. Thus they are not allowed to occupy any vacant ground under the sky of Rangoon. Oh righteousness loving gentlemen, we earnestly implore your protection and help. We should feel grateful if sheds are constructed near the port as has been done at the port of Coconada.

(2) Tickets for the ports of Coconada, Vizagapatam, etc., are often not available at Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co, even when available, there is such a rush of intending passengers and such a scrambling for tickets that the durwans and company's subordinates beat the surging crowds to keep order, and in one of such struggles that usually ensues, a young boy, we understand, was trampled to death a few months ago. We understand that the agents appointed by the company for the sale of Coconada line tickets sell them to all Telugu people through their unscrupulous Telugu maistries at enhanced rates. What usually happens is this: the durwan on the premises of the company

states that there are no more tickets available for sale and drives away the intending passengers. One lame Mahomedan and two Telugu maistries, who are often seen loitering about the premises of the company, sell tickets already in their possession at enhanced rates. Such arrangements may kindly be made as will ensure even the humblest cooly to enter the company's premises and obtain a ticket at legal rates without the slightest hindrance from subordinates or durwans.

(3) An hour before the departure of a steamer we generally go to that particular wharf with our boxes and baggage which have to be placed on the roadside until we are allowed to board the steamer. Some one comes round and collects rent at the rate of 8 annas for each big box, 4 annas for a small one and 2 annas for each bundle. We do not know whether these exactions are legal or not. If we request him to grant us a receipt, we are often beaten.

(4) As we proceed to enter the steamer with our bags, boxes, etc., on our heads, we are often unjustly pushed and beaten by wharf durwans, some European or Eurasian officers and police constables. We shall feel grateful to the authorities if they kindly make the steamer anchor at the wharf three or four hours before her actual departure and allow us to enter the vessel as we come to the wharf. Some two or three sympathetic steamer officials should see that the passengers, as they come in, take their seats in regular order and not anywhere they please as is at present the case.

(5) For those boxes which we are unable to carry ourselves a cooly-hire ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 is demanded and has actually to be paid for each box.

(6) We are not allowed sufficient room or sufficient quantity of good water. Gunners and other subordinate officials of the steamer allow more space to those who pay them money to the utter discomfort of others.

(7) Rotten fruits and foodstuffs are allowed to be sold in the steamer. The native hotel-keeper supplies rotten and unhealthy footstuffs. One soda water bottle costs annas four.

(8) In some steamers there is not sufficient number of latrines. Where there is a sufficient number, the scavenger, through gross negligence and laziness, has a few only open and locks the others up. As these latrines are used by hundreds of persons they should be cleaned as often as possible, which is not being done at present. These are kept in a very uncleanly state. The seats do not afford sufficient privacy. There are no signboards indicating by whom—whether by males or females—any particular latrine is to be used.

(9) The officers and subordinates of the vessel seem to think that they are the

owners of the vessel and accordingly treat us as so many beasts. Without any consideration or excuse, they often use foul language, strike us with their hands and their booted legs. If we respectfully protest, we are again beaten and imprisoned in the dark room of the vessel.

(10) When family women are travelling with their husbands the native subordinates of the vessel often pull them by their hands or saries and make signs at them. When we make complaints to the European officers of the vessel, they do not take any notice of their conduct. The conduct of the subordinates is most humiliating. In the case of women travelling alone, separate accommodation may be given.

(11) The Medical Officer of the vessel does not treat the sick free and, even if paid, does not give good medicines.

(12) Some years ago it was the practice for the Captain and the Chief Officer of the vessel to go round to all parts of the vessel enquiring with parental kindness and genuine love, how the passengers were getting on and listening sympathetically to their grievances. Should officers visit all parts of a vessel as they used to do formerly, most of the troubles which we suffer at the hands of petty subordinates will vanish.

(13) The butler of the steamer sells liquor to deck passengers. This increases the giddiness of passengers due to sea voyage and creates much nuisance. Sale of liquor to deck passengers should be prohibited.

(14) Special accommodation may kindly be provided on the upper deck at slightly enhanced rates for those middle class people who are too poor to travel in the second class but yet unwilling to travel with the ordinary run of third class passengers. Such middle class people now tip the subordinates of the

company and occupy the upper deck. The institution of this mode of intermediate class will bring in more income to the company.

(II) B.—*Hardships experienced on our voyage from the ports of Coconada, etc., to Rangoon.*—

(1) All the grievances, represented above as occurring on board a vessel proceeding to Coconada, etc., equally apply to vessels arriving at Rangoon from the ports of Coconada, etc.

(2) The boxes that we bring with us are either locked or packed. Before we can open our boxes for the inspection of the Excise authorities the durwans of the department taking advantage of our humility and timidity break open them with big sticks or iron rods. Those who tip them are let off without any examination.

(3) Whether we bear vaccination or small-pox marks or not, we are all vaccinated. But those who pay a small fee escape vaccination even though they have never been vaccinated.

(4) As stated in item (14) of Part A above, we have no sheds to hide our heads in, until we leave Rangoon for districts.

(5) The wharf coolies demand Rs. 2 a box for landing our boxes and baggages.

It will be seen from the above that our ignorance and helplessness are exploited by all concerned. We earnestly seek the protection of Government.

In conclusion, we humbly implore the members of the Committee to plead before Government and the authorities of the steamer Companies for an early redress of the grievances of poor, voiceless, helpless and ignorant coolies, for which act of kindness we shall ever feel grateful to you and the benign British Government.

*The above is a true translation of a Telugu petition, dated the 18th July 1917, submitted today to the President of the Deck Passengers' Committee, Old Public Buildings, Rangoon.*

P. B. VEEROW.

LETTER from Mr. A. K. SEN, L.M.S., Medical Practitioner and Honorary Magistrate, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Enquiry Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 23rd July 1917.

In the latter part of 1914, I had an occasion to go to the Latter Street wharf to receive a friend of mine from Calcutta.

There I saw an Eurasian servant of the B.I. S.N. Company, striking the Indians who had gone there to receive their friends, with his cane.

Europeans, Eurasians and Indians with European dress were not molested at all. The people were allowed there to go to the wharf to receive passengers and yet they were treated thus by the servants of the Company.

2. The method of registering berths is not at all satisfactory. It seems to depend upon

the whim of the man in charge of the passage department in Rangoon.

On March 13th, 1916, I wrote a letter to Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co., asking them to reserve three second class berths for me in the steamer leaving Rangoon on or about April 25th, 1916. They promptly replied that the berths were reserved for me. A week before the departure of the steamer, when I went to buy tickets, I was told by the man in charge of the passage department, that there was no second class accommodation vacant in that steamer and that no berths were reserved for me.

Next day, on presentation of the company's letter, he most reluctantly noted my name and asked me to come again two or

three days after. All my troubles were due to the negligence of this man. These things should be put down in no time

*Difficulty in getting deck tickets.*—My peon, Bathe Kahar, aged about 21, got leave from the District Magistrate for going to India. He waited here for 12 days and could not get a ticket for Rs 10. He told me that the Durwans of the B.I.S.N. Company wanted Rs 15 for one ticket. He also told me that the durwans assaulted the people who went there to buy tickets. He was also assaulted once, after which he never went again to buy his ticket. He requested me to buy a ticket for him. At last he left Rangoon as a servant of a second class passenger by paying him the deck fare.

On June 29th, 1917, our steamer reached Rangoon from Calcutta at noon. The Port Health Department wanted to send two passengers—a Marwari purda lady and a boy—to the Contagious Diseases Hospital. I wrote a note to the Port Health Officer saying that I would keep them under my observation and treat them, if necessary. The lady was allowed to go, but the boy was sent to the Contagious Diseases Hospital from which he was discharged (I was told) the same evening. When I examined the lady, she was not suffering from any disease for which removal to the Contagious Diseases Hospital was necessary. These unnecessary hardships and inconveniences should be redressed.

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LETTER from Mr T. BHATTACHARJYE, 98, Fraser Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman,  
B.I.S.N. Deck Passengers' Enquiry Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 23rd July 1917.

I beg to state that on the 15th April 1917, I came here from Calcutta by the S.S. "Bharata." On that day the steamer, instead of coming along the jetty, anchored in the mid river, where after a considerable period of time a three-storied steam-launch came to take the passengers to the wharf. I, with others, came down to that launch. As soon as I was in the launch, I was forced to go down to the lowest deck, where a number of lower class people were packed up. The place was so crowded, hot and dark that it was impossible for human being to stay there and that there was every possibility of

being suffocated. Being unable to stay there I was forced to ask humbly the durwans and other servants of the steamer Company and also the Police to allow me to go out of that room. They not only did not hear my prayers, but moreover they threatened me with their long sticks and pushing. When no other alternative was left for me, I, being advised by one of the Company's cooly offered them Re 1. After this I was allowed to come out of that dangerous place to the upper deck to my great relief, leaving all my keats (*keats*) there unprotected.

In conclusion I beg to ask that the Committee will make an enquiry into it and take necessary steps and oblige.

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MEMORANDUM of Hardships and Experiences by K. U. R. RAU,  
Medical Practitioner, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 20th July 1917.

I beg to bring to the notice of the Committee the following hardships and experiences. There is utter lack of discrimination in assigning berths to cabin passengers, for example, I was not provided a complete cabin for myself and my family while going to Madras. On my return journey, on 28th May 1917, when there was no difficulty in providing one, I was separated from my wife and children who were kept company by a Gujarati lady, who was separated similarly from her male relations.

2. My friends and relatives, who wished to see me off, were prevented from entering the precincts of the wharf, whereby I was deprived of their assistance in embarking on the steamer. A permit system will obviate this difficulty.

3. Despite the knowledge that wharf coolies are forbidden to receive any money for carrying luggages, etc., to the steamer, I was obliged to meet their excessive demands for the simple reason that I would be long

detained if I had only persisted in not complying with their demands.

4. The accommodation given to me on my return journey was anything but satisfactory in point of ventilation and I observed that animals were put side by side with men, the most insanitary feature ever met with.

5. A passenger before he leaves the steamer has to undergo strict examination by the Police, the Customs and the Port Health authorities, which is carried in a rough way.

6. I have seen third class passengers carrying heavy luggages by themselves from steamer to launch and from launch to wharf. If they cannot be allowed to disembark from the steamer itself, it should be arranged that they are not obliged to carry more burden than they can.

7. As to the vaccination it should be said at the very outset that it is conducted in an unsentimental manner in an ill-ventilated godown, crowded to excess with passengers who have not washed for some days and not nourished properly during the voyage for want of suitable food.

LETTER from S. C. CHAKRABARTI, 34, Mogul Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Old Secretariat Building, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 23rd July 1917.

I beg to bring to your kind notice that in the month of April 1916 I was urgently needed to go to Calcutta and consequently went to Bulloch Bros. & Co.'s office to have my passage, but whenever I went there I was denied with various lame excuses by the clerks concerned. I then with the greatest difficulty managed to get my passage.

I beg to add that troubles of the deck passengers know no bound at the time of embarking the steamer. All the gates of

the wharf are open only one hour before the steamer sails from the jetty and thereby occurs a terrible rush by the time. One Eurasian clerk from B.I.S.N. Company, who perhaps holds responsibility for the good management of the deck passengers, stands near the staircase intended for the deck passengers with a cane in his hand. He far from looking after the conveniences of the passengers does not hesitate to ill treat them and even abuses the illiterate classes with indecent languages. I hope that all these inconveniences should be put down at once.

LETTER from Mr. S. M. BASU, 44, Lewis Street, Rangoon, to the President, B.I.S.N. Deck Passengers' Enquiry Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 23rd July 1917.

As the Committee is going to enquire into the grievances of the deck passengers on the B.I. steamers I beg to state the following from my personal experience for the information of the members of the Committee.

I left Calcutta on or about the 21st October 1916, for Rangoon. On coming to the steamer my first lookout, being a deck passenger, was to find a good place for me. This I did and seated myself on the upper deck, the lower deck being very nasty, unhealthy and packed up to the full. The upper deck was neat and clean. As soon as the steamer weighed anchor, the Chief Officer came to check tickets. Those who had not had deck ticket with European diet were sent down to the lower deck. The chief officer informed us that those who would pay Rs. 6 more for diet would be allowed to stay there. Consequently many passengers who were unwilling to go down to the lower deck had to pay Rs. 6 for diet theoretically, but practically for the seat, because most of these passengers were Hindus who would not take diet on the steamer. At the time of buying ticket I enquired in the office of Messrs. Mackinnon and Mackenzie, Calcutta, as to whether there was any distinction among the passengers, who had got deck ticket with European diet and those who had got deck ticket without diet. I was informed that there was no distinction so far as the seat was concerned. I do not know why there was such incongruity between what I was informed in the office and the action of the Chief Officer. I would therefore ask that an enquiry be made into it and the restriction to stay on the upper deck be removed.

The deck passengers were insufficiently supplied with water. Sometimes I had to put off taking my diet for some two hours, and could not go to the latrine for want of water. The blame rests with the *Khalassis*. They would supply water at their own discretion.

On the 24th October 1916, at about 7 a.m. the steamer came along the Lewis Street Jetty. On coming down to the jetty I met the C.I.D. Officer, who took down my name, my father's name, the names of my native village and the district, the reason of my coming to Rangoon, why I went home, how long I stayed there, etc. I was detained on the jetty for three-quarters of an hour on this business. Then I was sent to the quarantine along with other deck passengers. There my bags and baggages were all examined by Customs men. In making search these men threw away this side and that side all the contents on my portmanteau, spoiling many clothes. This was not the case with me alone. Most of the passengers shared my fate.

Then came the turn of the Health Officer. Here the treatment we received was the worst of all. It was a matter of self-respect. I along with all other deck passengers had to stand up in a row and was to take off all our clothes. Thus we were in a state of semi-nudity. It was like the scene of so many coolies ordered to fall in by their master when he called their register of attendance. Had a photograph been taken and published in some illustrated magazine, I think the world would have got a subject to laugh at. After we had taken off our clothes the Port Health Officer (I am not sure whether he was the Health Officer or his subordinate) inspected our body, one by one, and we one by one went out. I saw many passengers vaccinated there. I do not know if they were previously vaccinated. I was not vaccinated there. The steamer came along the jetty at 7 a.m., but I could come out of the quarantine at 9 a.m. after passing so many inspecting officers. It will be seen that I was detained there for two hours after a tiresome journey of four days. What an awful it was one can easily imagine.

By the way I beg to touch three more points which are worthy of consideration. At present there is no inter-class

accommodation for ladies. The fare of the 2nd class is Rs. 45. This is too much for a gentleman of the middle class. It is admitted by all that middle class men are poor. They live from hand to mouth. But whatever their pecuniary circumstances may be, their wives at present are to travel in the 2nd class, as they cannot travel on the deck which is not at all fit for ladies to travel.

The steamers carry so many passengers on the deck that the deck passengers find very little room to lie down. I saw many passen-

gers to sit down on their luggages throughout the journey without sleep. The lower deck is rendered nasty and insanitary by accommodating so many passengers.

On the deck ticket the words "one native adult" are written. I take exception to it. I have heard many others to hold similar views. Now-a-days the word "native" is often used to express contempt, I would suggest that these words be omitted and some appropriate words be used.

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LETTER from Mr. P. N. MALACHI, West Kamayut, Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

*Rangoon, 20th July 1917.*

With reference to the enquiries that are going to be made into the grievances of B.I.S.N. deck passengers, I beg to mention two instances of hardship which have come within my experience and knowledge.

1 On or about November 1915 I had been to the wharf to see a few friends off. If I remember aright the scheduled hour of sailing of the steamer was 11 a.m., but as usual a huge crowd had gathered long before the hour of departure arrived, some of whom were seated on the dust ridden open space in front of the 3rd class bridge head with their effects all gathered around them, while others were either standing or lounging about. I was one amongst the crowd desiring to find out at what time or hour the authorities would let the passengers in for that was one of the big puzzles which the passengers were required to solve. I noticed however that the durwan in charge of the bridge gates opened the gateway at periodic intervals to let in, as it appeared to me, sometimes a cooly with a load, at others one or two passengers after a short parley. Some of the passengers naturally thought that the time had arrived for letting in people and made towards the gateway. But before they could come half-way the durwan closed the gates, and the people nearest the gate fell back. This happened several times and on each occasion the greatest confusion prevailed amongst the medley of men, women and children near the gateway, coolies with loads on their heads knocking against women, children brushed aside and men fighting to find a way out. The great hardship consists in the air of mystery that surrounds the operations of the durwan, there is nothing in his conduct and the arrangements generally to make the people understand which opening of the gate was really intended to let the passengers in, as it happened it was on one of these periodic occasions, when the gates were opened a feet wide, that passengers were allowed to enter and that not without interruption. What followed was chaos and confusion. A stream of men, women and children struggling to reach the gateway were jostled about by coolies carrying trunks

and boxes and more often than not it was the coolies that succeeded in getting in at a time. Owing to the narrowness of the passage which could admit only one at a time, a struggling crowd soon collected within the small enclosure—pushing, fighting and elbowing—and at these moments the durwan, now assisted by one or two more, drove the crowd before him by forcibly closing the gates upon them—men stumbled, women fell and children screamed. This is what I saw the last occasion I had been to the wharf to see some people off.

2 In March 1916 when returning from India, I booked a second class passage for myself and my wife. On getting on board the steamer—"Euryalus" it was—I was told that our cabin was at the "poop". On going in I found that the "poop" was a place, dark, dingy, damp and filthy, full of smoke, covered with coal dust, and evil smelling. I refused to take my wife in who was in delicate health. My luggage and trunks were all scattered about on the open space round about the 2nd class cabins. Seating my wife in a corner of the deck, for about an hour and a half I was engaged in finding out some one who would help me to find a place for us. One advised me to speak to the Chief Officer, one mentioned the Captain and another the Steward and so on. The last mentioned was soon seen to come in my way and on speaking to him on the matter he informed me that there was no room available and that I should only occupy the "poop." In the meantime all other second class passengers has taken their places in the saloons allotted to them, whilst myself and my wife were standing out with all our things strewn about. After an hour's weary waiting luckily I came across the Captain to whom I explained my difficulty and whom I asked to provide a good place at least for my wife. On finding that my wife was in poor health, the Captain enquired of the Steward whether there was any room available and on learning that there was one cabin unoccupied, gave him instructions to let us have that cabin. The arrangements seemed to have been completed and I took my wife into the cabin taking all my things in. After about 20 minutes the Steward returned

with the news that he had consulted with some other officer and that we should vacate the cabin. By that time all passengers had settled in their places and the time had arrived for the steamer to start on her journey. I had to go out again in search of some officer and by good fortune I came across an Engineer. On listening to my difficulties this officer was kind enough to issue instructions to the Steward confirming

the arrangement made by the Captain. The Steward was satisfied and we were left unmolested in the cabin for the remainder of our journey.

After paying our passage, as others had done, unlike others I had to wait upon the convenience of people, argue and explain my case to the officers of the steamer before securing a comfortable place.

LETTER from Mr. P. N. MALACHI, General Secretary, Indian Christian Association, Burma, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Rangoon, 31st July 1917.

in the Local Government, Resolution quoted above:—

I am directed to address you on the subject of the Government of Burma, Commerce Department Resolution No 4S., dated the 26th June 1917, published in the *Burma Gazette Extraordinary* of the 23rd idem and, in the first place, to convey to the Local Government through the medium of your Committee, the cordial thanks to this Association for the very generous spirit in which they have met the resolutions of the mass meeting held in this city on the 13th June, and for their prompt action in having instituted the necessary measures in order to enquire into the grievances of the deck passengers travelling between India and Burma by the B.I.S.N. Co.'s-steamers on their arrival at, and departure from, this port, or during the voyage, and with a view to mitigate their troubles in so far as it lies in their power. It augurs well for the success of the scheme that the Local Manager of the B.I.S.N. Co (and one who has had wide experience of Indian conditions) should have been invited to serve on the Committee, and I am to express the hope that any reasonable representations made to them will have their kind and sympathetic consideration.

2. It is admitted on all hands that the Indian deck passengers travelling to and from Rangoon undergo a lot of inconvenience and are subjected to a great deal of annoyance during every one of their trips to and fro, and it is no exaggeration to say that this is a matter of vital importance to the many thousands of passengers who have to cross and recross the Bay of Bengal every year, constituting as they do, a very large section of the Indian population of this Province. I am to summarise in this letter, as briefly as possible, a few of the many hardships which, in common with the travelling public, members of this Association have had to suffer in the course of their voyage from Rangoon to Indian ports and *vice versa*. I may say at the onset that these are not imaginary grievances, but actual facts which have come within the personal knowledge or experience of one or the other of the members at some time or another within the last few years.

3. I shall, for the sake of convenience, follow the terms of the reference as detailed

(i) *Passage Tickets*—The illicit sale of tickets at enhanced prices is a fact which was well-known in Rangoon some time ago, and many people had to pay more than the legitimate fare for steamer tickets. I am informed that it was just as bad, if not worse, in Madras. This of course did not happen ordinarily, but only when, owing to lack of space, passengers were told that no more tickets would be available for a particular vessel. I admit that the proper course to be adopted in such cases would be to promptly report individual cases of fraud to the Police or to the B I Office; but if this had to be done, the passenger concerned would surely miss his steamer; and in the ordinary course of events, no one would like to do so if he can help it, and much less a poor and ignorant deck passenger. Added to that, in the words of the Editor, "Rangoon Gazette" (in his leading article of the 16th June) "the reluctance of the most truthful complainant to give evidence and his fear of a powerful opponent militates against the possibility of proving the case." Happily this state of things does not exist now, so far as I am aware, but it is not unlikely that it will recur again unless some precautionary steps are adopted before-hand. I will leave it to your Committee to devise measures whereby this system of open extortion and swindling may be put an end to once and for all.

(ii) *Keeping order at the wharf*.—It has come within the knowledge of members of this Association time and again that much unnecessary hardship is imposed on 3rd class deck passengers while waiting to embark on board the steamer, and until quite recently, the use of sticks and canes was freely resorted to by the durwans and persons in charge of them, for the maintenance of order. One of the members recently witnessed a case in which a poor deck passenger was actually kicked on the shins by one of the persons appointed to keep order at the wharf and with such force that the skin was cut open. He was bleeding profusely and was unable to walk until at length some of his fellow-passengers took pity on him and conducted him to the steamer with some difficulty. The blame cannot however be

laid at the door of the B.I.S.N. Co since it is possible that they never hear of such cases of ill-treatment. Where so much harsh treatment is meted out all round, and there is such a lack of sympathy on the part of the officers appointed to keep order, the ignorant deck passenger does not know which way to turn and where to lay his complaint. The employees of the Company should be made to understand that they must not harass and ill-treat the passengers with impunity, and the latter should be able to feel that they could obtain justice readily from some responsible person on the spot.

(iii) *Wharf Coolies*—The exactions of the coolies went up to such an alarming extent a few years ago that the matter had to be reported to the B.I.S.N. Co. They very kindly looked into the whole question and introduced the system of free coolies. It worked very well for some time, but very soon the old order of things returned, so that at present although in theory the coolies are still not supposed to make any money from the passengers, the latter find it absolutely impossible in practice to arrange for the conveyance of their luggage on board unless they pay some remuneration to the coolies. The same thing happens at the time of disembarkation. The wharf coolies are absolutely callous and for all practical purposes there is nobody to see that they do their work. The trouble in this case is that the maistries who are of the same class as the coolies of whom they are in charge are no better than the latter in this respect and it is hopeless to complain to them of the illegal demands of the coolies. The deck passengers are entirely at their mercy and are quite helpless in this matter. What is actually required is a better and closer supervision over the work of the coolies. It is essential that the receipt of any money by the coolies or the maistries should be strictly forbidden, and steps must be taken to see that there is no infringement of this rule. Any attempt to obtain illegal gratification from the deck passengers should be severely dealt with.

(iv) *The time allowed for passengers to board the steamer on departure* is absolutely insufficient at present, and if only this grievance is remedied I venture to think the points referred to in (ii) and (iii) above will admit of easy solution. The fact that steamers are brought alongside the wharf about an hour or so before the advertised time of sailing gives rise to an inevitable congestion of passengers at the jetty and adds to the difficulties of conveying a large amount of luggage from the shore to the ship within the short space of time available, besides causing a great deal of confusion both in the wharf and on board the steamer. It invariably happens that even after the steamer is made fast to the jetty, passengers are kept waiting and are only let in through a jealously guarded and half-closed gate within the space of half an hour

like so many flocks of sheep. It is not an uncommon sight to see men, women and children huddled up together and waiting at the wharf head for hours on end patiently watching for the gates to be opened, and then commences a terrific rush onwards to the steamer, men, women and children with their *samans* and all, and the usual scrambling for places on board follows. A member had occasion to witness a pitiable scene in which a poor woman with a tender child in her arms was about to be crushed by the press, a position aggravated by the rough handling of passengers by the Company's durwan and the child would have been trampled upon if he had not gone to the rescue. This, I believe, is not a solitary case arising out of this unsatisfactory system. All this worry and inconvenience could be avoided if the steamers are brought alongside the wharf some three or four hours before the notified time of the vessel's departure and passengers are allowed to get on board as they arrive at the wharf.

(v) *The amenities provided for women passengers*—It is very thoughtful of Government to have put this down as one of the specific points on which the Committee might make some enquiries. The provision of a separate accommodation specially reserved for women passengers has been duly recognised on the various Indian Railways and a similar system with regard to journeys by steamer has been a long-felt want which, if supplied, will be a great boon to the travelling public, and chiefly to female passengers, who being obliged to travel alone, are quite helpless on board. There are many instances in which members have been put to the expense of making a trip to and fro, mainly because at present no special facilities have been provided for the comfort of their womenfolk. A female attendant might profitably be employed to look after the needs of the female passengers. It must of course be optional for women to occupy the quarters, if any, reserved for them and no attempt must be made to separate husbands from their wives, or the women from their children. If this is admitted as a necessity in a Railway train for journeys of short duration, it is all the more important that a separate accommodation for women passengers only should be provided on board the steamer.

(vi) *Any other defects in the existing arrangements*.—The following are the points which occur to some of the members of this Association and I am to solicit the earnest consideration of your Committee to the grievances complained of under this head and the suggestions put forth below.—

(1) There is at present no waiting room accommodation for deck passengers, and it will be readily conceded that it is a real hardship for people to be standing out in the open under the burning sun or the pelting rain for hours together before being admitted on board the steamer, particularly where



delicate women and children are concerned. Under any system of improving the facilities for the embarkation of passengers, some amount of waiting would be unavoidable, especially for the early comers and in any case for people arriving overnight from up-country stations to catch the next day's steamer. It is nothing but reasonable that some decent accommodation should be provided for them in order to shelter them from the sun and the rain. Waiting rooms have been provided for the use of the 3rd class passengers at every important Railway station here as well as in India and, if this is considered necessary in cases where passengers do not need to wait for more than a few minutes for the next train and the journeys are comparatively of such a short duration, it is all the more important that a similar facility should be given to the passengers who have to wait for a much longer period and prepare for a very tedious and more arduous journey.

(2) The deck passengers ought to be given greater facilities for embarking and disembarking. The practice of discharging passengers while the vessel is lying in mid-stream and bringing them to the shore in barges is fraught with so many risks and discomforts that it should, if possible, be put an end to altogether. Unsatisfactory as this system is, from the passengers' point of view, it is not half so bad as when compared with the hardships they have to suffer on this account in the Madras harbour. It is the rule, rather than the exception that the vessel stops in the middle of the harbour without going on to the wharf, and the transport of passengers and their luggage is effected by means of rickety cargo boats (none but the Madras boatmen can eclipse the wharf coolies in Rangoon in their exorbitant demands). At the time of embarkation, no attempt is made to transfer the passengers on board until a good number of cargo boats collect by the side of the ship and the passengers in some cases have to wait for some hours, the cargo boat lurching all the time with every movement of the waves. Then at length a sort of temporary platform is improvised in one of the lower decks and the passengers either have to make a jump for it or are pulled up from the boats by the ship's man, the women and children being subjected to the same rough treatment. A decent ladder reaching down to the cargo boat should always be made available for the use of the 3rd class deck passengers.

(3) Another fruitful source of trouble is the overcrowding of passengers. Every steamer invariably takes more than the full complement of passengers allotted to her, no regard being had to the requirements as regards space, light and ventilation laid down by the rules. In certain cases, for reasons best known to themselves, the ship's officers do not allow passengers on certain portions of the main deck and twin-deck ordinarily intended for deck passengers, and

matters are greatly aggravated thereby. The pressure is sometimes so great that every inch of space is taken up, and passengers hardly have any room to stretch their legs about and much less to lie down. This is certainly a great inconvenience which deck passengers have to put up with considering the number of days the voyage lasts. Cases of over crowding are reported on every steamer and are not confined to small boats which on account of the exigencies of the service are made to serve the runs on which they are not ordinarily sent. A notable case was that of the "Arankola" on her voyage from Calcutta to Rangoon in May last. She carried a herd of buffaloes as cargo and they were all put on the main deck and deck passengers had to accommodate themselves as best as they could, so that many people had no room even to sit. The extent to which this overcrowding goes on sometimes may be easily imagined from the fact that the "Chilkā" during her voyage from Madras *via* the Coromandel ports in January and February was packed to her utmost capacity, and for want of room a number of deck passengers had to be accommodated in the life boats carried on board the ship. Instances of this kind may be multiplied indefinitely. It is most essential that this grievance should be removed since it is a bare necessity for the deck passengers and not a luxury. The system of limiting the sale of tickets to the carrying capacity of the steamer is of course a desirable one, but it does not go into the root of the trouble, unless the Company sees to it that all the accommodation set apart for passengers in the ship's register and certificates is actually made available for their use. Where for instance, 3,000 deck passengers are booked for a particular steamer, proper inspection must be made with a view to see that suitable arrangements have been made on board the ship for the accommodation of 3,000 people and an attempt must be made to find for each passenger the requisite amount of space for himself and his luggage, instead of allowing passengers to shift for themselves. It is often said that a deck passenger's worst enemy in the scramble for "best places" is his fellow-passenger, but this is a matter where, as in the case of the railways, the ship's people ought to be able to put matters right, whereas at present they keep off at a safe distance. A responsible officer in the ship might with advantage be detailed for this specific work, whose duty it will be to see that justice is done to every one in this important matter which so largely tends to the comforts of the deck passengers.

(4) Want of space forbids my writing in detail of many other matters over which the deck passengers have a legitimate grievance; and for fear of taking up too much of your time, I will only mention a few of them:—

(a) The insanitary condition on board created through a variety of causes but principally by allowing passengers to travel

on the same deck as animals (fowls, sheep, ponies and buffaloes) and by not providing them with proper ventilation and light and other necessaries of life.

(b) The insufficient latrine accommodation.

(c) The scarcity of drinking water.

(d) The inadequacy of medical attendance on board.

(e) The inferior quality of food supplied by the hotel-keeper.

(f) The existence of thefts on board (while out at sea).

(g) The putting on of awnings long after the vessel leaves port and their removal long before she reaches harbour.

(h) The exclusion of husbands and male friends from accompanying helpless women and children on board.

(i) The absence of a middle-class accommodation.

(j) The harsh treatment from Company's servants and ship's officers.

4. The following members of this Association are prepared to give evidence and

answer any questions on the subject of this representation —

(1) Mr. D. J. Daniel, M.A.

(2) Mr. G. A. Chellaiya, B.A.

(3) Mr. S. Satyanadhan.

(4) Mr. T. A. Gnanasundram.

(5) Mr. T. Lamech.

(6) Mr. P. N. Malachi, B.A.

(7) Mr. Jas. Barnabas.

5 It is the considered opinion of this Association, making a due allowance for the special circumstances arising out of the abnormal times we are now passing through, and allowing for the fact that some amount of inconvenience is attendant upon every sea voyage, that the deck passengers travelling between India and Burma, in the B.I.S.N. Co.'s steamers undergo much inconvenience and unnecessary hardship and have many real grievances. Both the Government and the B.I.S.N. Co. will earn the eternal gratitude of many generations of this poor class of people if their grievances are looked into and redressed at the earliest opportunity:

LETTER from Mr. S. PONNIAH, No. 66, 50th Street, East Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Old Public Buildings, Rangoon.

Dated Rangoon, the 24th July 1917.

I have travelled several times between Madras and Rangoon from the year 1893. On each occasion, I travelled by the B.I.S.N. Co.'s steamer. The difficulties I experienced at the hands of the representatives of the Company both on board the steamer and on shore are many of which the following are of recent occurrence —

I left Madras on the 25th June 1915 by the S.S. "Euryalus" which arrived Rangoon on the 30th June 1915. On this occasion, I travelled with my family consisting of 12 members including children and two servants. I took deck passage with European diet. When we came on board the steamer, we were not able to secure accommodation and consequently had to stand for over two hours. I represented this to the Chief Officer who replied that he does not care a damn. After receiving this reply, Gunner Jacob came to

me with a proposal to secure accommodation for us and for which he demanded Rs. 10. I was obliged to agree to this as our children were suffering a great deal by the exposure on account of rain and cold. He permitted us to occupy a place in the upper deck which had no canvas covering. On the night of the 29th of June 1915, this Gunner came to the place where we were sleeping, in a drunken state, and disturbed us from our sleep.

The use of lavatory was also paid for. The servant who used to bring our food demanded a *bukshish* which was at first refused, but he vindicated this by delaying in serving our food. Finally I was obliged to bribe him also.

On arrival at Rangoon the coolies demanded exorbitant charges for removing our luggage, etc., from the steamer to the wharf and I had to pay them.

Witness No 96.

LETTER from Mr. S. C. GOSSAIN, Accountant-General's Office, Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Dated Rangoon, the 26th June 1917.

With reference to your invitation for applications regarding inconveniences that deck passengers are made to suffer, I wish to place the following before you for your information.

First of all I would say that the latrines in the steamers are kept in an abnormal condition. The very sight of the seats in the latrines causes nausea.

The latrines should be cleaned every 15 minutes with Phenyle and an employee of

the B.I.S.N. Co should see that it is regularly done. The number of the latrines should also be increased as the existing number is quite out of proportion with the large number of passengers.

Secondly I should like to deal with the medical examination trouble.

When I first landed in Rangoon April 1916, I was marched along with other deck passengers into an enclosure where deck passengers are detained before medical examination. I was detained there over half-an-hour after which my vaccination marks were examined

and was allowed to come out. After four days' journey in the steamer one finds it impossible to be detained in an enclosure for over half-an hour.

I found some of my brethren belonging to the labourer class in a more pitiable condi-

tion. Some of them were too weak to keep standing as they had sea-sickness and they lay flat on the bare ground in the enclosure. They should be provided with mattresses on which they may take rest during the period of detention.

LETTER from Mr. S. C. BOSE, 100-A, Fraser Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

Dated Rangoon, 29th August 1917.

I beg to place before you the following statement of mine about the oppression of the B.I.S.N. Co.'s 3rd class passengers, especially by Mr. Foy, the Port Health Officer.

I had got a wire at Calcutta from my brother-in-law Dr. G. C. Das, M.D., from Rangoon that my sister was seriously ill. Immediately I went to the B.I.S.N. Co.'s Office at Calcutta and tried to get a 2nd class cabin ticket for myself and two and a half tickets for my mother, sister and nephew (5 years old). The officers in charge of the cabin tickets told me that there was not a single seat left and asked me to try for the next trip and if I wanted so I must deposit the fares on that very day, I showed him the telegram and requested to be kind and to give the seats. But he turned a deaf ear to my entreaties. I had got some friends in the office. Through them I tried once more. Then he showed us the 2nd class passenger list book, with the chart of the second class berths. We found that every seat was filled up with names. At the request of my friend he erased several names from a female compartment and he put my mother, sister and my nephew in that compartment. But he could not give any seat for myself. As nothing could be helped, I was obliged to take a Rs. 10 ticket and come as an attendant on deck. I came on European diet on board and always used European costume on board.

When our steamers came very near to Rangoon, Mr. Foy, the Port Health Officer, came on board and ordered all the 2nd class passengers and their attendants to come into 2nd class saloon. The passengers were given seats while the attendants including myself was made to stand in a row.

Here I beg to state that I was very nicely dressed in European costume. In spite of that I had to stand with the bearers and servants of the 2nd class passengers. Mr. Foy felt the pulses of the Indian 2nd class passengers and asked only the names of the Eurasian and European passengers and thus he passed them in health examination.

Now our turn; Mr. Foy ordered us to put off our clothes, i.e., upper garments. At this I refused and asked him that I was not a cooly that I should do like that. One Sergeant told Mr. Foy, "Sir, he doesn't want to put off his coat and shirt, etc." At this Mr. Foy grew very angry and told me,

"If you don't put off your coat and shirt I won't allow you to get down from the steamer." As I was the only man escorting my mother and sister and as I knew that no one of my relatives will be allowed to receive us in the jetty, I was obliged to put off my coat, shirt, necktie, collar, etc. Mr. Foy ordered me to put off my banian too, at this I refused as there were some European ladies seated before us. Mr. Foy urged me to put off the banian on; he threatened me again in the same way of not allowing me to get down and send me to Syriam. Now I was obliged to put off by banian too.

Now he examined my vaccination which could be seen in spite of my banian and touched my thigh to see whether I had got any bubonic plague or not and then gave me a pass slip.

At this time the steamer touched the wharf. The coolies rushed on the board and I was confounded as to whether I should manage my luggages, my mother and sister or I should put on my banian, shirt, necktie, collar, coat, etc. But hook and crook I had to dress myself and take the luggage, mother sister and nephew on the wharf.

Lastly I beg to say that it is the rule with B.I.S.N. Co. that only labourers not vaccinated before will be vaccinated.

I come from a very high family. My father was a Zamindar and retired Head Postmaster of Bengal. My uncle was given the distinction as *Rai Sahib* from the Government. My relatives, some are high Government officials, Merchants, Doctors, Barristers and Pleaders, etc. At present I am putting up with my eldest brother-in-law, Dr. G. C. Das, M.D., here. As regards my present occupation I am a Zamindar and landlord of Calcutta and in addition to that I work as an auditor in the A.-G.'s Office, Burma.

I think Mr. Foy is not a new man here in this country. He has spent most of his days or I think his whole life here in this country. Surely he can distinguish a common labourer and a gentleman. He thinks himself, that he has been given supreme power and thus he doesn't hesitate to exercise his power beyond the limit. I think he feels himself proud in insulting an Indian gentleman in such a way. When the kind notice of our Government has fallen in the way, I venture to put my application before you. Hoping your kind Committee will kindly take a bit notice about the matter.

LETTER from Mr. S. C. BOSE, 100-A, Fraser Street, Rangoon, to the Chairman, B I S.N. Deck Passengers' Committee, Rangoon.

*Dated Rangoon, 29th August 1917.*

Further in continuation of my statement in connection with the sufferings and hardships of the deck passengers, I beg to add the following points of my experiences on the same :—

(2) *Careless way of cleansing and washing the deck.*—The Indian crew plashed on the deck without giving sufficient notice and time to the sea-sick passengers in the morning, drenching all their property and beds making them unsuitable for use. This

happened in presence of officers who do not take any notice of this.

(2) *Racial distinction.*—Once all the Indian deck passengers were turned out of the second class bridge but one Eurasian deck passenger was allowed to remain there by the order of the Captain of the S.S. Edavana.

(3) *Illicit gratification.*—I have seen that one of the Indian crew collected money from deck passengers occupying the raised covering of the hold; this was done in presence and under the order of an officer.

## DECK PASSENGERS' COMMITTEE.

### STENOGRAPHER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS.

First Day's Sitting, 1st August 1917.

The first witness to be examined was Mr. P. Churchward, Manager of the Bank of Rangoon, Limited. He said that business interest had taken him constantly to the River Side Mansions in 40th Street which is directly opposite to the buildings from which tickets to deck passengers are issued. I wrote to the Commissioner of Police and pointed out the overcrowding of the place, and I also went to see Mr. P. H. Brown, who was, I think, the senior official of the B.I.S.N. Co. Mr. Brown received me courteously and showed me what space they had for issuing tickets and said that it was not their fault. Mr. Churchward then told Mr. Brown that when the architects planned that building they failed to provide sufficient space for the issue of tickets to deck passengers. I have often seen pandemonium in 40th Street whenever large numbers of coolies were waiting to purchase deck-tickets. The entrance to the passages leading to the office in which tickets are sold is only about 5 feet wide. On one occasion, I saw coolies storm the place. They pushed and trampled each other and some fell into gutters. They were however driven out by the durwans. I think they were the durwans of the B.I.S.N. Co. that were impervious, but they only do that when they see a white man come. I would suggest to keep the coolies quiet that the piece of vacant land in Sparks Street be used.

*Chairman.*—Where is the land?

*Mr. Churchward.*—Exactly south of Sparks Street.

I would mention that we have been paying taxes to the Municipality for years. I think we are justified in coming forward and asking that our property should not be spoiled. I have had to reduce the rent by rupees thirty a month solely because of this nuisance. I think the clerks of the B.I.S.N. Co. also take their tiffin on the steps of my building and though they have a tiffin room they do not go there. I would suggest that more favourable facilities should be given even to deck passengers to enable them to purchase their tickets, and during the monsoon there is no shelter whatever there for the passengers who come to buy tickets.

*Mr. Bell.*—What are your experiences of the conditions with regard to deck passengers at this port?

*Mr. Churchward.*—On many occasions I have travelled to India and have seen batches of deck passengers being pushed.

*Mr. Bell.*—Can you say who pushed them?

*Mr. Churchward.*—Whoever ordered them to do so.

*Mr. Bell.*—Have you ever heard of people having to pay excessive rates?

*Mr. Churchward.*—Nothing of that kind.

*Mr. Bell.*—What do you want to suggest?

*Mr. Churchward.*—I suggest proper arrangement should be made to issue tickets, &c.; greater facilities should be given in order that the tickets might be issued with greater care and saving of time.

*Mr. Bell.*—Do you think that it can be remedied by having a number of ticket offices?

*Mr. Churchward.*—I am not an expert in the subject, but I think adequate arrangement exists in Madras and Bombay for the issue of tickets. I suggest that we should have them in places where traffic will not be interrupted. I would suggest the vacant piece of land on the east of Sparks Street almost in line with the River Mansions.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—The River Mansions has been built now fourteen years.

*Mr. Churchward.*—The building was completed about 1910—say ten years.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—And the selling of tickets, I think you will admit is proceeding for the last thirty years.

*Mr. Churchward.*—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say that there was a large crowd. Could you give the committee any idea of what the size is?

*Mr. Churchward.*—It blocked that street.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Then it is the business of the Police.

*Mr. Churchward.*—My business is to keep durwans there to keep them off my site.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—To keep the passengers off that street is the business of the Police. Now have you seen in England theatrical gatherings? The crowds often block up the roads, block up the path way.

*Mr. Churchward.*—No, excuse me, I have been a theatre-goer since 1885 and this was not the case.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You are aware that some of the steamers going to Madras carry a large number of coolies, 3 and 4,000 on one ship sometimes and sometimes two. Have you any idea as to what arrangements are to be made in the rains so as to give shelter to a number of that magnitude?

*Mr. Churchward.*—I do not think it impossible.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Where will you put that shed?

*Mr. Churchward.*—The B.I.S.N. should decide that. The larger the number the greater the difficulty in keeping them on.

*Mr. McDonnell*—Are you aware at the present moment that there is a great shortage of steamers and that occasionally Government take up space in the steamer and that is the reason for the number of coolies having to wait.

*Mr. Churchward*.—It was worse off before the war, it is so at the present time and would be the same when peace comes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You spoke of the narrow passage along which these people have to pass to get the tickets.

*Mr. Churchward*—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—In the absence of such narrow passage you would not get far more rush.

*Mr. Churchward*.—No.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Have you any idea how long it takes for the passengers to get tickets on an average?

*Mr. Churchward*.—I am afraid I cannot help you with any suggestion. It is a matter for the B.I.S.N. to look into.

*Mr. Bell*.—Have you had complaints from your tenants?

*Mr. Churchward*.—Yes. I had to reduce the rent from Rs. 130 to Rs. 100 in consequence.

*Mr. Bell*.—Would you have made a representation if you had not owned property.

*Mr. Churchward*.—I should certainly I take interest in every community of this country and I would certainly provide accommodation for these people.

*Mr. Bell*.—Have you noticed this was going on for a great number of years?

*Mr. Churchward*.—Yes, ever since business brought me to this country.

*Mr. Bell*.—You have been a public man for a number of years, have you ever done anything until now about this?

*Mr. Churchward*.—Yes, that was as a committee member in the Municipality.

*Mr. Bell*.—So that your suggestions are to get rid of these people.

*Mr. Churchward*.—No, my representations in the Municipality only related to the vacant piece of land and not to the crowd on the land.

*Mr. Bell*.—You think of your tenants only and not of the deck passengers.

*Mr. Churchward*.—I think of the town people generally. I was thinking of the school children living round and of the nuisance to the people there.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Can you see this land?

*Mr. Churchward*.—From the top flat. I wish to say that I have always received courteous treatment from Mr. Bell and other officials of the B.I.S.N. Co.

The 2nd witness that was examined was the Revd E. H. Courtenay.—He said that in March 1917 a servant came to him saying that he could not get a ticket for Calcutta at the normal price He knew one of the assistants in the office and he wrote to him

a letter and asked him to get the boy a ticket at the ordinary rate. This assistant took some interest in the boy and took him down and left him where the tickets are issued, but he did not wait there. But no sooner had he left then the Official in charge abused and threatened him and the boy had to leave the place. The boy had to wait 15 days before he got the ticket. In the meanwhile three of his friends had come from Moulmein and they also wanted about the 10th March to get away to Calcutta and they succeeded by paying Rs 17 each for a ticket. I wrote about this to Mr. Bell who replied to me immediately saying that he would punish the clerk concerned if he can be pointed to him. But the three men who purchased the ticket at enhanced rates had left and I was interested only for my boy.

With regard to the striking of the deck passengers a former B.I.S.N. Officer now holding a position in the Port Commissioners, had told me that the passengers were struck.

*Mr. Bell*.—This man told it to you?—Yes Who was this man?—Mr. Cardno, a Port Official.

*Mr. Bell*.—Why he does not come here and say so?—I do not know if he was disposed to come, but permission was granted to me to give the evidence.

*Mr. McDonnell*, showing a letter written by the Company to Revd. Courtenay said.—I may take it from you that the B.I.S.N.Co. could not do more than that?

*Mr. Courtenay*.—I think something could be done. The tickets could be sold at the wharf.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—If you sell tickets at the wharf each man goes with a bundle on his head, unties his *dhoti* to take the money, gets his ticket and still there is delay.

*Mr. Courtenay*.—The tickets were sold at the time of the competition, I understand the names to be the Bengal Steam Navigation Company and the Japanese Steam Navigation Company at the wharf and there were no complaints.

Then there was the question about the date mentioned in the letter from the B.I.S.N. to Mr. Courtenay and the date when the boy left for Calcutta, but it was dropped as Mr. Courtenay was not accurate about the dates.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—As regards striking passengers have you personally witnessed it?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—This man who told you did he see himself coolly after coolly being struck or nearly tapped (pointing to Mr. Bomanjee with a paper cutter)?—Yes. He said coolly after coolly was beaten.

*Mr. Bell*.—This boy of yours was he struck?—I think that he was threatened, but not struck.

*Mr. Bell*.—You do not suggest that the B.I.S.N. are making more than Rs. 10?—No,

*Mr Bell.*—So that the extra value got out of the passengers is by their own countrymen?—Yes.

The 3rd witness that was called was Mr. M. S. A. Mudaliar, typist and stenographer of Messrs. Jamal Bros. Ltd, Rangoon.

Mr. Bomanjee read his letter to the committee

*Chairman*—How many times have you travelled?

*Witness*—Twice.

*Chairman.*—Were your experience equally unfortunate on both occasions?

*Witness*—The first time I accompanied my brother-in-law who had some influence I had not much trouble. On the first occasion I travelled by the S.S. "Chilka"

*Chairman*—When was your first voyage?

*Witness.*—Before the war.

Here the question arose whether grievances on board the steamer were admissible in evidence. Mr Bell said that he would abide by the ruling of the Chairman. The Chairman called upon Mr. Bomanjee to argue the point. Mr. Bomanjee said that the communique was wide in its scope of inquiry and it included all grievances on board. The Chairman ruled that it was so, although the wording is not clear.

*Mr. McDonnell to Chairman.*—There are rules made for the carrying of animals.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—It comes under the Marine Act known as the Native Passengers Act 10 of 1887.

*Mr. McDonnell to witness.*—You complain of the shortage of drinking water. Is drinking water given out at certain hours?

*Witness.*—Yes, only once a day.

*Mr McDonnell.*—You say you got no drinking water. Did you go to any of the officers of the ship and report the matter?

*Witness.*—I did not ask.

*Mr McDonnell.*—Why.

*Witness*—They are not approachable.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Did you not see the ship's officers moving about? I think they will listen to you if you approach them.

*Witness.*—The crowd was too big and I could not approach the officers.

*Chairman.*—Were you afraid to approach them?

*Witness.*—Not afraid exactly. I thought I could get water from the crowd.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—The necessity was not so great as to approach one of the officers.

*Witness.*—Yes.

*Mr McDonnell.*—Dirty condition of the latrine was it at the end of the voyage or when the voyage began.

*Witness.*—It was cleaned once in the morning, but dirty during the day.

*Mr McDonnell.*—Was there a cloth screen at the front of the latrine?

*Witness*—Yes. It did not fully cover. It was half opened.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Did you make any complaint to the officers?

*Witness.*—I complained to the small petty officers. I did not approach responsible officers.

*Mr McDonnell.*—What are the ranks of the officers?

*Witness*—Kalasies.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What you mean by Kalasies? Were these people those who cleaned the latrine?

*Witness*—No.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Are there not separate latrines, for men and women?

*Witness*—Yes, there are separate latrines, but no distinction can be made.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Do you mean to suggest that the men use the latrine for women when they have got their own?

*Witness*—That is what I meant to say.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—How many passengers were there?

*Witness.*—About 1,300.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Were they all seasick?

*Witness.*—Yes, almost all.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Do you admit that it will be difficult to get latrines cleaned often considering the number of passengers?

*Witness.*—Yes, that is true.

*Mr. Bell.*—Do you remember all the circumstances very clearly?

*Witness.*—I cannot say exactly.

*Mr. Bell.*—Do you remember the name of the steamer?

*Witness.*—Yes, S.S. "Fultala."

*Mr. Bell.*—Could you say how many travelled by "Fultala"?

*Witness.*—About 1,345.

*Mr. Bell.*—The steamer is licensed for only 1,300.

*Witness.*—I know that there was such a rule, but I did not know the exact number.

*Mr. Bell.*—Do you remember how many latrines there were?

*Witness.*—I remember only two.

*Mr. Bell.*—I should like to tell you as a matter of advice that the Government rule was to have nineteen latrines and that the steamer had more than that number.

*Mr. Cowasjee.*—With regard to the dirty condition of the latrines was it possible for the officers to see it for themselves without being told?

*Witness.*—It was possible for them to see it.

*Mr. Cowasjee.*—Did they take any steps to get them cleaned during the day?

*Witness.*—It was cleaned twice a day.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Were there any boards put up to show whether they were for men or women?

*Witness.*—No.

## DECK PASSENGERS' COMMITTEE.

## Second Day's Sitting

There was a discussion as to whether Mr McDonnell could consult Mr Eell and the President ruled that he could

It was also settled that the vernacular petitions should be taken up on Saturday when the Chief Court interpreters will be free

The first witness to be called was Dr. R. C. Chowdhri.

Mr Bomanjee read his letter to the Committee.

*Mr Bomanjee*—Is this your letter? Yes

*Mr. Bomanjee*—You say that you saw durwans of the B.I.S.N. Co. strike the Indians who had gone to the wharf to see their friends off Was he in Police uniform?—I cannot say.

*Mr Bomanjee*—Could he have been employed by the Port Trust?—I cannot say

*Mr. Bomanjee*—Could he have belonged to the Customs?—I cannot tell

*Mr McDonnell*—Could he have been a Policeman in plain clothes?—I cannot say.

Could he have been a durwan employed by a passenger to make room for him?—I cannot tell

So that you cannot really say whether he belonged to the B.I.S.N. Co. or to any other class—No.

Now you say that he was striking Indians with his cane I suggest he was trying to make way—Yes

Are you prepared to say that whether he actually struck the Indians on the body or on the box they were carrying?—Not on the box, but on the body

I suggest that he may have struck on the box in order to make room and to keep them away?—No, I do not think he struck on the box.

*Mr Bomanjee*—Do you say a durwan or number of them?—Only one

*Dr. Mehta*—Where did this happen?—Near the ladder at the wharf.

*Chairman*—Was there a very big crowd?—May be 70 or 80.

*Mr. Bell*—The people who were struck were not passengers?—No.

*Mr. Mehta*—Did the Custom or Port Office men see the durwan striking?—It was just near the ladder, where they were checking tickets

*Chairman*—Were the people trying to crowd at the ladder?—There was a big crowd. I have seen in Howrah Station very big crowd, but I have not seen striking.

*Chairman*—Why did he strike?—I cannot say.

*Mr. Bell*—You say that you do not know whether this man belonged to the Port Trust or Customs?—I cannot tell. I merely assumed that they belonged to the B.I.S.N.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—I he man who was checking the tickets, was he close?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell*—Did you complain to anybody?—No.

*Dr. Mehta*—The B.I.S.N. Officers see that, and do not stop it?—Yes.

The 2nd witness to be called was Veerow.  
*Mr. Bomanjee*—You say that in spite of the weather and scorching heat the passengers are kept waiting outside the ticket office? I was kept waiting at the embarkation place.—There was no shelter.

*Mr Bomanjee*—You say that there is a shelter at Coconada.—Yes

*Mr. Bomanjee*—You say that people are beaten and mercilessly driven out.—They strike at two places, both at the ticket office and at the embarkation place.

*Mr McDonnell*—Do you think that the shed at Coconada is constructed by the B.I.S.N. Co.?—I do not know who constructed it, but I know that there is a shed at landing place at Coconada.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—Have you seen people being beaten?—Yes

*Mr. Bomanjee*—By whom?—Some gentleman with a topee and a durwan.

*Mr Bomanjee*—You say that first of all that Telugu maistries sell tickets to passengers Now what is your authority for that statement?—I have paid for them myself.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—Where are they?—They loiter near the office and at the jetty and when people go to purchase tickets, they go to one lame Mahomedan and two Telugu maistries who offer the tickets at enhanced rates.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—Have you seen it with your own eyes?—I have myself paid for it

*Mr. Bomanjee*—How often was that done?—Several times

*Mr Bomanjee*—Before purchasing from these maistries did you go to the office?—I went to office and asked for tickets, but the office clerk said that there was no ticket and therefore he had to purchase from the maistries.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—The lame Mahomedan and the two maistries. Do they constantly loiter about the B.I.S.N. office?—Yes. The same men several times I have bought it from them alone

*Mr Bomanjee*—You say that an hour before the departure of a steamer you go to the wharf and place your boxes and baggage on the roadside and that a rate of annas 8, 4 and 2 are levied. Have you ever paid this land rent?—Yes, I have paid it for my father-in-law.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—You say that you asked for receipts and you did not get one Why?—They said that the rush was too much and therefore receipts could not be issued.

Was this your personal experience?—Yes.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—You say that as you enter the steamer you are insulted, pushed and beaten?—Is that your personal experience,



I was not beaten but my father-in-law was beaten.

*Chairman.*—Did you say you were beaten?—Yes.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You suggest that the steamer should be brought alongside of the wharf 3 or 4 hours before sailing and that superior officials should be kept there—Yes

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Now you say that you do not get sufficient drinking water.—Yes.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You say you have to pay Rs. 2 or 3 for carrying the luggage—Yes, I have paid twice

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Can you say whether they were Port Trust coolies?—Yes

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You say you did not get sufficient drinking water How often is drinking water served out to the passengers?—Morning once and evening once. Twice a day

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Are there any B.I.S.N. coolies on the wharf?—I have never seen any company coolies

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Would you tell a B I S N, cooly from a Port Trust cooly?—Port Trust coolies have a badge.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You say that gunners and other servants of the steamer allow space to those who pay them money?—Yes Have you seen it done actually?—Yes

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Are rotten fruits and food stuffs allowed to be sold on the steamers?—Yes

*Mr Bomanjee to Mr Bell.*—Do the B.I. sell these fruits?—No. Do you give a license to a man to sell fruits and food stuffs?—Yes

*Mr. Bomanjee.* You say that there are not sufficient latrines?—Yes.

And you say that the scavenger keeps some opened and the others locked up?—Some are locked up and some are kept opened

You say that they are not clean—Not properly cleaned

Your remedy is that they should be cleaned as often as it could be done—Yes

As a matter of fact how often are they cleaned?—I do not know when they are cleaned, how many times they are cleaned, but they are always dirty

You say that there are no sign boards to show which are for women and which for men.—Nothing to distinguish

You say that they did not afford sufficient privacy?—The doors are not properly tied and they are open.

Are there doors?—Yes

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You say that they use foul language—officers and subordinates of the vessel—Yes.

Do European officers use too?—Yes What for?—When they are lying on board when the officers move on board instead of asking them to get up they kick.

You say that people are imprisoned in a dark room. Where is it?—Just near Coal punker.

*Mr. Bell.*—By whom?—By some gentleman.

Have you seen it done yourself?—Yes

How often?—Once when a man was taken at 8 a.m. and was there even at 12 noon

*Chairman.*—How often have you seen men in this dark room?—I have seen only once.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Now often have you travelled?—This is the 6th time.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Now you say that the native subordinates of the vessel pull the women by the saris and make signs at them? What is the idea? To see them out of the crowd?—I cannot say They simply drag the saris and make signs at them

*Mr Bell.*—Who pulled these women?—The native subordinates of the vessel.

Is this with a view to insult the women?—I do not know

You say that separate accommodation should be given to women.—Yes

Have you ever complained yourself to any European official of the steamer that a woman was insulted?—Yes, I once reported to the Captain of the steamer "Gwabor" who said that he would make enquiries and punish them.

Then why do you say that officers do not take notice of the complaints?—I complained two or three times to other officers but no notice was taken.

Now you say that the medical officer does not treat people on board free.—Yes.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You say that some years ago that Captains and Chief Officers used to go round and enquire into complaints—Yes that is what I heard from my father and others

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You have never seen it yourself—No

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You like that to be done?—Yes

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Now you say that grievances of the passengers is increased by the butler supplying drink Have you seen the butler selling liquor?—Yes, I have seen liquor being sold by the butler of the steamer

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You suggest that sale of liquor to deck passengers should be prohibited?—Yes, because these people drink and vomit on board

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You say that special accommodation should be given to third class passengers which you say is now obtained by tipping?—Yes, respectable people who cannot go to second class should be given separate accommodation

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You say that when you land that your boxes are broken, opened with sucks by Excise officers?—Yes, I lost Rs 25 on that account.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Did this happen only once or five or six times?—Only once and at other times the boxes were merely broken

*Mr Bomanjee.*—You say that those who tip the Excise officers are allowed to go without examination?—Yes, a man who came

with him was allowed to go away without being examined and he saw this himself.

*Chairman*—What were the Excise officers searching for?—They searched to see if we had opium.

You saw them yourself?—Yes.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—You say that whether you bear vaccination marks or not, you are all vaccinated and that those who pay a small fee escape?—Yes, I pointed out my vaccination marks and the vaccinator told me that there was no vaccination and that I should be revaccinated, but if he was given something he would let me off.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Were you vaccinated as a child?—Yes.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Here said that the orders of Government were that unvaccinated labourers must be vaccinated (Local Government's orders of the 24th February and 1st March 1916).

*Chairman*.—Were you vaccinated here?—No.

*Chairman*.—You only heard of people escape by paying money?—A chetty who came from Madras paid Rs. 10 and got off without being vaccinated.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—You saw the signatures of the 359 people who have signed it?—No, several of my friends went round and got these signatures.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Showing the vernacular letters asked whether they were not in the same hand writing?—He said they were and that they were ignorant people and that it was the practice for an educated man to write the petitioners' names for them when they have touched the pen, which is believed to be the practice among the uneducated coolies.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that these coolies came to get tickets. They cannot go to the rest-house at Strand Road. They are refused admission.—Yes.

Here a discussion took place whether the rest-house was under official control or under non-official control.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You cannot say why they were refused admission.—No.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that they will be glad if they were allowed to occupy an open space round the rest-house or any other vacant land?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Are you aware that the B.I.S.N. Co. have asked the Municipality and the Local Government to grant temporary piece of land for this purpose?—I do not know that.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that at Bulloch Bros.' office when there was a rush for tickets that a young boy was trampled to death? Have you seen this yourself?—No, I did not see, but I was told by several of my countrymen.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—When did this happen? Bulloch ought to know about that?—I cannot say.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Who was the boy?—I do not know who the boy is.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that the

durwan on the premises of the company state that there are no more tickets available and drive the people away?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Was there a European in charge supervising the issue of tickets?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—The durwan cannot make this statement without his orders—No, the gentleman does not say anything but it is only the durwan.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You mention that a lame Mahomedan and two Telugu maistries loiter about the premises of the B.I.S.N. and sell tickets at enhanced rates?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You do not suggest that they are the employees of the B.I.S.N. Co?—I cannot say whether they are the Company's employees, but they are always selling tickets.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Where are they? Inside the building or outside?—Not in the office but outside the office.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—In the Street?—Yes, in the lane by the side of the office.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Do you mean 40th Street?—Yes.

*Chairman*.—Is it the main lane leading into 40th Street or off the Street?—It is a street.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Can you tell me the names of the maistries and of the lame Mahomedan?—I cannot say.

*Mr. Bell*.—Can you point them out?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell*.—When did you see them last?—Some three or four months ago.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that someone comes round and collects rents at rates Annas 8, 4 and 2 for a bundle. Who do you suggest collects the rent? Is it the B.I.S.N. or some body employed by the Port Trust?—I cannot say whether they are employed by the B.I.S.N. but a certain gentleman dressed like a clerk and another durwan by the side comes and collects.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You do not know whether they are collecting for the B.I.S.N. or the Port Trust?—They never say.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—They may be fraudulent persons collecting this money?—I do not know who they are.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say a gentleman comes with a durwan. What do you mean by a gentleman?—A gentleman dressed like a clerk. I cannot say whether he is an Indian, Eurasian or a European, but he wears European clothes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Do you know who he is?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Does the durwan wear a badge?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that as you proceed to go on board you are pushed and beaten by wharf durwans?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Who are these durwans and who employs them?—I do not know, but they are just dressed like Police people.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Do you know who employs them?—I think they are Port Trust employees.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Do you really mean to tell me that these 3rd class passengers have to pay two or three rupees for each box they bring on board?—Yes

*Mr. McDonnell.*—To whom is this money paid to? Is it to the Port Trust coolies?—The coolies that carry luggage to steamers. They are dressed in khaki.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You do not know who employs them?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say that gunners and subordinate officials of the steamer, what do you mean by gunners?—I do not know who the gunner is but a man on the steamer is called gunner.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Is he a European?—No, he is a Goanese.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Now you say that the scavenger locks up a number of the latrines and leaves only a few open?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Have you ever yourself asked for these to be opened?—I do not know to whom I have to ask.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why not the scavenger?—He never cares for me.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Have you ever asked him?—I asked him, but he said that I was not his master to order him.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Have you never asked any one else?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—The dark room you say was used only once?—Yes, only once.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—How long did you say that the man remained there?—For four hours. I saw him in the morning at 8 and again at 12 noon.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Do you know how he got there?—I do not know.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Perhaps he preferred to go there.—No, he was thrashed on the deck and taken there.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say you complained once of the impertinence of the native subordinates of the vessel to respectable women.—Yes, to the Captain of the S.S. "Gwalior".

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Are you sure it was the S.S. "Gwalior"?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—When was this?—Some four or five years ago

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Could it not be more than that?—I do not know.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Where were you going then?—From here I was going to my country.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—To Calcutta or to Madras?—To Coconada.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say four or five years ago. Are you sure that it was not more than ten years?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What is your occupation?—I am employed in the office of the Burma Tobacco Company.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—How long have you been employed in the Burma Tobacco Company?—Four years.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What is your pay?—Rs 35.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Before this where were you employed?—I was reading English.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—When did you first come to Burma?—In 1907.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Since then you have been six times to your country.—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You never had any employment in Burma since 1907 for six years. How did you maintain yourself all this time?—My father and my brother were all here.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What is your father?—My father is a cooly maistry.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What is his name?—Ramiah

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Where is he employed?—He was employed in Pegu.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Where is your brother employed?—He is employed in the General Post Office. He is a clerk.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—How old are you?—Twenty-two years

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You suggest in the case of women separate accommodation should be given.—Yes

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You mean accommodation separate for the women.—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—How will they be looked after?—By their relatives.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—If they are all sick what will they do?—If all get sick we can do nothing. It is the duty of the doctor to look after them.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You know there is a lot of canvas screen on board.—I have not seen it.

*Mr. McDonnell,* speaking to Dr. Mehta.—Do women travel without their husbands;

*Dr. Mehta.*—Sometimes. But if they have an occasion to travel without them, they will be accompanied by relatives or acquaintances mostly

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say that the medical officer does not treat sick people free. He asks money. Did you complain to the Captain of the steamer?—I wanted to complain, but I was not allowed to go in.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why did you not go to the office and complain?—Here durwans do not allow

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why did you not write?—I did not know that I have to write.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say that liquor is sold to deck passengers.—Yes

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Has it been sold only to a few friends of the butler or to every one?—Those who go for it to buy can buy.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Now you say you want special accommodation for the middle class people who are not able to travel by the 2nd class?—Yes

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Do you want this accommodation to be based on particular class to which the passengers belong to?—Yes, it should be separate from the ordinary 3rd class passengers.

*Chairman.*—Respectable people should not be mixed up with coolies.—Yes.

*Dr. Mehta.*—How many classes of coolies are kept on the wharf to carry luggage

for the passengers?—I have not seen any other except those of Port Trust coolies.

*Dr Mehta.*—Can you distinguish between a Policeman and a wharf durwan?—I have not noticed any difference between a Policeman and a Wharf durwan. You say that they are similarly dressed?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell.*—You say that you have never seen any difference between a Policeman and Wharf durwan?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell.*—When you say a Policeman, how do you know that?—I have seen Policeman in the street.

*Mr. Bell.*—How are they dressed?—They are all dressed in khaki and they are said to be Port Trust durwans.

*Mr. Bell.*—Are there any badges?—I have not seen them

The next witness called was Dr. A K Sen. He submitted a further statement which was read to the Committee by Mr Bomanjee

Questioned by Mr Bomanjee he said, that his durwan wanted to proceed to Calcutta and that the durwan of the B.I.S.N. Co. wanted Rs. 15 for one ticket and that the durwans assaulted the people who went there to buy tickets and as his durwan could not get a ticket had requested him to get a ticket.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You say that he could not get a ticket and it was sold. Then how did he get to Calcutta?—He had to buy a ticket as a servant of a 2nd class passenger.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You say that two passengers were sent to the Contagious Diseases Hospital. How did you come to know about this?—Babu Nairam Ram Bux and another gentleman came and informed me that a purdah lady and a boy were being removed to the Contagious Diseases Hospital and asked for help. I wrote to the Port Health Officer and asked that I may be allowed to keep the lady under my treatment. The lady was allowed to go. I examined her and found that she was not suffering from any contagious disease but from sinus resulting from an abdominal operation. The boy, I am told, was sent to the Contagious Diseases Hospital and he was discharged that evening.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say that a Eurasian caused hurt? Was he a Police Officer, a Customs Official or a Port Trust Official?—No. They have nothing to do. The Customs Officers station themselves in certain places and make the passengers go, but this man was managing the passengers

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Can you say whether he was a Port Trust Official?—I do not think so. When a steamer comes alongside the Port Trust Officials have nothing to do with the crowd.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why was he striking?—That I cannot say. May be to clear them.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Is not the wharf a dangerous place?—I do not think so

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Was there a very big crowd?—Only about 50 or 60 people.

*Mr. McDonnell.* You say it may have

been to make room. Is it one blow or more than one blow?—Violent blows, pretty hard, not joking or tapping.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Where did the blows land?—On the backs and not on the luggage.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Did they make any complaint?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Did they yell?—No, they fled for their lives.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say he is your peon?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—When was he going to his country?—He got his leave from the District Magistrate about 1st May, but had to wait 12 days.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You are aware that there is a great shortage of steamers at present going to India?—Of course, I am aware

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Does that not count for the delay in his getting away?—That may be, but not 12 days.

*Chairman.*—The war conditions may count for the part of the delay, but not for the whole of it?—Yes

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Did you write and complain to the B.I.S.N Co?—No, I thought it was not my duty. These people say a lot of things, and they may exaggerate.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What has brought conviction to your mind to say this in your letter?—I cannot say it may be true or may not be true

*Mr. Bell.*—When you saw those people assaulted, did you draw the attention of any one?—No.

The next witness to be called was Mr. Bhattacharya

Mr Bomanjee read the statement to the Committee.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You have nothing to add to your petition?—No.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—How often is water served out every day?—I do not know.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—When did you get your drinking water?—I got it only at 6, not before 6

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—You got your ration of water at 6 in the morning?—Yes.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—What do you think of the latrines?—Not clean, in a filthy condition.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—How often are they cleaned?—I do not know.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—How many passengers were with you?—More than 1,000.

And how often you would suggest that they should be cleaned?—In order to keep them perfectly clean throughout the day, at least four times.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Were the latrines separately marked for women and men?—I did not notice it

*Chairman.*—Did you purposely see?—No.

*Mr. Bell.*—Were there doors to latrines?—The doors cannot be closed

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Were there cattle being carried as cargo with you?—Yes, once. When going from Rangoon.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Do they roam about amidst the passengers?—No, they are tied? (The Chairman here ruled that Mr. Bomanjee should not lead the witness.)

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Have you anything else to state?—The place where we were was very dark and hot.

*Chairman.*—Do you mean on the steamer or on the launch?—On the steamer.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Did you ask for water from any body?—I asked the Khalasies. They said that it will not be supplied now.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why did you not report to one of the officers?—I thought that they would not supply.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why did you not appeal to them for more water?—Because the Khalasies told me that the water will not be supplied now. That is the reason why I did not report.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—There was no urgent necessity for water?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Now you say that the latrines were filthy?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—How many were there?—I cannot say.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Did you make any complaint about the filthy condition of the latrines?—No.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why not?—I thought it useless.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What about the cattle?—The cattle are kept in the middle of the room near the passage tied up and there is a bad smell emanating from it. When obliged to go near them, I was afraid.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why should you go near them?—There was no passage.

*Dr. Mehta.*—You say that you thought it useless to complain about the filthy condition of the latrines. What do you mean by that?—I saw other persons complaining and no action was taken and therefore I did not report.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You arrived at the conclusion that it was useless to make a complaint without making the complaint?—Yes.

## DECK PASSENGERS' COMMITTEE.

### GRIEVANCES ENQUIRY.

The second sitting of the Committee of Enquiry (appointed by Government) into the Indian Deck Passengers' Grievances, was held this morning in the office of the Joint Secretary to the Government of Burma, P. W. D., Secretariat Buildings. The committee consists of Mr. J. P. Hardiman, I.C.S. (Chairman), and Mr. J. W. A. Bell of the B.I.S.N. Co., and Dr. P. J. Mehta (members).

Dr. A. K. Sen was one of the witnesses examined to-day. He stated that he had seen coolie deck passengers thrashed by B.I.S.N. Co. Eurasian employees. His servant had tried to purchase a ticket, but was unsuccessful and was thrashed. He was certain that it was a Eurasian official of the B.I.S.N. Co., whom he had seen thrashing the coolies. It was not a Customs or a Port Commissioners official. The blows were delivered on the coolies' body and arm. They did not yell with pain, but they fled. One of his servants had to wait twelve days before he could get a ticket. He was aware that there was a shortage of steamers, and a delay must occur in getting tickets, but not so long as actually took place.

*By Mr. Bell.*—When he saw these coolies being assaulted on the wharf he did not report the matter to anybody.

Mr. Bhattacharjee, the next witness, said that a three-decked launch used to come to the wharf and take off deck passengers to the ship. The launch was overcrowded and it was stifling on the lower deck. There was also a shortage of water on board, the ship water was issued at 6 a. m., and again at 12 noon. That was all. They could not get water at other times. The latrines were

in a very dirty state and were not cleaned out sufficiently. He did not know how many latrines there were, but they were all nearly always full. He thought it useless to complain about the latrines. He had seen others complain but no action was taken, so he did not complain.

Similar evidence was given by Dr. C. Chowdhury; and Mr. P. B. Veeron.

Mr. T. F. R. McDonnell at this stage said he was satisfied that Mr. Bomanjee could call 100 people who would say exactly the same thing about the shortage of water, etc., but it was merely wasting time. Could not Mr. Bomanji select one witness to speak on each particular point.

Mr. Bomanjee said he could.

Mr. Hardiman said he thought they were wasting a lot of time. They should call and examine two witnesses to speak on each point.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Very well, Sir. I will sort out the witness.

Mr. Hardiman said that was all the evidence they would take that day. The next sitting would be on Saturday morning at 11 o'clock.

The next witness called was Dr. K. U. R. Rao.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Have you travelled frequently between India and Burma?

*Dr. Rao.*—I travelled four times.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Was your experience that of a deck passenger?

*Dr. Rao.*—No, I was second class passenger except once. I have stated only about my recent journey.

*Chairman.*—Had you the same experience as on the last occasion?

*Dr. Rao*—More or less.

*Mr. Bell*.—On this occasion do you wish to speak about your experience as a second class passenger or as a deck passenger?

*Dr. Rao*.—As a second class passenger.

*Chairman*.—If he wants to deal with his experience as a second class passenger, we cannot take this into consideration.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—You say that the wharf coolies make excessive demands, is it on the steamer or at the wharf.

*Dr. Rao*.—At the wharf.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—You say that the people were pushed and sometimes assaulted. Have you ever seen any body assaulted?

*Dr. Rao*.—Yes, when I went to receive a relative of mine, some of these people were assaulted by Police sergeants.

*Mr. Bell*.—Were they assaulted by B.I.S.N. Officials?

*Dr. Rao*.—No, only by Police sergeants.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that the Wharf coolies ask excessive charges for carrying luggages? Do you know that there are notice boards to the effect that coolies are to do their work gratuitously and not receive money?

*Dr. Rao*.—I have not seen the notice boards, but I know that there are rules to that effect.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Is it not the same over all the world?

*Dr. Rao*.—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Looking towards Dr. Mehta said that he must have had similar experiences at Victoria Station in London.

*Dr. Mehta*.—There is a great difference between the exactions made by the London

Railway porters and the B.I.S.N. coolies. Two pence or three pence are often enough there.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that animals are carried side by side with men, what you mean by that?

*Dr. Rao*.—There are 3rd class passengers who are made to sleep near the animals and just near this my cabin was situated.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Do you keep a pony?

*Dr. Rao*.—Yes, I had.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Does not your syce sleep with your pony?—And are you not aware that coolies in India do.

*Dr. Rao*.—I cannot say.

*Mr. Bell*.—How many bullocks and sheep were carried?

*Dr. Rao*.—I cannot say exactly.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—How many cattle were there.

*Dr. Rao*.—Eight on each side. A few men in the middle.

*Mr. Bell*.—Do you know that these coolies are provided free of charge? And they ought not to receive anything, but some people pay these coolies gratuities in order that they may get their services earlier than they would otherwise do. Is that so?

*Dr. Rao*.—Yes.

*Mr. Cowasjee*.—Are there enough coolies?

*Dr. Rao*.—I think for so many passengers some more coolies may be employed.

*Mr. Bell*.—How many coolies did you see at the wharf?

*Dr. Rao*.—I think about seventy to eighty coolies are employed to carry luggage.

Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee  
held at the Secretariat on the 13th August 1917 at 11 a.m.

PRESENT:

J. P. HARDIMAN, Esq., B A., I.C.S. (*Chairman*).  
Dr. P. J. MEHTA.  
J. W. A. BELL, Esq., British India Steam Navigation Company.  
T. F. R. McDONNELL, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, representing the B I.S.N. Co.  
F. BOMANJEE, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, representing the Social Service League.  
N. SIVAYA, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, representing some applicants.

Evidence of the following witnesses were recorded:—

(1) *S. C. Chakrobatt*—The written statement of witness is read by Mr. Sivaya (temporarily acting for Mr Bomanjee, who was late in attending)

*Mr. Sivaya*.—Did you see the beating by canes yourself?—I did not see them beating but saw them poking with canes or tapping, which were in the hands of some B I clerks,

Was the poking or tapping, as you say, on the persons of the passengers?—So much I did not notice as there was a big crowd.

Are you quite certain that the poking or tapping was on the body of the passengers?—I saw a man being poked on the back of the neck in spite of the crowd. I saw this distinctly.

*Chairman*.—Were you yourself a deck passenger then?—Yes, sir.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say you were denied a ticket?—Yes.

On what account?—On the first day I went to Bulloch's, with the greatest difficulty I managed to go in and asked a clerk who said I could not get tickets to-day but to come to-morrow when office opens. I went the next day but was told that the tickets were stopped.

Why?—I do not know. I asked why and the clerk said he could not give an explanation, that he had no time.

That is all your complaint about the tickets—that you were put off?—Yes.

For several days?—For one or two days.

*Chairman*.—You had to go altogether three times?—Yes. On the third day I went to one of my friends working at Dass & Co. (cycle dealers), he had a friend (Mathews) at Bulloch's through whom he managed to get a ticket for me.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You think it was Mathews—you are not quite sure?—I am not quite sure of the clerk at Bulloch's.

You say there was a terrible rush before the steamer sailed?—Yes; because the gates are shut and all are crowded together and have their luggages with them. Only an hour before or less, not more, the gates are opened and all the people try to get in at the same time.

You say there is a terrible rush to get on board—that is due to the fact that everybody is trying to get in first?—Yes.

If they all waited and took their turn, there would be plenty of time for everyone to get on board?—That may be.

*Chairman*.—I think you said that the gates were opened only one hour before the steamer left?—Yes, one hour, or less than that.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—As regards this poking and tapping, was the clerk trying to direct the traffic of this rush, it was at the moment of this rush that there was this poking and tapping?—Yes.

And this clerk was trying to direct the traffic?—No, he was standing on one side only and using bad language.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—We will come to the 'bad language' part of it afterwards. There was some reason for this tapping and poking?—I don't know the reason; he was standing near the staircase (gangway?) and poking.

I suppose he was trying to direct the traffic?—I cannot say.

About this bad language. You say he was using bad language, what do you mean?—"Hai you, sala Soor," that is all bad language.

In other words he was directing the traffic—the crowd—but somewhat impolitely?—These are the very words.

That is all the indecent language you complain of, anything else?—That is all.

Who was this Eurasian clerk?—I don't know his name.

Could you recognise him if you saw him again?—Yes.

*Chairman*.—Was he dressed in any sort of uniform?—No.

Dressed like a European?—Yes.

How do you know he was a B I. clerk?—Then what would he be—no one else would go there if he was not a clerk of the B I.

He was standing by the gangway—On the ship's side or on the wharf's side?—On the wharf's side.

Mr. Bomanjee here read the following letter dated the 6th August 1917 from the

Rev. Mr Atwool, St. Augustine's, Moulemein, to the Rev. Mr. Courtney, St. Phillip's, Rangoon:—

I was meaning to write to you before to congratulate you on your efforts on behalf of B.I. deck passengers. The last time I was in Rangoon, after enjoying your hospitality at breakfast I went to see Clarke off by the mail boat to Calcutta. The boat was advertised to sail at 2-30 p.m. We reached the jetty about 2-40 p.m. and found she was to sail at 3 p.m. I went on board with Clarke. The wharf was crowded with deck passengers and their luggage, wanting to be allowed on board. I enquired why they were not allowed on board and was told that they would be allowed to come on board at 5 minutes to 3. Accordingly at 5 minutes to 3 precisely one gangway was put down for the deck passengers. They came on board as fast as it was possible to do so by one gangway guarded by one or two officials. At 3 o'clock the gangway was taken up, in spite of all protests. An officer came along the deck and insisted on the gangway being hoisted up and removed. By 5 minutes, or perhaps 10 minutes past 3, the steamer was clear of the wharf. When I left the wharf—about 3-10, certainly not later than 3-15 p.m.—I had considerable difficulty in making my way through the crowd of deck passengers who were left behind on the wharf with all their worldly belongings around them. They appealed to me in Hindustani which I did not understand. There was nothing to show that the steamer was crowded. In fact there were, I suppose, only those few passengers who happened to be near the gangway, so were able to get on board during that 5 minutes. It struck me as outrageous and I wanted to bring it to somebody's notice but had no means of doing so. I had no idea that such things happened, otherwise I would have taken more careful notice of things with a view to furnishing evidence.

*Chairman.*—You have Mr Courtney's authority to produce this letter?—Yes.

*Mr McDonnell.*—I think it desirable that the committee should come to some decision, one way or the other, if my friend is going to put in a mass of letters and reports from persons who cannot come forward to speak to what they know or that these letters and reports be not admitted.

*Chairman.*—It is certainly desirable to have an opportunity of questioning the witnesses.

*Dr. Mehta.*—In the majority of cases witnesses will be produced.

*Chairman.*—Is there any possibility of the Rev. Mr. Atwool attending as a witness? Will you, Mr. Bomanjee, write and ask him if he has any objection to appear before us to give evidence?

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—I will, I suppose the committee will not pay his travelling expenses?

*Chairman.*—As a matter of fact the committee have no grants for paying anything; but we hope somehow to pay this official stenographer's fees. For the present, we are not prepared to file his representation.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Probably now, to shorten the proceedings, would it not be better for Mr. McDonnell to cross-examine the witnesses all of whom I tender?

*Chairman.*—I thought you had selected representative witnesses.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—I don't want to call anybody unless you challenge their state-

ments. I will limit myself to 5 or 6 witnesses.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—As I have already said you have hundreds of people to come forward and say very much the same that other witnesses have already said, but whether their grievances are substantial or not is another matter.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Is it reasonable to suppose that they are all telling lies and making out grievances which are not true.

*Mr. Bell.*—We are not accepting anything from persons who are not appearing.

(2) *S. M. Basu.*—The written statement of witness is read by Mr. Bomanjee.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—When you speak of the upper deck you mean the deck that is above the 'tween decks. The 3rd class passengers ordinarily have the use of the 'tween decks—that is a covered deck?—There is no other deck above it.

You claim that persons who pay Rs. 6 extra can travel on the same deck as the 1st and 2nd class passengers?—I don't mean that.

I think you are making a mistake: there is a deck above the upper deck?—There is no deck above that.

What is the name of the steamer?—“Bharata.”

*Chairman.*—Were you travelling deck with diet?—No, but I paid Rs. 6 more.

What is your profession or occupation?—A clerk in the Chief Court.

What did you get for your extra six rupees?—Only a seat.

Apart from where the deck passengers were accommodated?—Yes; they were on the lower deck, I was on the upper.

Were you mixed up with the 2nd class passengers?—They had cabins, we were on the deck outside the cabins.

The difference is that they had a cabin and you were on deck outside the cabin?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Were the 2nd class passengers on the same deck moving about?—Yes.

*Chairman.*—Then they were on the deck as you?—I think their cabins were on the lower deck, I am not sure.

There were some cabins on the deck where you were accommodated?—I am in doubt about that.

Then what is your complaint, Mr. Basu; you got accommodation separate from the deck passengers without diet, and that is what you wanted?—Yes.

Then what are you complaining about?—Before leaving for Rangoon I heard at the office of Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co, Calcutta, that there was no distinction between passengers who got deck ticket with diet and without diet, and here there is an incongruity.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Is it your complaint that you were better treated than the other passengers?—Certainly not, but because I paid Rs. 6 more I was accommodated on the upper deck,—I did not know before that that



if I paid Rs. 6 more I would be better accommodated.

You wanted better treatment than the ordinary coolies, you expected it?—No, I expected equal treatment. If they paid Rs. 10 and I paid Rs. 10, why should I expect better treatment.

Why did you expect to be given the upper deck?—Because all passengers who paid Rs. 6 more and got deck ticket with diet were accommodated on the upper deck, why should not I, I always thought there would be no distinction between these two classes of passengers.

You complain about the extra charge of Rs. 6?—Yes.

Did you take a receipt of it, or asked for one?—No, I was quite satisfied.

Who did you pay the Rs. 6 to?—To an officer of the steamer, I think the Chief Officer; many others also paid this sum.

Mr. Bomanjee.—Did any of them get receipts at the time of payment?—They did not get receipts.

Chairman.—Were you able to eat the diet provided on board?—I did not take diet on board.

That is because of your caste, I take it?—Yes.

What was it you particularly wanted when you paid this Rs. 6—any particular food, or was it to get away from the coolies?—Practically to get a better seat—to get away from the coolies.

Mr. McDonnell.—You say that you took a seat on the upper deck because the lower deck was nasty, unhealthy and so on?—Yes, that is so.

You know the part which is reserved for 1st and 2nd class passengers?—Yes, they have cabins.

And they have decks also; they do not remain in their cabins all day but as a rule they are on the deck. Were you mixing up with the 1st and 2nd class passengers, or with the 3rd?—With the 1st and 2nd class passengers; I mean the 2nd class.

Chairman.—You did not get a separate cabin?—No.

If you had paid a 2nd class fare you would have got a cabin?—Yes.

What about the water. You say that the deck passengers were insufficiently supplied with water?

Dr. Mehta.—He said that water was supplied twice a day.

Witness.—But it was not sufficient. After the supply which was, say, for two hours or a little more, these khalasies would take away the handle of the pump.

Chairman.—Was your boat a very crowded one?—The "Bharata" was very crowded.

Mr. Bomanjee.—What were the times for the supply of water?—Morning and evening.

What times?—From 6 to 8 in the morning and from 7 to 9 in the evening.

What do you suggest—how often would you like the water supplied?—Three times a day: morning, noon and evening.

Mr. McDonnell.—In those two hours you got as much water as you wanted?—Every one did not.

(3) P. N. Malachi.—Chairman—Do you represent yourself or the Indian Christian Association?—I sent one representation on behalf of myself and another on behalf of my association.

Chairman.—We will take Mr. Malachi's personal experience first of all, he also represents the Indian Christian Association.

Mr. Bomanjee.—You say that on or about November 1915 you went to the wharf to see some friends off by a steamer which was timed to sail at 11. Till what time were the people not allowed to go on board?—Till half past ten or so; there was no permission given at all.

Do you suggest that the time allotted to them was not enough?—It was not that so much as the behaviour of the durwan at the gate which is supposed to let in the passengers. He would open one gateway, which is barely two feet wide, and there would be a rush made by men, mothers with children in their arms, coolies with loads on their heads knocking against women, and he would just forcibly bang this gate against them to keep out the crowd with the result that men stumbled, women fell and children screamed, and that is the gate letting them in to the wharf.

You say the passage could only admit one and there was pushing and fighting and elbowing and all that. That refers to the gate leading to the wharf that is in charge of the Port Commissioners?—I refer to the gate which admits people on to the gangway and to the jetty.

Mr. McDonnell.—He means wharf.

Dr. Mehta to Mr. McDonnell.—Have the Port Commissioners anything to do with that?

Mr. McDonnell.—I should think so: the gate on the Strand Road is in charge of the Port Commissioners.

Dr. Mehta.—As far as I know there are no Port Commissioners' men there; only the B.I. have the charge.

Mr. Bomanjee.—Would you like to go along and see?

Chairman.—We could ask the B.I. and the Port Commissioners officially and get authentic information on that point.

Witness.—They said it was a B.I. durwan, but I don't know from my personal knowledge.

Mr. McDonnell.—On what wharf was this gate?—Lewis Street.

Where is the gate along here (placing a rough sketch before witness)?—Just flush with the road; on the shoreside of the pontoon.

Mr. Bomanjee here recited the salient points of complaint submitted in petition by Indian Christian Association, of which witness was a member. The following are the chief grievances: Illicit sale of tickets at enhanced prices, disorder at the wharf;

unnecessary hardship imposed on 3rd class deck passengers while waiting to embark on board the steamer, the free use of sticks and canes by durwans or persons in charge of them for the maintenance of order. The blame, the statement stated, could not be laid at the door of the B.I.S.N. Company since it was possible that they never heard of such cases of ill-treatment, but employees of the company should be made to understand that they must not harass and ill-treat passengers with impunity. The statement further referred to the exaction of sums of money by wharf coolies, which left deck passengers entirely at their mercy; to the insufficient time allotted for passengers to board the steamer on departure, to the absence of separate accommodation for lady passengers on board, and to the need for greater facilities for embarking and disembarking, to the insanitary condition on board caused through a variety of causes, but particularly of allowing passengers to travel on the same deck as animals, poultry, etc., and by not providing them with proper ventilation and light and other necessities of life; to insufficient latrine accommodation, to the scarcity of drinking water; to the inadequacy of medical attendance on board; to the inferior quality of food supplied by the contractor; to the existence of thefts on board (while out at sea); to the exclusion of husbands and male friends from accompanying helpless women and children on board; to the absence of middle class accommodation; and to the harsh treatment from the company's servants and ships' officers.

Certain paragraphs of this lengthy statement were put to the witness by Mr. Bomanjee, from whom the following replies were elicited, *viz.*, that as regards illicit sale of tickets at enhanced prices he could vouch for this from his own knowledge; that as regards ill-treatment of deck passengers, Mr. Samuels, Customs office, care of Y. D. Charles, could speak to this; as to exactions of sums of money by wharf coolies for carrying the luggage of deck passengers, witness confirms that from his own knowledge, and explains what the system is *viz.* that the B.I. give out the contract to a cooly maistry who gets so many coolies and he pays them nothing; they are told to get what they can.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—When we give our version you will see that this is not the case.

Continuing the witness said that the time allowed for passengers to board the steamer was most insufficient, with the result that ill-treatment ensued. Mr. Barnabas, of St. Anthony's Schools, would bear testimony to the fact that on one occasion had he not gone to the rescue a poor woman with a child in her arms would have been trampled on by the durwan. Witnesses suggested that as the Indian Railways very properly reserved certain accommodation for women and children, he thought the same might be done by steamer companies, and that more

facilities as to embarking and disembarking respecting time especially should be afforded to passengers. Regarding the overcrowding of passengers on ships, it was not his personal opinion but that of his association, Jno. Raj could speak to the passengers being accommodated in life boats on the "S. S. Chilka" for want of sufficient room; he is at the Customs office. The date of this voyage of the "Chilka" was January or February this year from Madras to Rangoon. Witness asserts that it is both his and his Association's opinion that the latrine accommodation is most insufficient.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Regarding the scarcity of drinking water how often is it given out?—I am told once a day in the morning and then once again in the evening.

What about these awnings?—A certain member made a complaint that for 2 or 3 hours before the steamer reached port the awnings were removed and he and his wife were standing in pelting rain and soaked to the skin.

The next complaint is as to harsh treatment—what about this?—Yes, some officers on board the steamer when they had to pass from one part of the deck to another and finding no clear passage would kick the passengers and make a passage. Mr. Barnabas would speak to this.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say in your letter that many people have to pay more than the legitimate fare for tickets from here to Madras what is the legitimate fare and to whom is this money paid?—The fare is Rs. 12-4-0 and the money is paid to the man who sells tickets at the office, I don't know who he is.

*Chairman.*—Is he a servant of the Company or an outsider?—I am told they are the servants of the company, but I am not quite sure. It appears a representation was made regarding this illicit demand to the B.I. people and they promised to look into the matter but nothing was done.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You know of any person who has been definitely pointed out to the B. I. Company as having charged more for tickets than the legitimate fare?—I don't know.

Are any of your association members willing to come forward and identify anybody as having charged more than the legitimate fare?—I cannot say, I will make inquiries and find out.

You say here as regards keeping order on the wharf that the use of canes and sticks is freely resorted to by durwans: as a matter of fact who employs these durwans?—The B.I. that is what people say.

How are they dressed?—In khaki uniform.

You say they have the B.I. khaki uniforms?—Yes, a khaki coat.

Do the policemen use sticks and canes?—The people say it is the B. I. durwans.

Do you know they help to the B. I.?—They are not in the police nor in the Customs.

**Chairman.**—You are speaking of what you know yourself, or what your association say?—I am speaking of what I know myself.

**Mr. McDonnell.**—Khaki coats, sure?—Yes, khaki coats.

**Khaki putties?**—Don't remember.

You say that the blame cannot be laid at the door of the B.I. since it is possible they have never heard of such cases of ill-treatment. Is that your opinion, or that of your association's?—What we mean is this; that the B.I. company entrust these matters to a few durwans and they seem to be indifferent so that nobody cares to make a complaint, that is the general opinion.

You say that reports of violence on the jetties have been made to the B.I. company. Have any reports of ill treatment been actually made to the agents of the B.I.?—Yes, I am told so.

You will be surprised to hear that no reports have been made?—(No reply)

**Mr. Bomanjee.**—There was a big report sent in to Lord Inchcape in 1916.

**Chairman.**—A report has been submitted to the British India Company, Calcutta, I understand.

**Mr. Bomanjee.**—Yes, I have a receipt dated 13th January and another dated 15th January 1914 of a representation addressed to Mr. Monteith.

**Mr. McDonnell.**—You say that the exactions of the wharf coolies had reached such an alarming extent that the matter was reported to the B.I. When was that?—About 1914, before the war broke out.

You don't blame the B.I. for these exactions?—I do, "If they enter into a contract with certain coolies and pay them for performing certain duties, why should they not superintend the work of these coolies.

Have you complained?—Of what use is it.

**Chairman.**—You say you once had to pay the coolies—how much did you pay?—One rupee for two packages for carrying from the wharf to my place on the steamer.

**Mr. McDonnell.**—The man refused to carry them, if you did not pay?—Yes.

And you complained of this exaction?—I did not consider it worth while.

**Chairman.**—When was this?—About November 1916.

**Mr. McDonnell.**—Do you really say that steamers are brought alongside the wharf only an hour before the advertised time for sailing?—Yes, that is so.

Now as regards separate accommodation for women passengers. It is a fact, is it not, that separate latrine accommodation is provided for women passengers; yes or no?—No; at least I have not seen.

**Chairman.**—You have never yourself noticed separate accommodation?—No.

**Mr. McDonnell.**—Have you looked for it?—Yes, the latrines are used by both males and females.

You suggest that separate latrines should be arranged for women passengers?—I do.

It is a fact that very few Indian women passengers travel alone. They nearly all have a man—husband, brother or father—attending?—Yes, usually.

They are helpless without a man, they are bad sailors are they not?—They are.

Indian women cannot look after themselves?—Just so.

You agree with me that when Indian women travel, it is necessary for their men-folk to have access to them—to look after them?—No. I don't quite agree.

They could not go the whole journey, say from here to Madras, without some male adult going with them?—They could, if they had separate accommodation.

**Chairman.**—That is the opinion of your association?—Yes.

Would the case be different, if women had separate accommodation, say, for a Hindu or a Mussulman woman undertaking the voyage without her men-folk to look after her?—I think so.

That is the opinion of the Indian Christian Association?—Yes.

**Mr. McDonnell.**—Your association made this statement that every steamer invariably takes more than the full complement of passengers that is allotted to her. What do you mean?—More than she could comfortably carry.

By "the full complement allotted," do you mean the registered number of passengers?—Yes.

And you say she invariably takes more than that number?—My association definitely says that.

Have they taken any steps to count or to estimate the number of passengers on a steamer?—No.

Are you not a member of the committee of this association?—I am the general secretary.

Before you sent in this representation you had a meeting?—Yes.

And each paragraph was discussed by the committee?—Yes.

These particular paragraphs included?—Yes.

And the statement that nearly every steamer invariably takes more than the full complement of passengers allotted to her was approved by your committee?—They did not have anything to say against it.

They approved of it?—Yes.

What is their authority or yours for making this statement?—The idea is that invariably steamers are overcrowded and that they could not make up their minds to believe that that was the licensed number.

I understand you know nothing about passengers being carried in life boats?—No.

You said yourself just now that the latrine accommodation is insufficient?—Most insufficient.

Are you speaking of any particular ship?—I can speak of the S.S. "Palamcotta."

Did you travel on it?—Yes, in 1914.

How many latrines were on that ship?—Two.

How many 3rd class passengers?—700 to 800

What do you mean by two latrines?—I mean a small compartment which was supposed to be a latrine

Containing?—Not more than two each

So there were only four places of retirement for four individuals in the whole of the 3rd class accommodation; is that correct?—Yes, I am speaking of the "Palamcotta."

*Chairman*.—You saw two ranges of latrine with two seats in each?—Yes.

Any of these four set aside for women?—No.

You noticed any mark; did you look for them.—I looked for marks and noticed none

Have you any more recent experience of travelling?—Yes, when I went to Calcutta in January 1916 by the SS "Itola" and returned in March 1916 by the "Euryalus."

How many latrines on the "Itola"?—I saw only one.

How many passengers?—Lots of passengers from Singapore—over a thousand.

And only one latrine—how many seats?—Two or three seats.

Three at the most?—Yes

How many passengers were on the "Euryalus"?—She would have carried over a thousand.

How many latrines?—I don't know; I travelled 2nd class.

*Chairman*.—On the "Itola" you travelled deck?—Yes

*Mr. McDonnell*.—"Inferior quality of food supplied by the hotel keeper." Can you suggest a better method?—By appointing somebody to superintend it.

Have you ever made any complaint to the officers of the ship about the food?—No; I could not get at them

You tried to complain?—Yes. I went about asking people and they said to go to the Chief Officer.

Do the officers come down to the 3rd class?—Yes, but they always seem to be in a mighty hurry to get away quickly

*Chairman*.—So delicious that they want to get away as soon as they can.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Regarding the food by the hotel keeper, witness means the man who is licensed to sell provisions on board

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Regarding this ill-treatment you complain of. Was it on any particular voyage?—I have seen it on the SS "Itola."

Have you heard of any complaints of violence on the part of the ships' officers being made by anybody?—I don't know

*Chairman*.—Did Mr Barnabas complain to the Company?—No.

Have you heard of anybody complaining to the company of violence being used on board?—Yes, I am told some people did complain, but I cannot tell you who they are.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You know for yourself it is open to anybody to file a case in court if

there is any violence used?—The other day I saw a durwan shoving a gate and a woman tumbling down and a B.I. man looking on.

It is open to the persons who are grieved at the hands of the B.I. people to go to court?—Yes, people know that but consider they won't gain by it as it is too much trouble.

There never has been a case in court brought against a B.I. officer?—Never heard of one.

*Chairman*.—What is your occupation; Mr. Malachi?—Clerk in the Chief Engineer's office, Burma Railways.

(4) *S. Ponniah*.—The written statement of witness is read by Mr. Bomanjee.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You travelled deck with European diet and you say you could not get accommodation, what do you mean by that, was there no room?—I applied for a 2nd class berth and they said there was no room; they issued me a European deck saying I would be given special accommodation

What do you mean—you did not want to go with the 3rd class, you tried to get a 2nd class berth but there was none available?—Yes, that is what I mean.

And you were allowed to remain apparently on the upper deck, but your complaint is there was no canvas awning?—In the first instance I went and asked the Chief Officer who insulted me which he should not have done. Then a gunner (Jacob, a Jew) was kind enough to help me and I gave him a present of Rs. 10 and would have paid even Rs. 20 and more in such a critical moment; he secured us an accommodation in the upper deck which had no canvas covering

And who did you pay for the use of the lavatory?—There was a boy in charge of the lavatory. This lavatory was being used by the servants of the steamer, that provided for the deck passengers was too horrible for use, I attempted to use it but it was too dirty and never cleaned and so I could not use it

Did you make any complaint about the filthy condition of this lavatory?—Only to the gunner; I did not wish again to approach the Chief Officer who had once insulted me which I resented, or the Captain.

And the Chief Officer replied that he did not care a damn whether he had accommodation or not: that was the insult?—Yes. Some people told me at Madras that I would be given special accommodation.

*Chairman*.—What lavatory did you eventually get the use of—the 2nd class?—I think the lavatory used by the steamer's servants

And you had to pay a gratuity for that?—Yes, Rs 2 and a like sum to the man who served me with food as he demanded buk-sheesh otherwise he would delay the food, altogether I had to pay Rs 14

I think you said there was no room in the 3rd class, but you did not wish to travel 3rd?—I applied for 2nd but the B.I. people said to travel 3rd and that everything special would be given me.

That is deck with diet?—Yes.

Well, you did get separate accommodation from the coolies, you were not herded with them, they gave you a separate deck?—Not they, but the gunner for a payment of Rs. 10

At first you had no separate accommodation and you would not have had this separate deck had you not paid this gratuity?—Just so.

Did you eat the ship's diet?—They supplied food but I only took biscuits, coffee, tea, etc.

What is your occupation?—Clerk, in the P.W.D. Stores branch (Mr. Molesworth's office).

Your religion?—Hindu,

Your caste?—Khatris

Dr Mehta—The latrines you were allowed to use, for whom were they specially reserved?—Intended for the steamer's servants.

Mr. McDonnell.—In 3rd class space?—I was on the top and the latrines were down.

Mr. Bamanjee.—Where were these latrines situated?—Below deck to where I was seated.

Mr. McDonnell.—Where the 3rd class passengers are?—They have a horrible latrine which cannot be called a latrine—they cannot be used

These latrines to which you had access were kept closed?—Yes

How many were there?—The one that I used had one or two seats.

Chairman.—You had no objection to that?—No.

Mr. McDonnell.—By ship's servants you mean the crew?—Yes, the gunner and all.

You paid for the use of this latrine?—Yes.

(5) J. Reynaud, Headmaster, Randeria School—I live in No. 5, Sparks Street. Next to my house there is a vacant piece of land and tickets are sold there to deck passengers by the B.I.S.N. Company during the months of April and May; not continuously, perhaps for a day or two when a steamer is about to leave and then there is a break. What goes on that piece of vacant land when tickets are actually being sold I do not know because I cannot see from that part of my house there being no opening; I can only see and speak to what goes on in the street (Sparks Street) in front of my house.

I should like first to state the system as to how tickets are sold. There is a ticket box at one end of this piece of land; about two-thirds of it is fenced in with a rope; a certain number of coolies get into this roped enclosure and are made to sit there and go up and purchase their tickets in turn one by one. There is only one such ticket box as I have seen. Hundreds of coolies are on the road waiting their turn to get into this place and buy their tickets,—in fact they camp out there in Sparks Street for weeks until they are able to get their tickets. They camp on both sides of the road, they eat and sleep there and so on. As the sale of tickets is proceeding at this place crowds of coolies get on to this roped enclosure within which

other coolies are seated and try to get in first

Chairman.—Which end of Sparks Street is this enclosure?

Witness.—On the East side. (Continuing)—When these men crowd there there are a few Eurasians on duty, some three or four of them, perhaps more. These men are moving about from this piece of land on to the road; they are all the time on the move, I suppose trying to maintain order. When these men, as I have said, crowd towards this area where the coolies are seated one or two of these Eurasians come up to them, disperse them and drive them off to the other side of the road

Mr. McDonnell.—When the crowd is too pressing, you say?—Yes.

Mr. Bamanjee.—When the crowd behind gets too pressing?—Yes.

Is all the vacant land enclosed, or only a portion of it?—A portion only.

And on the balance outside the coolies crowd as they please?—Yes.

Chairman.—And besides that on the road, side, too?—Yes.

Witness (continuing)—Then one or two of these Eurasians come and disperse them. When this is being done the men are beaten pretty severely, and I must say, sometimes, unnecessarily. That is all about what goes on there. There are two other cases I should like to mention in connection with this selling of tickets. A few days before the departure of a steamer, either towards the end of April or the beginning of May, I am not quite sure, a Coringhee woman came up to our place begging—she had an infant in her arm. Both the mother and her child, I must say, were in a miserable condition—they looked very bad. I was the first to see her and called out to my daughter, she came and this was the woman's tale. She said she had been waiting for several days (she had come from somewhere to Rangoon) to get tickets. She, her husband and her mother-in-law—three of them—had come to buy tickets, that her husband had not been able to purchase the tickets, she had brought enough money for the tickets and a few rupees more to purchase food while waiting in Rangoon for the steamer. She said she had spent all the money and was reduced to begging for food from other coolies—the three of them. Not the money for the tickets but the extra money that she had brought with her for the purchase of food

Chairman.—Did she say how many days she had to wait?—Several days, and her husband could not get the tickets.

When was this?—About the end of April or beginning of May this year.

Did you ever hear of such an episode before, or is this the first time?—The first time; I am living there for three years now.

Did you make inquiries about the truth of this woman's statement?—Yes. A burmese nurse of my daughter-in-law's said she knew that this was a true case as this woman had

lived for a few days near her house ; she had a mat and pillows and the rest of it there, and she and her husband and mother-in-law all three of them lived under a tree and had taken up their abode there temporarily ; the nurse told this to my daughter-in-law and that the woman was really begging her food from the coolies. My daughter-in-law felt sorry for this woman and gave her some help and told her to go herself instead of sending her husband and explain matters to those who were selling tickets and see if she could not get the tickets. She said that for the past two or three days the tickets were being sold at Rs. 11-6-0 instead of at Rs. 10-6-0 (the usual price), and that would mean that she would have to pay three rupees more for the three of them and from where was she to get this money from when they were begging for food. Then my daughter-in-law wrote to a gentleman of her acquaintance at Bulloch Bros and asked him he would oblige her by sending her three deck tickets, stating that the people were very poor and were trying to get away by that steamer and were in really bad circumstances. He wrote back saying that he was sorry he could not oblige her as passengers were all booked and that there were no more tickets available for that steamer but he would try and get her tickets for the next boat leaving. I think a day or two or three days later he sent the tickets and said he was able to send them because some of the deck passengers had returned tickets as they were not leaving by that boat.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—And, these tickets were supplied at the proper rate, Rs. 10-6-0?—Yes, we sent the money. Then we gave this woman the tickets and they left. When the next steamer was about to leave a few days before—I suppose this became known to the coolies—another woman came up to our place, but she did not come up begging ; she had some money in her hands (forty rupees in notes and five rupees in cash) and said that she would give us this money if he would get her three deck tickets (perhaps she was under the impression we were selling tickets, I cannot say). I told her we were not selling tickets and to go away and that we did not want anything more to do with the buying of tickets. She said if we go there, they want Rs. 17-8-0 a ticket as that is what the tickets were being sold at now. She stood for a while trying to get us to get the tickets for her but we would not have anything to do with it.

*Mr. McDonnell*—You say that this woman said "If we go there they want Rs. 17-8-0," who was this woman referring to, or where?—She was pointing in this direction, meaning Sparks Street.

As far as you know, you cannot say whether there was any truth in it or not, that Rs. 17-8-0 was demanded there?—Well, I cannot say.

*Chairman*.—There was some one in authority selling tickets there in this enclosure. Did any persons tell you that

Rs. 17-8-0 was demanded within this enclosure or without?—No one told us.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say you have lived in Sparks Street for three years?—Yes, from the beginning of 1915.

This arrangement of a roped enclosure and making them all sit down and go in turn for their tickets is quite a reasonable arrangement in view of the crush?—Yes.

And to avoid too much of a crush it is necessary to have these Eurasian subordinates looking after them, all you complain of with regard to that is that sometimes there is unnecessary violence?—Yes, if they had some more men on this duty they could keep these men on the opposite side of the road and there would then be no necessity for this crowding.

Any police there?—Occasionally.

*Chairman*—Have you ever seen these coolies giving any serious trouble?—They submit very easily.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—As a matter of fact this violence used is not very great?—They are beaten on the back and legs, and a man sometimes receives several strokes.

Leave any marks—you are a school master?—I very seldom use the cane.

As a matter of fact the cane strokes do not leave any marks?—No.

*Chairman*.—You can understand that when you are controlling a lot of coolies it may be necessary to use some physical force?—There is no necessity for any force.

*Mr. McDonnell*—As regards this poor woman waiting for days for her tickets, do you know that there is now a great shortage of shipping owing to the war?—You know the reason why that these coolies have to camp out and wait for days for tickets is that Government is taking up all the shipping?—That is what I have been told.

You have no reason to disbelieve it?—None.

You know that the B. I. have other places besides this spot in Sparks Street where tickets are sold outside the office?—I know of 40th Street and no other place.

When these coolies were being beaten, did they make a complaint to you or to anybody?—Not to me.

Or to the police in your presence?—No.

And there are police down there in Sparks Street when tickets are being sold?—Sometimes a man is there.

They have a sort of central box—a moveable place—for the sale of these tickets?—I think I have seen only one such.

*Chairman*—There is a roped enclosure where this central box stands?—Yes.

How far up do you live from this vacant land?—The house adjoining ; there is a dead wall between.

*Dr. Mehta*—You stated that the people were beaten severely and sometimes unnecessarily ; what do you mean by unnecessarily?—You see these men are all crowding near this area allotted to the coolies and when they see one or two of these Eurasians

coming towards them, brandishing their sticks and making a noise, they turn and make for the other side of the road, where they are gone after a while and beaten.

How far do they go?—From one side of the road to the other.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Do they follow them right over to the other side of the road?—Yes; that is why I say 'unnecessarily.'

How often have you seen this?—Several times; there is great commotion in the street and then I rush to my window to see what is going on, and I see this beating.

*Dr. Mehta.*—And the other inmates of the house can also testify to this severe beating?—Yes, they can.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Who is this gentleman at Bulloch's who wrote to your daughter-in-law about the tickets; any objection to mentioning his name?—No, he is a friend of ours, a Mr. Gibson; but he has nothing to do with the selling of tickets; he simply did this to oblige us.

This meeting here concluded and the Chairman stated that the date of the next meeting will be duly announced, and notices would be sent to the remaining witnesses of the date of the next hearing. The Chairman ruled that no written statement would be admitted unless the witnesses came personally to substantiate their allegations.

**Proceedings of the Fourth Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee which met at the Public Works Department Secretariat on Wednesday, the 29th August 1917, at 11 a.m.**

**PRESENT:**

J. P. HARDIMAN, Esq., B.A., I.C.S. (*President*).

J. W. A. BELL, Esq., B.I.S.N. Company } *Members.*  
Dr. F. J. MEHTA }

T. F. R. McDONNELL, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, for B.I.S.N. Company.

F. BOMANJEE, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, for the Social Service League.

*S. S. Halker*, Advocate of the Chief Court.

(No written statement.)

In 1913, when I was coming to Rangoon from Calcutta on the "Aronda," and class, there were a number of passengers on the steamer, some deaths occurred amongst the deck passengers the next afternoon and I sent a wireless to the Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, stating that the ship was overcrowded and there were deaths by suffocation. What occurred was this. These deck passengers were sent down to the hold.

*President.*—You mean the lowest deck?—I mean the deck under the second class cabins; and they were not allowed to come up. There were not more than 300 to 300 passengers in the upper deck, whilst in the hold there would have been about 2,000. I asked the Bengali doctor to allow them to come up and roam about and he asked me to mind my own business.

*Mr. Bell.*—Did you complain to anybody else?—There was another officer passing by (I do not know his name) and I complained to him, but he did not attend to my request. I also complained to other people passing by, but they paid no heed. There was a general impression on board that these deaths were due to suffocation—want of fresh air. I had down the names of all the passengers who noticed this and I think their statements were taken afterwards by the police, but nothing came of it. Ram Chandra, a camp clerk to Mr. Hart, Inspector-General of Forests, Government of India, who travelled with me in the same ship, and I both went to the wireless office and sent the wire-

less. Even then I asked the doctor to allow the deck passengers to come up to the upper deck and he did not; and when they came to know that I had sent a wireless the Captain sent for me and when he came to know of it he allowed these passengers to come up but three remained in the lower deck. I was told by the doctor that they were dying because they were not taking food and drink.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Was the sea rough then?—Yes.

*President.*—What month of the year was that?—November. First of all the doctor said they died of cholera, and I said if there be cholera they should be vomiting and purging and there would be some proof of cholera germs; he then said they were dying because they were not taking food or drink and it was so published in the papers afterwards, at least in the "Rangoon Times." When all this had come to the knowledge of the Captain and he had sent for me, these 3 or 4 passengers who were in such a moribund condition in the hold were brought up and kept on the first class deck.

*President.*—How many?—I think three. The doctor told me to come and see that he was giving them this medicine and they were not taking it; he asked the other passengers who were there to administer to them this medicine and to see that they took it or else they would die. They recovered, and my belief is, as is also the belief of others, that they recovered by taking fresh air. I have here the names of fifteen passengers who travelled with me, many of whom were in the 2nd class. As a result of my

wireless the police at Rangoon came on the steamer and asked me for my statement and many others were also examined at the same time. I ascertained on inquiry that there were 23 passengers less than the complement allowed on the ship. My own opinion is that if these deck passengers were not confined to the lowermost deck but were allowed to enjoy the fresh breeze they would not have suffered in this way. Ram Chandra, myself and another man (now working in the Railways) tried to go down and make an estimate of the number of passengers but we could not stand there, the air was so foul it was similar to the air of a room which had been opened after 6 or 8 months; persons were heaped up like sardines. If the whole space was allowed to be used there would certainly not be this result. I think there was sufficient space on the ship for them to have free access to roam about. Some people who paid extra money were allowed this liberty. I would like that the statements taken by the police of these witnesses at that time, if they are available, be also gone into by this committee.

*President*—Mr. Bomanjee will give us his views on this point.

In November 1911 myself and Trimal Khaimchand, the jeweller, were travelling in the same cabin and we found that a Hindustani lady, who had her brother travelling with her, came and complained to us and to the other passengers that she was being harassed and molested. On inquiry it was found that the person who was with her was given some wine or other liquor to drink and she was then harassed by the crew, including the doctor. I suggest that if a separate portion of the ship is reserved for these lady passengers, as is done in railways, nobody would encroach there. When passengers are mixed up in this promiscuous manner advantage is taken by persons who wish to commit mischief.

Recently in May 1917 there was an incident in regard to a Tavoy boat. I had to send away some 20 coolies to my Wolfram Concession at Tavoy. I sent Rs 120 with my durwan to the office to get tickets for these 20 men at Rs.6 each; one hour later he returned saying that the tickets may be purchased next morning at the wharf. I anticipated some difficulty, so I went there myself at 6-15. A durwan was there with tickets and I asked him to sell me 20; he said they were all finished and referred me to Mr. Smith. I asked him at what time he commenced selling tickets and he told me to ask Mr. Smith. I found out this gentleman on the wharf and he said 'all finished'. I then wanted to see two or three officers of my acquaintance who attended these steamers, the time was then 7-30, when a clerk from Thomas Cook's told me I would find them on the Latter Street Wharf. I saw them there and they said they would be coming at 9 or quarter to 9, before the steamer had left, they came and inquired from Mr.

Smith who said that 450 tickets were sold. I said how is this as only 350 were allotted. Those gentlemen told me that if the persons (coolies) are present they can get tickets. The men were brought there and 20 tickets were taken and paid for and whilst distributing them the mantry wanted to defraud me. He had 18 only, as he said two had absconded. Another two passengers (Pathans) asked for these two tickets but they were refused. If they were good for me, they were good for those two men who were waiting there since morning.

*President*—I am not quite certain that I understand this. You went to the wharf at 6-15?—Yes, and I got the tickets at a quarter to nine just before the boat left.

*Q*.—Did you only get them through the good offices of your acquaintances who came from Latter Street?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell*—What are their names?—I cannot give them, as my complaint is regarding the system and not against persons.

*President*.—What did Mr. Smith tell you?—He said he had distributed 450 tickets and had no more available, and I understand that the total number that left by that steamer was 453. I asked the number the steamer carries; he said there is no fixed number but that it varies with the season. My partner (Gunpat Rai) who was coming from Kalaw wired me to arrange for passage as he would reach by the 8 a.m. train, and he was also told that passages were not available; after about one hour he succeeded in getting the passages.

*Mr. Bell*.—I don't see how this is relevant.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—His point is that 20 tickets were offered to him, he could only use 18, and the other two passengers were refused the balance two.

*President*.—In your 1913 journey did any deaths actually take place?—Six from cholera. It appeared in the "Rangoon Times."

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Were those six thrown into the sea?—Yes.

*Q*.—Was there any medical investigation as to the cause of death?—I don't know.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—I will deal with this instance of 1911 about the Hindustani lady and her brother. You mention this as an instance of how desirable it is when Indian women are travelling deck they should be given separate accommodation. Do you realise that if separate accommodation were given Indian women, their brothers or husbands, or the male member in charge of them could not have access to them because of the other lady passengers?—It would be possible to have access, as the other ladies would not mind; they have no objection to these things. For example, when we travel by rail there is a separate ladies' compartment. When there is good ground there is no objection.

*Q*.—Not even if there were Mahomedan women there?—No; they draw a veil over their faces for a time.



Q.—As regards these deaths in 1913. You say the ship was overcrowded in this sense that of the 2,200 and odd persons not less than six-eighths or seven-eighths were down below. The deck for 3rd class passengers on these ordinary boats is not a very large one. Was there room for all the passengers?—Yes, I think three-fourths of the number of persons could have been accommodated on the deck. Some of them entreated to be allowed to go up but were refused. If you allow them on deck so that they may get the fresh air, there will be no complaints of this nature.

Q.—You say that the deck were overcrowded. Are you aware that the lower deck space is measured by the Government Surveyor?—We all know that; but my complaint is—

Q.—Do you suggest that there were more people on that lower deck than the Government Surveyor certified to?—By all means I say so.

Q.—You have no knowledge of the number the Government Surveyor certified to?—No. But I say this that when the upper deck was sparsely occupied the lower deck was filled with the remainder.

Q.—You say these deaths occurred from suffocation?—It is my belief and the impression of all the people.

Q.—The medical man told you cholera?—Afterwards he said it was due to starvation.

Q.—You are not a medical man?—No.

Q.—You therefore would hardly set up your opinion in opposition to the doctor's?—The doctor himself admitted it. He said he is a servant of the Company and was eating their salt and had to obey their orders.

Q.—It really comes to this: you really don't know what they died of—it is reported they died of suffocation—the doctor said cholera; rumour had it suffocation, and the general gup was?—Not rumour, but people who investigated the matter.

Q.—Did you make a complaint to the Captain?—I said, he sent for me afterwards.

Q.—Was it raining?—It was a bit rough.

Q.—Someone said that passengers died from not eating food?—The doctor himself said that being Brahmins or Hindus they were not taking food or drink.

Q.—He did not say from suffocation?—He told me afterwards.

Q.—You say he definitely said so?—He practically admitted it. We had a discussion on that matter.

Q.—Have you any practical suggestion to make on this matter of the Brahmins not taking food or drink on board?—No passenger would starve as they always bring some eatables with them. Coolies bring fried gram and flattened rice and eat this in sufficient quantities, and there is no question of their starving within 24 or 48 hours.

Q.—Do you know what the result of the police inquiry was?—They gave it up.

Q.—They came to the conclusion that nobody was to blame?—Mr Tarleton sent for me and told me we must pursue that matter but that he had no jurisdiction—it was the business of the Port Commissioners.

Q.—Have you any cause to think that death was due to reasons other than suffocation?—People who gave evidence said that that was their belief.

There are certain other suggestions I have to make. There should be a large waiting room or shed for waiting passengers; the steamer should touch the wharf from where the passengers have to leave instead of being taken by launch to the steamer. If this were done and a large shed erected to accommodate the maximum complement of the steamer, all this inconvenience and trouble would be obviated.

S. C. Gossain.—Clerk, Accountant-General's Office.

(Statement read.)

Mr. Bomanjee.—You complain chiefly about the latrines being insufficient and dirty about the time taken up in the medical examination on board.

Mr. McDonnell.—How often have you travelled on the B.I. boats?—Three times.

Q.—How often are these latrines cleaned?—I don't know.

Q.—You know that there are topazes on board whose duty it is to clean up the latrines?—But the latrines are in a filthy condition.

Q.—Were any of the passengers seasick when you travelled?—Some were.

Q.—You were a deck passenger?—Yes.

Q.—Were you seasick?—On the first voyage, yes.

Q.—You find it is very difficult to keep these places clean in rough weather?—The topazes work all night.

Q.—They are not seasick?—(Laughter).

Mr. Bomanjee states that on the China Line boats a pump is kept working which flushes the latrines day and night.

S. C. Bose, Auditor, Accountant-General's Office.

Mr. Bomanjee.—The witness wants to add this as supplementary to his statement.

(Statement and supplement read.)

V. Supalitham, Clerk, Sanitary Commissioner's Office.

(Statement taken as read.)

Mr. McDonnell.—Your complaint is having to sit amongst coolies; you have the same ticket as them and pay the same money. What do you suggest the B.I. should do?—At least a distinction should be drawn between a respectable man and these coolies: the distinction should be based on social position and education.

Q.—Do you know any carriers in the world making this distinction—even in the railways it is not observed. You complain that although you paid for diet you did not get a

meal. Did you ask the steward?—No, I was all the while sick and the steamer was rolling fearfully; I could not even raise my head.

Q.—You say here, as a matter of fact, the steward was searching for you?—There is no complaint as to that.

Q.—Do you claim a refund of the money?—Certainly not.

President.—You travelled deck with diet. What did you pay the additional Rs. 6 for?—Simply that I might get separate accommodation.

Q.—You found that even after paying this extra Rs. 6 you did not get separate accommodation?—I did not.

Q.—You say you had to look to the crew for water rather than the steward. Was not water supplied at certain times of the day?—Yes, but we were at the mercy of the crew as we could not find the steward; sometimes we got water and at times we did not, in which case we had to pay for water.

Q.—You say that the officers appeared to be very generous and kind?—Seeing their responsibility we did not like to trouble them.

Q.—Had you made a complaint to them of the lack of water, don't you think your complaint would be attended to?—My complaint is not that; it is about the defective arrangement on the steamer: men travelling deck with diet should have a separate place.

Q.—Your complaint is about the water. What was there to prevent you from going to the pump and getting water?—In the first place I was sick and could not go; I sent my servant and he was driven away.

Q.—You yourself did not know of it?—He said he was refused and when he returned without water what else must I conclude but that he was not given the water.

Q.—You yourself did not see this refusal?—When I did not get the water, it is sufficient proof.

Mr. Bell.—Why didn't you go to the Captain? or to the other officers?—They could not be seen.

Q.—Your complaint is that this Rs. 6 extra does not give you any special attention?—That is one complaint, and another is that if a special place were provided for men with diet, there would be no reason for such complaints.

Q.—Then how did you say the officers were generous and kind?—I mean on the journey.

Q.—Did the officers never go down to the place where you were?—In June I did not see; only when near Madras, at embarking time, then I saw the officers.

Q.—You travelled many times?—No, four times.

Q.—Your own experience is that the officers are generous and kind?—That was in April.

Q.—They are usually kind?—Yes.

President.—You think that if the respectable and educated class were given separate accommodation from the coolies, they would

be prepared to pay extra for it?—They would be.

Dr. Mehta.—You suggest an intermediate class for educated and respectable passengers?—Yes.

Q.—They don't want to travel with European nor with coolies?—Exactly.

J. K. Ghose, Civil Engineer.  
(Statement taken as read.)

Mr. McDonnell.—You have done 5 or 6 voyages on the B.I. boats, and in 1907 you say you saw an officer whipping some deck passengers. Can you say why he did so?—No; that is why I rushed to see, and he stopped whipping.

Q.—You say Anglo-Indians are treated differently?—Yes; they are allowed the use of the 2nd class deck whilst the Indian passengers with the same ticket (deck with diet) are denied this privilege.

Q.—Is it the usual thing to allow Anglo-Indian deck passengers the use of the 2nd class deck?—I don't know.

Q.—You say that on your last voyage two deck passengers had to pay Rs. 3 each to occupy the upper deck?—The steamer clerk and another European officer came up and finding these passengers with deck tickets they were asked to go down into the hold or to pay Rs. 3 each. They asked me what to do and I told them to pay the money and get a receipt; this was refused. They paid the money to the clerk and the officer was with him.

Q.—Was he ship's officer?—I can't say.

Q.—You say they charge for luggage without granting receipts?—After embarkation of the passengers and on the starting of the ship they come up and examine the luggages. One passenger by my side had somewhat heavy luggages and the officer told him he had too much luggage and that he must pay for it. Rs. 3 was taken and no receipt granted.

Q.—Are you not aware you can only carry a certain amount of personal luggage?—I did not know that.

Q.—You cannot say that the amount charged was far luggage in excess of the authorised quantity?—I do not know, but when the receipt was not given I had doubts as to where this money would go.

Q.—Do you remember the name of the steamer?—It was the last voyage I made in 1916 end of December; I arrived in 1917. It was the last steamer which left in 1916.

Q.—What was the name of the steamer you saw the coolies being thrashed by an officer?—I think "Goa."

Q.—You said the latrines were insufficient. Do you know how many there were in each voyage you made?—I did not count them, but what I say is that many deck passengers are waiting in the morning in crowds to use the latrines before they can get in. It takes about half an hour for one batch to go in.

Q.—In your last trip, do you know how many latrines there were?—No, but they were very filthy.

*Mr. Bell.*—They were so filthy you could not count them?—Yes, they were very filthy.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say there is no separate provision for respectable Indian female deck passengers. What sort of provision do you want?—Separate from the males.

*Q.*—Would it not be difficult to provide that, because their men companions would have to attend them?—When a man has his wife there, he is generally allowed to converse with her and the other ladies do not object.

*Q.*—You want separate accommodation from the coolies for the respectable class of people?—That is my suggestion.

*President.*—About the different treatment accorded to Anglo-Indian deck passengers; in what way?—I said they were allowed to use the 2nd class bridge.

*Q.*—You are quite certain about that?—Yes.

*N. S. Rau, Registrar, Lodging Houses, Rangoon Municipality (Statement read.)*

*President.*—You suggest a permit system?—I do.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—How much do the Municipality allow per man in lodging houses?—5 by 4 superficial feet.

*Q.*—Have you any idea of what the ship's space is—is it more crowded?—More crowded.

*Q.*—The Municipality would not allow this overcrowding in lodging houses?—Certainly not.

*Q.*—Much overcrowded?—More crowded than lodging houses.

*Q.*—It is your duty to measure and allot the space in lodging houses?—Yes.

*President.*—Are you supposed to make surprise visits to your lodging houses?—Yes, I make them.

*Q.*—Is the figure of space in lodging houses kept?—Yes.

*Q.*—Then I suppose you divide the space according to the number of lodgers?—Yes.

*Q.*—How often are you supposed to make these surprise visits?—Four times a week at night.

*Q.*—How many have you in charge?—About 500 to 600.

*Q.*—How many times a year are you supposed to visit these lodging houses?—I inspect them at least three or four times a year—each of the lodging houses?

*Q.*—During day or night time?—Only night time after 11 o'clock, then we can find out if the lodging houses are overcrowded or not.

*Q.*—Have you ever prosecuted any people?—A number of them.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You realise that it has nothing to do with the B.I. preventing friends and relatives of passengers from getting on the wharf—that is an order made by Government?—I am aware of an order to that effect, but I know that many persons are allowed and I do not see that any distinction should be made.

With regard to my first point of complaint. When there is a great crowd at the gates,

the gates are not opened fully but only half, and when they are allowed in there is another entrance which takes them to the steamer, and here the B.I. clerks treat passengers very badly. I have seen it.

*Q.*—What nationality are the clerks?—Eurasians.

*Q.*—Can you identify any?—At least one.

*Q.*—Do you know his name?—No. On my rounds as Inspector I saw the man in 29th Street; he lives there.

*Q.*—That is when the passengers were going on from the wharf to the steamer?—Yes.

*Q.*—Was he beating him for amusement?—Not for amusement, but for keeping the crowd in check; but surely other methods could be devised.

*President.*—Do you think he could achieve the same results without beating them?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell (aside).*—Moral persuasion with 3,000 to 4,000 coolies.

*Witness.*—The gate is not opened wide enough. When tickets are checked at the second entrance men can only go as far as that gate where they could be controlled; but these durwans take undue advantage of the passengers.

*Q.*—The durwans?—And the clerks at the second entrance.

*Q.*—You complain that the deck passengers have no accommodation for bathing. Is it not a fact that there is accommodation around which a screen could be put?—I have not seen it; I have seen people bathe under the pipes. So far as I am concerned I always pay extra to the ship's people and get the second class bathing accommodation; also for the 2nd class latrine.

*President.*—Who did you pay the money to?—To the steward.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Was it by way of gratuity, or is a recognised charge?—A gratuity.

*Q.*—What do you mean by "treated very badly many petty annoyances by the officers"?—I was a passenger on the "Arankola," there was a chetty standing by an officer's cabin and an engineer officer came and asked him what he wanted there and kicked him out of the place.

*Q.*—That is the only case?—Yes.

*Q.*—What about the menials?—When our things are put on board the menials come and shift them from place to place, thinking thereby that by causing us such annoyances they could get some gratuity.

*Q.*—You say that you have to pay coolies for carrying luggage. You know that there are notices put up that these coolies are to do their work gratuitously?—That may be so, but some people in order to get their luggage put away quickly and in a good place, pay the coolies, and those who don't their luggages are put away anywhere and afterwards the coolies deny all knowledge of the luggage.

*President.*—Do you think that this state of affairs could be rectified if there were

more coolies?—The maistries work hand in hand with their coolies. There should be some European supervision in this connection so that everyone could get the service of the coolies without paying anything.

There is also a responsible person on the spot. Have you complained of not being able to get coolies?—I have complained to the clerk of the B.I., who said if you don't pay there will be trouble.

*Witness*—Then about this accommodation on the steamer. There is what is called 'deck with European diet,' and 'deck without diet.' The majority take the ordinary deck ticket, but there are some people who would not mind paying another Rs. 5, not for diet but simply to get a better accommodation than what is given to the other 3rd class passengers. Europeans and Eurasians taking deck-with-diet tickets are provided with special accommodation and sometimes are allowed to mix with the European passengers; we are not given this privilege.

*Q.*—If they have not paid more, why should Indians get better accommodation?—I take 'deck with diet' and pay Rs. 15; a Eurasian also pays the same, he is given special accommodation, and not I—because I am an Indian. Europeans and Eurasians are invariably given special accommodation.

*President*—Special favour is shown to Europeans and Eurasians holding deck-with-diet tickets?—Yes I suggest that some sort of special accommodation should be given to respectable Indians, something like an intermediate class as is provided for on Indian Railways.

*Q.*—What do you think would be the proper fare for this intermediate class—the present deck fare is Rs. 10 and the 2nd class Rs. 45?—I have travelled intermediate between Madras and Calcutta; the 3rd class fare is Rs. 13, the intermediate Rs. 22, and the 2nd class Rs. 40, but these fares have since been raised on account of the war. My idea is that the intermediate fare should be between Rs. 15 and Rs. 20.

*Q.*—Shall we say Rs. 17-8, would that be fair?—I think so, with separate sleeping, bathing and latrine accommodation.

*Q.*—No diet?—No.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—Does the Rangoon Municipality allow a syce or anybody to sleep with his horse or cattle?—He would be prosecuted; it is on lofts that these people sleep. There are by-laws which say that stables should not ventilate into sleeping rooms.

*Q.*—Have you ever been engaged on the inspection of stables?—Yes, for two years.

*Q.*—You know what offences are punishable and what are not?—Yes.

*Q.*—If you found a man sleeping in a stable alongside his horse, would you prosecute him?—Not him but the landlord.

*Mr. McDonnell*—You would not prosecute the syce?—No, there is no by-law to that effect.

*Witness*—I was a passenger by the "Bangala" to Calcutta in December; all the lower decks and the one above were filled up and so the only deck available was the 2nd class; some of us were allowed to go up there. I was deck with diet and was not asked to pay anything extra for this; some who had deck tickets for Rs. 10 were required to pay Rs. 6 extra for this privilege, but they got no receipts for this money.

*Q.*—Who did they pay this money to?—A Goanese clerk.

*Q.*—The Company was cheated out of this money—no receipt was given?—I don't know where the money went to.

*Q.*—You have seen cattle carried as cargo on boats. Would the Municipality give a license to a man to keep his horse or cattle in the same way as the B.I. allow?—Certainly not.

*Q.*—Would you license a lodging house had cattle and men herded together?—No.

*Q.*—You complain about ventilation; what is your experience?—When I was a passenger on the "Arankola" there were two flues which ventilated into the place where I was sitting and so put us to much inconvenience and we even suffered from headache—the odour was very foul. They could have been extended a little further, also there was a smell of urine from the place where the animals were lodged.

*President*—You say that the ventilators should be made longer so that they could discharge higher?—Yes, I was told that there was a rule that livestock should not be herded with people.

*Mr. Bomanjee* quotes the certificate issued under Act X by the Port Commissioners.

*Witness*—Some respectable people would like to cook their own food on board but there is no accommodation for this.

*President*—All this means a good deal of extra space; you are aware of that?—Yes, but we are not allowed to use any stoves on the steamer.

*Q.*—Do you know that there is a separate cooking accommodation provided already?—There is, but it is insufficient. There are three or four ranges given to the low class people; the high class people are given no accommodation.

*Q.*—You suggest that there should be a separate cooking range for high class people?—Yes.

*Witness*—About this shelter I should like to say something. In Madras there is some sort of shelter—a corrugated iron roof where the people may stay for 2 or 3 hours before the steamer leaves, I don't know who it belongs to.

*Mr. McDonnell*—Which is superior—the arrangements in Madras or in Rangoon regarding embarking and disembarking?—

So far as embarking is concerned, it is very difficult and inconvenient in Rangoon, but not so in Calcutta or in Madras. I lately went to Calcutta and experienced no difficulty in embarking or disembarking. As for Madras, I agree, the arrangements are not very satisfactory.

*President*—In some respects the circumstances in Rangoon are more favourable than Madras?—Yes.

*M. Mayekar*, head clerk, Traffic Manager's Office, Burma Railways, and President of Maharashtra Mitra Mandali, Rangoon. (Statement read)

*Mr. McDonnell*—You say that at the entrance to the wharf passengers are struck with canes—all passengers?—Coolies.

*Q*—Is it to keep back the crowd?—If passengers were not kept back to the last moment, there would be this rush.

*Q*—Who as a matter of fact strike these blows?—The B.I. durwans

*Q*—How do you know?—They could not be anybody else.

*Q*—That is your only reason?—Yes.

*Q*—Could they be Fort Trust durwans? The B.I. durwans let in passengers.

*Q*—You complain of the tarpaulins being removed 2 or 3 hours before the steamer is berthed: you know it is necessary to remove them to unload cargo, etc?—(No reply).

*Q*—You complain of these passengers being kept in the holds: if they were kept on deck in the rainy season they would be equally uncomfortable?—No, the decks would be covered with tarpaulins.

*Q*—These tarpaulins are not going to keep the sea out?—It is not a question of the sea. These holds are not kept clean and not fit for men to sleep in for four days.

*Q*—Are you aware there is a Government Surveyor who examines each ship and sets out the number of passengers that should be carried in the 3rd class deck?—Yes, I know that. I mean the passengers are not distributed properly over the ship.

*Q*—You don't mean that the total accommodation is insufficient?—Yes.

*Q*—Do the officers go round inspecting?—Never.

*Q*—Have you travelled often?—Since 1891; I go every three years.

*President*—That is 12 times or so?—Yes. Have you always travelled deck?—Yes, and now and class.

*Q*—When last as deck passenger?—In 1899.

*Q*—Your personal experience as regards deck passengers is becoming remote?—We have discussed these matters at the Mahratta Friendly Club.

*Q*—You say there are no bathrooms. You know there are screens which may be put round?—No screens are provided on any ships.

*Q*—You say there are no separate latrines for females?—There are separate latrines for females and for men.

*Q*—How do you know that?—There are marks: something to show which are for men and which for females.

*Q*—You say latrines have no doors on all boats you have been in?—Most of them, it is only recently I have seen doors.

The doctor does not go round every day. There should be a tariff of food put up for notice. The principal complaint is that these hatches are closed from on top; if you wish to avoid accidents there should a wire netting put round, but they should not be closed. Tarpaulins are put over them and those who pay extra are allowed to sit there.

One more suggestion is that the selling of tickets by agents should be stopped. The B.I. should have a central office, separate from their office, which should be situated at the Phayre Street wharf. If an office is opened there then this extra money business would be stopped altogether. If tickets are sold six hours before the steamer leaves there would be no trouble at all. I also suggest that heavy luggage should be kept separate; by so doing the passengers would get more accommodation.

*President*—Supposing there are only 1,000 passages and there are 2,000 people who want tickets, what is there to prevent a man selling his ticket to another at a premium?—That could not be stopped. There is such a rush of passengers that people are willing, rather than get into the crowd and be crushed, to pay extra money to secure tickets.

*Q*—At any rate there is a chance for the first comer to get his ticket and there would be less chance of extortion?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell*—Can you suggest anything that the B.I. can do to prevent a man who has bought a ticket from going outside and selling it at a higher rate?—That could not be stopped, unless he is caught selling it.

*Q*—Could anybody stop him selling his ticket?—I don't think so. Previously these durwans used to buy 50 or 100 tickets and they used to sell them.

*Mr. McDonnell*—That was done previously, but it is stopped now?—Yes, now they give one ticket to each man.

*Mr. Bomanjes*—Formerly they used to give hundreds of tickets?—These tickets were being sold outside by durwans.

*Q*—Do you think that if a rule was introduced to the effect that not more than one ticket is to be sold to one person, or four tickets to one family, would that be a good thing?—Yes. Except to big firms when they apply for a number of tickets and it is quite certain it is meant for coolies then there is no harm in selling the tickets to them; that is for a legitimate purpose. The best way would be for these tickets to be sold in the booking office.

*Q*—You said the whole hatchway is closed over; how many people are under the hatchway?—All the people; there is only one door to come up by.

*Mr. McDonnell*—Are you suggesting that the place is absolutely air-tight?—Yes.

except for the port holes there is no other ventilation.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—There is no outside air coming in except from the port holes; that seems incredible: people would be dying in hundreds in that case?—The staircase is open and there are these ventilators going down; but there is no air coming in from the hatchway—it is entirely closed over.

*President.*—Then it is this: usually in the rains the hold is closed; the port holes are closed, and the only air that comes in is from the companionway.

*C. C. Kothari*, paper merchant, 11 Sule Pagoda Road, Rangoon. (Statement read.)

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say you saw an assistant of the company beating with sticks in 40th Street, why?—There was no room for him to pass, and he made his way through by using the stick.

*Q.*—Who was this?—An Eurasian, and sometimes durwans.

*Q.*—You say you can recognise the man who takes a special delight in using the cane mercilessly on deck passengers, who?—*Mr. Helps.*

*Q.*—Your complaint is that by paying *baksheesh* people get special accommodation?—Nothing can be got without paying.

*Q.*—Is that not so all over the world?—When shipping goods, too, we have to pay. If you examine any shippers' accounts you will find that item "To gratuity account."

*Q.*—You say on one occasion you endeavoured to get a photograph of the beating of these coolies?—We wanted to photograph *Mr. Helps*. We saw a man thrashing and I suggested that we photograph him as we would then have a good ground for complaint to the B.I. Company. *Dr. Mehta*, myself, *Mr. Ahuja*, the photographer, and others were there at the time. *Mr. Helps* said you have come to photograph me whilst I am thrashing; well, I won't thrash now.

*Q.*—Have you got a photograph?—Witness produces some five copies which are scrutinized by the committee.

*Q.*—How did you and *Dr. Mehta* go there?—I arranged with *Dr. Mehta* to pay a surprise visit to see people being thrashed.

*Q.*—When was this?—Last May, before the letter was written in to the B.I. Company.

*Dr. Mehta* says he went to see to satisfy himself and after that the letter was written.

*Q.*—You say you had always to pay a big *baksheesh* to men on board for securing seats—what do you mean by that?—There is a space reserved on board for the mails and a man is in charge of this, called the mail clerk, and, after the mails are put away, that space is sold to the passengers. I and two others bargained for space there which we got on payment of Rs. 6 and we still owed a balance of Rs. 4. Some time later this man met me in Lewis Street and said you still owe me Rs. 4 and I will see how you travel next time.

*Q.*—What was the ship and who was the man?—It was the "Bharata" and he was one of the ship's clerks, an Eurasian.

*Q.*—Did you pay that Rs. 4?—No.

*Mr. Bell.*—Where is this space; what part of the deck is it? Is it the ordinary bit of deck or better?—It is just the same.

*Q.*—Then why should anybody pay?—They say the space is reserved for the mails and they allow a few people there on payment.

*Q.*—What part of the ship is that—the forward end or after end?—Towards the stern of the ship.

*Q.*—Where the mail bags are kept?—Yes.

*Witness.*—Besides *Mr. Helps* there is another man who strikes—*Ispahany*—but he does not use the cane. (*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Perhaps he uses his fists). Another point is this; I have seen sheep being slaughtered in front of me—where the deck passengers are; this was done near the *Hindustani hotel* or stall by a *Punjabi*. He may have been a military policeman or a sepoy.

*Mr. Bell.*—It was not done by a B.I. employee?—No; I have never seen.

*Mr. Bomanjee to Mr. Bell.*—Do you allow anybody to kill sheep on board?—This may have been in connection with some religious rights, in which case the B.I. would not interfere, they carry their own provision, including sheep. These men are caste men and usually travel with an officer in charge. The officer might ask permission which would probably be granted.

*Witness.*—These men were Sikhs (*Punjabis*), they were certainly not men of the ship.

My next complaint is that durwans and others take gratuities in the presence of European officials and are not stopped. I allude to *Mr. Helps*.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—By durwans you mean baggage coolies?—No; *durwans*, not baggage coolies. I have once seen it done on the *Latter Street Wharf*, for letting people over the railing.

*Q.*—Have you complained of this to the Captain?—The Captain is not visible, and we don't know to whom else to go to lodge a complaint. There are no rules posted up on the steamer to show what are our rights. *Lascars* spread their mats on portions of the deck and sell that space to passengers.

*President.*—What remedy do you suggest for the abuse by which tickets are sold at a large premium?—To open up town branches for the sale of tickets.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Have you thought over the question?—I have not considered how to stop it.

*President.*—How many times did you see deck passengers beaten?—Six, seven or eight times.

**V. N. Sivaya**, Advocate of the Chief Court.

I have been in Rangoon for over 31 years and have travelled by almost every B. I. steamer from here to Calcutta, Madras, Singapore and Ceylon, and on some boats more than three or four times. As a rule I have travelled as a 2nd class passenger, sometimes 1st and at other times 3rd. The last time I travelled deck was about 10 years ago; was compelled to travel deck on account of some others who could not afford to pay more. In December 1916 I was returning from Calcutta in one of the small B. I. boats—the "Katoria" or some such. During that voyage I saw some 3rd class passengers being ill-treated by the 3rd officer; don't know his name. The ill-treatment consisted in pushing them down when he did not have a clear space to pass through; he could easily have edged passed the men if he wanted; there was room to get round. There was a crowd, but he could have got round notwithstanding. One of these men who were pushed fell against me and I remonstrated with the officer and he apologised. I was travelling 2nd class on that occasion but I had business to go where the 3rd class passengers were. I complained of this to the B. I. at Calcutta and they replied that the officer had been severely dealt with. It is my custom, when travelling, to get up early at 5 o'clock and to stand on deck and take a look round. I would see the steamer people, when they are washing the deck, turning the hose on to the deck passengers to get them out of the way quickly and wetting their things. When this becomes too severe, these people beg the men not to do it by putting their hands on their heads like this (shows) and saying 'don't do.'

**Q.**—What time was this?—About 7-30 in the morning. I cannot fix the time exactly, but it is the usual time when they wash the deck. I have had to complain about ill-treatment of the chetties on their way to Madras. They have asked me to come and see for myself and I have gone. The gate on this side of the wharf is not opened early enough to enable them to get inside comfortably, and they have only got admission after much struggling and rushing through, after that I don't know what happens. I made two representations to the B. I. Company at Calcutta and here. This instance I am alluding to was in Lewis Street. Sometimes when I travel with the chetties in the 2nd class (the chetties are 3rd class passengers), their boxes and things are shifted from one place to another and charges are made for that. I have said nothing about the justice or otherwise of these charges, but when the chetties have asked me to get a receipt for the money paid, the officer to whom I applied said—"Damn the receipt."

In June 1916 a postmaster friend of mine from Nyaunglebin wanted to go from here to Ceylon via Madras and he asked me to

get a ticket for him from the Mogul Street office; I told him to go and buy it himself; he went several days to the office and a Brahmin there told him that unless he paid Rs. 18 or 20, he would not get a ticket; he was going up and down for 3 or 4 days. The proper fare was Rs. 12-4 I think. My friend's name is Koomaraswamy Pillay; he is now postmaster at Syriam. I told him to go to the B. I. office and he went and complained to Mr Bell, who sent one Mr Phillips to the Mogul Street Office to investigate the matter. The Brahmin who demanded this excess fare denied it before this gentleman. Anyhow Mr Phillips got my friend the ticket and he managed to go by that steamer.

**Mr. Bell.**—When I sent him with Mr. Phillips to the Mogul Street Office, did he identify the Brahmin?—Yes, but he denied it. I also want to state that I have been travelling from Calcutta to Rangoon but have never seen this confusion, or this beating or harassing there at the Calcutta wharf, nor even at Madras, Singapore, Penang or Colombo.

**Mr. McDonnell.**—You are giving your own experience of these places?—My own personal experience.

**Q.**—You made a complaint last December to the B. I. at Calcutta about the behaviour of this 3rd officer and you had a reply to the effect that this officer had been severely dealt with. You have no complaint against the B. I. about that. You will also admit that in a big concern like the B. I. it is occasionally possible that there may be subordinates who do not behave properly and all that is expected is that their employers should deal with the matter when brought to their notice?—Just so.

**Q.**—Your next complaint was regarding your friend Koomaraswamy Pillay, who went and complained to Mr. Bell, who at once sent a man to Mogul Street to have him confront the Brahmin in question. The Brahmin however denied the charge. You don't blame Mr. Bell for that. In that case the B. I., as represented by Mr. Bell, had done everything that could be done?—No, because that man went several times for the ticket and was refused; subsequently he had to go to the head office who put matters right. My view is that tickets should not be sold anywhere else but at Bulloch's at the office.

**Q.**—You would not have town offices?—No; town offices would lead to abuse.

Again, sometimes more tickets are issued than the number the ship is licensed to carry.

**Q.**—That is perhaps recently?—No, no; I am speaking about 10 years ago.

**Q.**—Do you really say that?—I am going to say that—I have not finished.

**Q.**—Was that on one or more than one occasion?—I know of that one occasion, that is about 10 years ago.

**Q.**—Did you count the number of passengers?—The Captain did not allow us to go on

board. But what I mean is not that they actually carry more than they are expected to, but that more tickets are issued than the ship could legally carry.

*Mr. Bell.*—You base that statement on this particular instance and nothing more?—Yes

*President.*—Do you know anything about the arrangements in Calcutta for the passengers to wait?—They all wait along the railway line outside the gate on the Calcutta side of the Outram ghat; they wait outside, not under cover

*Q.*—You don't know how long they wait?

*A.*—Not 2 or 3 days but that one morning only.

*Q.*—You have not seen any special sheds put up for accommodation of deck passengers?

*A.*—No.

*Q.*—Have you heard that tickets were sold in batches here in Rangoon?—I have heard.

*Q.*—Do you think it is a good or a bad thing?—A bad thing.

*Q.*—One rectification is to curtail, if possible, the selling of tickets in batches?—Yes, or it would lead to trouble.

*Q.*—You say on two occasions an officer ill-treated passengers. There was a big crowd you say, and perhaps he could not get round; probably he was rather busy on duties in connection with the ship and pressed for time. You think that is not improbable?—It may be.

*Q.*—When that officer pushed this man against you, you remonstrated and he apologised?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell.*—You have told us that in Madras, Singapore, Penang and Calcutta there was never any trouble; in Calcutta, you say, passengers are ranged along the railway lines, outside. What is the procedure in Madras?—They stay in boarding houses and as soon as a steamer is advertised to sail, they get into boats and board the steamer.

*Q.*—In Penang?—There is no shed for waiting; you embark on the jetty and go on board

*Q.*—You know that ships that run between Penang and Singapore are small ones, carrying a very small complement of passengers and it is a very easy thing to deal with these passengers?—Yes.

*Q.*—What is your experience of Singapore as regards passengers; how many travel?—There is no trouble as not more than about 100 travel.

*President.*—How many trips have you done from Singapore to Rangoon?—About four or five

*Q.*—And you have never seen the ship crowded?—No.

*Q.*—There was no trouble at Penang and Singapore?—No trouble.

*A. T. Moodaliar, Consulting Geologist and Mining Engineer and Graduate of the Madras University.* (Statement read.)

*To Mr. McDonnell.*—On the 23rd January 1917 I was a deck passenger on the

"Chilka" which left Madras with 1,500 passengers, and at every port she touched she took in more passengers (she was a coasting boat), so much so that there was not an inch of space to move. Some passengers had to be accommodated in life boats and were exposed to the sun all the time.

*Mr. Bell.*—Was that because there was no room on the ship?—Yes.

*President.*—Was the deck crowded?—Every deck was overcrowded

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What other inhumanity was the Captain guilty of besides permitting the decks to be overcrowded?—On touching a port, the European passengers were allowed to go on shore in boats, whilst this liberty was denied the deck passengers, although their provisions had run out and they wanted to go on shore to replenish same, but the Captain said, 'I don't care, you starve.' We did not expect that so many passengers would be carried on board.

*Q.*—There was a shop on board and you say that their stock of provisions was exhausted?—Yes.

*Q.*—The shopman said that?—I don't know who, but the people there.

*Q.*—What other inhumanity?—One man was beaten by another passenger with a stick and he was bleeding. He went to the doctor, who said to come tomorrow morning; people told him to go to the Captain, he said he had gone but he paid no attention.

*Q.*—What more against the Captain?—That is all.

*Q.*—You have used rather strong language against him; is it simply because he took a large number of passengers; that when a passenger was assaulted by another he took no notice of it, and the third complaint is that he would not allow the deck passengers to use the ship's boats to go on shore and get provisions?—That is my complaint.

*Q.*—You say the same exorbitant charges prevail in Madras as in Rangoon?—Yes.

*Q.*—Are the other officers of the ship as inhuman as the Captain?—I say there is no space for females to move about; they are huddled together and lie at men's feet, this is very bad

*Q.*—How many days did the "Chilka" take on the voyage?—Ten days

*Q.*—On board you tried to purchase provisions but could get nothing?—I carried my own provisions.

*Mr. Bell.*—This is more hearsay about the provisions running out of stock?—People sitting near the shop told us so

*Q.*—This man who was assaulted, as you say, by another passenger, did you see him go to the Captain?—Yes.

*Q.*—Did you hear what transpired between him and the Captain?—No.

*Q.*—Where was the Captain's room?—On top in the cabin; the man went there in that direction; it is not 30 yards away and I could see.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You don't withdraw any of that language about the Captain? you



still adhere to the charges ; you made a statement that the Captain was reckless and inhuman—You adhere to that still ?—I do.

*Q.*—For whom are you working ?—I am working on a Wolfram Concession at Thaton belonging to Mr. Ah Kee, head clerk of the Official Assignee's Office.

*B. Bhimani*, Insurance Canvasser for Messrs. Finlay Fleming & Co.  
(Statement read.)

*Mr. McDonnell.*—What arrangements do you suggest should be adopted by the B.I. for selling tickets ?—The tickets should be sold in a jetty where all the people could go and get their tickets and more men should be employed to sell them.

*Q.*—Are you under the impression that the B.I. employ only one man to sell tickets ?—One man sells.

*Q.*—Tickets are only sold at 40th Street ?—Calcutta tickets are sold there, and in Mogul Street for other runs. Tickets are also sold at the wharf near the boat.

Are they not sold in the busy season in 27th Street ?—Not for Calcutta.

*Q.*—When you speak of persons who go to buy tickets, you mean in 40th Street ?—No—where else.

*Q.*—Who are the persons there who were striking the purchasers of tickets ?—The B.I. durwans.

*Q.*—How are they dressed ?—They wear the B.I. badges.

*Q.*—Describe it ?—It is a yellow brass plate with a red badge. I know the person personally and can identify him.

*Q.*—These latrines you complain of, are there not tapozes on board the ship who come and clean them several times in the day ?—They are never cleaned.

*Q.*—Why didn't you complain to one of the ship's officers ?—You can never get them.

*Q.*—Does not the ship's officer ever go round the 3rd class deck ?—They even kick you if you go to tell them.

*President.*—How often have you travelled ?—Four times.

*Q.*—Always as deck passenger ?—For the last three times as deck passenger, the last time being in 1914.

*Q.*—Before or after the war broke out ?—Before.

*Q.*—What remedy do you suggest as to the crowding at the gates of the wharf ?—If

gates were opened a good long time before the starting of the boat, there would be no such crowding.

*Q.*—Which gates do you mean—the gates opening on the Strand Road ?—Yes.

*Q.*—What time do you suggest ?—Four hours before the scheduled time of sailing, and if possible, a little longer.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You want the ship to be tied up for four hours for passengers to get on board ?—Men could be allowed to embark three hours before the ship comes on to the jetty, and for these three hours the deck passengers should be allowed to embark. At present most of the time is reserved for the 1st and 2nd class passengers to get on board. The gangways are put on at the same time, but the B.I. men stand at the 1st and 2nd class decks and let them go on and when they have finished, then the deck passengers are permitted to board.

*President.*—That causes crowding at the gates and crowding at the gangways ?—Yes.

*Q.*—What grounds have you got for saying that the crew of the ship sell their mat spaces to the deck passengers ?—I was travelling with my wife and two children and could not get space and so I had to pay Rs. 10 to the gunner for space.

*Q.*—That is the only reason for saying that the employes of the ship sell space ?—Besides myself many other passengers have been obliged to do the same.

*Q.*—How do you know that ?—In my work as shipping clerk to a Khoja Company in Rangoon I used to go and ship their goods and see that they were properly stowed away ; I would thus see a lot of people paying for space for several years. Sometimes the Mate's receipts contained mistakes regarding the amount of cargo and I had to see to its correctness ; at this time I would be with the passengers and used to witness these payments.

*Mr. Bell.*—You say most of the good part of the ship's deck is covered by the mats of the crews. What do you mean by that ?—They reserve spaces for themselves.

*Q.*—Are you aware that crews have separate quarters on a ship ?—They do not use these spaces themselves for sleeping but they simply reserve them for the purpose of extorting money from the passengers.

*Q.*—Have you ever complained of that to anyone ?—No.

Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee which met at the P.W.D. Secretariat on Thursday the 30th August 1917, at 11 a.m.

PRESENT :

J. P. HARDIMAN, Esq., I.C.S.,—*President*,  
J. W. A. BELL, Esq., British India Steam Navigation Company }  
Dr P. J. MEHTA } *Members*.  
T. F. R. McDONNELL, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, for B.I.S.N. Co.  
F. BOMANJEE, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, for the Social Service League.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—I got a letter from Mr. Halker (a witness examined the previous day stating that he has made inquiries and says) that Mr West, the Deputy Superintendent of River Police, Barr Street, is willing to give evidence of the six deaths on the "Aronda" which occurred in 1913 before the war.

*President*—Arrangements are being made for the examination of official witnesses.

*E Ramanathan*, Clerk to Mr Lambert, Solicitor, Rangoon

*Mr. McDonnell*.—In your journey during 1916, you complain that after you got your accommodation you were asked by the steamer authorities to vacate the place occupied. Why?—First of all the whole deck was vacant and after we had put all our things there some other authorities came and said that the place was intended for sepoys.

*Q*—Then you merely complain of the inconvenience you were put to in having to remove your things?—Yes

*Q*—You say there are only three pipes on the "Fazilka" and they are opened only twice a day?—Yes.

*Q*—You complain of the slaughter of a goat on board, this might have been part of their ritual?—They have no business to slaughter in an open space where all the people are assembled.

*Q*.—You mean the B.I. should supply places where each community could perform their rituals?—The Captain said he would look into the matter; but he did not.

*Q*.—Was there any British Officer in charge of these sepoys?—I cannot say.

*Q*—You say the B. I. authorities on board torture the passengers to extort money?—For instance, in the early morning they begin to wash the deck, wet all our things, they don't give us sufficient time to remove our things which are all drenched with water. The next thing is the latrines are not cleaned properly and when the sweepers are asked to clean them up, they refuse. We complained to the Captain who said he would get them cleaned but he did not. We complained a second time to the Captain and he again promised to get somebody to clean them, we waited for nearly half an hour but nobody came. Finding it useless to complain further, we had to pay something to the men and then it was done. The latrines were very dirty and the smell very bad.

*Q*.—Any other torture?—If you want some breeze and want to go to the upper deck, the gunner says "this is not your place, go down to your own place."

*Q*.—Is that all the torture?—That is all.

*Q*—You said there were only four latrines on "Fazilka"; how many seats were there?—Four seats, one seat in each—two are for males and two for females.

*Q*—How do you know that?—There is no notice board, but the females used to go one side and the men the other.

*President*—The complaint regarding tickets seems to be precisely the same in Madras as here (*reads statement*).

*Q*—Is it just as difficult to get a ticket in Madras as in Rangoon?—Yes

*Q*.—Which is worse so far as getting tickets is concerned?—Personally, I have no experience

*Q*.—How many trips have you made as a deck passenger?—Only two trips

*Mr. McDonnell*.—So far as you know which is the best?—Madras.

*Dr. Mehta*.—You say money has to be spent on board like water to get a little convenience?—We are not allowed to stand anywhere we like, suppose we want breeze and wish to go about the deck, they don't allow us. We are not allowed to stand even on our own deck in the corner for some breeze unless we pay something to the gunner

*Q*.—How many times did you pay like that?—Only once, this time.

*Q*.—What was it for—because you wanted to come on the deck?—For everything

*Q*.—You say you had to incur heavy expenses at Madras, such as payment to coolies, are they as extortionate in Madras as in Rangoon?—They are worse

*Q*.—You say the coolie trouble in Madras is beyond expression?—Several reports have been made by me but have borne no fruit.

*Q*.—That it makes people make up their minds not to travel?—There are so many sub-inspectors and constables standing by the steamers, we go and report to them and they take no notice.

*Q*.—You say there are only three water pipes on the steamer; what do you mean?—For the whole of the 3rd class deck I forgot to say one thing, about the opening of pipes. As they are opened only at limited

hours, we have to request the men to give us a little more time to take water and money has to be paid to him, or else he will not allow us.

*Q.*—You mean to prolong the time?—Yes.

*Q.*—As regards latrines you complained that they were not properly closed—you mean they were not properly private?—Yes.

*Q.*—What remedies do you suggest for all these abuses?—I beg to suggest that more water pipes be put on; proper doors be put on to latrines, and the menial authorities of the B.I. must be directed to be a little more courteous towards the passengers.

*Q.*—In your two trips from Madras to Rangoon and Rangoon to Madras, how much did you pay for your ticket?—I paid only Rs 12-8-0.

*Q.*—You have no personal experience for having to pay more than the proper fares?—No.

*Mr. Bell.*—You said that when this sheep or goat was slaughtered by the sepoys you complained to the Captain; and you said that when the latrines were not properly clean you complained to the Captain twice—where did you find him, where did you go to find him; did he come down to the passengers?—Yes, he came down; he used to see the passengers.

*President.*—You mean he came and walked among them every day?—Yes.

*Mr. Bell.*—When you spoke to the Captain did he treat you in a courteous manner; was he polite, or was he rude?—He simply told me he would have the matter attended to.

*Q.*—He did not abuse you, he was quite polite; he received your complaint?—Yes.

*Q.*—You told Dr. Mehta that in the course of your voyages you had only once paid a gratuity on board the steamer to the people on board and that was for everything generally; you just paid once, how much did you pay?—Rs 5.

*Q.*—Who did you pay it to?—To the Gunner.

*President.*—What was that for; did you pay him before or after the voyage?—The first day out.

*Q.*—For what privilege?—He recommended me to the man who opens the pipes, as well as he allowed me to stand.

*Q.*—Then you got better standing place; more water, for this money?—Yes, and whenever I complained to him of the latrines he used to call the man to clean it.

*Mr. Bell.*—You complained that the latrines were not sufficiently private, was there a screen round them?—No screen, but only a piece of canvas was hung to conceal the inside of the latrine and when the wind blew there was no privacy whatever.

*Q.*—Merely pieces of canvas?—Yes.

*Q.*—Could any one sitting inside the latrine have held the canvas down?—I cannot say.

*Q.*—Is it usual to have great privacy in connection with deck passengers?—Why not?

*Q.*—Did you ever see in India natives

using the side of a street as a latrine?—In village parts.

*Q.*—Have you ever seen it in Rangoon?—No.

*Mr. E. C. Cardno*, officiating Deputy Conservator of the Port, who was examined by Mr. Bomanji, speaking in his private capacity, said that he told the Rev. Mr. Courtenay that he had seen deck passengers being struck with a cane. He had no opportunity of observing members of the B.I.S.N. Co. selling tickets at the office. He thought that it was advisable that waiting passengers at the wharf should have sufficient shelter from rain and sun. He terminated his connection as chief officer with the B.I.S.N. in September 1904. The latrine accommodation at present was a hundred per cent. better than it used to be when he was an employee of the Company. He thought it was inadequate in his time. Ships were not then built for the carriage of large numbers of passengers.

*To Dr. Mehta.*—He had seen on several occasions deck passengers beaten, but not severely. On the occasion he referred to, what attracted his attention was that some children got squeezed in the crush. They got hysterical. He had to pass through the crowd. He spoke to the man in charge, and the children came through.

*To the Chairman.*—The crowd was so great that they were crushed.

*To Mr. Bomanjee.*—He did not consider that the time given to passengers to embark on board was adequate. They had to wait far too long. Assuming there were four gangways working, one hour should be allowed for 1,000 passengers to get on board. He did not know what time was allowed for passengers to get on board. That is provided the ship's decks were ready, the hatches are on, the awnings spread, etc. Proportionately more time would be needed for 4,000 passengers—a little more than 4 hours. He did not hear of passengers being shut out because of no time. He did not know of any exactions by coolies for carrying luggage; he had seen that in the papers.

*To Mr. McDonnell.*—He was the officiating Deputy Conservator of the Port, in charge of the harbour master's service. He had nothing to do with the landing of goods and the management of coolies or the handling of luggage. He saw passengers beaten but not severely, the blows were on the body with sticks, there was a great crowd. The men who struck the coolies were Eurasians. The one who used the stick mostly was the coolie maistry. He did not know who he was or whether he was an employee of the B.I.S.N. Co.

*To the President.*—I have seen them frequently in service on the B.I. steamers, so that they may be B.I. employees. I am not positive of that.

*To Mr. McDonnell.*—He did not think these men were either Port Trust or Police

officials. He knew them all, at least he thought he did. He was not in a position to say that the Telugu maistry he referred to was a private individual seeing his coolies off. He thought he was in charge of baggage coolies but was not quite sure, but the people he was assaulting were not baggage coolies. This was a particular occasion he spoke to, that is before this committee was appointed. He did not suggest to the committee that this was an every-day occurrence, or one of frequency. The management of coolies was not a matter of great difficulty. In his opinion Brooking Street wharf was not suitable for embarkation like the pontoons. It is a danger in the case of a large crowd, it is a pile wharf. On this occasion the steamer was actually alongside. He was for 8 years in the B.I. service but he had no directions to give to the deck passengers; they came on board and he left them there.

*To the Chairman.*—He had been on the coolie run from Rangoon to Madras; he would call the Telugu coolies who came from Madras manageable and docile, but not the Arabs from the Persian Gulf—they were very troublesome.

*To Mr. McDonnell.*—He agreed that it is sometimes necessary to use the cane to keep the crowd back, that is with the present system of embarking, but he did not say that the system could not be improved. That was for the sake of the coolies to prevent possible loss of life or limb.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—To prevent a stampede which might mean that they might be swept into the river?—Exactly.

*President.*—And if there are children or weak people there they might be trodden under foot?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You will agree with me that it is more desirable that a few coolies be struck with a cane than that such a catastrophe should occur?—We may assume that.

*To the President.*—He left the B.I. service in 1904. He had some experience of the Bengal Steam Navigation Company. He was then in the harbourmaster's department. That was in 1907-08. They competed with the B.I.S.N. Co. Both cut down their rates. He did not know how low they had come, but the B.I. rates were below that of the Swadeshi Co. His recollection was only that the Bengal Navigation Co. ran to Chittagong. In his capacity as harbour master he constantly visited both Companies' Chittagong steamers.

*Dr. Mehta.*—You said caning may be necessary under the present system. Why is it necessary?—I said to prevent a stampede—a rush. The rush is because each tries to get to the boat first, as far as I can see to get the best seats.

*Q.*—Can they not regulate the crowd without the use of the cane?—I suppose it is not beyond the wit of man to devise a scheme.

*Q.*—If the crowd were properly regulated, there would be no need for using the cane?—I don't know what the regulations should be.

*Q.*—The traffic is regulated by the B.I. men at the time of embarking and disembarking?—As far as I know, yes.

*Q.*—The Port Trust men have nothing to do there?—No.

*Q.*—The caning therefore would be by the men of the B.I. who regulate the traffic?—I am not in a position to say. I cannot say what the responsibility is.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Is it absolutely necessary to use the cane; would not the show of the cane be sufficient?—No, unless you use the cane, it is of no use showing it.

*Q.*—Do you really say that actually laying the cane on them is necessary?—It is not for me to say that. I have not gone into the matter. I have not devised a scheme.

*Q.*—Were the arrangements better when there was this competition?—There was not nearly so much of a crush and there were more ships running.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You agree, do you not, that for the past two years or so since the war the number of ships have decreased?—Yes.

*Q.*—The shortage in shipping would result in congestion of passengers to some extent?—Certainly.

*Q.*—You say that the boats work their cargo too long and suggest that they should have the hatches on and awnings spread. That would necessitate short shipment of cargo?—Yes.

*Q.*—That is not possible considering the tide?—Yes.

*Q.*—And these are mail boats that carry 3rd class passengers?—Yes.

*Q.*—It is very often desirable that there should be no short shipment of cargo for State reasons at the present moment?—Yes.

*Q.*—At the present moment cargo is very important?—Yes.

*Q.*—So that I put it to you that at the present moment, while the war is going on, it would be dangerous in the national interest to extend the time for passengers embarking and disembarking?—It would affect the B.I. more.

*Q.*—That may be, but the B.I. is very much bound up in the national interest like every other shipping company?—It would be a great pity to shut out cargo at the present moment.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Do you consider that cattle should be carried with passengers?—It is not nearly so common with the B.I. ships as with the Asiatic boats. I have seldom seen it on the B.I. ships.

*Q.*—Would you stop it altogether?—I am not a doctor, that is a hygienic question.

*Dr. Mehta.*—The B.I. also carry cattle?—Yes, I have seen it.

*To the President.*—The conditions before the war were much easier. At the time of the competition between the two companies, as far as he remembered, there were no special measures taken for the comfort of the passengers. The Bengal Navigation Company had reduced their deck fare to Rs. 5.

*To Mr. Bell.*—He was a B. I. officer for eight years. He had never struck passengers in that capacity. He had never seen any one struck by an officer; nor was there any need for physical force. On the Gulf run he thought that show of force was all that was necessary. From his experience, the statement that deck passengers were ill-treated by the B. I. officers was not true; he would not say it would be incredible. When he was a B. I. officer it was the duty of the relieved officer, at the end of every watch, to go round the decks and make a thorough inspection. That inspection was entered in the ship's log; he was speaking of some 13 or 14 years ago. As a B. I. officer he exercised control over the subordinates—kalassis, sweepers and the deck and saloon crew. It had not been his experience to see any of these subordinates ill-treat passengers. He knew of only one instance in his experience of eight years where a gunner asked for a gratuity from a passenger, and that man was dismissed on my reporting him. If passengers had complained to him or any officer on board that a subordinate was demanding gratuity it would at once have been stopped; it would be my duty to listen to the complaint and to inquire into the matter.

*President.*—What was your rank in the B. I. when you left?—Chief Officer.

*Witness.*—As far as I know I never had any complaint from a deck passenger to the effect that he was being asked for a gratuity; if such a complaint was made he would have inquired into it.

*President.*—In this instance when you saw passengers being beaten, you said the crowd was so great that these children were being squeezed. Does that mean that the crowd was crushing on to them from behind?—Yes, and some people from the front.

*Q.*—In your opinion when a man is struck like this, is he really hurt?—It would not hurt his person, but it may hurt his feelings.

*Q.*—You know that ships have to sail here at a certain time. The time a ship has to leave is fixed by you or your department?—Yes, the sailing is under the control of the Deputy Conservator's department.

*Q.*—Who is the Conservator of the Port?—The Commissioners themselves.

*Mr. Bell.*—From your knowledge of the shipping in Rangoon, do you know that the B. I. steamers now have very much shorter time in port than they used to have?—I remember when the "Iara" and "Taroba" were carrying passengers years ago had a shorter time.

*Q.*—I mean since the war?—The stay of steamers in port is shorter.

*Q.*—Can you suggest any reason for that?—Due to shortage of tonnage.

*Q.*—You know that before the war there were three mails a week to and from Rangoon and Calcutta, there are only two now, and at times one?—I know that from my own experience.

*Q.*—In connection with Madras, is it within your recollection that there was a sailing every week?—Yes.

*Q.*—Do you know how many sailings there are now?—I don't remember a steamer going to Madras for several weeks.

*Q.*—Would it be an exaggeration to say there are only three steamers in two months?—I don't know where the steamers are bound for.

*Q.*—You know at least there is no weekly steamer to Madras?—I know that.

*Q.*—Do you know that before the war there was a weekly steamer to the Coromandel Coast and Madras and that these sailings are very much curtailed now?—Yes.

*Q.*—You say that you would give an hour for the embarkation of these passengers?—Yes, but that is not a reasoned suggestion.

*Q.*—Have you ever heard of the British India steamers giving passengers less than an hour?—I have seen them working cargo, right up to the time of embarkation.

*Q.*—Have you ever seen passengers being given less than an hour before embarkation?—I have no recollection. I have frequently told the man at the gangway that he must have his passengers on board at a certain time as the ship had to leave at a certain time.

*Q.*—You say that Brooking Street is not a convenient place for the embarkation or disembarkation of passengers?—I say it is not as convenient as the pontoons.

*Q.*—Who fixes the embarkation and disembarkation?—The Traffic Manager of the Port Commissioners and your people, I suppose.

*Q.*—To your knowledge the berthing of steamers is ultimately in the hands of the Port Commissioners?—Not my department, it may be in another department of the Port Commissioners.

*Q.*—You have told us that you have frequently handled the Bengal Navigation Company's steamers. Do you say that the arrangements on the Bengal Navigation steamers superior to the British India?—Six and half-a-dozen. I should say just about the same.

*Q.*—They are not superior?—Not inferior either; the comforts were equal.

*Q.*—I think you said that the latrine accommodation now on ships was a hundred per cent. better than in your time? When did you leave?—In 1904, I said.

*Q.*—You mean that the latrine accommodation was a hundred per cent. less in your time?—I say it is better now.

*Q.*—Do you suggest that between 1904 when you left the Company and now the law has been changed with regard to the number of latrines to be carried on board a steamer?—I don't know. What I mean to say is that the British India Company have built ships to suit certain runs now, which before this time they did not.

*Q.*—You have cooly ships now?—Yes, not then.

*Q.*—Do you suggest at the time you were in the B. I. the ships sailed with a smaller number of latrines than were required under the Act?—I say they are better fitted and more conveniently placed, they may have had proportionately the same number. In the newer ships the latrines are of a better type.

*Q.*—Therefore if the service were run by these new ships that are now engaged on the war run, the latrine accommodation would be of a very superior type?—Much better than on the older ships.

*Dr. Mehta.*—You do not consider the latrines quite satisfactory to the passengers?—All I am saying is that it is a good deal better now. I have not travelled on these ships to any extent, but have simply gone and looked.

*President.*—Have you ever been on boats on the Chinese coolie run. Are they specially fitted up for coolies?—They were not specially built for coolies, but they have these fittings on.

*Q.*—How do they compare in the accommodation for deck passengers with the B. I. service?—The B. I. ships have been built to carry coolies, I say they are far superior to the Chinese boats.

*Q.*—What do you call that line?—The *Seang Line*.

*Mr. K. B. Bannerji,* Advocate of the Chief Court, and resident of Burma for over 35 years.

Nearly every year I go to Calcutta. I am a member of the social service league. Most of the allegations in the memorial are true, but some are untrue, exaggerated.

*President.*—Which memorial are you referring to?—The letter signed by the 150 signatories to the British India Steam Navigation Company.

I am merely come here to give my opinions and suggestions. The important point is the selling of tickets. That should be done by the Company only through their agents. I have seen the place where the deck tickets are sold many a time, they should make two doors—one for entrance and one for exit. That is done in every big railway station for 3rd class passengers. The tickets should be sold two-thirds in the office and one-third on the wharf, one or two hours before the departure of the steamer. No passenger should be allowed to buy more than one ticket to prevent negotiating, and if he requires more the ticket should not be in the present form but in the form which is generally used when Government sends coolies or men away on a written warrant. This would stop the tickets being negotiable. Take for instance, if Government are sending 20 men they generally use one warrant.

*President.*—You would not issue a warrant except to a responsible person—a *bona fide* employer of labour?—In that case the warrant should be in the name of the head man.

The next point is that at the time of getting the passengers on board mistakes are sometimes made by the passengers themselves, by the durwans, policemen and officers. By the passengers in this way—everyone wants to get on the steamer first. The durwans should use more tact and forbearance, at the time of embarking passengers should enter one by one and their tickets checked, there would then be no rush.

*Mr. Bell.*—Then the system is right but for the rush of the crowd. If you can prevent the crowd from rushing then the system would be all right?—Yes.

*Q.*—How do you suggest getting rid of the rush?—By roped enclosures.

*Q.*—In Sparks Street there are three roped enclosures and still there is a rush, how can you stop them?—By making more enclosures.

*Q.*—You recognise that the space on the pontoon is very limited?—Yes.

Then as regards cattle, three feet should be kept apart and the enclosure roped off. Entire partition is impracticable.

Then there should be an intermediate class.

*President.*—Do you think there is a demand for it?—I think so. For instance, if gratuities are to be put a stop to the intermediate class would solve the difficulty. A Government or other clerk drawing Rs. 60 a month wishing to go to his country has to buy a second class ticket for his wife and a deck passage for himself; he has to pay a little money to underlings to get a space on the hatch for a little better accommodation than the coolies. If this intermediate class is opened the passengers should be allowed the use of the 2nd class saloons for taking their meals and the use of the bathrooms as is now being done in the case of European deck passengers. Under the rules it may be that no different treatment is to be given to the European deck passengers, but in practice this rule seems more to be honoured in the breach than in the observance. Officers of the ship more readily listen to their subordinates than to statements made by other people as to inconveniences.

*Mr. Bell.*—About this intermediate class and the use of the saloons and bathrooms of the 2nd class. Assuming that the fares to Calcutta, as the President put it yesterday, is Rs. 10 deck and Rs. 45 2nd class, what fare would you fix for this intermediate class?—Between Rs. 15 and Rs. 17 without food.

*President.*—That would give him the right to use the 2nd class saloon and bathroom?—Yes.

*Q.*—Do you anticipate no objection on the part of the 2nd class passengers?—Certainly not.

*Q.*—Supposing he having paid a big fare and went to have a bath in the morning and found an intermediate class passenger there,

would he not resent it?—I don't think so, because mostly the 2nd class travellers are Indians, very seldom Europeans or Eurasians.

At present the custom is for women, if they want privacy, to put up bed sheets or some cloth around and make a sort of a room for themselves.

*President*—You think there should be separate accommodation for women travelling alone and females generally?—Yes. Also that all parts of the deck space should be made available to passengers whether they have the full complement on board or not.

There should also be more latrines, and the principle of embarkation by launches should be avoided as much as possible, if not altogether abolished.

*Mr. Bell*.—If it were possible never to use a launch the B I would rather like it as it gives a lot of trouble.

There should be two waiting sheds for passengers to save them from exposure to the sun and rain before embarkation.

*President*—These sheds need not actually be on the river-side, they could be inland somewhere?—Yes, a reasonable distance from the river, as near embarkation as possible.

*Witness*—I have also complained about the treatment of deck passengers by the medical officer.

*President*—That is a matter for the vaccination committee.

*Witness*.—They are kept waiting for hours and are exposed to the sun and rain; that should be avoided as far as possible. I do not say that the doctor is not justified in examining them, but arrangements should be made on disembarkation to ensure greater comfort to the passengers.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Did your people have any trouble while disembarking?—When I am with them there is no trouble, but when I am not with them there is trouble. Lately there has been appointed a police inspector to examine female passengers of the 3rd class; the first class passengers are not searched. This appointment was made about eight months ago. To my recollection there have been two cases of smuggling on board by passengers. One was an English woman who was convicted for 3 months at the time of Mr. Agnew, the Recorder of of Rangoon, and another was a Chinese woman, who was convicted about 3 years ago. This is what led the Commissioner of Police to make this appointment.

*Mr. Bell*.—How often have you travelled as a deck passenger?—On three occasions: the first time was 35 years ago when the fare was Rs. 5, the second time ten years later, and lately I went to Calcutta on deck on the 1st August this year on the "Bangala."

*Q*—Were you badly treated then?—Very badly treated. All the other deck passengers were Europeans and they were allowed to take their meals in the 2nd class saloon and

I was pointed out by the butler as being the man who complained and was treated very badly. On the second day I represented the matter to the Captain and he allowed me all the privileges; these Goanese boys of the ship are very bad. In the Calcutta Office, too, these Goanese boys make a lot of mischief.

*President*—I am afraid we are not inquiring into the abuses at Calcutta. Dr. Mehta you stated first of all that there are exaggerated statements in the first letter written by certain persons?—Here and there. Everyone wants to go first and get good accommodation for themselves with the result there is a great rush and in order to prevent crowding and rushing the officer, or whoever is in charge, loses his temper and consequently the cane is used. The passengers have themselves to blame for this. They are ignorant, and uneducated.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Should the complaints have been made after they were educated?

*Mr. Bomanjee* did not reply.

*A. C. Chatterjee, Pleader, Piñu.*

*Q*.—How many times have you travelled as deck passenger?—Three or four times out of fifty or sixty trips between here and Calcutta.

*Q*—What is your experience of the circumstances under which deck passengers travel?—It is over fifteen years since I last travelled as a deck passenger.

*Q*.—It is not then very profitable to hear what Mr. Chatterjee has to say?—What I wish to say is that the treatment now is not what it ought to be. In the first place there is a fearful overcrowding, so much so that occasionally and class space has to be allotted to deck passengers. In fact one cannot walk on the deck without stamping somebody—and that is in the day time, not to talk of night time. As regards treatment by the B.I. officers, I am rather sorry to say that sometimes they betray rather high-handedness. About 5 or 6 years ago I saw passengers treated very badly twice on one of the old boats. There is a passage running alongside the engine room, and sometimes passengers—ignorant people—peep into the engine room, they are pushed and even thrashed for getting in the way. The most coveted space seems to be the hatch, and in my experience I have once seen a passenger actually pay a gratuity to a lascar, this lascar turned out some of the fellows in the hatch and made room for him. As regards the officers, I have noticed three or four times on the "Bharata" and "Bangala," which has the 1st class at the stern of the boat and the deck between the 1st and 2nd class in the hatch, some persons were occupying this space and they were actually driven out by the officers who said that this space was reserved for the 1st class passengers' servants.

*Mr. Bell*.—These servants are also deck passengers?—Yes.

Of course there is the usual rush at the time of embarking in Rangoon, for which I blame the management more and the passengers partly. The mails are delivered first and passengers are kept standing meanwhile, consequently when the mails have passed there is a big rush. I have also noticed that you are not allowed to disembark unless you have a disembarkation ticket, at Calcutta it is checked at the gate and here at the gangway. It puts us in a very awkward position, in this way that I generally travel with my family and servants, and when I want coolies to remove my luggage, either I or my servant has to go and fetch them. Supposing my servant goes I have to go and deliver his ticket to the collector to let him pass out and he has much difficulty in coming back again. This system has been in force now both in Calcutta and here for the last three years. I have noticed it is meant for Indians only. I do not know whether it is within your purview to go into this question.

*President.*—What remedy would you suggest for it?—There should be some arrangement to avoid this overcrowding on board, the people are treated really like cattle. Then as regards cattle, it would be much better if cattle were taken by cargo boats than by passenger steamers.

*Q.*—You realise that there is a great shortage of boats now?—I quite know that.

*Q.*—And it is necessary to get cattle here?—Yes, but what I mean is that after the war these troubles should be rectified.

*Witness.*—Another thing is about the searching of female passengers by the customs officers, and not the male passengers. All the ladies were taken from the boat and made to stay in the Sparks Street Jetty. Why should my wife be subjected to a search?—I could understand if the Criminal Investigation Department were after me. No males were searched, only the females. Why should this be?

*Mr Bomanjee* said that it was felt that the services of females were used for the purpose of smuggling contraband, as they were likely to be freer from suspicion than men.

*Witness.*—I would suggest that steps be taken to prevent this overcrowding, either now or after the war, that the female deck passengers be allotted a separate space, and also a separate place be given to deck passengers for them to go about and for washing.

*Q.*—Where do they wash at present?—They are compelled not to wash at all.

*Q.*—Do you suggest that there is no washing place at present on board?—There may be but I have never seen it, I have never been round that side. Another suggestion is to have an intermediate class accommodation.

*Q.*—What rate do you think would be fair?—That depends on the amount of comfort the Company is prepared to give. I

should say between Rs. 15 and 20 with no diet, but with separate latrine and bathing accommodation and a separate space from the coolies. What is wanted chiefly is more ventilation on board.

*F. M. Chowdhury, merchant, proprietor, Burma Trading Agency Company.*

(Statement read)

*Mr McDonnell.*—You went on the 26th June to Bulloch Brothers' Office to complain about some durwans who were assaulting passengers—(reads statement)—The durwans you allege who were beating the passengers were beating them on the other side of the office in 40th Street—Not in 40th Street but within the passage, just behind the ticket counter.

*Q.*—Did you see Mr. Bell in the office?—Yes.

*Q.*—Did he subsequently ask you to accompany Mr. Matheson to point these durwans out?—Yes, I identified two men but they denied beating. Mr. Matheson asked the men to say who were beating them, and they all said they had been beaten. Mr. Matheson asked me to try and maintain order but I could not—the people seemed very vexed. He said he would withdraw his durwans which he did and then to ask the people who had beaten them, but they were all so frightened that they would not say, thinking that if they did they would not get tickets.

*Q.*—You were asked by Mr. Matheson to see if you could keep order?—Yes, I tried but failed.

*Q.*—You came out and said that it was impossible to keep order?—Yes.

*Q.*—Did you inform Mr. Matheson that the force used by the durwans was reasonable and that it was certainly their own fault?—Not at all.

*Q.*—I ask you, did you at any time use these words to Mr. Matheson?—He put it to me that there are only 150 passengers now, just imagine our position when we get ten-fold of them. How do you think we can manage them? Is the force we employ now reasonable or unreasonable?—It is to this I said that in that case I thought that the force used was reasonable.

*Q.*—You then did use the words that at some time the force used was reasonable?—Yes, when it was put to me in that way.

*Q.*—As a matter of fact when you went to the place where the tickets were sold you were actually swept off your feet?—Yes, the people were in an awful apprehension to get their tickets. There was no European gentleman there and when Mr. Matheson came they all got frightened and thought that they would not get their tickets.

*Q.*—You know Mr. Bell (this gentleman), you know Mr. Hudson?—Yes, I know Mr. Bell, I saw him and Mr. Hudson on that day.

*Q.*—Did you say in the presence of Mr. Bell, Mr. Hudson and Mr. Matheson that you certainly did not realise the difficulties



the B.I. had to contend against, and you were pleased to find that you had the opportunity of realising it for yourself?—Not exactly in this way, I may have said something like that.

*Q.*—Tell us what you did say?—Mr. Bell spoke to me and gave me his views on his work. I said I may be satisfied but the general public would not be.

*Q.*—Do you deny that you did not realise the difficulties the B.I. had to contend with?—I deny it. I wish to add something else Mr. Bell compared the present system with that of the past. He said that the present system is much better than the old one, especially considering that at this war time so many steamers have been taken up by Government and have no more steamers to replace them and that they had consequently to put up with all this sort of inconvenience. I said I am satisfied with your explanation.

*Mr. Bell.*—Did you say that the general public would not be?—I said so.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You complained about the passengers being charged 6 or 8 annas extra for tickets. Was it explained to you by Mr. Bell that this extra charge was either for Port Trust dues or landing charges at Madras, and with this you were satisfied?—Yes, I was satisfied.

*Dr. Mehta.*—You went to the B.I. in your individual capacity?—I went on behalf of the Social Service League.

*Q.*—You have stated that the officers turned a deaf ear to the complaints of passengers. How often have you noticed that?—On two occasions in my own experience.

*Q.*—How many times have you travelled as a deck passenger?—Four times, in 1914,

1915 up and down, I had to travel in that way as there was no accommodation in the higher class.

*Q.*—What complaint have you to make about the treatment you received?—Once in 1914, as far as I remember, I was travelling with a small box and bedding and I told a cooly to take them on to the steamer, he refused until I agreed to pay him Rs 1-4. The steamer was away from the jetty and the passengers had to board her by launch. The cooly disappeared with the luggage and he could not be found for some time. When I did find him and remonstrated with him he was about to throw my bedding overboard when I had to pay him another 4 annas. I complained of this to a gentleman there (assistant captain or so) and he used abusive language to me, he said 'you go; damn' I don't remember the exact words but something like that. On another occasion I complained to the Chief Officer for not giving timely warning to the passengers before washing the deck and let their luggages and belongings all get wet. He said 'get out of my cabin door, I don't like to hear any complaints from natives I am doing my duty and cannot do better.'

*Dr. Mehta.*—All the luggage of the passengers is on the same deck?—Yes, there are no racks or anything of the kind to put the luggages on.

*Q.*—Do you say that the Chief Officer said to you he would not listen to the complaint of a native?—Yes.

*Q.*—What steamer was that?—Most probably the "Lunka."

*Q.*—What date was it about?—I think 1915.

The inquiry then adjourned till Tuesday, the 4th September 1917, at 10-30 A.M.

### Proceedings of the Sixth Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee which met at the Public Works Secretariat, Tuesday, the 4th September 1917, at 10 a.m.

V. S. KOTHANDAPANI, Paddy Trader, 67, 50th Street. (*Statement taken as read.*)—

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Your complaint is that tickets are sold for more than their face value and that the B.I. Company should sell tickets direct to passengers as is done in Calcutta and Madras. Are you aware that it is also so done here?—I am not aware of that. My suggestion is that tickets should be sold by the B.I. only and by nobody else.

*Q.*—Do you suggest that besides the B.I. Company, there are other persons selling tickets?—Yes, I do suggest it.

*Q.*—You say that when passengers are going on board they are caned—who canes them?—The B.I. peons and the policemen who stand at the gates.

*Q.*—Are these Government or Port Trust police?—I am not certain but they look like officials.

*Q.*—What sort of coats do they wear?—Blue coats.

*Q.*—Do these policemen carry staffs?—Yes.

What durwans are these?—I think the B.I., they have a common dress, nobody else could be there.

*Q.*—By common dress, you mean they are all dressed the same?—Common clothes, no uniform or badges.

*Q.*—You say passengers should be allowed to go on board before the steamer leaves so that they may secure proper accommodation for themselves and their female relatives?—Yes.

*Q.*—That is this bit of space is to be registered as his?—Not registered, but it is a case of first come first served. At the

present time the passengers are let in about half an hour before the steamer sails, just like a flock of sheep and there is consequently a big rush and much confusion

*President*—How long before the steamer leaves, is this?—About one hour, which is quite insufficient

*Q.*—How long do you suggest?—It would depend on the number of passengers.

*Q.*—For an ordinary steamer, how long? I cannot say definitely unless I see for myself, but the present time of one hour is quite insufficient

*Q.*—You say that the incline of the passage on the pontoon is very inconvenient as passengers are liable to drop their baggages which they may be carrying on their heads. What would you suggest?—The steamer should be allowed to come up to the wharf. This passage takes a gradient of 30 degrees and once when the steamer was berthed at the Lewis Street Jetty and I was walking over this passage I slipped and fell and lost what I had in my hand, the passage is very narrow and steep. The B.I. should make arrangements to bring the steamers up to the wharf.

*Q.*—Regarding the excessive demands made by baggage coolies for their services, which you complain of, have you not seen notices up that their services are free?—I have never seen or heard of any such notice.

*Q.*—Have you ever complained of the exactions of coolies to any official?—We cannot complain because we have scarcely any time to get on board and secure our places, and so when these coolies demand money we are obliged to pay them, otherwise we might lose the steamer

*Q.*—What is your experience regarding the accommodation on board, you say there is much crowding and that more passengers are carried on the ship than is allowed by the Government rules?—Yes, when I travelled in November 1915 to Calcutta on the "Kistna" there was no space for a man even to sit down. Someone should be deputed to see that each steamer only carries as many passengers as is laid down in the Act.

*Q.*—Do you know that there is an official who sees to that?—No official checks the number of passengers the steamer is carrying.

*Q.*—You complain of the accumulation of carbonic acid gas in the 3rd class accommodation and suggest that the authorities should lay down a standard for ventilation of steamers. Is this stuffiness when the port holes are closed?—Some port holes are kept open and some closed

*Q.*—It is only in rough weather that they are closed?—No, in all kinds of weather, moreover we cannot shut them if we wanted owing to their being so rusty the air inside gets so hot and stuffy that we are unable to bear it.

*Q.*—You say that the electric lights are put out without previous notice,—Do you

know that this done under Military orders?—I am hearing of it for the first time. In the hatches, however, there should be some kind of light to prevent the possibility of khalasis robbing passengers. In September 1915 I had been robbed on the "Bharata" on the voyage from Calcutta. A khalasi came alongside me, when the lights were put out, and tried to rob me and I chased the man

*Q.*—You complain of there being no urinals and that there is a smell from the privies and that they are very filthy. Have you complained of this to the topaz on board or to anybody?—Our complaints are no good, it is like a drop in the ocean, unless we pay we get nothing.

*Q.*—Did you complain to any officer?—I am not complaining of the European officers.

*Q.*—You don't suggest that they want a rupee or 8 annas before they take your complaint?—I am complaining of the topaz

*Mr. Bomanjee* suggests that the sweepers on board should be thrashed sometimes

*Q.*—You have said something about the seats of the privies?—In the "Kistna" there are raised seats and the debilitated passengers especially on a long journey, are unable to get on to the privy seats and they do it on the floor. The seats are much too high

*Mr. Bell*—You would have a sliding seat?—They should be ordinary seats for persons to get up to them by steps

*Mr. McDonnell*—As regards water—what boats have you travelled on?—The "Bharata" and "Kistna"

*Q.*—You say that the water is in tanks and the passengers are only able to get water at certain times, at other times they are driven away from the tanks?—A sweeper gets on to the top of the tank with a dirty bucket in his hands with which he pours out the water, if you want more, he says 'pay for it'

*Mr. McDonnell*—The dirty bucket is a badge of his rank. Is there not a tap?—I have not noticed it on the "Kistna"

*Q.*—On the "Bharata" has he also to get on top of the tank and dip in his bucket?—I did not notice; I was travelling as passenger with a ticket for European diet.

*Q.*—That gave you better facilities for getting water, and what other privileges?—A better place to sleep

*Q.*—By paying this extra money?—Yes, I did not care for the food.

*Q.*—Were you mixed up with the coolies on the same deck?—I had a place where the 2nd class passengers smoke after their dinner

*Q.*—You complain of there being no interpreters on board and therefore it is difficult for the doctor to understand the passengers. What is he?—Usually a Bengali doctor.

*Q.*—Can you say there is a supply of Telugu medical men who would be prepared to accept berths on the B.I. steamers?—That is the lookout of the B.I. There are many doctors if you pay for them.

*Q*—You complain of the incivility shown towards deck passengers by the servants of the Company. By 'servants' do you mean menials?—There is no complaint against the officers

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—They have no time to be rude.

*President*.—Anyone can find the time if they want to be rude.

*Q*—You complain of insufficient life belts. You know all this is laid down by Government rules and regulations?—A friend of mine told me that on account of insufficiency of life belts a man got drowned

*Dr. Mehta*.—Have you made any complaint against the police or the medical examination?—The police or the B.I. servants should never use canes.

*President*.—What sort of canes do the police use?—Long canes, tapering, about 3 feet in length

*Mr. Bell*.—Is your complaint that the police use canes?—Yes, they do use canes, in addition to carrying their truncheons.

*President*.—Do they use those?—Never use them.

*Q*—You complain of the Customs examination—can you suggest any improvement?—It should be conducted under cover in a godown or shed.

*Q*—Have you any improvement to suggest regarding the medical examination?—I leave that to the doctors

*Mr. Bell*.—You say in September 1915 you were robbed, by a khalasi—of how much?—I had some money tied in a handkerchief, he pulled it and I chased him, he got away with only half the handkerchief.

*Mrs. Shastri, wife of R. K. Shastri, head clerk in the Panjab Motor Company.*

About two years ago I travelled by steamer from Madras to Rangoon as deck passenger, I was by myself, unaccompanied by any of my people. I came a little early on board and as I took up my place I was told to move from that place or else to pay Rs 6 more, that is Rs. 18 in all. I said I was prepared to pay that if I were given a receipt, signed either by him or the Captain. This was an Indian Christian who asked me for this extra money, he was dressed in European uniform—European dress. I insisted on remaining there and he threatened me and said 'You seem to be an educated lady.'

*Mr. Bell*.—That is rather polite. (Interpreter.—Mr. Iyer, a witness, says, it means 'hard to move'.)

*Q*—Did she eventually move?—No. Others were asked to move away but not I

I made another voyage from Madras last year. I as well as other passengers were told we were to pay Rs. 2 per head extra for the space we were occupying, they paid and I paid too. This was after leaving the harbour. The day previous to landing in Rangoon a lady passenger on deck was suffering from labour pains. The mother of the girl begged of the ship's doctor (a Bengali) for assistance, literally falling at his

feet. He complained that his sleep was disturbed and to go away, he did not come. It was a rainy night and this woman was confined in the midst of the other passengers, where the steamer's cooks and others were. Eventually the mother of the girl begged of a man who appeared to be a Punjabi sepoy for assistance of some sort and he went and brought a European lady. By that time the launch came to take us away and I don't know what happened to her after that. I got away by the launch, this was in the Rangoon harbour. We arrived in Rangoon at 7 in the morning but were detained till 11 o'clock owing to medical examination.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Was she delivered on board?—Yes

*Q*—Before the European lady arrived?—She was delivered at 5 in the morning and we arrived at 7, long after the delivery the European lady came.

*President*.—Did the doctor absolutely refuse to give any assistance?—He was very much requested but he refused

*Q*—Didn't he even come and look at the woman?—He did not come out of his room at all.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Was any complaint made to the officers?—There was no one to complain too, we were all women.

*Witness*.—On arriving at Rangoon our things were examined and I was asked for Rs 2 by the people who make the search.

*Q*—Can you say who it was?—He was an official of some sort

*Q*—Did you pay?—I said I don't care if my things were damaged but I won't pay, for these reasons I have come to the committee to ask that we lady passengers may be given a separate accommodation.

*Q*—You know if there were canvas screens put round this lady who was being confined?—Nothing.

*Q*—Were they asked for?—Who were we to ask when even the doctor would not make his appearance

*Q*—You know there are screens on board for this purpose?—I know there are screens, but here the woman was crying from 12 midnight till 5 in the morning

*Q*—You have seen them used before?—Not for anybody before.

*Q*—What boat was it?—'Euryalus' in June of last year.

*Q*—Don't you think it would be pretty difficult if women passengers had separate accommodation, who would look after them?—We would at least have seclusion and this is what we chiefly want.

*Q*—And you would probably die of starvation?—Sleeping in the midst of other ladies would be more comfortable.

*President*.—You mean to say there would be no objection by the ladies if the male attendants of other passengers came to visit them?—No

*Mr. McDonnell*.—There are possibly less progressive ladies who would?—They may,

but if they had some sort of seclusion they would not be so much exposed

*Q*—How are these other ladies to be attended to by their husbands if they were all put into one room?—There is a good deal of difference in coming occasionally and rendering necessary assistance and being there all the time.

*G. N. Sircar*, Contractor, P.W.D. (Written statement taken as read).

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—You say one of your workmen had paid Rs 15 once for a ticket at B I office instead of Rs 10—who paid it?—I paid the money. The man went to purchase the ticket and came back saying they wanted Rs. 15 I gave him Rs 30 for two tickets for himself and his brother.

*Q*—You have seen the B I servants whipping deck passengers?—Yes.

*Q*—You say your prayer book, written in Bengali and English was taken away by a Customs Officer and after a week the Collector returned it to you?—Yes.

*Q*—You say you have travelled all over the world but have never witnessed such hardships?—They should be more polite with passengers and should show more consideration in the search of passengers' things.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You say that the Company's durwans whip the deck passengers, what do you mean?—They actually whip them with canes.

*Q*—Why?—I can't say, but I have seen it done.

*Q*—You have travelled all over the world, you ought to be able to say, they may have had a reason?—To check the rush, but there is no proper system of supervision, and the officers sometimes beat and kick passengers.

*President*.—You think that better arrangements would preclude this whipping and beating?—That is so.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—If the rush was not stopped very serious accidents might happen to passengers—they might push one another into the river?—There is not the slightest chance of that happening

*Q*—At what part have you seen this whipping?—Close to the gangway, going on board.

*Q*—You say there is no chance of anybody falling into the river?—No.

*Q*—You say in October 1911 the lid of the fresh water tank was blown away—was there only one tank?—Don't know how many tanks there were, but fresh water was not available, the deck passengers suffered for want of fresh water. The lid was blown away by a storm.

*Q*—Tell us where all you have travelled?—I left Rangoon by B I for Singapore by 2nd class, then by a German mail steamer from Singapore to Hongkong, from Hongkong I travelled 1st class to Manila, from Manila to Japan, also 1st class by a Japanese mail steamer, and from Japan to San Francisco by the Canadian Pacific Line I visited all parts of the United States and

then left New York for London by 1st class, then from London to Paris. I travelled through Germany, France, Australia and Italy. From Naples I went to Alexandria, 2nd class, by the Italian Line

*Q*—Were there any 3rd class passengers on that boat?—Yes. In my experience of travelling I have made a special study of the comforts of passengers and have never witnessed such hardships as prevail here

*Q*—By what line did you travel from New York to London?—Hamburg-America on the "Imperator"—the largest boat in the world.

*Q*—Did she carry many 3rd class passengers?—Yes.

*Q*—Did you go among them?—Yes.

*Q*—Are 1st class passengers allowed to go regularly among 3rd class passengers?—It is their option.

*Mr. Bomanjee* says that this is not allowed as a rule but permission may be asked from the Captain, that was his experience

*Witness*.—I want to make one or two suggestions. If an intermediate class were instituted by the B I, I think nearly one-third of the passengers would travel intermediate

*President*.—That is a big figure?—I mean between here and Calcutta, if they had special accommodation, separate bathroom, etc.

*Q*—Have you any idea how many deck passengers come to Rangoon from Calcutta every year?—I think one-third the number.

*Q*—The deck passengers in 1917 totalled 195,000. Anyhow you think there is a big demand for an intermediate class?—Yes.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Did you see the sleeping accommodation on the Italian and American boats, is it anything like what we have here?—Far better than the B I, they are allowed a lot of space, and all the officers are more polite and take more interest over the deck passengers

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Do you include the Germans also?—Everyone, I have travelled and I know

*Q*—This durwan of yours who travelled, are you sure he asked for his ticket at the B I office?—He came back and told me they wanted Rs. 15 for each ticket, that they were not sold for Rs 10, they paid the Rs 30 to the office.

*Q*—If they paid it to anybody else would you have any means of checking?—He was a reliable man, and I believed him.

*Mr. Bell*.—You have seen passengers being struck by durwans, were you one of the passengers?—I was travelling 2nd class, the people struck are 3rd class passengers

*Q*—And you consider that if an intermediate class were instituted, one-third of the passengers would travel by it?—A very large proportion—everyone in fact except the labouring coolies and the durwan class, they would continue to go by deck.

*President*.—The Tamil and Telugu coolies who come across, are they the high class or the very lowest class?—The very lowest.

*Q*—Do you think that the deck passenger accommodation as it exists at present is good enough for these Tamil and Telugu coolies of the lowest class?—No, it is not.

*Q*—What class are these durwans—they are mostly Uryas or Punjabis?—They are Hindus from the United Provinces, they are high and low class mixed.

*Dr. Motta*.—Many of them are Brahmins?—Yes, and many high class Brahmins.

*Q*—What have you to say about the space allotted to each?—More space should be allotted, it is too little at present; it is overcrowded. There should be an officer on board the steamer whose room would be close to the upper deck so that the Indian passengers could have easy access to him to make complaints, if necessary.

*M. A. Sundava Aiyer*, Senior Tamil Interpreter, Chief Court. (Statement taken as read.)

*Mr. McDonnell*.—This statement you have put in is not your own?—A meeting of the Brahmin Association was convened to discuss the question of the treatment of passengers, and this statement is the outcome of such meeting. The first meeting failed for want of a quorum, it was attended by 40 members, and the quorum required was slightly higher, about 60.

*Q*—You complain of the difficulty of getting till the last moment?—People don't know when a steamer is sailing and they go about making inquiries where tickets can be got. I suggest that a notice board be hung up outside the ticket office announcing the availability or otherwise of tickets.

*Q*—You would rather have tickets sold in other places than being confined only to Bullock's?—Yes, and wherever they are sold a notice board should be hung up, saying tickets are available or not available.

*Q*—Do you think it a convenience to passengers that tickets should be sold elsewhere?—Certainly.

*Q*—If the office of the B.I. remained open night and day?—It would then be all right.

*Q*—Then would it still be necessary to have tickets sold at agencies?—Yes, the larger number of places tickets are sold is the better. A guarantee or assurance should be demanded of persons buying a large number of tickets to the effect that the tickets were not for the purpose of reselling at enhanced rates.

*Q*—You suggest an intermediate class, are you aware that an intermediate class has been tried?—Never heard of it, I have been 20 years in Burma.

*Q*—You say that as regards marshalling passengers, a rush is made when the gates are opened and you suggest that they should be given several hours to embark?—As a matter of fact passengers and others were compelled to crowd together near the wharf on the side of the gate for deck passengers and when they make a rush in their eagerness to secure good accommodation, they were maltreated.

*Q*—What do you suggest to prevent this accumulation at the jetties, which you must see causes considerable danger?—The passengers should be allowed to embark as they came and as soon as the steamers were ready to receive them. The steamers should be brought up more alongside the wharves, and at least two hours before the time for sailing.

*Q*—What is the ordinary time allowed to passengers to go on board the B.I. steamers?—Much less than two hours sometimes.

*Q*—And sometimes longer, as a matter of fact, for you might have the whole of the previous evening right away till 12 o'clock in the day?—I have not had such an experience.

*Q*—Is there much congestion at the jetties when passengers are leaving?—There is usually a large crowd.

*Q*—And yet you suggest that the friends of the passengers should be allowed on the jetties to see them off?—By a system of passports, like railway platform tickets.

*Q*—Would that not increase the congestion?—With a corresponding convenience to the passengers in the shape of help being rendered to them if necessary. With a small charge of say 4 annas on these passports, I think it would minimise the number of people seeking for these tickets. I am not sure if this is done in Madras.

*Q*—As regards separate accommodation for lady passengers, you say they should not be given separate accommodation unless they asked for it. You think it is not advisable?—The ladies of my house would rather prefer to travel with their friends. If the company provided a separate portion of the deck and screened it off, as is done on railways that would be quite good.

*Q*—You say there is nothing to distinguish the latrines for men and women?—I travelled in April last by the "Euryalus," there were only two sets of latrines, and absolutely nothing to distinguish them. I returned by the "Fazilka" in September and it was the same thing.

*Q*—Have you travelled by the "Bangala"?—Long ago by 2nd class, I have no experience of the 3rd.

*Q*—You realise that the "Euryalus" is an old steamer?—Yes, but not the "Fazilka."

*Q*—You travelled on these two boats last year, that is since the war?—Yes.

*Q*—You realise that many of these old steamers are being used for 3rd class travelling?—Yes.

*Q*—Regarding water. Are there not taps on the "Euryalus" and "Fazilka"?—Yes, they are opened by Chinese carpenters, and some people not getting any notice as to when the taps are opened, especially the women, have to do without water. But I am complaining more about sea water than fresh water, which can be used of flushing purposes, and yet it is not available.

*Q*—You say all work of loading and unloading should be done long before passengers embark or disembark?—Yes, it should not be done at the time of embarkation or disembarkation and so lay the passengers open to the mercy of the weather.

*Q*—You say there is overcrowding on board but this may be due to the war. You have been speaking to your own personal experiences in the man?—Yes, but I have also consulted a number of friends and whose opinion I am expressing as well.

Your complaint is also against the bazaar man—the man in charge of the stall, who you say is not very clean and respectable persons have an aversion to going to him for anything.

*Q*—You say you had to pay some money for your luggage, how much and who to?—I paid Rs 2 for a number of boxes to a cooly. I don't complain about the paying of the money, if it has to be paid we will pay it, but, if we have not to pay it, I don't see why we should be called on to pay.

*Q*—Did you notice a board hung up that complaints may be made to the Captain?—No, in fact no officer goes round to whom the passengers may complain. My remarks are with respect to the "Fazilka." Notice boards drawing attention very prominently to the fact that no hire need be paid to the coolies should be put up at the wharves.

*Q*—You deny that the Captain or other officer goes round the ship?—I don't deny it, but what I mean is that illiterate people don't know the difference between the Captain and any other officer, and they don't know that this is the man to whom complaints may be made.

*Dr. Mehta*.—You made mention of searches—have you anything to say about that?—Madras passengers sometimes bring pickles and other condiments with them which they do not like touched by other caste people. There is not the least chance of opium or *ganja* being smuggled from Madras—it may be so with the people from Northern India—and these searches are purely vexatious—people put their hands into the pickle jars and pollute the contents.

*Q*—What have you to say against the search by the Excise officials?—Passengers in European dress are exempted from the search, and why not we?

*Q*—And with respect to the C.I.D. search?—I think more educated officials should be employed.

*Q*—Do you think a search of printed books is at all necessary?—Even if they are, receipts should be given for any books taken.

*Q*—When you travelled as deck passenger, were you ever struck on board or anywhere?—I was never interfered with either on board or on shore, but a fellow Interpreter of the Small Cause Court had been maltreated at the plague examination.

*Q*—You were never struck by any B.I. people?—No, but I have seen some rough

handling; they might be a little more courteous.

*Q*—Do you recognise that if man is not obstreperous endangering the life of other people he would never be struck?—They might be a little more polite and courteous, I think.

*Q*—Besides this case at the Plague examination, have you seen another?—I have never been struck myself or seen anybody else struck by a B. I. employe either on board or off the ship.

*Q*—About the uncleanness of the latrines, did you make any complaint at any time?—On one occasion on board the "Fazilka" a complaint was made to the gunner, who carried it to the Chief Officer. The latter gave orders for the cleaning up of the latrines, but it was not done.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Your experience of the beating or not beating of passengers is only confined to these two steamers?

*Q*—And equally so as regards overcrowding?—Yes, and sometimes they are so full of passengers that some of them are clinging on to the bulwarks, holding the chams. But this may not be for the full four days of the voyage.

*Q*—How often have you travelled as deck passenger?—About eight times to and from Madras in the 20 years I have been here.

*K Pillay*, Postmaster, Syriam (Statement taken as read).

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—You went to Mr. Sivaya and complained that you could not get a ticket from the B. I. agent in Mogul Street and that somebody there told you he would give it to you for a premium and you complained of this to Mr. Bell at the B. I. office. Then what happened?—He sent one of his assistants with me to Mogul Street and I pointed out the man who demanded the premium but he denied it. That gentleman got me my ticket.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—How much were you asked to pay by this man?—I went there for 4 or 5 days and at last the man said I could not go by this steamer but that I will get a ticket for the next steamer. I said it is the last day and I cannot come any more. Somebody told me to pay more and I would get a ticket, he mentioned Rs 20 I asked for a note to that effect but the man refused to give, and then I went to Mr. Sivaya.

*Mr. Bell*.—Yes, we have heard the whole story. Have you anything more to say?—I had to undergo a lot of trouble. When I went to the wharf I could not get a place for myself and family, I was waiting for 3 hours in the rain. Had to pay money to get to the boat. Then again money was demanded for space on the steamer. All told I had to pay something like Rs 10 to Rs. 15 extra before I arrived at Madras.

*Q*.—You would travel intermediate if there was one?—Yes.

*Krishnasamy Iyer*, clerk, Dutch Consulate (Statement taken as read. Same complaints as made by other witnesses).

*Mr. McDonnell*—What have you to say regarding the Customs search?—The trouble is this. This search is only a formal search; it is a search for those that don't pay money.

*Q.*—What is your suggestion for improving it?—Officials of some responsibility should be posted there and not menials who want gratuities.

*Mr. Bell.*—And what class of officials do you think does not take gratuities?—It is a question nobody can answer; we have all read of high officials taking bribes.

*Q.*—I want to know?—These bribes that are taken do not exceed in the main more than a rupee.

*Q.*—You mean an Indian Civilian would not be open to taking a rupee?—I here are some people in the Customs, I do not know their position—these people take bribes. The moment you pay something your bag and baggage is taken out and you are not searched. If you don't you are searched and you may miss many of your things, search is very indiscriminately done. Once they threw all my beetle down on the floor and I only recovered one-fourth of it. This was done by Customs officials.

*Q.*—You think that after search articles should be carefully replaced?—I certainly think so.

*Q.*—Now as regards the police search—what have you to say?—They make us open our boxes and show all the books we have. They have if you have diary or letters in your pockets and if you produce, then they are taken away and no receipt given. I suggest receipts should be given for documents detained, and more discrimination should be used in the search of documents. I did not get back four of my six-penny novels. Why should they take this, there is nothing incriminating there. I say it is all bribery and corruption on board the steamer. If you don't pay you get nothing done, there is nobody to attend to you. No payment, no place is the rule.

*Q.*—What remedy have you for that?—Officers should supervise. There should be a fixed hour for receiving complaints. We only see officers on the last day, before that never.

*Mr. Bell.*—Do you know that the officers have to be up all night to keep you safe?—That may be so, but we are not allowed to go where they are to make complaints.

*S. A. Tyabji*, general merchant and commission agent. (Statement taken as read.)

*Dr. Mehta.*—You went on the 3rd July last to wharf on behalf of the Social League for what purpose?—It was about half past six in the morning that I went on to the Sule Pagoda Wharf and I found a whole lot of people sitting outside No. 1 shed on the road and on the tram lines and also near the gate and under the Small Cause Court porch, they had no shelter whatever. I was told that some

of the people had come there at 4 in the morning to be allowed to go into the boat as early as possible as the time allowed was very short and they wanted more time for embarkation.

*Q.*—You recognise that it is dangerous to go on board when cargo is working?—The loading of cargo should be finished before the passengers embark. More time should be given to the passengers, at least 2 hours, when there is a crowd.

*Q.*—What about coolies?—I have been on the wharf several times, and I have travelled many times, but personally I have never seen a notice up that the services of coolies are free and I have paid every time. It was only this last time, when the Service League started it, that I saw a notice board put up in the shed.

*Mr. Bell.*—You don't suggest that it was put up for the first time?—I say that I saw it for the first time then. I have never seen one anywhere although I have been on the wharf many a time.

Another thing that happened to me was that I was stopped by a policeman for smoking on the wharf, he took me round to show the notice that I must not smoke on the wharf. He looked all round for the notice board and when he came out of the gate he said it was at the other side of the gate. This is only to show that you cannot expect a man to see these notices.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—In your letter to the committee you say that a 2nd class passenger was struck by a B.I. mau—what was the steamer?—Don't remember the name, but it was in September last.

*Q.*—Did he make any complaint?—He told me he would complain here.

*Q.*—You complain that a 3rd class passenger—husband of a 2nd class lady—was not allowed to come to the 2nd class and visit his wife. You regard that as refined cruelty?—Well, if my servant—a 3rd class passenger—can be allowed to come and see me (a 2nd class passenger), I think that man should have been allowed to go and see his wife.

*Q.*—Do you know whom the husband asked for permission to go and see his wife?—There was the butler and his immediate superior, they were asked.

*Q.*—If a husband travelling 3rd class were allowed to visit his wife travelling 2nd class, he would like to be there the whole time, would he not?—This is not likely as the other ladies would certainly object to his being there.

*Q.*—You say when the passengers are rushing the gangway the B. I. officers use the cane freely—what do you mean by the B. I. officers?—The men who are at the gangway.

*Q.*—You don't mean the ship's officers?—No, those on the wharf.

*Q.*—What are they?—Europeans or Eurasians?—I suppose Eurasians, as well as Indians.

*Q.*—You don't mean the durwans?—All inclusive, the durwans and their superior officers—all carry canes.

*Q*—Have you seen them use the canes?  
—Yes.

The idea of carrying these canes is to prevent this rush?—I suppose so.

*Q*—Do you realise the danger of a rush sometimes people might be thrown into the river?—Yes, under present circumstances the use of canes may be necessary; with better arrangements it might be avoided.

*Witness*—I certainly think more time should be given for embarking.

*Q*—You realise that steamers have to leave port at a certain time and that at present there is a great shortage of shipping. The B I has to cut things as fine as possible to make a steamer do as much service as she can?—I quite realise all these things, but once I saw that they were not loading cargo and were waiting for the passengers to come on board. The 1st and 2nd class passengers had already boarded the steamer and they wanted to know on board why the 3rd class passengers were not coming along; somebody on shore was to blame here for not letting the passengers embark.

*Witness*—I have made a statement that caning under the present circumstances might be necessary, that is only in respect of a rush endangering life or limb—to prevent death.

*Dr. Mehta*—If there was better supervision and the crowd better looked after, there would be no need for this caning you mean.—Just so.

*Witness*—There is another point I would like to bring forward. Sometimes we Indians have to experience very galling circumstances. For instance on one occasion I was not allowed to go on board whilst my clerk, who is also an Indian, was allowed, simply because he was in European dress. This is very galling. I have seen hotel runners—Indians—being allowed on board.

*Mr. Bell*—You have said more time should be allowed to passengers for embarking—how long?—The passengers think about two hours at least.

*President*—Do you think if a system of compartments were opened on the wharf it would avoid crowding?—I have not considered the feasibility of such a system.

*Mr. Bell*—You have spoken of your recent experiences as a Member of the Burma Social Service League. That was not in existence before the war; so that your experience of the inconveniences of passengers are since the war?—Yes, as regards 3rd class passengers and only in so far as embarkation is concerned. I have been several times on the wharf to see my friends off, before this League was started.

*Q*—Were they 3rd class passengers?—No, but I had my eyes open.

*Q*—Then on these particular occasions that you went down there, you did not go as a passenger but you went there for one purpose only and that was to see if there was anything you could find fault with?—Just so.

*Valji Hirji*, rice merchant.

A 3rd class lady passenger suffering from a swelling on the neck was made to stand for two or three hours by the doctor—a man with a white beard and getting on to nearly 60 years of age. He could not see that it was only a swelling but he classed it as bubonic plague and sent her to the hospital. She asked to be allowed to go in a gharry, but he said no she would have to walk with his peon to the plague hospital. The peon said after a lot of trouble he succeeded in getting this woman to go.

*Q*—What remedy do you suggest?—It is for Government to find out they must employ more experienced doctors.

*Vedamurti*, editor of the "Rangoon Mail" (Statement taken as read)

Since 1908 I have travelled six times as deck passenger and I say that there should be separate accommodation for women although it need not be compulsory.

*Mr. Bell*—Have you separate female accommodation in the swadeshi steamers?—No, there is no necessity for it.

*Q*—Why?—Because of better supervision.

*Q*—As an experienced traveller, do you know of any line having separate accommodation for women?—I cannot tell, perhaps there is no necessity for it.

(Witness is taken through his written statement *seriatim*)

*Q*—You say there are complaints against the hotel or eating shop on board. There is a notice put up at this stall that complaints as to the quality of the food may be made to the Captain?—Yes.

*Q*—Does the Captain go round daily?—During the last few voyages I have not seen him going round. Some years ago he used to be accompanied by the Chief Officer and the Doctor.

*Q*—Do you think it would be a good thing if an officer went round the ship?—Certainly.

*Q*—And it would be a good thing to enter their daily inspections in the ship's log?—Yes.

*President*—Your remedy is a railway from India to Burma?—Yes, and I am for erecting a big waiting room or shed on the foreshore.

*Q*—What have you to say about the searches?—They are very humiliating. My boxes were opened, my diary read, and the searching officer put his hands into the pockets of a fellow editor.

*Q*—How would you remedy this state of things?—My suggestion is that respectable passengers, unless there is any information from the port of embarkation as regards their character, should be merely made to declare that they have no contraband, etc.

*Q*—You realise these are war times and Government has to be very particular?—Yes, I realise that, but there might be a little bit of politeness and consideration on the part of officers so as to ameliorate the asperities of life.



*Mr. Bell*—You have travelled six times as deck passenger, has anybody struck at any time?—Nobody would dare it.  
Not been struck by a B.I. employee either

on board or on shore?—I say nobody would dare to strike me.  
The committee adjourned till 10-30 a.m. the following day.

Proceedings of the Seventh Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee which met at the Public Works Secretariat on Wednesday, the 5th September 1917, at 10-30 a.m.

*T. N. Gray*, Captain of the "Bharata."

*Q*—How many years are you in the B.I.?  
—17 years.

*Q*—On the Eastern run?—The whole of this period.

*Q*—How long have you been a Captain?—Two years

*Q*—This is your Chief Officer's log book?  
—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell* states that the witness desires him to say that the entries in this log book must, under Admiralty Rules, be regarded as confidential. He has no objection to certain entries, concerning this committee, being gone into.

(Committee inspect entries in log book.)  
(It is decided to inspect the entries made in August.)

*Mr. McDonnell* reads the entries of 27th August 1917, when the "Bharata" was at sea. It reads as follows.—

"Passengers decks reported hourly all well."

A further entry reads as follows:—

"Commander went round at 11 o'clock."

It is suggested that an entry of a previous date be read—Entry of 1st August taken, which reads the same, *vis.*—

"Passengers decks reported hourly all well."

"Commander went round at 11 o'clock."

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—I understand by this that this is done every day?—*Witness*: Yes. Every day, at sea, the decks are inspected and the Commander goes round with the Chief Officer, the Doctor and the deck serang.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Have passengers the opportunity as you go round of making complaints to you?—They have.

*Q*—You speak to them ever?—Very often.

*Q*—When you go round do you go and see the latrines of 3rd class passengers: do you go into them and see their condition?—Yes.

*Q*—If they are not clean what do you do?  
—We want to know why they are not clean and immediately give orders for them to be cleaned.

*Q*—Whose work is it to keep them clean?—The topaz.

*Q*—Have you one or more topazes?—On the "Bharata," two for the latrines on deck and three for the passengers 'tween decks.

*Q*—Does that include the topazes for the saloons?—No, they are separate.

*Q*—And the crew?—The crew do their own work.

*Q*—At night does any one visit the 3rd class deck?—The purewallah (the bridge-man) goes round every hour.

*Q*—Does he report to anybody?—He must report to the officer on the bridge.

*Q*—How long is the watch on the bridge?—Four hours.

*Q*—He therefore goes round four times?  
—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You also produce before this committee the Doctor's log—a medical diary. This is a daily diary kept by your doctor. Is it brought for your inspection?—I sign it every day, and when we come to port the Health Officer countersigns it—there are his initials (of Dr. Foy and Dr. DeMello)—it contains all births and deaths, etc.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—Is the doctor supposed to enter everything that occurs during the day?—Yes.

*Mr. McDonnell*—Something has been said about the length of time allowed to 3rd class passengers for embarking. What is the time allowed?—As regards my ship 2½ to 3 hours

Never less?—Never less.

*President*—What is your deck passenger complement in the fair season?—2,000.

And in the foul?—1,100.

Assuming that you carry 2nd and 1st class passengers, what is the foul weather complement?—946.

What do you consider ample for embarking a full complement of 3rd class passengers?—1½ to 2 hours.

That is for the 2,000?—Yes.

You think that the whole 2,000 could easily be embarked in that time?—If it is 2,000 we would give them two hours.

How many gangways are working?—At least three for deck passengers only.

How many latrines have you?—21.

Any reserved for women?—8.

You are referring to the separate seats in the latrines, I suppose?—Yes.

Is there a notice or any indication to show whether any are reserved for women?—There is a brass plate above the door with "Women's W.C." in English, also in the vernacular.

These latrines with 21 seats are for the deck passengers, not for the 1st and 2nd class?—Oh no.

Nor for the crew?—No, they have separate latrines.

About fresh water. Are there certain hours only for obtaining it?—Always obtained

—there is a continuous supply. We have two pumps and one donkey.

Can the tap be removed or locked?—No.

How much fresh water do you carry? I carry 191 tons.

Any condenser?—We have one, but it is not necessary to use it.

You can, in emergency?—Yes. If the 191 tons run out we have a further supply of 136 tons, but we never require more.

You carry 191 tons regularly?—Always carry it.

Why do you split it up thus?—The 136 tons are used by the engines.

Is that fresh water for drinking purposes for all the persons on the ship?—Yes.

Do you ever carry passengers in excess of the numbers you gave just now?—No.

We have been told on some ships there is such overcrowding that 3rd class passengers have to sit in life-boats?—Not in my experience.

Or, as has been stated, they sit on the bulwarks holding on to the chains or rails?—They would never be allowed; not even in the case of 1st class passengers.

What about some passengers lying on top of one another practically owing to congestion?—I have not experienced that.

Have you noticed abnormal overcrowding at any time?—Not to any extent.

Such overcrowding as you have seen, what is it due to?—I should say to the amount of baggage they carry.

Do they bring much baggage with them?—Oh yes.

According to the regulations how much space is allowed each deck passenger?—In the 'tween decks they are allowed 6 superficial feet.

(The committee read section 18 of the rules for short voyages.)

Something has been said about the separation of the sexes—that there should be a separate place for women—how do you think that would work?—I do not think the womenfolk would care to be separated from their husbands.

Q.—It would not be an advantage?—I don't think so. If you had, say, 60 women and 60 husbands, where was the privacy?

Q.—Is there any means of securing privacy as it is?—They ought to be able to secure privacy by putting little purdahs.

Q.—Are there any screens carried on board?—Oh yes.

Q.—Are they available for that purpose?—Yes.

Q.—If they are asked for?—Yes, we give them.

Q.—Have you heard of any cases of Indian women being delivered of child on board; are there any arrangements made in such an event for securing privacy?—Immediately such a case comes under the doctor's notice we put up screens round the woman in labour.

Q.—Is the doctor allowed to charge any fees for this?—Oh no.

Q.—Have you had any report made of the doctor charging fees?—No.

Q.—If a report of that kind were made?—I would report him and he would certainly be dismissed.

Q.—Do you carry cattle?—Yes, occasionally.

Q.—Are they mixed up with the 3rd class passengers?—No.

Q.—Are they quite close, within a foot or two?—There is the bulkhead, a big division, between them which separates them entirely.

Q.—Have you had any complaints by the 3rd class passengers of the presence of animals, in your 17 years at sea?—No.

Q.—Do they object to the animals?—I should say they have no complaint.

Q.—Something has been said about the violence used by B I officers towards 3rd class passengers—have you ever noticed anything of that kind?—No.

If it came to your notice what would you do?—He would be very strictly dealt with, no matter who the officer was.

Do your European officers carry any sticks when they go round?—No.

Come back for a moment to the embarkation of passengers. Something has been said about sticks being used on the jetty, probably you have heard or read of it?—I personally have not seen passengers being struck with canes.

Do you know whether they are?—I could not say.

Is there sometimes a rush made on the jetty?—The system they have for embarkation prevents a rush to a great extent.

Are you speaking of any particular jetty?—Of Sule Pagoda and Lewis Street.

Will you explain that system?—Barriers are put up and the passengers are allowed to come through these barriers in batches and so embark.

Even so, do they all try and come together?—Yes, they all stand at the gangway and somebody has to guide them up.

Do most passengers buy their food on board or do they bring it across?—Most bring their own food.

Have they any place to cook their food on board?—They have English cooking ranges.

How many places have they got?—Fifteen.

How many galleys?—Three.

Is firewood and coal sold to the passengers?—We give them that.

And cooking pots?—We supply them, not give it to them but let them have the use of them.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—You said in your Chief Officer's log book there is a daily entry of passengers' deck reported hourly. Who reports?—A khalasi.

What is he supposed to do?—He goes round seeing that there is no fire, that there is no water in the 'tween decks, and that everything is hygienically good.

So that the hourly report is the report of the khalasi?—Yes.

Is that done for the 24 hours of the day?—No, during night.

Have you any reports during the day?—The Doctor, the Chief Officer and myself go round during the day.

How often does the doctor go round?—As required.

And the Chief Officer and the Captain?—I go round once through all the decks.

It takes you about five minutes to do this?—Oh much longer than that.

Is it for any particular purpose or just a hasty walk?—I have to say there is no water lying about between the 'tween decks. I speak to passengers and ask how they are doing, and so on.

Do you always go round the same time?—Usually at 11.

There is no rule as to that?—No.

In all these 17 years you have not had any man complaining to you?—Yes, we get heaps of complaints. For instance one passenger came along once with his head split open. I asked him who did this, he said another passenger, I sent him to the doctor.

That is quite an isolated complaint. Any complaints of the insufficiency of the arrangements on board, or about the food, or the water, etc.?—Never.

Do you think these people know that they have a right to complain to you—do you think the deck passengers understand that?—I think so. If I go round the passengers' decks and stand there and look at different things the people all look round and they must know who I am. If any man is sick and the doctor goes up to him, he knows it is the doctor. If he does not sometimes understand my limited Hindustani there is always someone to interpret.

Do you attribute it to the fact that everything is not as it should be, or perhaps it may be that there is a feeling that their complaint would not be listened to?—I cannot say.

Have you been on any other run?—Yes, on the Persian Gulf.

Have any complaints been made to you?—No.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—So it is quite the exceptional thing for people here to complain?—As far as I think.

Has it ever struck you in all your 17 years' experience that things are not quite what they should be as regards passenger comforts?—I have not always been on passenger ships for the 17 years.

For the time that you have been—have you noticed, for instance, the latrine arrangements are not quite what they should be?—Not once that I remember.

You have never called the sweepers' attention to the state of the latrines?—Yes, I sometimes have drawn the sweepers' attention when the latrines were dirty.

When things are not satisfactory you have taken action yourself, but the passengers have not drawn your attention to such things?—No.

You have often felt that there was reason for your interference?—Sometimes, once or twice.

In all these 17 years?—Yes.

These doctor's visits and other things—are they not merely matters of form?—Oh no.

You will allow that all depends on the person himself—whether he is carrying out his duties conscientiously or perfunctorily?—I cannot reply to that.

You know that the way in which investigations are carried out depends largely on the character of the man—one man might do his work thoroughly, another might scamp it?—It is hard for me to judge other men.

You will allow it is possible to comply with the regulations of the log book and yet do things very perfunctorily?—I am judging everything by my own standard of work. As captain of a ship I have not travelled with another captain.

You have never as an officer observed that a Captain has scamped his work?—Never.

How many Commanders have you served under as an officer?—Quite 20 or more.

And you have never in your experience on all these ships found the Captain or any of the officers scamping his work?—I have not yet found a B.I. man doing his work other than in a painstaking way.

Do you consider that this 6 superficial feet sufficient?

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Is this the business of the committee. I did not think the committee was formed for the purpose of recommending amendments to the Act.

*President.*—I consider the committee is quite competent to such amendments if necessary.

Do you consider this 6 superficial feet sufficient?—It is not my position to criticize the Government of India's work as regards their survey.

Could you give us an idea of this 6 superficial feet?—You have got a space of 20 feet x 6 feet.

And you would put 20 passengers into that space?—If I say to you I did not consider that space sufficient, I am criticizing the work of the Government of India.

*President.*—Your statement on that point would merely be a matter of opinion, Captain Grav—*Witness:* I think the space allotted by the Government of India for our ships is sufficient.

*Dr. Mehta.*—It is 4 feet on some decks?—On the upper decks.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—I don't quite understand section 90. What amount of space is a passenger really entitled to?—

*Mr. McDonnell.*—To 6 superficial feet; or 76 cubic feet, I take it.

*Witness.*—The 4 feet is air space. Each passenger is entitled to so much superficial space on the 'tween decks and also to so much air space on the upper decks.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Have you heard of any exactions by sweepers or anybody?—No, not to my knowledge.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Any case reported to you?—No official reports have ever been received by me of any kind. I have every reason to believe that such a thing never exists on my ship.

*Q.*—Why, are your men so spotless in character—there is a lot of “tipping” going on everywhere?—I don’t think my men would do it.

*Q.*—You think that every topaz who is under you is above taking a gratuity of 2 or 4 annas for cleaning latrines?—I don’t think the passengers have any occasion to approach the topazes for this purpose.

*Q.*—If the passengers ask them to do it, they would do it?—Yes, and not expect to be paid for it.

*Q.*—If there was any beating on the wharves or jetties, you would not see it—you would be so busy on board?—I would not see it.

*Dr. Mehta.*—We have here about 400 persons—men of all classes, some belonging to the legal, medical, mercantile and other professions, all in well-to-do circumstances and holding good positions in life making statements of ill-treatment, etc., some statements signed by 1,300 persons, others by 100 and so on, are you prepared to say that all these statements that have been made complaining about water, the latrines, food, having to pay for space on board, and so on and so forth, are all absolutely false so far as your experience is concerned?—I can only speak of my own ship.

*Dr. Mehta.*—But there are complaints about your ship, too.

*President.*—Do you remember an occasion since you have been Commander of the B.I. of the ship’s servants selling the space of the

mail bags after they have been cleared, to the passengers for a gratuity?—I have not heard of such a thing. If I heard that such a thing existed the man would be dismissed, there is no doubt about it.

*Dr. Mehta.*—You have probably seen some of the passengers either coming on board or leaving before others are allowed?—I cannot say that I have noticed that.

Is it likely that they could go there before other passengers?—When the Chief Officer tells the people on shore who are embarking the passengers that the ship is ready, then we embark the passengers—before that we have nobody on board.

Except the time you go round, you are generally on the bridge or with the 1st class passengers?—I often pass along the deck passengers’ deck.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Where does the Chief Officer stand when orders are given for the passengers to come on board?—He may then be on any part of the ship.

*Dr. Mehta.*—When you are on the bridge you don’t allow passengers to come there, to make a complaint if they want to?—On the bridge, no. I don’t live on the bridge, my cabin is below. Very often deck passengers come to me when I am on deck.

Have captains their cabins on the bridge?—Not generally, and he is not on the bridge for several hours. My cabin is below the bridge—the bridge deck, that is where, generally, the captains’ cabins are.

Not on the passenger-deck?—No.

They say they are not allowed to go up the captain’s staircase?—Oh, yes, they have often come to me by that way.

The committee adjourned till 11 a.m. the following day.

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### Proceedings of the Eighth Meeting of the Deck Passengers’ Committee held at the Public Works Secretariat on the 6th September 1917 at 11 a.m.

#### PRESENT.

J. P. HARDIMAN, Esq, I C.S. (*President*).

J. W. A. BELL, Esq, British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited.

Dr. P. J. MEHTA.

T. F. R. MCDONNELL, Esq, for the B.I.S.N Co.

F. BOMANJEE, Esq, for the Social Service League.

*Mathura Singh*, Contractor, 2 Bow Lane, Rangoon.

One of the 1,380 signatories to the petition submitted.

(Copy of the statement being in the vernacular witness is requested to read and translate same to the committee.)

The time for selling the tickets is so limited and the space where they are sold is so narrow, that tickets can only be got by difficulty, canes have to be used on account of the crowd, and people have sometimes to pay more than the legal fare of Rs. 10. They

are warned to be on the jetty four hours before the steamer sails. There is no waiting shed on the wharf to shelter the people from the sun and rain. If they are crowding on the road the police interfere with them. They are not allowed to enter the jetty till the time of embarking, and they are kept outside the gate by the Port Commissioners’ authorities; when they try to enter the gate they are caned by a Port Commissioners’ *said*.

On account of the crowd people cannot take their luggage with them and so have to

engage the B.I. coolies who demand payment for their service. If outside coolies were allowed they would do the work cheaper. The B.I. coolies demand eight times more than they should charge. Friends of a passengers are not allowed to go on the wharf, if they were they could render assistance. The B.I. men prevent them. When the passengers are on the steamer the ship's officers never come near them.

There is no provision for cleanliness on the ship and there is a lot of rubbish in the drains, and the vomit of passengers is allowed to stand with the result that when the ship rolls all this rubbish and vomit go all over the deck. The latrines are so dirty that people have to pass over the excreta.

Within the 24 hours water is only given out one or two hours daily. We don't get water for washing and not enough for drinking; people have to suffer from thirst during the night. The *khalasi's* interfere with the bedding and luggage so that passengers might give them gratuity not to do so; if they are remonstrated with they abuse, and there is no one to complain to.

There is no separate place for women on the steamer or jetty. On arrival of the steamer the women are separated from the men (their husbands or male attendants) by the plague authorities or the police. They are ignorant of the place and cannot get the assistance of the husbands or male friends. Brothel-keepers who hang about the jetties come up to the women and decoy them away on pretence of taking them to their husbands. When the latter come to the jetty they find their wives are gone. It is therefore very desirable that arrangements should be made that women should not be separated from their husbands or male friends.

When they are vaccinated there is no ventilation and it is very hot.

The most important thing is that separate latrines and sleeping accommodation should be given to the women, as at present they suffer very much, some might be with children.

There is no cooking room on the steamers; they don't get any provisions and consequently most of the people get sick.

For these reasons the committee should make special arrangements for the women.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—You say this statement is signed by over 1,300 coolies?—Not coolies, all respectable gentlemen—contractors and others.

Who took it round?—There was a deck passengers' meeting called at the Hindu temple and these resolutions were passed and they all signed it.

All signed at one place?—Yes, at the Hindu temple; there were some Mahomedans, too.

How did they find their way to the Hindu temple?—They stood outside in the shed.

Who wrote it out?—Basdeo Singh. At the meeting?—Yes.

Who is he?—A clerk in Singer's Sewing Machine Company.

Is all this your own personal experience?—Yes.

You travelled deck ordinarily?—Always.

How often?—Not less than twenty times.

What boats have you travelled on?—Arankola, Fharata, Bangala, Taroba, Tara, Lunka and others.

You say the place for the sale of tickets is very narrow; will you then have one large space for every one to come up at once?—There should be a proper office, the door should be kept open and people should be allowed to come in one by one from one door and out by another.

Is that not done in Bulloch's office?—No.

Try and think. They go pass the window where they sell the tickets and are out by another door?—I have seen people standing only on one side.

*Question repeated.*—The crowd is so great you cannot make out.

Have you bought tickets at Bulloch's?—Yes.

Tell us how you got your ticket?—It is a long time since I have been to India. When I bought tickets, there was no such crowd.

You bought your ticket at the window?—Yes. And you did not pass out from another door?—No.

Was there a crowd when you bought tickets?—No.

How long have you not travelled?—Not for the last four years.

You went twenty times to India, you say, and there was never a crowd?—No, because tickets were also bought at the wharf. In these days, when I got to buy tickets for my friends, the crowd is so great that I cannot stand there.

*Mr. Bell.*—You are asked a definite question, did you go in from one door and come out by another?—No, by the same way.

You complained of the baggage coolies. Have you not seen notices up that these baggage coolies are to give their services free?—I don't know where the notices are; I only seen one since this committee started, only have now they have been put up.

Why do you say it is the B.I. who prevent your friends accompanying you are embarking?—I mean who?

Do you not know it is the Government rule that no one except passengers are allowed on the jetties?—Then nobody should be allowed, yet lots of men go to see their friends.

When you go on board the steamer, say from here to Calcutta, is not the steamer perfectly clean?—Yes, perfectly clean.

The deck where you stay is always clean?—The top portion of the steamer is always clean.

I am talking of the lower deck?—Not so clean.

Are not the latrines clean when you first go on board?—Yes.

Are there not a number of topazes (sweepers) to look after the latrines?—Yes,

two or three If they do their work there should not be any complaint of dirtiness

Have you ever made a complaint to any one?—There is no chance to make a complaint

This rule of water being allowed only one or two hours daily, is it universal on all ships?—In the "Bangala" only once we got enough water, that is, two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening.

What was the arrangement on the "Bangala"?—The water tap is opened at 8 in the morning and closed at 10

Is there one tap for all the passengers or more?—I think two One tap the khalasis alone use and no one else is allowed to take water from it, they keep the key of the tap.

Are there any pumps on the "Bangala"?—I think two.

Two pumps as well as two taps—you know what a pump is, you are a contractor?—One I have seen near the 2nd class cabins and that is only for the cooks' use

What are the arrangements on the "Arankola" for water?—Water was given once a day.

A tap or a pump?—A tap.

For how long?—Two or three hours

You say there is no cooking room on any of the steamers?—No cooking rooms There is one place 4 feet square where the stall is kept and there is a small room for the use of Mahomedans and every one, the Hindus will not go there.

Are you speaking of the "Arankola" or "Bangala"?—Almost all ships I think every steamer has one room, one cooking place for general use

How many choolas?—One or two.

Have you been inside?—No, I have seen from outside. We cannot even cook our tea in it.

You mean because of your caste?—Yes.

You say you cannot get provisions, why not?—The sweetmeat-man sells rubbish sweets and *puris* at Rs 1-8 a viss. Not only is this very dear but insufficient. What they mostly sell is cooked gram

There is no one to complain to on the boat?—No one. We know there are masters to complain to but it is of no use.

You were here yesterday when Capt. Gray gave his evidence You know him—have you travelled on his boat?—What boat does he belong to, I have never seen him.

Did you hear him say that every day he, the Chief Officer and the doctor and serango go right through the passengers' decks and even talk to them?—I have never seen it myself What he said was that the passengers can go and complain to him There is a notice hung up that no passengers are allowed on the bridge, and this is where the Captain usually is

Have you never seen any Captain, or Chief Officer, or doctor, go through the passengers' decks?—They never go near the passengers, I have never seen them.

You employ a lot of labour—how many coolies have you?—Sometimes a thousand at a time—I am a building and road contractor.

The President.—Where do you get your coolies from—here, or do you send across to India for them?—Generally I engage them here and sometimes I send my maistry to India.

To Calcutta or Madras?—Calcutta. For my building work—I get the coolies from Chupra, Saran, and for road work from here.

What caste are they?—Hindustanias.

Uriyas?—I engage them here

Do you ever send for Tamil and Telegu coolies?—No

Most of the deck passengers on these steamers are, I suppose, of the cooly class?—The majority of them.

Are most of them Tamils and Telegus?—They are Hindus

Which are in the majority—the Hindus from Calcutta or the Tamils and Telegus from Madras?—Hindus from Calcutta.

Are these Hindus of a high or low caste?—Most of them are of the high caste.

You don't know much of the Madras boats?—No

Dr. Mehta.—For what purpose do these men from India come here?—For trade and to work as durwans. These durwans are not low class, they are Brahmins, Rajputs, some are landholders, artisans, shopkeepers, mason and carpenters.

These masons and carpenters are not of the low class?—No.

Mr Bell.—You think the majority of the deck passengers are of the better class?—Yes I am alluding to the Calcutta boats, as my voyages have been chiefly between here and Calcutta and back.

And particularly with regard to the "Arankola" you think, the supply of water is insufficient. You said it is given out one hour a day. Do you still hold to that statement—is it true or untrue?—It is true.

President.—Your last voyage was about 4 years ago?—Yes.

How often would you like to have water?—At least four times, between 4 in the morning and 8 at night.

How long each time?—I have noticed there is only one tap in the "Arankola," it would not be sufficient

Have you been all round this ship?—I have seen one near the cooks' quarters, they have a key for it and no one is allowed to use it.

Is there no water given for bathing and washing?—No

Not even sea water. Have you asked for it and been refused?—When you cannot get enough drinking water what to talk about water for bathing

How often do you think the latrines should be cleaned?—Every hour—then they would be clean. Besides there are not sufficient latrines

Abdul Rahman (witness for British India Steam Navigation Company)

Mr. McDonnell.—You were an honorary magistrate?—Some four years.

You are the head of the Madras Mahomedan community out here?—Yes.

You have had 30 years' experience in this place in connection with passenger traffic?—Yes.

You are the B.I. passage broker and a coal contractor?—Yes.

What do you do as passage broker?—I sell tickets.

Have you an office where you sell deck tickets?—For Madras I sell tickets in my office in Mogul Street, and for Calcutta in the B. I. office.

You employ a clerk or durwan to sell these tickets at the B. I. office and you pay him?—Yes.

And you pay the staff in your office at Mogul Street?—Yes.

What do you get in return?—Rs. 350 a month.

You get a commission on the tickets that are sold?—No, only this monthly salary.

Does your increment depend on the number of tickets sold?—I get only this Rs. 350 a month and nothing more.

What is the fare to Madras?—Rs. 12 steamer fare and 4 annas toll ticket (Madras Port Trust toll).

Is a special ticket given for this toll?—Yes.

Do you sometimes employ extra hands to advertise special sailings?—Yes, men going round with bells.

Some people have told us that tickets are sold for more than the right fare Rs. 12. You know anything about that?—I was told that people were selling outside.

Can you suggest a way to stop it?—Impossible to stop it.

It has been suggested that tickets might be sold at the jetty and passengers sent on board straight away?—It is impossible.

Why?—The crowd is so great and if tickets were to be sold there, people would probably fall into the river.

Do you attend the steamers on their departure—do you go down to the jetty?—Yes, all Madras steamers.

Are people with tickets shut out of the steamer for lack of room?—In rare cases: when Government take up space for military purposes.

That would be at the last moment, after the tickets for the full complement were sold?—Yes.

We are told that the B. I. baggage coolies are paid *dukhsheesh*?—They are sometimes.

Is there a notice up that they are to do their work for nothing?—Yes, notice boards are up to that effect.

How long have these notice boards been up?—I think some four or five years.

Why do they pay *dukhsheesh*?—To get their things taken first and put in a good place on board.

Do the durwans and cooly maistries carry sticks with them?—I have never seen.

Some witnesses say that the deck passengers are beaten with canes on the jetties—can you tell us anything about that?—Not the passengers. Sometimes there is an unruly crowd and the policemen take sticks from the passengers and tap on the boxes so as to control them.

What policemen?—The policemen employed by the Company as well as civil police.

Are these policemen employed by the Company dressed as policemen?—They are in khaki dress.

Have you anything to do with the employment of the baggage coolies?—No.

Have you seen deck passengers violently beaten on the jetty?—Never seen.

Would you sell a deck ticket any day of the week or only before the steamer sails?—Sometimes 5 or 6 hours before the steamer sails. My office is open from morning till evening. The B. I. send a whole lot of tickets 3, 4 or 5 days before the steamer starts.

How do you sell these tickets?—Some take one and others with a family take 4 or 5.

If some want one hundred?—They are not given, except only to well-known maistries. You would give any number?—No, perhaps 10 or 20.

You have never sold more than 20 to anyone?—That is the maximum.

Are these maistries required to bring any authority for the purchase of these large batches of tickets?—No.

For each boat, in the ordinary run of things how many batches of tickets would you sell on an average?—About two or three lots of 20 tickets for each boat.

Would you not sell a Chetty if he wanted 100 or 200 tickets?—I have never yet sold to a Chetty.

Not even your own Chetty, with whom you keep a banking account?—No, I would not.

To lodging-house keepers?—No, only to *bond fide* passengers.

How long have you been doing this work of selling tickets? My connection with the B. I. is 30 years.

President.—Besides this agency with the B. I. have you any other business?—I have a piece-goods business and am a coal contractor.

At what time do you attend to this piece-goods business?—That is a separate department in Merchant Street.

How much of your time is taken up in that?—My brothers look after that.

You spend your whole time at the Mogul Street office?—Yes, I live there.

What time do you generally come down to your office?—I go down at 4 in the morning and work till 7, and then at 8 again up to 10. I go to the B. I. office at 10 in the morning and spend about an hour there, then come back to my office.

Where do you do your actual business?—At my office in Mogul Street. Tickets are sold at the front part of the building, just on the roadside.

If there is a crowd what happens?—I go myself and sell the tickets.

You personally sell?—My clerk sells, and I stand by and see.

What do you pay your clerk?—Rs. 70; he also looks after my other business.

What do you pay your durwan?—Rs 15.

You require more than one durwan to control the crowd?—In such a case I use all my clerks and durwans when necessary.

How often do you go on to the jetties?—Every Madras steamer.

Not to Calcutta steamers?—Unless friends are going by them.

You have never seen any officer of the B.I. carrying sticks or canes?—Never seen.

Many persons have made statements here that the B.I. officers and policemen carry sticks and beat passengers. These statements must be absolutely false to your knowledge?—To my knowledge I have never seen passengers beaten.

Not even by Mr. Helps?—He generally looks after the baggage coolies.

Passengers too?—He has no business with the passengers.

Does he not look after the crowd and let people go on to the wharf?—He has no business with them.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Many persons have stated here that they have seen Mr Helps doing this business—they must be telling falsehoods?—Mr. Helps is employed only to look after the baggage coolies and other assistants have charge of passengers.

Have you seen the policemen of the B.I. beating people—do they carry sticks or canes?—Sometimes, when there is an unruly crowd, but they never carry sticks, they take them from passengers and strike on the boxes.

They have their batons?—They don't use them.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—I wish to prove that the B.I. have the use on the jetties of a certain number of civil police allowed to them by the Commissioner of Police.

*Dr. Mehta.*—You have told us that you have heard of people selling tickets at a premium—these complaints are frequent?—I asked them to prove and they cannot prove.

It is possible for your clerks and durwans to sell tickets in batches without your knowing about it?—Not without my knowledge.

What are your orders on the subject?—When there are a great many passengers going and there is a likelihood that the sale of tickets will be stopped, I take the tickets from my clerk in my own hands and sell one to each man who wants to go urgently.

You are not always there—you have to go for other businesses as you have told us?—When I know that the tickets are to be stopped, I give orders to my clerk that tickets are only to be sold to such men as want to go badly.

You mean that the tickets are sold like this only when you are there—it is possible, on occasions, for your clerk or durwan to sell 5 or 10 or 20 tickets and you may not

know?—They cannot sell without my knowledge.

When a steamer is to sail what is your procedure regarding the sale of tickets?—We would sell tickets every day up to the number allowed by the B.I.

Say there are 4,000 tickets to be sold, how will you arrange that?—We have never sold 4,000 tickets. The most we have sold is 1,500 for any one steamer.

At no time have you a larger demand than 1,500 tickets?—No.

How will you arrange to sell these 1,500 tickets, supposing you have 3 or 4 days before you?—Freely, we would sell every day.

Supposing the steamer is allowed to carry 4,600 passengers, you would have all the tickets?—We have not sold so many for Madras up to this time, 1,500 is the largest.

You say up to the sailing of the steamer you sell freely, what part do you take in it?—When we are selling freely, my clerk does it.

Your clerk then can sell half a dozen tickets or more in batches and you would not be aware of it?—He has my authority to sell up to ten tickets to anyone who comes forward.

You have no other test for finding out whether the man is going by that steamer or not?—We don't inquire about that.

Is it possible that these men who take away batches of tickets can sell to other persons?—They won't get any profit on it when we are selling freely at our office.

During the last 3 or 4 years there has been a larger demand for tickets, in that case a man taking batches of tickets can easily dispose of them at a profit?—There has been a larger demand for tickets after the war broke out consequent on the irregularity of sailings.

*President.*—Does the ticket say it is not transferable?—Yes, but it cannot be enforced.

Do you sell tickets only to Madras?—Yes, and also for Calcutta.

There is another broker for Coconada, Vizagapatam, etc?—Yes.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Have you ever seen baggage coolies being paid money?—Never.

Did you not say so?—I said I have heard of *bukhsheesh* being paid to coolies, but it has never occurred to my own knowledge.

How long, as a rule, does the B.I. allow deck passengers to get on board?—Two or three hours before the steamer sails, sometimes more.

If a very respectable gentleman (a padre) were to tell you that he saw passengers being shut out because only fifteen minutes was allowed, what would you say?—I have always gone to the wharf when a steamer is leaving and I have not ever seen that.

You would therefore absolutely contradict the man who said that—that there never has been so short a time given?—It has never happened to my knowledge.



Has it happened to your knowledge that passengers were shut out because the time was up?—It might sometimes happen when at the last moment Government has taken up space, or in the case of late arrivals.

In the case of late arrivals have you seen large numbers like 100 and 200 being shut out?—No.

When it has happened how many men have been shut out?—I cannot say definitely, but not so big a number.

When you say late arrivals, do you mean that they came at the time when the ship was advertised to weigh anchor, or were they there long before the time, but could not get on board owing to it being overcrowded?—(No answer)

*Mr. Bell.*—Is there a special time for passengers to embark?—Yes

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Is the gangway lifted before they have arrived—they may have come late?—In that case they are transferred to the next boat sailing.

*Mr. Bell.*—Anybody who is shut out can, as a matter of right, be transferred to the next steamer?—Yes;

*Dr. Mehta.*—Has any passenger complained to you that unless he pays something he cannot get a seat on board?—Nobody.

There are certain places on the deck which are generally occupied by clerks and respectable persons, is that so?—Deck passengers can take any place they like indiscriminately?—Yes, we never separate them.

But you find certain classes of persons travel or take up certain parts of a ship as they do not wish to mingle with the low class or coolies?—There is no favouritism shown to any deck passenger.

You find every part of the ship occupied by every class of passenger without any discrimination?—Yes, they are all deck passengers.

Even in the upper decks it is the same?—They are not allowed on the upper deck, not allowed to occupy the 2nd class decks.

There is a space between the 1st and 2nd class decks which is not occupied by either the 1st or the 2nd class passengers. Do not some deck passengers occupy this space?—I have never seen. If there are no 2nd class passengers, possibly they may be allowed to go there.

There are no better parts on the ship, besides the 1st and 2nd class decks, where some people are given preference?—No favouritism is shown in the allotment of deck space to any passenger.

Who allots these spaces?—No one, it is a case of first come first served.

*President.*—Do you keep a register of the sale of tickets?—No. In the case of selling tickets in batches of 10 and 20, I give chits to my clerk for well-known maistries.

*Dr. Mehta.*—There are many statements to the effect that when passengers have taken up their places on board they have been

asked by the Company's subordinates to move from that place and which they give to another. Is that possible?—Not to my knowledge.

Are you familiar with all these internal arrangements on board?—When passengers go on board, as far as I have seen, nobody interferes with them and nobody objects where they go.

And you have seen coolies mixed up with the better class of men—all huddled together on board?—They pay the same fare and are entitled to the same space.

Sometimes there is overcrowding in steamers?—No overcrowding.

A man can walk through the passengers on any of the decks?—There is space in the middle.

By whose order is this space left?—The passengers do it themselves.

By themselves automatically?—If they don't do it, then the officer goes and sees that a narrow space is left for passages.

*Mr. Bell.*—Dr. Mehta asked you what you paid your clerk and you said Rs 70 a month. Is that a reasonable rate of pay for a man in his position?—Yes

If the suggestion was that on account of your underpaying him he was led to make money through the sale of tickets, would it be untrue?—Certainly

Do you employ coolies yourself?—Yes, in connection with my other business in coal, firewood and stevedoring

How many coolies do you employ on an average?—3,000.

Are they usually of a class who travel between Rangoon and Madras?—Madras and Coconada

Have you ever had from any of these 3,000 coolies, at any time, complaints of oppression at the hands of the B. I. Company—that they were struck by subordinates on board and on shore, they were generally treated like wild beasts as some of the witnesses have said—if you heard a complaint like that, would you probably say it was untrue?—I would say it was untrue

What class of coolies do you employ—are they of the lowest class?—Some of them are Brahmins.

You are the leader of the Madras Mahomedan community?—Yes.

You take an interest in the people of your community?—Yes

Would you be a person to whom these people would be likely to complain if they had any grievances in connection with the transport by the B. I. steamers?—They would complain to me.

And have any of the number come to you at any time?—I had received a complaint that their big baggages were not allowed to be put on board. I saw the Company about this and they agreed, with a view to studying the convenience of the passengers, for these baggages being booked in bulk.

So they came to you with this grievance?—Yes.

You have 30 years' experience in Rangoon in this cooly traffic, so that if there were serious grievances you would probably know of them?—Yes.

*Hurry Krishna Pillay*, Stevedore, Phayre Street, Rangoon.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—At one time you had a great deal of experience in the firm of Madooray Brothers?—I was the Manager.

That was in the lifetime of your uncle P. M. Madooray Pillay?—Yes.

For what lines was he stevedoring?—Bibby, Patrick Henderson, B.I., Japanese and Asiatic.

How much of it are you doing?—Most of it.

How many coolies do you employ in your business?—5,000 to 6,000.

You are as a matter of fact passage broker for the B.I.?—Yes, for passages to the Coromandel coast.

How long have you so been?—Four years.

Who was before that?—My uncle.

You managed the business before your uncle died?—Yes, for 10 years.

What do you get from the B.I.?—An allowance of Rs 150 a month and Rs. 25 per steamer.

Do you sell tickets in Bulloch's office?—Yes, I employ a clerk and durwan.

Do you sell them anywhere else?—Sometimes at the vacant land in Sparks Street and sometimes in a temporary office in 27th Street.

It is there where the coolies lodge?—Yes, when they come down from upcountry.

You have heard that tickets are sold at a premium?—Yes.

Can you suggest any means of preventing it?—I think it is impossible.

Why?—Because the passengers themselves buy and sell them.

If a man asks for 1,000 tickets, would you sell him?—I sell one ticket to each man.

If your cooly maistry asks?—He would not get more than one.

Suppose a man came to you and asked for a ticket for his wife?—He must produce his wife, or else his wife's ticket will be sold to her at the wharf.

Do you go down to the jetty and see all Coromandel steamers off?—Yes.

You know the B.I. durwans, they wear a black and red sash, do they carry sticks?—No.

You know what they call the B.I. police, do they carry sticks?—No.

Do the baggage coolies carry sticks?—No. Sometimes the maistries may have sticks in their hands for the purpose of controlling their subordinates.

We have been told that the B.I. durwans and police beat 3rd class passengers with canes?—I have never seen it.

Never on any occasion?—They have used canes but not on the body of passengers.

*Dr. Mehta*.—They carry canes?—Not their own, but they get it from the passengers.

They never strike the passengers, in what way then do they use the canes?—Tap them on boxes and baskets.

Why?—To keep the crowd from rushing.

They make a noise on the boxes?—Yes.

We have been told that the baggage coolies take money for carrying passengers' luggage whilst they are supposed to work for nothing?—They are not supposed to charge for their service.

Are there notices there to that effect in Tamil and Telugu?—In three languages.

How long have they been there?—About two years, so far as I know.

What is the fare to Coconada?—Rs. 10-8.

And to the other Coromandel ports?—Rs. 10-6.

What are these annas for?—Boat hire, for which separate tickets are given.

Do you think it possible to sell tickets to the passengers on the jetty only?—No, we have sometimes to sell to 4,000 and 5,000 passengers for a steamer; it would be quite impossible.

How long would it take, on an average, to sell a passenger a ticket?—About half a minute.

*President*.—Why half a minute—does he have to write anything?—No, but it takes him some time to take his money out of his bundle and to count the change and so on.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Have you heard of tickets being issued and passengers not being able to get accommodation?—I had may have been the case after war broke out owing to Government taking up accommodation.

Is that often?—Very seldom.

Have you yourself travelled 3rd class on B.I. boats in your younger days?—Yes.

You have read about this inquiry into the grievances of the deck passengers?—So far as I am concerned I have never heard of any grievances at all.

Under you there are a number of coolies and a considerable number of maistries too, have they come and discussed with you about the grievances of deck passengers?—No.

It has been suggested that the deck passengers are smarting from wrongs for a long time and from the brutality of B.I. officers. Do you know anything about it?—No.

Have you ever heard of complaints that tickets are sold at higher prices?—If so, when did you first hear of it?—Two years ago. I have never heard of tickets being sold at a premium before the war.

Did you take any steps to trace whether there was any truth in these rumours?—People won't come forward to tell.

What steps did you take?—When people have come and told me, I have asked them to point out the persons and they could not.

How many such complaints did you receive?—I cannot say.

Did you ever bring it to the knowledge of Mr. Bell?—It was not necessary for me, so I didn't.

*President*.—How do you arrange for tickets being sold in batches. Suppose a maistry

wants ten tickets for his coolies?—He would have to produce his coolies. I would not sell tickets in batches blindly.

You don't personally supervise the sale of tickets, your clerks do it, what prevents them from selling batches of tickets?—Most of the time I am there. Tickets are not sold at the B. I. office without myself and a B. I. official being present, both in Sparks Street and in 27th Street.

What official of the B. I.?—A Eurasian shipping assistant.

So that there is no possible chance of your clerk selling batches of tickets without your knowledge?—No.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Do you make it your business to go to every boat leaving?—Yes, to the Coromandel coast, there are six ports.

Have you ever seen violence used, or beating or tapping of passengers by a B. I. officer or durwan?—Never.

Have you ever heard of Mr. Helps of the B. I. who had a great reputation for beating?—I have never seen him beating passengers.

Have you ever heard that there is a general feeling amongst persons that deck passengers are roughly handled?—No.

How much time is given deck passengers to get on board?—Sometimes half a day, sometimes more, that is from six to twelve hours.

Six hours in a stretch—that must be a very big boat?—I am talking of the *Chilka*.

What is the average time?—Two hours.

Did you ever see passengers shut out from a steamer?—Yes, a few, as they have come late.

Has the gangway been removed to your knowledge whilst people were standing by ready to embark?—Never.

Have you heard from any people that there has been a complaint to that effect?—Never.

You sometimes sell tickets at the wharf?—Yes, to women and children.

Any objection to selling to a man on the wharf?—If there is excess of tickets.

Have you seen baggage coolies exact money from passengers for carrying luggage?—Never.

Have you heard of complaints to that effect?—Never.

You say you travelled deck very often before?—Not often about 4 or 5 years ago.

How have you found the sanitation on board?—I have travelled 2nd class.

Have you seen any passengers having to pay for space on the boat for themselves and their baggage?—The passengers choose places themselves.

*Dr. Mehta.*—What do you go on board for?—As passage broker to see to the passengers' comfort.

It is your duty to see to these things?—I should say so. I am up and down between the crowd on the wharf and the steamer.

What have you to do with the crowd?—To see them embark.

What is your business for this Rs. 150 a month and Rs 25 per steamer?—To sell tickets and to see to embarkation, it is part of my duty.

What do you pay your clerk?—One man Rs. 100 a month, another Rs. 50, and durwan Rs. 15.

And these men attend to this business?—Yes.

What do you do on the wharf?—I look to the comfort of the passengers and if they have any grievances I attend to them.

Are there any particular seats on board ship?—All places on board are free to deck passengers.

Have you ever known or heard of an instance in which a ship's servant has asked for a gratuity for a special place on board?—Never.

Have you seen mats spread out in special places before the passengers get on board?—Sometimes luggage coolies take passengers' mats and spread them on board.

They give some select places to passengers?—There are no select places, coolies when taking passengers' luggage also take their mats and spread them on board.

How many passengers carry mats?—I should say about 15 per cent.

What is the size of the mats?—That I cannot say, usual size.

It seems to me that you are giving a good part of your services for a remuneration which probably comes to nothing. You are spending Rs. 165 out of your Rs. 175, and getting nothing for it?—My profit is derived from the stevedoring business I do for the B. I.

So you make practically nothing from your passage brokerage?—No.

And you give all these long hours for this purpose and get no profit from your passage brokering business?—I said my profit is from the stevedoring business.

*Mr. Bell.*—You know the last witness Abdul Rahman. He is the head of a particular community, in like manner you are the head of another community?—I keep up a Madras-Tamil school from my own funds.

At any rate you are a prominent man in your own particular community. You are well known, being the owner of a school as well as in your other capacity, and you employ five to six thousand coolies. Between this community you represent and the large number of coolies you employ, if there was any systematic ill-treatment of deck passengers, as has been suggested here, you would be likely to hear of it?—Certainly, but I have never heard.

Would you consider it your duty, as representing that community and as the head of these coolies, to inquire into any grievances if they existed?—Yes.

You would not feel it right to allow these grievances to go on?—No.

About this question of selling tickets at a premium. If there were a regular supply of steamers, could anybody sell a ticket at a

premium?—If there was plenty of tonnage the tickets would have no other than their face value

Do you remember what the rates were before the war to the Coromandel coast ports? Have they been raised since the war?—No, they are still at Rs 10

Suppose the B.I. wanted to charge Rs 25 instead of Rs. 10 could they have got it?—At the present time they could get any fare they want.

Have they done it?—No.

A great many people have told us that the subordinate officials—you might say the crews—of the steamers have a regular system of blackmailing passengers—that is they say to passengers that unless you pay us gratuities (*bucksheesh*) we won't allow you to stay in a particular place. Is that being done?—Never heard of any complaint from anybody.

If that were a regular thing would you certainly hear of it from these five to six thousand coolies that you employ?—Yes

Do these people travel regularly year after year?—Yes

And yet you have never heard from them that gratuities are forced from them?—Never.

*Dr. Mehta.*—You said you represent the Tamil community?—No I said I have a Tamil school

You don't represent anybody?—I did not say so

*Mr McDonnell.*—These deck passengers that go to the Coromandel coast are chiefly Tamils?—Chiefly Telegus.

Mostly of the low caste of Telegus?—Of all castes.

Which is the most numerous—the high or the low caste?—Many of them are of good caste, they are mixed

If you wanted to make separate classes of accommodation for each caste, you would have something like 20 classes of accommodation on a steamer?—Yes.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Nobody suggested that.

*Dr Mehta.*—What caste are these lascars, who seem to be so good as never to demand for gratuity?—Personally I don't know.

If they demanded anything from you if you were a passenger what would you do?—I would at once report them

*Mr. Bell.*—Like a sensible man.

The inquiry was adjourned to Saturday at noon.

### Proceedings of the 6th and 7th September 1917 of the Deck Passengers Committee.

The Committee visited the B.I. S.S. "Arankola" and questioned the Captain and Chief Officer.

### Proceedings of the Tenth Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee held at the Public Works Secretariat on Saturday, the 8th September 1917, at 12 noon.

#### PRESENT.

J. P. HARDIMAN, Esq., I.C.S.—(*President*).

J. W. A. BELL, Esq., British India Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.

Dr. P. J. MEHTA.

T. F. R. MCDONNELL, Esq., for the B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd.

F. BOMANJEE, Esq., for the Social Service League

*Venkatta Reddy*, Cooly contractor.

*Mr McDonnell.*—You supply baggage coolies to the B.I., how many?—Eighty, and two maistries.

You are also cooly contractor to the Port Trust?—Yes, also to Burma Oil Company and Graham and Company.

What do you pay the coolies?—Rs. 14 a month and maistries Rs 25.

You produce this book. Each man makes his thumb mark when he is paid?—Yes.

How far does this book go?—August 1914.

What do you get from the B.I. for the supply of coolies and maistries?—Rs. 1,250 a month

Apart from carrying passengers' luggage, do these coolies do any other work?—If they

are not on the B.I. work I give them other work for which I pay extra, as Rs. 14 is not enough for them.

What is the ordinary wages of coolies here?—If they are not employed regularly, one rupee a day. Regular monthly wages would be according to the nature of work.

*To Mr. Bomanjee.*—His clerk writes up the book, and he sees it every day

For this Rs. 14 a month these coolies are supposed to go on each boat?—Yes

How many hours are they supposed to be on each boat?—Three or four hours incoming steamers, five to six hours outgoing steamers. Passengers take lesser time embarking and longer time disembarking.

Do you attend each incoming and outgoing boat?—Not I, but my partner and a cooly maistry. I go sometimes.

Have you ever heard that cooly maistries take money from passengers for carrying their baggage—did you hear of it at any time?—Never.

Or is it the first time you are hearing from me?—Never heard of them exacting money. If *sabhs* care to give the money they take it.

Has anyone complained to you of this?—May have complained to my partner, not to me.

Have you asked your partner whether he has heard?—No.

In your presence this has never happened?—Never.

Have you seen any passengers struck by the B.I. employés or police?—No.

Have your maistries been striking anybody?—Never.

Are these generally the same men?—No.

*President.*—Do you keep a register showing how many coolies attend each steamer?—No. If one steamer comes all the 80 are told to go on. If there are two steamers they are divided into halves. We take a muster roll at the Lewis Street jetty every morning at six. If there are three or four boats extra men are engaged and the B.I. pay. I have a contract with the B.I. (witness produces contract).

If there are no boats at all what do you do with the coolies?—After the muster roll has been taken they are dismissed. If they are willing to go on other work I let them go and they are paid extra.

How many coolies are required to do the work of the passengers?—Forty or fifty would be sufficient. If it is a big boat carrying say 4,000 passengers 80 coolies would suffice, as most of the deck passengers carry their own luggage. Nearly half would take their own luggage.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Our point is that coolies are in a position to exact money because there are not enough to go round.

*Mr. Bell.*—That is the same all over the world. Inquire from the Railway Company here and see how many porters they employ.

*Witness.*—If there are four boats twenty of these would go on each and some extra coolies. These books show the 80 coolies for the month, for extra coolies employed I have another book.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Take the last six months, how many extra coolies have you given the B.I.?—I cannot say from memory. I can produce copies of bills.

*President.*—You have given receipts to the Company and probably you have duplicates or entries in books?—Yes.

(Witness requested to produce the extra cooly bills)

*To Mr. Bomanjee.*—The B.I. bill has never come to Rs. 1,400, the extra cooly bills might be Rs. 4<sup>n</sup> or Rs. 50. He has been working for three years for the B.I. and

has never sent more than 80 on a single boat.

*The President.*—The Seang line generally supply 20 or 25 for each boat. He was not their contractor. Asiatic steamers give 15 or 20; Japanese 20 to 25. Asiatic boats carried from 500 to 700 deck passengers, Chinese boats 1,000 or more, Japanese 3,000 to 4,000. He has never seen more than 80 coolies on any B.I. boat. Passengers never get less than four hours to embark. Steamers departed from five wharves, *vis.*, Sule Pagoda, Lewis Street, Brooking Street, Sparks Street and Latter Street. Passengers could take their own coolies up to the gangway only, but no further; that is up to the barrier. It would not be more than 10 paces from the gangway in Sule Pagoda, and 30 to 40 paces approximately on the Lewis Street jetty. These coolies also worked for the 1st and 2nd class passengers, but generally they get their own servants to carry their luggage to the steamer.

*Dr. Mehta.*—For this Rs. 14 a month you get no other service from these men except carrying baggage from the wharf to the steamer?—No other work for the B.I.

Sometimes they have to work the whole day?—Yes.

Sometimes not at all and yet they get that Rs. 14 a month all the same?—Yes, they sometimes have no work for three or four days.

You get every month from the B.I. Rs. 1,250 and you pay out Rs. 1,170, the balance Rs. 80 is your profit. You are doing this work then for Rs. 80 only?—Yes, but on other work for the B.I. there is more profit—import and export cargo in sheds Nos. 1 and 2.

What would be a reasonable wage you would pay these coolies if you employed them all day in this baggage-carrying work?—For piecework one rupee a day, or Rs. 14 or Rs. 15 a month if engaged by the month.

Have they ever complained to you that the wages they receive is not enough now-a-days?—At first they complained and I promised to give them extra work.

*President.*—Do you use these 80 coolies on your export and import cargo?—When there is one or two hours' work in the day time, I give them some night work.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Are you sure you are paying Rs. 14 to each one of these men?—The B.I. allows Rs. 14 and I take one rupee per head for my commission.

If the coolies say they get nothing, what would you say to that?—It would be a lie.

According to your estimation what do these men make from the passengers?—If anyone chooses to give two or four annas they take it.

Two or three months ago they used to get more money from the passengers?—How can I answer that.

They have lately complained to you that they are not getting enough?—No.

None of these 80 coolies or the maistries have told you that they are not willing to work for Rs 14?—I have received no recent complaint.

Have you any personal knowledge of the coolies employed on the Chinese boats?—On my work I pass that jetty and I guess that so many men are employed there.

Who supplies the uniforms for these 80 coolies?—I supply and take payment from them.

How often?—I take two to three rupees in six months, the uniform consists of coat and short pant.

Do you feed the coolies?—No, I leave them to make their own arrangements, they get their meals in their own house.

What is the making charge of these uniforms?—I get them second-hand, a new one would cost Rs. 5. Sometimes I order new ones.

When you get second-hand, how do you get them all of one style?—I don't always get many second-hand.

Do these maistries carry sticks in their hands?—Never.

President.—I saw a maistry carrying a stick not four days ago?—Was he in my uniform?

He was pointed out to me as one of the maistries?—If he wore a yellow turban he would be my maistry. They get their own turbans, the uniforms I supply.

(Witness's cooly contract with the B.I. is produced and is inspected by the committee; a copy is asked for.)

G. W. Macredy, Inspector, Detective Department, Rangoon Police.

Mr McDonnell.—Were you asked by the B.I. to institute proceedings in respect of the illicit sale of tickets?—On five or six different occasions I was asked by Mr. Matheson on behalf of the B.I. Company to prosecute several persons for selling tickets in excess of the original cost.

You declined, why?—The parties were traced, but as there was no law under which they could be prosecuted, I declined.

Have you got any suggestions by which the system of selling tickets at a premium could be stopped or diminished?—If tickets are sold at the wharf on the day the steamer is leaving. By tickets being sold at the B.I. office days before the steamer leaves, gives people a chance of selling tickets at enhanced rates just before the steamer leaves.

If a large number of tickets were to be sold on the wharf as you suggest, would there not be a tremendous congestion?—There would be.

How long do you think it would take to sell 2,000 tickets, would it take a minute for each person on the average?—A minute would be a very moderate estimate.

On that basis, if you had, say, 4,000 passengers going, you would never get the steamer away. Have you considered what the effect would be if you had one or two

ticket boxes at the wharf in addition to selling at the office?—That would modify the congestion; it would also minimise the practice of selling tickets at a premium. When they buy tickets two or three days before the steamer sails people have an opportunity of selling them at the last moment to others in urgent need at a premium. The less time the tickets are in the hands of the public the better.

Mr. Bomanjee suggests the inclusion in the Passenger Act of a section making the illicit sale of tickets a punishable offence; he believes it is an offence under the Railway Act.

Have you any objection to giving us the names of the people who sold these tickets at a premium?—Their names are not recorded in my office.

Did you find a wholesale traffic going on or just casual?—One case was this. A man had bought five or six tickets some days before the steamer was leaving and somebody came along on the last day and wanted tickets. Seeing he was in a hurry he sold the tickets to him for Rs. 17-8 each.

When did you investigate?—In February, March and April last year, as also this year.

You found these cases in different parts of the town?—Yes, in four different places.

There may be a lot of other places?—Possibly.

You found no proof of a big traffic in tickets?—No. I tried to get tickets myself by sending a man to buy at a premium, but could not get. But I have absolute proof of these four cases—they were coolies. The report was by the B.I. office.

You never found that tickets were sold by the durwans of the B.I.?—No.

Dr. Mehta.—Were you particularly asked whether the durwans of the B.I. sold tickets at a premium?—No.

And you did not make particular inquiries on that head either?—No.

The B.I. did not give you any names?—No. In one case Mr. Matheson had got a man who paid Rs. 13-8 and he made him over to me.

Mr. Bell.—In these cases which you investigated these people who were the culprits, were of the cooly class—there is no mistake about that, they were not B.I. employes?—Quite certain of that.

Are you aware of the habit of coolies, that they come down to Rangoon in the busy season and leave in the slack. Do you know where they put up at such times?—Mostly in 27th and 28th Streets.

Do they come and go away in small or large numbers?—Large numbers.

Is 27th Street of bad repute?—Yes, both streets.

Are there many brothels there?—Formerly, not now.

Grog-shops?—Yes, and coolies practically live here for several days, with the result that at the end of their stay in Rangoon some are in rather an excited state, they are rowdy and become obstreperous.

And would be difficult to control?—Yes.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Have any arrests been made?—Not by me; I am a detective officer; I take no notice of such cases. But many coolies have been arrested from 27th and 28th Streets for being rowdy. The number of arrests is larger in these streets owing to the presence of grogshops and brothels there.

Any idea as to the number of arrests?—No idea, as I don't inspect the police records. I am attached to the whole of Rangoon and can investigate anywhere. I have been ten years in the Rangoon Police.

(The committee adjourn for lunch.)

#### PROCEEDINGS AFTER LUNCH

*Captain E. M. Barrett*, Marine Superintendent of the B I S N Co., Ltd. Have been in charge of the various boats of the B I for 35 years.

*Mr McDonnell.*—What time do you consider is sufficient for passengers to go on board?—One hour per 1,000 passengers.

What is the ordinary time allowed?—All depends on the tide, four hours is the ordinary time allowed.

You don't as a rule give them one hour per thousand?—We give them 4½ hours for embarkation.

We have been told that too few latrines are provided—not enough on these ships?—We provide according to the Government orders.

Where are they to be found?—Rule 4 of the Native Passengers' Ships Act (Committee read Rule 4—one per hundred and one extra.)

Have your ships got women's privies?—They are divided up—a certain number set aside.

What proportion?—One-fifth.

There is provision in the rules?—In the rules it is said "should be sufficient," and we give one-fifth.

We are told that the seats of these privies are sometimes very foul?—It's their own fault. There is a full supply of water in every water closet running through day and night from the main service pipe. If the latrines are used in a legitimate way they cannot possibly become foul.

Is there any inspection?—The Commander goes round every day.

Does he inspect the privies?—Oh yes, it is his duty to look round and see that everything on the ship is clean.

Whose duty is it to keep the privies clean?—Topases.

And whose duty is it to see the topases do their work?—The Chief Officer.

Can you give us some information as to the fresh water supply on ships?—I have made some notes:—

*Bharata.*—Fresh water always on—three taps.

*Arankola.*—Six taps—water always on,

*Bangala.*—Fresh water all day—two taps, and two pumps.

*Fulata.*—Water served all day—several 400-gallon fresh-water tanks on deck (would not be less than four,—two forward and two aft)—served from the main tank. Passengers can help themselves.

*Fasika.*—Water all day—a sister ship to *Fulata*—same arrangements.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Our point is not that the arrangements are inadequate but that the employés defeat the best arrangements.

How much fresh water is carried per head per day?—Ten or twelve gallons.

And by Government rules?—One imperial gallon.

Each ship is licensed to carry a certain number of passengers—the number is indicated in a certificate issued under section 10 of the Native Passengers' Ships Act. Have you ever heard of an excess number being carried on any of the Company's ships?—No.

It has been suggested that sometimes the number is so much in excess that some of the deck passengers have to occupy the boats of the ship?—Never seen it or never heard of it.

Is this an "A" certificate of a steamer?—Yes.

Does it show the number of passengers to be carried in fair and foul weather in each part of a ship?—Yes.

Not only the 3rd class but also the cabin passengers it shows all?—Yes.

Do you also produce a "B" certificate which is issued on every voyage?—Yes. The "A" certificate is issued every year. (Read and recorded "A" and "B" certificates.)

No passenger ship can leave port unless she produces this "B" certificate?—That is so.

*Mr Bomanjee.*—Your business is to superintend all the boats of the B I.?—Which come here.

You have given us the number of tanks, taps, etc., but you are not in a position to say whether the tanks are kept open on the voyage. Is anyone in charge of the water taps?—The Chinese carpenter, and probably two gunners if there are a lot of passengers.

Have they any authority to apply a padlock to the water taps, or to stop the supply of water at any time?—No authority.

But he would stop a passenger if he were wasting water?—Probably, but not apply a padlock.

You don't know whether water is distributed all day and night at sea?—I am not there.

You have not heard of any complaints that water is not supplied?—No.

Do you consider 5 square feet per passenger ample?—Quite enough room as far as I have seen.

Do you consider it sufficient?—That is a question for Government. I think you are are getting to get altogether.

You agree that in the foul weather very few passengers travel?—In comparison.

Is it your duty to go down and see a ship leaving port?—My duty is to see that things are all right on a ship.

How many gangways have you for deck passengers?—Generally three to four—three as a rule.

And you find four hours are given for embarking?—Yes.

There could not be any reason to think, for tidal reasons or otherwise, that less than four hours is ever given?—No.

You have never seen a number of passengers being shut out as there was no time?—Never. I have seen a number of people on the wharf but cannot say if they were passengers or not.

Are sweepers told off to clean the latrines day and night?—There is a topas on day and one on night.

Have you heard that these men do not do their work unless they are paid a gratuity?—No.

It is his duty to clean up?—Yes.

*Dr. Mehta*—About the water supply. There is a big reservoir on the ship and small tanks. What is the carrying capacity of these tanks?—Three to four hundred gallons each.

And when these 400 gallons are exhausted, the water is pumped in again. Is there any one to do this?—The gunner, the Chinese carpenter and others.

That is if they notice it. If nobody notices then the tanks are not filled?—When the tanks are nearly empty they are filled up.

Automatically?—When I spoke of tanks I was referring to the old type ships. In the new types there is no necessity for tanks.

When a tank is empty it would be some time before it was repumped?—They have always the pumps to go to—they are open day and night. If a tank ran empty it is the duty of the officer on watch or the gunner to report to the Chief Officer or the Commander, who would give orders straight away to the gunner.

Supposing the Chief Officer has just gone his rounds and soon after a tank ran empty?—The matter would be reported to the officer on watch by the gunner or the carpenter. In the event of their not noticing it, the passengers would surely report.

It is possible then that the tanks would remain empty if the passengers did not notice it?—The gunners are deputed to look after everything pertaining to the ship. If he did not notice that a tank was empty he would not be doing his duty.

We have here numerous complaints about the supply of water from all classes and communities of deck passengers—some statements signed by 1,300 persons, others signed by 360 and many by hundreds, would you say that they are all deliberately making a false statement?—They are responsible for their own statements. I can only say what I know. I don't know who these people are.

These statements, I might tell you, have been made by nearly the whole town. There is hardly an important Indian Association, scarcely a club or a society that has not put in a representation complaining about the scarcity of water?—I decline to express an opinion as to the truth or otherwise of these statements. I have been a good many years at sea and I have never known of such complaints.

*Mr. Bell*—There have been complaints by a number of people, but none of them are *bonâ fide* passengers.

We have had statements here that passengers take their seats on deck and nobody sees where they go?—Perfectly right—they can go where they choose. But the Chief Officer goes round seeing that there is no overcrowding.

It would be part of the Chief Officer's duty to see that there was no overcrowding?—Yes, and that the total space was equally divided up. If there was overcrowding it is quite possible the Chief Officer would shift them.

Is cattle carried on all parts of the ship—on the upper decks and 'tween decks?—It depends on what ship you have got.

Take the *Bangala*?—They can be carried on the fore deck.

Ever on the 'tween decks?—They are generally put on the fore deck (upper deck).

When cattle are carried there is not so much moving and airing space for the passengers?—When cattle are carried so much space is knocked off for each head of cattle.

And to that extent the airing space is decreased?—Of course it is.

The passengers' space is decreased?—Yes, but the airing space is the same as allowed by Government rules. Everyone has so much deck space and so much airing space and an excess number of passengers is not allowed to be carried.

*Mr. Bell*—You must reduce your passengers to such an extent that there is left on the upper deck a proportionate quantity of space taken up by the cattle, so that each passenger will have sufficient airing space. That is quite clear.

*President*—What I understand is that every passenger—whether he be big or small—has never got less than 4 feet airing space.

*Dr. Mehta*—Regarding latrines—are they sufficient?—According to the rules.

*Dr. Mehta*—When, as you say, passengers do not use the latrines in a 'legitimate way,' what happens?—It gets foul and as soon as it is noticed by the topas he cleans them up.

These latrines are built one per hundred passengers—is it not inconvenient to the passengers—is there not a long cue always waiting their turn?—I have not seen this.

Have you been on the cooly run?—In 1882 and 1883, Madras to Rangoon.

Many coolies coming across now?—A good number.



In your opinion is one per hundred sufficient?—That is a matter for Government.

During the hours the latrines are used by passengers they would not be cleaned by the *topas*, it is quite possible that the latrines would be made foul?—That is their own fault.

You have told us that the time allowed for embarkation is 4½ hours—what is the least time?—Ships are invariably alongside the whole of a flood and the whole of an ebb. As soon as she comes to the edge of the wharf she comes there for the purpose of embarking passengers. She is there about 3½ to 4 hours and during this time the passengers are allowed to embark.

Even when cargo is working?—No. A clear 3½ to 4 hours after the cargo is taken, the passengers may embark.

*Mr. Bell.*—Is it not the fact that cargo is stopped hours beforehand in order to get the ship ready—putting up the hatches, spreading the awnings, and all this, takes quite two hours?—Yes.

*Mr. Mehta.*—Suppose you had a small number of passengers you would work one hatch and take in the passengers?—Yes. Passengers are even allowed to go on board overnight sometimes, more especially on the *Coromandel coast* run.

*President.*—Which of the jetties and wharves are exclusively for embarkation and disembarkation of passengers?—Lewis Street, and occasionally Sparks Street.

Cargo is never worked in Lewis Street and Sparks Street?—There are no cargo facilities here,—they are really pontoons not wharves.

Have you any personal experience of the conditions under which steerage or deck passengers embark and disembark in other ports in the world?—No.

Do you think it would be possible to reserve some wharf or wharves in Rangoon for embarking and disembarking passengers only?—The two jetties we have got are quite sufficient at the present time.

Are the arrangements for marshalling passengers at Sule Pagoda better or worse than at Lewis or Sparks Street?—At Sparks and Lewis Street the arrangements are quite good, and the sheds at Sule Pagoda are an advantage to deck passengers.

Is there a cover in Lewis Street?—No.

Brooking Street?—Small cover.

Sparks Street?—No cover.

Latter Street?—There are sheds but not specially meant for passengers; they can be used with some inconvenience.

Passengers would not be allowed to go in there if cargo were stored?—No.

So that not along the whole of the river is there a shed or godown exclusively reserved for the accommodation of passengers?—That is so.

Don't you think that is rather bad?—I think decidedly there ought to be covers for passengers.

Just give us some idea of the arrangements made?—The ship comes in charge of the

Harbour Master, the doctor goes on board, there is a medical examination, then she goes up to her berth, then all the passengers (except the 1st and 2nd classes) are taken off by flats, they go on to Sparks Street for detailed medical examination, then they go on shore with the kit for disinfection.

Can you give us some idea of what happens to an outgoing steamer?—The only steamers that are examined by the doctors are those bound for Colombo or Penang. There is very little traffic on this run.

*Mr. Mathieson*, Assistant, B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd., in charge of the Passage Department for 5½ years.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Until the war was the passenger service served exclusively by steamers of the newest type?—Yes, the "A," "E" and "C" classes.

The "B's" are not the newest type?—No. You sell the tickets in the B.I. office?—They are sold under my supervision.

Are the persons of clerks and durwans searched before the sale begins?—Yes, whenever there is a congestion.

*President.*—What is the object of this search?—To prevent the durwans or anybody sneaking out tickets and selling them at a higher rate.

Are they searched both before and after the sale?—Yes.

How long has that system been in force?—For the past two years, when the congestion has been very heavy. It is only at the congestion season from the 15th March to 15th June that this search is strictly carried out.

In the present year the congestion season has lasted longer, I presume, owing to the absence of steamers?—Yes, the congestion season lasts about two months, but during the war it has been longer.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—When persons come buy tickets at Bullocks do they come in by one entrance and leave by the same?—There is an entrance into the waiting room from which there are two exits to two windows where they get their tickets, passing out by an iron gate.

Are arrangements made for keeping them in a cue?—In the waiting room but not when they are on the street. They come up singly from the waiting room.

Who preserves order in 40th Street?—The B.I. police and the Civil police.

What are the B.I. police—how are they dressed?—In khaki, the Civil police have blue coats.

Are they enrolled as policemen?—They are enrolled by the Commissioner of Police.

They don't wear the Rangoon police uniform?—No.

Who are they paid by?—Government, who recover from us.

Do they carry the ordinary police truncheon?—I am not sure.

Do they carry canes?—No.

If you saw canes with them?—I would remove them.

Where do these policemen take up their posts?—At 40th Street where we sell tickets, also inside the wharf where passengers embark

Do they also assist your Agents Abdūl Rahman and H. K. Pillay?—I don't send them there

You have been supervising the sale of tickets for the last 5½ years—how many tickets could be sold in an hour in the B. I. office?—About 450 to 500.

One man doing it?—Yes.

You can pass out 450 tickets from your office in an hour?—Yes.

Besides this office of yours at 40th Street what other ticket offices are there?—Abdul Rahman Brothers in Mozul Street where tickets for Madras is sold and which can also be had at the B. I. office. Then at Sparks Street we have ticket boxes put up there especially in the congestion season.

One or more ticket boxes?—Two.

Where are these tickets for?—Calcutta and Coromandel coast.

In 27th Street there is a temporary office?—Yes, only when occasion requires we send one of our staff or else they are sold by Hurry Krishna Pillay himself and some reliable man.

We have statements here that tickets are sold at the wharf?—Yes, to women and children, and to anybody else if tickets are not exhausted

How do you find out how many women and children would want tickets at the wharf?—From our experience it works out to 7 or 8 per cent

How many of that would represent women?—About 4 or 5 per cent.

Is that the same average both out-going and in-coming?—I think about the same, I have no figures

*Mr Bell*—If there were 2,000 passengers we would probably have 80 women—Yes

*Mr McDonnell*—Is it true that some times more tickets are sold than the ship is licensed to carry under certificate "A" in consequence of which passengers are shut out?—That has occurred only when Government has requisitioned space, in which case passengers have to be shut out but are subsequently transferred to the next boat That occurrence is very very rare.

How long do you begin selling tickets before sailing?—For the Coromandel coast ports we start 4, 5 or 6 days beforehand, on the Calcutta run a day before

*President*.—Why this distinction?—On the Calcutta run there is a regular service maintained. Government passengers who go in large numbers travel practically only to Calcutta We keep open for Government requirements right up to the last.

You say 500 tickets are sold in an hour. How many are sold in the morning when there is a rush for tickets?—When there is congestion we have been able to sell 2,000 to 2,500

That is with the two ticket offices in Sparks Street and the two windows in 40th Street?—Yes

*Mr McDonnell*—Have 3rd class passengers been kept waiting for steamers this year?—Yes, particularly on the Madras and Coromandel run.

Why?—Because we have not had any regular service and as soon as we have a steamer we start booking.

Can you give us any idea as to the numbers who had been kept waiting?—With the assistance of the brokers, I found we had 12,000 waiting in one case, that was during last season

Did you make an estimate before the war?—We never had a congestion. Before the war we could do 12,000 a week owing to the "A" and "E" classes being on the run

Did you get complaints before this committee was created of passengers having to wait or to pay extra for their ticket?—Only last year, never before the war.

Before the war?—Never

Do you go down to the steamers?—I try to be on every steamer as far as my duties allow.

A great deal has been said about 3rd class passengers being beaten mercilessly?—There is no doubt that they have been beaten but not mercilessly as is alleged. Canes have been used but it is just to prevent an onrush and the crushing of the weak ones, the women and children who come down to the steamer. This has only been resorted to when all other measures have failed

You say 'to prevent an onrush' Apart from the women and children, would it be endangering the lives of men also?—Yes, it might carry them on to the edge of the river and they might go over.

Who beats them?—Our staff We have a staff of Eurasian lads—they have used canes, and the civil and our police assist in keeping the crowd in check

You don't consider that the use of the cane is excessive?—It is to prevent a worse evil—of men, women and children being crushed or pushed into the river.

These baggage coolies—they are supposed to do their work for nothing?—Yes, and it is so notified on the notice boards I produce two photographs—one of a notice board which has been hung up for 4 years and the other for about 2 years.

If you were to see a baggage coolie taking money, what would you do?—I have never seen them personally doing this but reports have been made to me. In some cases I have found the charge established and I have dismissed the men. There were 6 to 8 such cases in 18 months to 2 years.

Have you had complaints made to you of tickets being sold at higher rates?—Yes, several complaints

When was the first made?—As soon as the congestion started in 1915 or 1916.

Before the war have you had complaints?—No, never.

You are quite certain about that?—I don't recollect any reports coming in to me before the war.

When complaints have been made to you about all this, you ask the people who complain to identify the person who sold the ticket. Does he come forward for that purpose?—They shuffle out of it by saying they don't know the man and hence there is nothing to bear out their statements. On some occasions I have handed the matter over to the police for investigation, who said the offence could not be taken notice of, it being non-cognisable.

Did one Mr. Chowdhury come and complain to you?—He went to Mr. Bell and I was deputed to investigate the matter and this is the result of my inquiry.

(Mr. Matheson reads his note dated 27th June 1917)

The note was to the following effect—

A Mr. Chowdhury, a deck passenger, had complained to Mr. Bell of the passengers being ill-treated by the B.I. durwans at the ticket office—this was on the 26th June 1917. I was deputed by Mr. Bell to go along with Mr. Chowdhury and investigate the matter. On coming to the ticket office we found a great number of coolies there and Mr. Chowdhury was asked to identify the persons who were assaulting but failed to do so nor would any of the crowd speak to the alleged assaulting. Both witness and Mr. Chowdhury tried to pacify the crowd but could not. After waiting some time Mr. Chowdhury was hustled by the crowd, even though he tried to pacify them with kind words. They retired and Mr. Chowdhury remarked to witness—“It is certainly our own fault. We do not respect our own kind. There is no doubt that the force used by the durwans is reasonable.” Witness drew his attention to the fact that there were only 150 to 200 persons present and asked him to consider what it would be like if there were 6,000 passengers to control, not forgetting the trouble caused by different castes and religious sects. Mr. Chowdhury remarked that he certainly did not realize the difficulties the B.I. had to contend with and was pleased to have this opportunity of seeing for himself.

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Is this the note you made at the time and before this committee was appointed?—Yes. Within half an hour of the interview on the 26th June with Mr. Chowdhury I had this statement typed and Mr. Bell warned Mr. Chowdhury to hold up to his statement which was made before him, Mr. Hudson and witness about the force used being reasonable, and Mr. Chowdhury said he would stand by it.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Are there notices on the Madras and Coromandel boats over the bazaar man's stall as to complaints about food?—Yes.

Cattle are sometimes or often sent on these boats from Calcutta to Rangoon. Are they sent on any other runs—to Madras or the Coromandel ports?—Occasionally to Coco-

nada perhaps one or two; to Madras very seldom. Horses to Calcutta generally average about four.

And from Madras and the Coromandel coast?—Occasionally, perhaps three or four in a year.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—How many 1st and 2nd class tickets do you issue on each boat?—It depends on the steamer's accommodation never more than 40 or 50. The B class steamers can take thirty 1st and thirty-six 2nd class. The “Arankola” can take about 100. She has 51 second class nearly every trip and on an average of 25 first class.

You cannot carry more than 100 on any steamer?—No.

How many deck with diet tickets do you issue?—We limit our booking to about 20.

Why do you restrict it to 20?—It would entail special arrangements regarding cutlery, crockery, etc.

Do you think separate deck without diet would be availed of by the public?—I think there is room for an intermediate class.

Where does the deck passenger get his first beating. You have seen there is no beating when he goes for his ticket at the ticket office, some means of force is employed for controlling the crowd. If other means were adopted for controlling the traffic it would not be necessary for the employment of force. What objection have you for selling tickets at the wharf only?—In the congestion season we have larger numbers than the steamer could possibly carry. That would mean some 5,000 to 6,000 passengers would be coming down, perhaps from the suburbs, with all their bag and baggage which they would deposit on the wharf. If they failed to get tickets they would have to leave, taking with them all that they had brought down, perhaps with a great deal of trouble.

*President.*—Does that objection apply to present circumstances and to pre-war conditions equally?—In pre-war times we could nearly meet all demands.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—When they come to book at the ticket office they don't bring their baggage with them?—No, they do so when they come to the wharf and they would not be separated from it for all the world—they perhaps have all their savings there.

In pre-war times Government troops were carried by troop ships and the R.I.M. boats?—They have now to go by the B.I. boats. I don't think there was any necessity for better arrangements in pre-war times.

I understand there is no shed for these people. Do you think it would be a good thing to put one up?—Certainly.

I presume it should be at the expense of the B.I.?—Why should I suggest that?

*Mr. McDonnell.*—Why not the Social Service League—there are a lot of aliens in it. Are there not Burmans, too, in this League?—Very few.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—A shed both at the ticket office and at the wharf?—At the wharf only,

as after they get their tickets at the office they need not wait. Before the war we used to start selling tickets for the Coromandel coast, say to 4,000 passengers, 4, 5 or 6 days beforehand, this enabled them to return to their homes, even in the suburbs, and come back on the day the steamer is sailing there was no detention whatever.

Would you say that the practice of extorting money is pretty general—you have mentioned some cases of dismissal?—If these six cases were reported, I think there could be several others. It would, however, be an exaggeration to say that the practice is general.

Is it fairly common?—Judging from the complaints that have been brought to me, I should not say so.

What was the amount demanded in these cases?—A rupee each. The passenger said the cooly wanted one rupee and he was offering 8 annas, the cooly was not willing to take it. In all these six cases it was educated people who complained to me.

If a Tamil or Telegu man complained, you could not understand him?—I have one or two assistants with me who talk Tamil and Telegu.

You carry them with you always?—If not with me, I can get anyone else to interpret.

*Mr Bell*—About this beating of passengers. You said that it does occur—is it frequent?—It is not a regular or systematic caning.

It is done at a particular time, when there is a crush, for instance?—Especially in the congestion season; they have been aggravated, perhaps, by standing out in the sun and rain and then they get uncontrollable.

In the ordinary passenger trade, when passengers are getting their tickets freely on coming down to Rangoon and are leaving in steamers freely from Rangoon, is this caning resorted to?—We have never adopted harsh treatment.

Does this beating of passengers refer to all passengers or only to certain unruly members of the crowd?—Only to the unruly lot. Those that are in the front row are being pushed by men at the back, and the police take up their sticks and wave it about threateningly—hit their boxes, hit the ground, and a good few are hit about the shoulders and arms. It is done more for the purpose of stopping the rush.

Does the same apply to the booking office?—In the booking office those that are foremost are driven back and they, in turn, push those behind them. This is done to keep back the rush.

In your opinion this beating and pushing is not done in an angry manner with a view of punishing the people?—Merely as a protective measure, and more to frighten them.

You are quite certain about that. If anyone said they were deliberately beaten and meant to convey the impression that they were brutally assaulted, ill-treated, and

beaten, would that be untrue?—Totally untrue.

You say there is a demand for an intermediate class—has it ever been tried?—Yes. It was very seldom used.

When was it tried?—From 1911 to 1913 approximately, in the "E" class of steamers.

They are the best class?—Yes.

On the Madras and Calcutta runs?—Yes.

How many tickets you sold in those days?

—One or two, as far as I can remember.

Your recollection is that the cost was too high for a certain class of passengers who preferred to travel either 2nd or 3rd class?—The fare was Rs. 29-8 to Madras without diet.

Were those intermediate classes fitted in when the steamers were built?—I think they were erected here.

What were the advantages they were supposed to get for the Rs 29-8?—An enclosed room, not separate cabins, each cabin contained 5 to 6 compartments. In other respects they were like deck passengers. What I am now suggesting is a separate place from the coolies for Rs. 17-8 without diet, and I think there is a demand for it.

Is it not the case that this has been tried and not supported?—What they are clamouring for is for separate and better accommodation from the coolies.

About this shed for the shelter of passengers. Do you say in any case this shed is desirable?—Yes.

Would not a temporary shed suffice, something that would last till the term of the war?—In ordinary times it is not necessary but at the present time it is necessary to have some shelter for the numbers of passengers who come down from the suburbs.

You consider this shelter would not be required after the war?—No, as there would be no case of waiting.

You have had six complaints about the baggage coolies demanding gratuities, in any case was the sum asked for ten rupees?—Never more than Rs. 2, and the lowest one rupee.

Have you any idea of the amount of luggage that the cooly was asked to carry for that rupee?—In the case of one man he had about five or six packages.

Do you think this man had serious cause for grievance?—No, but as the cooly was not entitled to any sort of remuneration for this work, he was at fault and I dismissed him.

Do you think it is reasonable for this passenger to come to the committee with his complaint?—No.

If these permanent sheds were put up at the wharves could tickets be sold there?—In normal times it would be easier for the passengers to get their tickets at the B.I. office and go to the sheds and were there if they liked.

What have you to say about separate accommodation for women on board?—I have no experience as to how they fare on the steamer. I do not think it desirable, if

husbands are to be separated from their wives

Do you carry and use a stick or a cane at the ticket office?—I stand behind the durwans and the police and the other staff who work with me

What do you with the cane?—I have a cane always

Did you see this Mr Chowdhury the other day, four or five days ago, at the ticket office?—No

The time for selling tickets is very irregular, nobody seems to know?—When they come for tickets we ask them to come on a certain date.

They come from day to day—the steamers are irregular also?—We would know in 48 hours and we could sell tickets within 24 hours, commencing 7 in the morning. If a steamer's capacity is 900 we book up to 700, wait for any Government requisitions, which usually come in at the last moment, then the balance is sold at about 2 o'clock to women and children.

Say you had a steamer like the "Bangala" capable of carrying 2,000 passengers, how would you sell the tickets for that steamer?—I would go on selling freely up to my limit. If the Government's requirements were say 300 and if the "Bangala's" capacity was 1,400 I would deduct the 300 from the 1,400 that would leave me 1,100. I would then make further reservations for women and other Government requirements and sell up to 900; any surplus would be sold afterwards.

Before this congestion there used to be hundreds of men, one thousand and two thousand, loitering about in the street when there was no necessity for them to be there as they were told no tickets were to be sold.

Do you think it has ever occurred that durwans warned people off when tickets were really being sold?—It would not be the Company's durwans

We have had statements made that they were able to get tickets from the durwans when they were not obtainable at the office. Is that a fact?—Certainly not.

Do you notify the system of selling tickets by placards?—We are prohibited from so doing.

*President.*—Are there any rules as to the selling of tickets in batches?—We prohibit that. Only to large employers of labour we give tickets in batches of from 10 to 20 at a time, and keep the numbers of the tickets.

When did this prohibition come into force?—After the war broke out

What is the idea of keeping the number?—To try and trace back if they have been sold at higher prices.

When did you begin to keep numbers?—When complaints first started in 1916.

*Dr. Mehta.*—There are lots of places in the town where tickets are sold at a higher value. How do they manage to get these large numbers of tickets?—Quite simple matter that. A man sees a cooly going along the road; he stops him and says, "go to that office and buy me a steamer ticket, and for your trouble I will give you 2 or 4 annas" He sees another cooly and does the same thing, and so on.

Would these coolies, for a matter or 2 or 4 annas, go and wait so long at the ticket office?—Possibly, if they have night work, and they would only be too glad to earn a few annas extra in this way.

Are the tickets numbered?—Yes, consecutively.

Mr Reynaud, a schoolmaster, came here and stated that people were beaten unnecessarily in Sparks Street when the selling of tickets is going on. He saw them beaten often, he says. That was what Mr. Reynaud might have experienced.

*Mr. Bell.*—I think he said he had seen it once in three years. That is not frequently.

(Mr. Reynaud's evidence to be consulted.)

Is there no way you can control the crowd without beating?—One suggestion is to get a large army of policemen to give these people to understand that they are to get into a cue and come up two by two, buy their tickets at one door and leave by the other.

Have you attempted it?—Yes, in 40th Street.

You cannot do it in the street, you have no railings?—In place of railings my suggestion is have police men; if we had railings it would mean the whole length of 40th Street.

Is there any space for railings in 40th Street?—No. If railings could be put around the place for sale of tickets at the wharf it would be better

(Committee decide to inspect the ticket office at 40th Street.)

Nowadays you search the passengers who come there for tickets to see whether he has brought the price of one ticket—Rs 10 or more, is that not so?—I don't have them searched

*President.*—About these persons that are searched, before they go into the ticket office, does that include passengers, as well?—Oh no. That was in reference only to the clerk selling tickets and the durwans who went to keep order, and that, I may add, was only at the time of congestion.

You would not give two or three tickets to anybody without knowing who he is?—No.

The meeting was adjourned to Monday, the 10th September 1917.

Proceedings of the Eleventh Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee held at the Public Works Secretariat on Monday, the 10th September 1917, at 11 a.m.

PRESENT.

J. P. HARDIMAN, Esq., I.C.S. (*President*).  
J. W. A. BELL, Esq., B.I.S.N. Company, Limited.  
Dr. P. J. MEHTA.  
T. F. R. McDONNELL, Esq., for B.I.S.N. Company, Limited.  
F. BOMANJEE, Esq., for the Social Service League.

*Mr. T. Hudson*, Assistant Manager, Bulloch Brothers and Company, Limited, and second in charge of the British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited, with Mr. J. W. A. Bell.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—You put this forward as the official statement of the case for the Agents here of the British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited?—Yes.

(Statement and letter dated 1st February 1917 to the Commissioner of Police, read.)

So that before there was any suggestion of the creation of this committee of inquiry or of the receipt of any complaint from any organized body, such as the Social Service League, you had moved in the matter?—Yes, and I may add before the taking place of any actual congestion.

You also have brought here, in case the Committee would care to look at it, the register containing copies of all "A" certificates?—Yes.

(Committee inspect the register and witness is requested to put in a statement respecting the S.S. "Bulimba," which he states was completely renovated and is now measured for 1,351 passengers.)

You have heard in the course of these few months that certain people have come and made complaints. In each case have you or Mr. Bell personally investigated these complaints?—Whenever it has been brought to our notice.

Have you ever heard of a gentleman of the name of Chowdhury?—Yes, I have made an entry in my diary that he called and complained on the 26th June.

(Witness undertakes to submit a copy of the entry in his diary.)

You probably have heard a statement made of the reckless and inhuman conduct of the Captain of the "Chilka," he was accused of taking more passengers than he should in consequence of which the congestion was so great that some passengers had to be put up in life boats. Have you looked up that particular voyage?—I think he refers to the voyage when the "Chilka" left Madras on the 23rd January 1917.

We will take it that that was the voyage. Have you obtained the number of the 3rd class passengers that travelled on that voyage?—The total is 3,188 adults and 230

children under 10 (equal to 115 full adults). The total for those two is 3,303, and the steamer, according to her "A" certificate, can carry 3,729 adults without the saloon deck.

So that you were actually 400 less than your full complement?—Yes, and with the saloon decks she could carry 4,075.

*Dr. Mehta*.—I think the witness who spoke to this (Mr. Moodalyar, mining engineer and geological expert) rather emphasized the fact that the passengers could not get provisions on board and were not allowed to go on shore. He says they were given to understand that the run would only take from 5 to 6 days and they carried provisions sufficient to last till then, but when the voyage extended to 9 or 10 days their provisions were naturally exhausted and when they wanted to replenish their stock by going on shore they were refused. That in his opinion was an act of brutality.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Do you remember a Captain stating that he is bound to carry one month's provision, and he has carried three months' instead.

*Mr. Bell*.—The passengers buy their provisions from the bazaarman on board and if his stock runs out he gets it from the ship.

*Dr. Mehta*.—The bazaarman must keep what the passengers want.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Have you made inquiries from the Burma Railways as to the number of baggage coolies they supply?—

Mr. Mathieson was instructed to do so and he ascertained that the average travellers were 1,200 per day at the Rangoon railway station and a permanent staff of 50 coolies was maintained for handling their baggage.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Now about this voyage of the "Chilka." Where was this boat sailing from?—She left Madras on the 23rd January 1917 for Rangoon *via* Coconada and other Coromandel coast ports.

The number of passengers you gave, I think 3,303, was that the original number who embarked at Madras?—No.

Is it possible to get it?—I have all the details. At Madras she took 786 adults and 86 minors (that makes 872).

What is the port she touched after Madras? Coconada, and here she took 680 adults and 12 minors (6 adults), the next port was Vizagapatnam where she took 1141

adults and 34 minors (17 adults), the next was Bimlipatam where 97 adults and 6 minors (3 adults) were entered; Calingapatam was the next port where 502 adults and 56 minors (28 adults) came in, then Varvar 333 adults, 21 minors (11 adults), Gopalpore 379 adults and 15 minors (8 adults) thence on to Rangoon.

Were any of these passengers for intermediate ports?—These are the ports they embark for before Rangoon.

Are there any who got down at any of these ports, have you any record?—Our records show that these passengers embarked at these different ports.

The total is 3,303?—Yes.

*President*.—Mr Bomanjee wants to know whether there were any intermediate passengers?—It is not customary to keep such records.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Is it possible that on this voyage any portion of the passengers' space could have been taken up by cattle or by any other cargo?—There was no cattle on board, nor any other cargo.

There was not any cargo in the 'tween decks, but possibly there might have been some in the hold?—Possibly.

So there was no cargo on the passenger space? If there were, would your records show it?—We could tell by the steamer's landings—what cargo she discharged. A steamer cannot take cargo in her 'tween decks if she has not cargo in the lower holds. As a matter of fact these steamers never bring more than 300 tons of cargo.

There would be always some cargo from all these ports?—Very unlikely as in the passenger season we have at times to put in coal as ballast.

When did she reach Rangoon?—I have not got the actual date or hour, about 10 days after.

Is it your business to go on ships?—I am practically on every passenger ship that leaves here.

There are statements to the effect of overcrowding on some of these ships. Have passengers ever been shut out for want of space?—I think the space provided for passengers is sufficient.

Six feet sufficient?—It is rather misleading to say six feet, because there is a certain amount of aerial space provided. When they settle down on board they seem to be very happy.

*President*.—Can you give us an idea of how they average out the space. Take 600 square feet 'tween deck and 600 square feet airing space, how many passengers?—There is a different airing space on deck to what is below, for every six feet below, there must be four above, it is 600 and 400. In foul season you get nine square feet.

*President*.—You do, as a matter of fact provide two-thirds airing space on the 'tween decks on every ship—it is measured in that way.

*Dr. Mehta*.—The law is you must provide 6 feet down below and four feet above. If you give 10 feet it is not the same thing.

*Mr. Bell*.—A passenger cannot be at two places at one time. These rules of the Government of India have not been framed haphazard. These are the results of long experience in the emigration traffic in India. We have had steamers running to Fiji for 40 years and probably longer. Each of these emigrant ships is under the supervision of the doctor and he gets a fee for every man landed alive and you may be certain he takes good care to see that the passengers are provided with such accommodation as would ensure the best results.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Do you know how much space you allow each of the crew of the ship?—It is different on each steamer, they are specially fitted. On a ship it is never included in the surveyor's measurements.

As a matter of fact how much do you give your crew? I cannot tell you the crew have separate quarters provided them.

*Mr. Bell*.—The ship is built under Lloyd's Surveyor.—I think under Government Board of Trade rules.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Seventy-two cubic feet?—You will get all that from the Surveyor.

Assuming that all the people slept one night in the 'tween deck I would cover more than six feet square myself, and in that space my luggage also has to go?—There is always the space of two hatches in the lower hold put aside for passengers' luggage, passengers should keep their heavy luggage there and much is kept there.

Would you give a living man less space than what you would give a dead man. A coffin is 12 feet square and you will find in every cemetery a space of 6' x 2' allotted to an adult?—It is not for me to criticize. I would not like to express an opinion in view of the fact that Government has decided that this space is sufficient.

*President*.—What is the maximum luggage a deck passenger may carry?—Practically unlimited.

Is there no rule?—We have had rules but have never strictly enforced them, the rules nowadays have been much relaxed.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Do you allow the same amount of space in Madras boats as in Calcutta boats, or is there some difference. The same space for every passenger, it applies to all Indian ports.

*President*.—Have you ever charged a deck passenger excess fare on his luggage?—It had been done in the past, but there was a terrible outcry against it that we had to drop it.

So far as you remember, when did you last charge an excess?—For some years it has not been done. The Port Trust collect river dues when passengers embark. An employee goes round collecting from people who have baggage.

Is he allowed to do it?—It is the law, I believe

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—They systematically charge it and probably give a receipt.

*Dr. Mehta.*—The complaint is that no receipts are given

*Mr. Bell.*—They ought to give receipts, but that is a matter for the Port Trust.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Then I understand you to say that there are rules for charging excess luggage but were never enforced?—From time to time we have tried to enforce it, but it was eventually dropped.

Everyone is entitled to water. Is it possible that some underlings make them pay for it?—I should think not. Might I suggest what might possibly happen and be the cause of these complaints arising. A man might be sitting on the deck and might call one of the sweepers and ask him to fetch him a gallon of water, when he brings it, he may probably give him one or two annas, then the story gets about and is, as is not unlikely, exaggerated that the man demanded money for giving water—as a matter of fact, it is not his duty to bring water.

In some boats you say that water is allowed for some specified time—on the old ships—what does that mean, is the tap kept locked up?—The water is distributed on the older ships twice a day.

And for the rest of the time is it locked up?—That I cannot say, but anybody can go and have water.

If you have a couple of thousand people, you will allow there would be a rush and some difficulty to get water?—Many of the ships which distribute water in this way don't carry such a large number of passengers

So you will allow that on such ships people might be asked to pay for water?—I do not think so, it is under the supervision of the officers, it is a public place, everybody can see, and it is quite impossible that a demand would be made by the ship's crew for supplying water. On the newer steamers they have water night and day.

And you think that as far as possible this system ought to be followed on all steamers?—It is very desirable.

Do I understand you to say that for the last 10 years water has been obtained freely?—Absolutely.

*President.*—How long did you give your intermediate class a trial; how many cabins were there?—I have not written it down, but from inquiries I find there were some six or eight compartments and we gave it a trial for some considerable time.

And you found it was not availed of?—No. Passengers preferred to travel by deck or second class.

What were the fares? They were based on half the 2nd class fare without diet.

*Mr. Bell.*—I can perhaps help Mr. Bomanjee. That intermediate accommodation was put in when the ships were newly built and these compartments have only

recently been dismantled from some of them since the war. So that it was there although not used up to three years ago.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Was it available to everybody?—Yes.

I think it was 70 per cent, more than the deck fare?—A large number of passengers preferred to travel 2nd class so that the fare could not be prohibitive.

*Mr. Bell.*—At any rate, it is hardly likely that the British India Company would put up an expensive equipment and try it only for six months and then drop it—it has cost them a great deal of money.

*President.*—You don't know up to what date the experiment was tried?—No, the boats came out in 1911.

These boats began to leave the Rangoon run at the end of 1914 or beginning of 1915, so that up to that time you had experience of the number of passengers who applied for this intermediate accommodation?—Yes, they preferred the deck and 2nd class.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—What was their complaint against it?—Made no complaints at all—simply that they did not take the tickets.

Was it sufficiently advertised?—It was frequently explained to them by Mr. Mathieson, and in some cases they went down to the steamers to look at it

What was the accommodation?—As far as my recollection goes 50 passengers. It was about 8 compartments each accommodating 5 to 6 passengers

You do not think you carried on an average more than twenty?—Certainly not twenty

How much space do you allow lascars?—The surveyor could tell you that.

All your life-saving apparatus is according to Government rules?—Yes

You could save every life in case of accident?

*Mr. Bell.*—I guarantee you never could do that even if you had hundreds of life belts and boats.

*Dr. Mehta.*—There are rules on that subject also, in the same Act?—Yes.

You have told us that you have made all attempts to prevent the selling of tickets at excess rates?—That is the retailing of tickets

And you know of no means by which this can be stopped?—Not until we have a sufficient supply of tonnage

Have you tried the selling of tickets by writing down their names?—In the case of coolies it would be practically impossible; you would have to get their father's name, their name and their thumb impression and so on. I have had a considerable experience with cooly labour at the rice mills and I find that they have about half a dozen names and hundreds of them again have the same identical name—Ramaya, Chinaya, and so on. The registration of deck passengers would be impracticable.

*Dr. Mehta* thinks that registration would be the only means of stopping the illicit sale of tickets, and some remedy must be found



for it as the people were suffering very much.

*Mr. Bell.*—Do you realise that you could not even stop a first class passenger from selling his ticket.

*President.*—To what useful end would registration lead, Mr. Mehta?—In the first place if he offers these tickets to any person it would be refused, the name being there, and in the next place, if a man did purchase it, it would lead to detection.

*Mr. Bell.*—Do you, Mr. Hudson, consider it feasible or not?—Quite impracticable.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Why?—Supposing you have 4,000 passengers. It would probably take five minutes to examine each deck passenger, to get his name, his father's name, his thumb impression, for him to take out his fare, count his change, and so on, and that means 20,000 minutes for embarking these 4,000 passengers, or 333 hours, (Laughter)

*Dr. Mehta.*—You might have a great number of ticket boxes. A small number may at first be tried as a test case, say, one or two per cent.

*President.*—Then you would shut him out of the steamer if he is found out. And what about the staff to be employed?

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—That would mean more than doubling the steamer fare and more than doubling the time for embarkation.

*Dr. Mehta.*—It is necessary to suggest something and I mention this as one of the remedies. Surely this traffic must be stopped and stopped as soon as possible. It cannot be allowed to go on indefinitely. It might mean a little more time to you, but to the general public it would be a great relief?—It would mean detaining the ship for 14 days after taking in her cargo.

*President.*—Dr. Mehta suggests the inspection of one or two per cent., not the whole, Mr. Bell.

*Mr. Bell.*—You would have to keep an extra staff and the steamers would be delayed and that might mean the doubling and trebling the price of tickets.

*Mr. Hudson.*—The passengers themselves might be of a different opinion.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Please tell us your difficulties?—The first is additional time to sell tickets, additional delay that would be caused by the examination of passengers at the gangway even of a percentage, and the impossibility of finding out whether the man is telling the truth, you would then need a "thumb expert" and that would take days.

*President.*—What about the sale of tickets in batches.—We make it a rule to sell one ticket to a man.

What about a gang of coolies going back?—In some cases we have sold to firms a number of tickets on their guarantee.

Under such precautions you have no fear that the tickets would be retailed?—No.

Dr. Mehta suggests that in the same way warrants could be issued to batches of coolies and also to different families, which would be more convenient than as is the custom now to sell the husband's ticket at the office and his wife's and child's ticket at the wharf.

*President.*—Is there a ticket office on the wharf?—Tickets are sold at the gangway. We make reservations for wharf passengers, sometimes 100 tickets.

At any rate in respect of those family tickets there would be no retail sale?—No.

You said when Chowdhury came along with you there were about 150 people in that room?—In the street.

In the room how many were there?—I cannot tell, did not count.

Was there any means of regulating the traffic in the street?—I did not actually witness this. My entry in the diary is a record of what Mathieson and Chowdhury reported to me and to Mr. Bell. I was not present at the time.

What is the number generally put into that room?—I could not tell you, it may be one or twenty.

Never more than twenty?—Could not tell you.

If there were a thousand passengers waiting outside, how many would be put into the room?—They pass through the room, but are never counted.

Supposing it is raining?—The number cannot be more than the room could hold.

How many do you generally have?—We do not count them. We keep no record of the numbers.

*Mr. Bell.*—Would it be right to say that the room would not be allowed to contain more than the number it could hold?—Yes.

*President.*—I think Mr. Hudson said the doors were made sufficiently narrow to prevent two or three people going in at the same time.

*Dr. Mehta.*—If you kept a map outside the door, he could keep the crowd out?—Mr. Chowdhury thought the crowd could be easily controlled, but he changed his opinion.

At that time the number of people was 150, I think?—They may have been out in the street.

The whole conversation, as far as I understand, refers to the crowd in that room. If not, are we to assume that the people were beaten outside the ticket office in 40th street?

*President.*—Perhaps Mr. Hudson had better read the passage (Read)

*Mr. Bell.*—And that was also Mr. Mathieson's statement. He said we had 150 only, what would it have been if we had a thousand. Mr. Chowdhury said he was nearly swept off his feet.

Do the officers go round the boat and see what excess luggage the passengers have?—They don't ordinarily charge for excess luggage unless he has an extraordinarily large amount.

*Mr Bell*—With regard to the question of luggage Is it the case that the officers have instructions to take a very lenient view of passengers carrying excess luggage?—The Company has never pressed this matter. The S.S. "Bulimba's" copies of "A" Certificate are produced and the Committee inspect same.

The "A" Certificate which expired on the 29th March 1916 allowed 1,385 maximum.

The "A" Certificate which expired on the 3rd September 1917 allowed 1,361 maximum and that was put in error. Space was taken up by a wireless apparatus. The last column in that statement shows the number of passengers who failed to embark and that has to be deducted.

*Dr F. A. Foy*, Port Health Officer, since 1902, called by the President.

*To the President*—In the 15 years he had been here as Port Health Officer he had at first noticed an increase of deck passengers, then the number was stationary, and since the war there had been a decrease. The larger on record was in 1913—313,000. (Pages 38 and 52 of tables submitted). Deck passengers were carried by the British India Steam Navigation Company, the Asiatic, N.Y.K., Seang Line, and the Hong Line. By far the biggest earner was the B.I. Chittagong was the Asiatic's big emigrant port, The N.Y.K., carried to Calcutta, Straits and China. The Seang and Hong Lines carried Chinese only to the Straits and China. The Native Passengers Ships Act applied to all the five steamer companies. Surveying of the deck and aerial space was not his duty, but that of the Port Office. It was not his duty to check the number of passengers with the number of the survey certificate: but he would consider it part of his duty to report to the Principal Port Officer if a ship were overcrowded. It was not considered part of his ordinary duty to make a general sanitary inspection of a ship, but if anything struck him as wrong, he would try to get it rectified by seeing the Captain. Practically he or his department visited every incoming steamer. He personally visited a great many of the incoming steamers, especially those from India. He did not visit, personally, all the outgoing ships, but went to see the passengers off on the large and important steamers.

Tell us the details of your inspection of incoming steamers?—I first board the steamer in the stream on arrival and inspect the servants of first and second class passengers, that is, while she is going up to the wharf. At the wharf the deck passengers are taken off by flats to the Sparks Street inspection station. Here they disembark and the Customs, Police and medical examinations take place. The Customs and Police work together. There is a preliminary police examination as they get off the flats on the jetty and then they march into the shed on the land and from there they pass into the

inner shed, taking all their kit with them. Then they pass singly, if possible, at perhaps eight or ten at a time into the outer shed where they are inspected by the Police and Customs. At the inner shed there is no examination, but they simply wait there. They then pass file the Port Health department in the outer shed. I examine them not only for plague but chiefly vaccination. All this time they have all their things with them, or else they have one of the baggage coolies to look after their kit. These baggage coolies, some of them, accompany them right through and see their things away. Are all their effects, as a matter of course, disinfected on every steamer?—Not unless there is an infected passenger.

And if you found an infected case?—We would deal with it according to circumstances, he would be sent to the hospital concerned, the contagious diseases hospital and the plague hospital.

Where are they situated?—Both in Upper Phayre street, one on the east side and the other on the west.

Where is the quarantine station?—Below King's Bank, three miles below, or eight miles from here. Passengers are only taken to the quarantine station if there was a case of plague on board. For several years now there has been no cases of plague.

What facilities for shelter does it contain?—Here are eight barracks made of dunee, the soil is paddy land. The soil surface of the barracks has been reclaimed. The camp has been a temporary one all the time.

Would it be very difficult to find a suitable site in Rangoon for a quarantine camp?—At one time I had a site reserved near Monkey Point all the land there is reclaimed. Can you think of any other site around Rangoon that is not reclaimed?—The best site would be on the river bank, but almost all the land has been taken up by the Port Commissioners, there would be some difficulty in obtaining such land. I recognise that the present quarantine camp is not quite ideal.

*Mr Bell*.—You go on a great many steamers. Comparing the B.I. steamers with the Asiatic, which of the two has the most and best conveniences for deck passengers?—Taking all round, I should think the British India.

How as compared with the N.Y.K.?—The B.I. steamers offered 'tween deck accommodation and lower deck accommodation, while the N.Y.K. only gave upper deck accommodation and in the case of wet weather the passengers suffered, there being no shelter. They don't carry passengers on the 'tween deck but usually cargo. The B.I. deck accommodation was a decided advantage because it met contingencies of bad weather.

What about the Chinese Lines as compared with the B.I. regarding deck accommodation?—The disadvantages of the war have, there is no doubt, told on the accommodation. Before the war there was nothing to compare

With the beautiful ships of the A, C and E classes of the B. I. They were very good and the conditions on these B. I. boats were much better than any other line.

As regards cleanliness. Would you put any of these lines before the B. I.?—The B. I. steamers are better managed than any other lines in the point of cleanliness. I am speaking from memory.

*President*—And from a long experience?—Yes. I am not quoting any special instance, but that is my general impression.

(The *President* asked Mr Bomanjee if the 400 representations made were solely against the B. I. Company or against other passenger-carrying steamship companies.)

Mr Bomanjee said the complaints were solely directed against the B. I. S. N. Company.

*Mr Bell*—Do you remember the B. I. S. N. Company's "Aronda"?—Yes, a sister boat to the "Arankola"—one of the latest passenger ships of the B. I.

Do you remember her accommodation?—Do not recollect it specially. I think it ran on the same lines as the "Arankola."

Do you remember an instance, some years ago, of six passengers dying on board the "Aronda" and there was a complaint made to the Commissioner of Police by a passenger?—I was on leave then when I heard of it.

You are not able to speak as to that particular instance as you were not here. Knowing the accommodation of the "Aronda," do you believe on a steamer of her class it is possible for passengers to die of suffocation as is alleged?—Never. As far as I remember that occurrence took place in the month of November and there was no heavy sea on, in which case the passengers would certainly not have been battened down.

You personally practically visit every incoming steamer. Do you ever look into the latrines?—Sometimes I do.

Have you ever found them in a filthy condition?—Sometimes.

Is it due to neglect?—I cannot say definitely. It might be. I visit the ships generally early in the morning and it may be the sweepers have not cleaned them out the night previous.

If you found them dirty, would you consider it your duty to report to somebody?—I would speak to the Chief Officer.

And you generally do find them in a filthy condition?—Very often; I qualified that with the time of day of my visits.

Do you consider the type of latrines is the best that could be adopted? Some have said that the seats are too high and that they would be better kept clean if the seats were low—that it would be better if they had a low plank instead of seats with a continuous flow of water?—The suggestion which you are throwing out would perhaps be better for the class of passengers in question, as they don't usually use seats.

Have you often complained to the Chief Officer of the state of the latrines?—I don't say I have very often complained. I have

spoken to him several times. I don't as a rule see them dirty, but if I have poked my head in and found that the thing was in a dirty condition I would see that it was cleaned up. Whilst on the subject of latrines, I might say that the temporary latrines are not so good as the permanent ones on the old ships.

Have you found the latrines on other ships in the same condition?—Much about the same. I could not draw any distinction between one line and another.

Is it within your recollection that the B. I. passenger service was served by steamers of the newest type—the A, C and E classes—before the war?—As far as I remember, yes.

Remembering this, would you say that any other line gave such good accommodation to passengers on this side of the Suez as what they get in these B. I. steamers?—No passenger steamer company gives such a high standard of comfort to deck passengers as the B. I. gives in these A, C and E class steamers.

*Dr Mehta*—Your experience has been confined to Rangoon only. You could not speak to the conditions prevailing on steamers running, say, from Bombay to other coastal ports?—No.

You simply state that the comforts are greater on B. I. steamers running from Calcutta to Rangoon. Have you found any passenger complaining to you about latrines or water?—No, I cannot swear by my memory.

Do I understand you to say that you yourself have found latrines sometimes quite offensive to go to? Would it not be prejudicial to health to use them in that condition?—They would be.

Is it your duty to issue certificate "B" or any certificate?—The Surveyor's.

There is no medical examination for that purpose?—Unless he refers to me.

Dr. Solomon is your assistant—does he often see passengers?—Yes.

Do you know his qualifications?—He is not an M.D., he does not hold any diploma.

Does he inspect passengers on incoming steamers?—With me and without me.

Has he sent cases to the hospital?—Not of plague.

Has it not come to your knowledge that a suspect case of plague has been rejected by the hospital?—Not to my knowledge. The plague hospital may take any view they like of a case. It is my duty to exercise my judgment as to whether a case is suspect or not.

How long has Dr. Solomon been in the department?—Since 1903.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—As a matter of fact do you send a good many cases every week?—Yes.

Would you also know the result of these cases?—We get a statement once a month.

Can you give the percentage of your suspect cases turning out real?—Supposing out of 500 we get one case that justifies our action in sending away the 500—you don't

know what may develop, it might spread disinfection.

You would still consider you are justified in sending away 499?—Yes, why are we here for?

*President*—Mr. Bomanjee, we are not here to examine the propriety of the measures taken but simply to ask Dr. Foy what procedure he adopts, and, if he has any suggestions for improvement, to listen to them.

Do you think six feet space is sufficient for a passenger?—That would be criticizing Government.

*President*.—Do you think ten feet sufficient: he has to get six feet below and four feet above. Is that too little?—I would not like to pass an opinion.

Do they carry much kit?—A good lot. In a full complement it would be a bit cramped.

Would the cramping be diminished if they carried less kit?—Certainly.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—How much of the space would be taken up by baggage, approximately?—Sometimes the passengers sleep on their baggage.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Would it not be more convenient if you examined the passengers on board on arrival of the steamer?—There is no room on board to get the work done. Very cramped accommodation to carry out an inspection.

Take a steamer like the "Arankola"?—Even then there would be a certain amount of discomfort.

*President*.—How long would it take you to examine 100 persons at the Sparks Street detention shed?—Fifteen minutes on an average for 100 persons.

If you had 100 of the ship's crew marshalled up before you on deck, how long would it take you to examine them—would there be any impediment to marshalling them as suggested?—They are not so used to uniform discipline, there would be delays.

Delays to whom?—To them and to everybody concerned in the ship.

Would it be greater delay to examine them on board than in the Sparks Street shed?—Probably not.

Would there be much trouble if the passengers left their kit behind?—They would not leave their kit behind for anything, that is the trouble. Both systems have been tried, the one on land is considered preferable.

Tell us about the other experiment—When did it cease?—1908.

Till then it was on the ship?—Yes.

And the examination on shore was found more convenient to passengers?—I would point out that on shore they had all their belongings with them and so there was no chance of pilfering.

What was the general run of complaints when you were examining on board?—About the pilfering of their things.

That could be stopped by proper regulations?—You would want someone whom you could confide in to be on the watch.

Could not, say, 100 at a time bring up their kit with them and be examined?—Would not be feasible on a ship, besides you want a lot of light for an inspection.

Suppose you did not marshal them but went down yourself to the deck passengers?—If the light was good we could do it, but you cannot get good daylight in a 'tween deck. I once nearly missed a case of small-pox in a dark corner.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Light comes from the hatches?—Still, when you go past the hatch.

*President*.—Do you consider it a good thing to have an inspection station where the steamer lands?—Yes, but it would mean the having of three or four stations, and also the carting of passengers about.

Why should not all the steamers, instead of going first to Sule Pagoda, go straight on to Sparks Street and land their passengers there first of all. Would that not save trouble?—That would, in many cases.

Why is it not done?—Chiefly on account of shortage of tonnage during the war. It was tried before, but steamers miss tides.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Do you know of other ports where passengers are treated in the same manner?—I do not think there is another port that has such a strong tidal river, or that lands such a large number of passengers.

Do you know of any places in the world where passengers are taken from the wharf when the steamer is there to another part of the harbour and examined there?—I think at Calcutta they are all taken to the quarantine station.

You give some figures in which you refer to Rangoon as being the largest emigrant port and the second largest immigrant port in the world?—Yes.

Why should you make this difficulty about the light? Is not the light the same in all parts of the world?—Passengers are not examined in the 'tween decks. In other parts of the world passengers may be examined on the upper deck because of the small number. In New York harbour there are two islands to which passengers are taken and examined.

People have been complaining bitterly against the way in which they are taken off the ship to the Sparks Street jetty and examined there, and a way must be found to do it in a more satisfactory manner to the people and that is what we have to suggest?—After the war when tonnage is available, possibly Government will arrange for steamers to berth at Sparks Street.

*President*.—You think it would be a very great desideratum to dispense with the conveying of deck passengers from one place to another?—I would be delighted.

Could you suggest any way by which it could be dispensed? The Port Commissioners cannot give you space for an examination shed; but suppose for a moment we were to annex Mr. Holmes' bungalow, would it be quite large enough?—Quite large enough.

*Dr. Mehta*—If you could get space there it would solve the difficulty. In a steamer like the "Arankola" what would be the difficulty to bring the passengers on to the upper deck?—2,800 passengers could not be examined on the upper deck even of the "Arankola."

Then have them in batches?—If you do that you must have an intermediate space. Where are you going to put them and examine them before they go down and mix with the others? You must eventually put them down below. It could be tried, but it would mean that the ship would have to wait till everything was finished.

Is it possible to examine them on the decks?—You cannot conjecture how much longer it would take than the examination on land. If you had 2,800 or 3,000 passengers you must have a large staff and it would take nearly seven hours to examine them, on the calculation of 400 an hour.

What is your present staff?—Two assistants and myself. If all of us are available we could manage 1,200 an hour on the shore examination, but at times three ships come in together and our attention has to be divided, there may also be some outgoing steamers.

Regarding passengers' shelter at the wharves. At present there is only one shelter at Sparks Street. Do you think it would be a good thing if there was to be some shelter set aside permanently for the use of passengers leaving Rangoon?—That would have to be at every wharf and jetty at which passengers leave.

*President*.—Could a site for a shed be arranged without assigning some special wharf for the emigration of passengers?—I fancy that the whole of the square between Phayre Street and Sule Pagoda would be sufficient.

*President*.—Can you think of a better place?—For instance, the municipal market site which, in one of these days, is going to be demolished. Would that not be more preferable?—It would be, because it would serve Latta Street as well as Sule Pagoda. That triangular patch would be a very good spot at Lewis Street, but the condition in the lease militates against it.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Has New York got a separate wharf set aside for the reception of passengers?—All the passengers I saw were in an empty cargo shed.

*President*.—You have told us that Rangoon was the largest emigrant and the second largest immigrant port in the world. Do you think for an emigrant and immigrant port of such dimensions, do you think it would be generally advisable to have the cargo and the passenger sites absolutely separate?—When a ship comes in, how are you going to treat her—as a cargo or a passenger boat?—If you had a joint site between the wharves or the Municipal Strand market site, that would serve both jetties.

If that could be devised, it would have an advantage over the present arrangement?—I should certainly think so.

What do they do at Bombay?—They mix cargo and passengers.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Did you go on board the "Bulimba" when she last arrived here?—I think so. I must have gone on board.

There is one complaint from a gentleman about his child who was about 2½ years old and had pimples on the forehead which was suspected for chicken pox—you remember that case?—Yes, I sent it away.

And he was discharged immediately on going to the contagious diseases hospital?—I cannot interfere with their diagnosis. I would keep that case under observation, as the child had a temperature and this eruption on his face. I am telling you of what I found at the time.

*President*.—In this case you think you had good professional reason for sending the patient to the hospital?—Yes.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Did not the father tell you that these pimples existed on the face for a long time?—I do not much remember the details, but I gave the case my due consideration. I had to decide the matter, not the father—he is not a medical man.

From this statement it appears you sent a good many more patients, in that way, to the plague and contagious diseases hospitals in 1915 and 1916?—The rules for inspection then were different—more stringent.

In what way different?—Because the Vaccination Act was introduced in 1916 when small-pox was so bad here.

*President*.—What has been the effect of the introduction of the Vaccination Act?—To practically stamp out small-pox in Rangoon.

That accounts for the increase in the passengers?—Yes, the introduction of small-pox by sea was a great factor in keeping up the disease in Rangoon. That is my opinion, and I think that the effect of the Act has been to stamp it out.

*Dr. Mehta*.—Is there any time when small-pox is not in existence in Rangoon?—It may be regarded as endemic. The number of cases have dropped from August last year; before that it went up to nearly eight cases a week.

People are sent to the hospital on foot?—Or in our ambulances.

Have you any ready?—They are always ready at the Sparks Street jetty.

Was there one when this child was examined?—Yes, I got it out and he refused to go in it. They would prefer to walk it than to go in the ambulance from what I see.

*President*.—Would you consider it a dangerous thing to allow an infected person to go in a ticca gharry?—Yes. If a ticca gharry is used, it has to be disinfected.

*Dr. Mehta*.—When you are sure it is a case of contagious disease?—If in my opinion it is.

In 1916 you sent some 454 cases to the plague hospital. From your recollection could you say how many were real plague cases?—Those cases are put into an observation ward at the plague hospital premises, which is a different thing altogether from a plague hospital.

And the same thing applies to contagious diseases?—Those are all practically contagious diseases.

You get returns?—Yes.

*President*.—Dr. Mehta's point is that the medical examination is at present unnecessarily stringent. What is your opinion?—I don't think it is, when we examine 400 in an hour.

What is suggested is, to put the suspects aside and examine them afterwards at leisure?—We have to pass on to other work.

We have no time and staff for a detailed examination of suspects.

*To Dr. Mehta*.—If six persons had died all at once without any particular disease on board and there were other persons in a similar condition and those persons were brought up on the deck and revived, the cause of that might have been want of air.

*To Chairman*.—On a ship like the "Arona" he hardly thought that it was possible that the air was so close as to suffocate passengers to death. I think it absolutely incredible—there are ventilators, and the hatches, in fair weather, are not likely to be closed.

*To Mr. Bomanjee*.—He did not think a man would die of starvation if he abstained from food for two days, he might be in a very emaciated state.

### Proceedings of the Twelfth Meeting of the Deck Passengers' Committee held at the Public Works Secretariat on Wednesday, the 12th September 1917, at 10-30 a. m.

#### PRESENT.

J. P. HARDIMAN, Esq., I.C.S., (*President*).

J. W. A. BELL, Esq., British India Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.

Dr. P. J. MEHTA.

T. F. R. McDONNELL, Esq., for B. I. S. N. Co., Ltd.

F. BOMANJEE, Esq., for Social Service League.

*Captain McPherson*, Engineer-Commander in the Royal Indian Marine, Senior Surveyor and Superintending Engineer to the Burma Government (called by the President).

How long have you held your appointment?—In Rangoon for eight months, approximately, and at Bombay for three years surveying ships, in addition two years on the Transport staff since the war.

Is it your duty to apply section 18 of the Native Passengers' Ships Act, that is to say, to measure a native passenger ship to find out what is the maximum number of passengers she may carry?—It is part of my duty.

The committee find some difficulty in understanding quite how this measurement is conducted. Supposing you have 100 feet vacant space on the upper deck and 103 on the lower deck?—The 100 feet on the 'tween deck would be divided by 6, that would give 16 passengers. For each passenger 4 feet of aring space on the upper deck would be reserved. Four times sixteen gives 64 superficial feet, leaving a balance of 36. This 36 feet would again be divided by 6 (sixteen plus six) which would give the total number of passengers as 22. This calculation was for the fair season. This is a fair assumption as they don't lie down and stay in one place during the whole voyage. It gives them, practically, an average of 9 feet.

You leave it to the officers of the ship to see that no part of the ship is overcrowded?—That is the duty of the ship's officers. We apportion the different spaces, giving the maximum number which could be accommodated.

You say you fix a maximum for each portion of the ship. Whose duty is it to see that this maximum is not exceeded—the duty of your department?—No, except in so far that one of the officers, not of my actual department but from the Engineering department, proceeds to the ship immediately before departure to see she is not overcrowded.

Who grants these certificates?—Principal Port Officer's department.

When is it given?—Not very certain.

These figures in section 18 of the Act have been in force since 1887—the year of the Act—and they are still in force and not been altered since?—No.

*Mr. Bomanjee*.—Would it be your duty to know the space allotted to the crew of the ship?—12 superficial and 72 cubic feet minimum to each lascar—that is not a measurement taken at the same time.

Under what Act is that measurement calculated?—Indian Merchants Shipping Act.

Does it also provide for the European crew?—No, the English Merchants Shipping Act, and the rate for that is 15 and 120, judging from memory.

Then your department is responsible for the "A" certificate and gives it once a year?—Yes.

*President.*—How often do you re-measure?—Whenever there is any structural alteration.

In the case of no structural alterations, is the ship ever re-surveyed, or does a re-measurement endure without an end?—It endures for years, although it is not so marked on the certificate granted.

Does it endure beyond a year?—No, at least one year, then she is re-measured. I am not certain of it however. There is an annual survey for the sea-worthiness of the vessel. If the sea-worthiness was satisfactory, there was no re-measuring.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Are cattle carried as cargo on the 'tween decks with passengers?—I have never seen.

Does the Act say anything about it?—It allows for drainage, etc. There is a bulkhead between.

Are there rules in the Act?—Yes.

On the 'tween decks, if you carry cattle, there must be a bulkhead between the passengers and the cattle?—Yes.

And would it be such as to shut out all ventilation from the passenger space?—It would be put up at the end side of the upper deck. It is an open bulkhead—it need not be covered in.

Have you seen B. L. boats carrying cattle?—No, but they could carry if there is a bulkhead, which need not necessarily be a partition right up, but only sufficient to separate the passengers from the cattle.

*Dr. Mehta.*—Would it be the same provision for goats and sheep?—I should think it would be the same.

How much cattle are they allowed to carry: are there any regulations on that point?—It is regulated.

When you carry cattle is the ship supposed to provide any drainage arrangements for urine, refuse, etc.?—The space has to be properly ventilated and get proper cleansing with the hose. No structural arrangement, such as a cattle shed, is necessary.

Do you consider this 6 feet on the 'tween deck quite as much as a man can reasonably expect for his health, or would you make it something higher?—I have no power to express an opinion on this point. The present measurements and rules are the result of many years' practical experience.

Have you any experience of any other Anglo-Indian passenger ships?—Ships running from Bombay to Jeudah under the Indian Pilgrims Act.

*President.*—What space, under the Pilgrims Act, do they insist on these ships?—I could only guess.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—Any knowledge of other ports in the Persian Gulf?—I have surveyed the ships from there under the Indian Passengers Act—the same space for short voyages, more space for longer voyages.

You don't issue certificate "B"?—I have nothing to do with it.

As regards the "A" certificate, if there is no structural alteration, and if she does not apply for a re-survey the original certificate may last for 10 or 15 years?—Yes.

*Mr. Bomanjee.*—This 6 feet includes baggage space, too?

*Mr. Bell.*—In connection with the proposition put to you by the President—100 feet on the upper deck and 100 on the lower—you know that practically all the passenger steamers running to Rangoon carry cabin passengers?—Yes.

In that case, is space deducted for 1st and 2nd class decks?—Oh, yes, there must be a reasonable amount of space left for promenading.

From your experience you would say that practically every ship—except those particularly measured to carry deck passengers only—on this run carries 1st and 2nd class passengers?—Normally all ships would have.

You practically must have less space above than below on the steamers running here—take the Calcutta run?—It is probable it would be so from the amount of space that is allotted to 1st and 2nd class passengers.

You say that the crew got 12 and 72. The 72 cubic feet is made up of the 12 superficial feet multiplied by the minimum height of the 'tween decks (6 feet)?—Yes.

The ship is the home of the crew and therefore it is only reasonable that the space allotted to them should be greater than the space given to passengers, who merely go for short voyages?—Yes.

With regard to the re-measurement of the ship, is it the case that a new "A" certificate is granted every year?—Yes, at the time of the annual survey.

If that certificate were not granted to a ship, could she continue to carry passengers?—She must have that certificate.

On the "A" certificate there are always two dates—it gives the date when the last survey expire?—I don't think it is so.

(Committee will inspect "A" certificate.)

With regard to the carriage of cattle. What are the provisions of the Act with regard to that?—The Act says very little. Rule 6 reads—"Cattle will be securely penned in so as not to inconvenience the passengers."

There is no question of the erection of a bulkhead, though it is always done?—

In the course of your experience as Surveyor in Rangoon and Bombay, would you mind telling us the lines of steamers that you had an opportunity of surveying—examining. Begin with Rangoon if you will?—In Rangoon I have only passed one so far, but I have visited two or three of the China Line.

Had you occasion to visit any other line in Rangoon?—No, my assistant does most of that work.

In Bombay what lines have you had occasion to examine or survey?—The Shah Line,

Mogul Line, Bombay Steam Navigation steamers that run to Goa, the Arab Steamship Company and the German East African Line's steamers. The last named do not carry a very large number of deck passengers.

Do you know the B.I. steamers known as the A, C and E classes that have been specially built for deck passengers?—I do, well.

What ones do you know in Rangoon?—I think I have visited the "Arankota" only.

In Bombay?—I have visited every one of them during my tenure as transport officer—visited them very frequently.

Do you think that any of the other line steamers which you have visited give the same standard of comfort as the steamers of these classes, A, C and E?—I don't think so. Of necessity, the other ships are very old, whilst the ships you mention (the A, C and E classes) are all brand new.

Would it be an exaggeration to say that none of the steamers belonging to other lines give anything like the standard of comfort to deck passengers that these steamers give?—They are not the same class of ships. The modern ships, like the A, C and E classes, would certainly be more comfortable. It would not be an exaggeration to say so.

In saying this, are you keeping in view such things as water supply, latrine accommodation, etc.?—Oh, yes. My duties are principally in connection with the actual number of latrines. The latrine and water arrangements on these modern ships are far more efficient than on the older type boats.

In giving that opinion you are including the steamers of the Shah, Mogul and other lines, I presume?—Yes, they are all very old ships—one or two of them running up to 40 or 50 years of age.

They run under a certain Act?—Under the Pilgrims Act. Government take special precautions to see that they are provided with all the equipment provided for in the Act.

How long is the voyage to Jeddah?—About 14 or 15 days.

Are you aware that on arrival of the steamer at Jeddah she has to lie in quarantine for 10 days, so that makes the voyage 25—call it 20 days?—Yes.

You were asked by the President to attend as a witness?—Yes.

You were not asked to give evidence on behalf of the B.I. Company?—Oh, no.

When you were on transport duty at Bombay, had you ever occasion to go on board any of the steamers belonging to the Rangoon side—like the "Seang Chooa," "Seang Bee"?—No.

As regards these A, C and E class steamers, is it within your knowledge that the Government of India have a very high opinion of them as transports for native troops?—Yes, the Transport Staff in Bombay have a very high opinion.

As transports?—Yes.

And is it within your knowledge that these steamers have frequently been employed in that capacity?—They have.

As regards this "A" certificate. As a matter of fact, at the expiry of every 12 months you must get another?—Yes. In getting the "B" certificate it is a guarantee that the passenger accommodation has not been exceeded and it involves the personal inspection of an officer of the Port Office.

That does not imply that the deck space should be measured every year?—Except only if there is any structural alteration.

And are ship-owners bound to advise you as regards any structural alterations?—Certainly.

Mr. Bomanjee told the President that yesterday a certain petition which he would like to have on the record came into his possession. This petition was signed by certain B.I. baggage coolies, who were present and were prepared to be examined. The petition had been addressed to and received by Mr. Bell and it was to the effect that formerly they were told by the contractors that they were to make their money in the best way they could from the passengers and not to look to them (contractors) for their wages. For this they were compelled to pay, by way of compensation, Rs. a each per month to the contractors. Now the contractors had stopped them from collecting money from the passengers, owing, as they were told, to an order passed; if they did they would be prosecuted. Since then they have not been collecting money from passengers for carrying their baggage nor have they received any wages from the contractors, although their thumb impressions for receipt of pay had been taken.

President.—You closed your case some days ago, Mr. Bomanjee, and unless Mr. Bell agrees, I do not think this evidence can be admitted.

Mr. Bell and Mr. McDonnell both objected to the letter going in and these witnesses being examined at this stage, since Mr. Bomanjee had closed his case some days ago. The coolies could say anything they liked.

Mr. Bomanjee said it was true he had closed his case some days ago, but he did not think there were strict rules on this subject.

President.—I think the matter is now raised too late for this committee.

Dr. Mehta thought the petition should be admitted as evidence, and the coolies who signed it examined.

Mr. Bomanjee.—Will you allow me to read it out?

President.—No.

Mr. Bomanjee.—Will you take these witnesses later?

President.—It is too late—this enquiry cannot go on indefinitely.

Mr. Bomanjee asked that a note be made on the record regarding his request.



**President**—Certainly. They wrote on the 30th August and you hear of it for the first time yesterday evening, the 11th September, and this morning a copy of the letter is put into your hands.

**Captain Amas, Commander, S.S. "Bangala."**

**Mr. McDonnell.**—You produce the Chief Officer's log book of the "Bangala," which shows that the passengers' deck is visited hourly?—Yes, and whenever possible I visit it myself at 10 o'clock.

All decks?—All decks.

(The committee read entries.)

The seacunnies went round every hour in the night and reported to the officer of the watch, and at the end of his watch which lasted four hours, the officer goes round and makes his entry in the log book.

**President**—Does he go round all the decks?—Yes, all passenger decks on completion of watch.

How does the time allowed for embarkation for deck passengers compare with the time allowed in Calcutta—is it less here?—It is more here than in Calcutta.

What is the average time allowed here?—Anything between two to three hours, it all depends on the number of passengers. We reckon about an hour per thousand. It is nearly always over three hours.

Is that time sufficient?—I consider two to three hours ample time, giving a thousand passengers an hour.

Do you find that owing to the ship having moved off a number of passengers are shut out?—Passengers are never shut out for want of time. One or two or more may be shut out for having come late—some people are always late, no matter how long a steamer stays at a jetty—there will always be late-comers.

How many are you licensed to carry?—2,000 in fair weather and 931 in foul weather.

How many latrines have you?—Twenty, apart from the crew—14 are for men and 6 separate for women: three aft and three forward.

Is it possible for anyone to tell which is for men and which for women?—They have brass plates, and in different languages.

**President.**—Do you think a device—as a picture of a man and woman—as what they have on railways, it would be better?—Yes, for illiterate passengers, it would be just the thing.

Who is responsible for these latrines?—Government—or the number.

I mean for keeping them clean?—The ship—we have topazes to keep them clean.

Who do you hold responsible for these latrines being kept clean?—The doctor and the Chief Officer.

Do you yourself, when you go round every day, as is shown, visit these latrines?—I always do so. I cannot get down and see

them when I am, for instance, coming up the river; I cannot leave the bridge.

If anything is wrong—not kept clean?—I fine the topaz and log it. I cannot cut a man's pay if I don't officially log it.

As regards the water supply. What are the opportunities for getting water?—We have three pumps and four taps which run all day and night.

Could the pumps be locked?—No.

It is suggested that the Chinese carpenters fit up some contrivance—a wooden box—to prevent water being taken?—I have not seen it on the "Bangala."

How much fresh water do you carry for the trip?—I am supposed to carry 100 tons at least, but I usually leave with over 300.

Have you got that quantity now?—I will have it when leaving.

How many passengers do you expect to take on?—About 900.

It has been suggested that women should be separated from the men?—It could not be done.

Why?—There would be more trouble over that—men would have to go amongst them.

Some witnesses have said that the other women would not object to a husband deck passenger or male relative attending on wife or other female?—They certainly would not say that on board—they might say it before this committee.

Do they manage to secure privacy as it is when they want it?—They can do anything they possibly can—no one objects to it. In the case of sea-sickness or, as in one or two recent cases, of confinement on board we have put screens around them and kept them secluded from the rest of the passengers. We do that in every case.

It is suggested that the doctors carried on the B.I. ships extort fees from the deck passengers for service?—Not to my knowledge, I would certainly report him and have him dismissed.

Would he be dismissed?—Certainly. He understands it is his duty to attend all passengers free—he is paid by the Company like everybody else on the ship.

You carry a certain amount of cattle at times?—Yes.

You keep them separate from the passengers' deck?—I barricade them off.

Do you find passengers object to the cattle?—They have objected. It is certainly objectionable to carry cattle, but at the same time they are always barricaded off and at some distance away.

**Dr. Mehta.**—On the upper deck?—Perhaps one or two buffaloes but never sheep. We don't always get buffaloes. When we carry buffaloes the passenger deck space is reduced, the largest number carried was seven or eight on one side of deck, and the sheep in the 'tween decks. Platforms are put right over the sheep and passengers have assisted on going there, saying it was a good space.

They travel with cattle?—No necessity to travel with cattle, we don't carry other cattle in the 'tween decks, but the passengers get on to the platform of themselves. I have tried to remove, but they say they like the place and will stay there.

*To the Chayman*—He never carried cows and goats on the 'tween decks.

*Mr. McDonnell*—Have you had any complaints of violence on board by officers or subordinates?—Never.

On the wharves?—I have seen them being pushed when there is a rush on the wharf.

Was it unjustifiable?—That is what I say. They are pushed back when they actually throw down the hurdles and rush right on to the ship. They have to be kept in check or they might be pushed into the river.

*Mr. Bomanjee*—Supposing there were fixed railings instead of hurdles?—In any case it would have to be portable or you cannot work your cargo and besides a portable railing would not be very steady.

The posts might be fixtures, and as you don't work cargo when taking in passengers the railings could be put on at that time?—There are barriers now put up.

Have you heard of exactims by coolies?—No complaint has been brought to me.

What is your time for visiting the ship?—About 10.

The sweepers and khalasies all know your visiting time?—Sometimes later—it would be before 12.

Have you ever cared to pay a surprise visit?—If the forward latrines were at all dirty I would get the benefit of it in my cabin, and I would jolly well see that they are cleaned. If the aft latrines are dirty, the engineers would get the benefit of it.

*Dr. Foy*, the Port Health Officer, has said he has occasionally called the attention of the ship to the dirtiness of the latrines?—For half an hour the latrines may get dirty—some use the floor.

Are there not night and day sweepers?—The topazes are working day and night in turns. You cannot expect a man to be standing at the latrine door all day and all night.

Anyone over the sweepers?—The serang, the doctor, the Chief Officer—I hold them responsible.

Do you generally visit oftener on these three days' voyage?—Yes, but my fixed time is between 10 and 12.

You have never had any complaint from a single deck passenger?—Never.

*Dr. Mehta*—In the log book you have shown your entries as "All well"—is it usual to write like that?—It is a nautical phrase. If there is any sickness on board, or anyone put overboard, or a birth or death—everything is entered, with the time. Disturbances?—Disturbances even.

Any disturbance during the last six months?—No, I would not enter an ordinary dispute between two deck passengers.

Regards latrines. There are 14 for men and 6 for women. Supposing the number of passengers is mostly men, take a full complement 1,800 all—the 1,800 men would be using the 14 latrines all the time, and that would mean to each latrine some 135 men. In that case would they not be in a very dirty condition from morning till night?—It would not be in a dirty condition if they used it as they should, there is always a flow of water in the latrines and when we go out to sea there is a bigger flow.

That is if rightly used, but cases of sea-sickness, etc., will always go on, and if they are not cleaned properly they would be bad?—They are always cleaned and we always use disinfectants.

There would be so many going, what time would you allow each man?—I cannot answer that.

*President*—Could the women's latrines be used by men if none are travelling?—Oh, yes.

*Dr. Mehta*—There would always be women travelling—at least 5 to 6 per cent., then the women would not be allowed to use these latrines?—No.

If the number of women was large?—They would have some difficulty.

*Dr. Mehta*—Do you allow the use of fresh water all day and all night?—Yes.

Would it not run out?—They do waste water, but we cannot stop it. They can always pump up water—there is a running flow, a constant flow of water going to the tanks.

Then there would be an overflow?—It could be stopped.

Would it be stopped for long hours sometimes?—A khalasi goes round at least three times a day.

Actually when you see water being wasted—and it would be wasted if the passengers are allowed to take water from one morning till the next morning—you never try to prevent the waste?—Never.

You were captain in other boats?—Yes, in the very old ships we had to limit the water supply.

How?—They are only entitled to one gallon a day. We give them as much as they could take in the forenoon or afternoon—we have never measured it out, 'There is the tap,' we say, 'take as much as you want.' In very old steamers water used to be given out two to three hours in the morning and two to three hours in the evening—there was no limited quantity.

These old steamers are in the run at present?—Only one, I think, now.

It is quite possible to limit the quantity of water whenever you like?—It is very difficult to limit the supply of water.

When the tanks are empty and you don't fill them up?—There is a pump going day and night. It leads into a ballast tank.

You cannot stop that—it is never stopped (in the "Bangala"). It is free to every passenger who wants water.

Even the big tank would be exhausted in case of waste?—So far it has not been exhausted. I have 150 tons in reserve. If actually short of water we could condense a thousand gallons an hour.

You said that the men would not like their women folk to travel separately, why?—I have given an instance of a man—a servant of a cabin passenger—objecting to another man going into the ladies' cabin where his wife was.

That is only one instance?—The one brought to my notice.

One case does not prove the rule. You base your opinion on that one case—you probably have no personal experience of Hindu life and ways?—I confess I have not.

*Mr. Bell*—Dr. Mehta has been questioning you about this single instance. You have been on the passenger runs for a considerable number of years, both as an officer and commander, and you know the general attitude of passengers towards one another. Is it not the case that women require constant assistance?—Yes, especially in bad weather the men would have to be in constant attendance on their wives.

In connection with the carrying of cattle—do you ever carry cattle in such a way that they are mixed up with passengers? They have never been mixed up. I have carried them in the same compartment but always barricaded off. The only time that they are mixed up is when passengers cross over the barricade of their own accord and get on to the place where the cattle are. They have been prevented but they will go there.

It has been suggested, to avoid latrines getting dirty and filthy, that instead of the usual seats there be an open trough with a plank across. How would that do when the ship was rolling?—They would fall in.

Dr. Mehta suggests latrines be of the native style adopted in houses by the Municipality.

*Mr. Bell*.—When passengers are sick, it is almost inevitable that the latrines will be dirty—a passenger rather falls into the thing, does he not?—If bad weather be sometimes does not use the right place.

All that could be done in such a case is to clean it up as soon as possible? Yes, there is always water running through.

Whatever precautions you took, if there were even 100 topazes on board instead of 5, there would always be a time when these latrines would be dirty?—Yes.

Dr. Mehta has questioned you at very great length on the supply of water on the old steamers where water is given out two or three times a day, is it within your knowledge that any of these steamers were used on the passenger run prior to the war?—They have been out of commission for some time now prior to the war—the "Bulimba" was as hulk before the war down at Singapore.

It does not matter what happened 30 years ago, or even 15 or 20, but in ocean travelling things have improved greatly—the whole conditions have been changed?—So they have.

That old steamer "Bulimba," has she a condenser?—Yes.

So that even in steamers of the old type in which there was less water, they had condensers?—The Surveyor would not pass them otherwise—it is one of the causes of seaworthiness.

In your experience as Commander, in bad weather, the male relatives of women passengers require to be constantly in attendance on them?—Yes.

It would not do to see their women folk once or twice a day?—No man would like to leave his wife if she is sick.

Would there be any inconvenience to leave them at night?

*Dr. Mehta*.—In that case the women might come out.

*President*.—That concludes the inquiry. I propose to write a draft report and circulate it to the members for consideration.

*Mr. Bomanjee* referred to the police papers regarding the six deaths on the "Aronda" referred to by Mr. Halkar and wanted to know if any evidence would be taken.

The President said he would call for the police papers on the subject, and if necessary he would call the police officer who conducted the inquiry if any oral evidence is desirable.

*Mr. Sivaya* asked if he might be permitted, on behalf of the Social Service League, to suggest that the members of the League be permitted to go on the wharves and on board the steamers during embarkation and disembarkation to prevent the ill-treatment complained of by representing matters to the captain or other officer of the ship.

*Mr. McDonnell*.—Is this request to be made to the committee?—If they wish to go on the B.I. Company's property they should ask that Company's permission. If they wish to go on the Port Trust property they should ask that body's permission.

*Mr. Bell*.—I don't mind Dr. Mehta coming to me and asking permission to go on board, I would even go with him and show him round. But if a member of the Social Service League or any other person not known to the company asked to be allowed to go on board, the B.I. would certainly not permit this. Supposing the B.I. allowed it, the police and the Customs would not allow them to go on board. The Company was not going to have any interference with their work; as it is the Company has more to do than they can overtake. We are anxious that Dr. Mehta should satisfy himself, but we don't want any interference from anybody.

With regard to baggage coolies the question of whether company's contractors pay their coolies or not, is not a matter the Company can be held responsible for.

# DECK PASSENGERS' COMMITTEE.

## DOCUMENTARY EXHIBITS.

### A.

[Extract from the "Rangoon Gazette" of the 8th June 1917.]

#### B.I. DECK PASSENGERS' GRIEVANCES.

##### STATEMENT BY THE AGENTS.

As the subject of the following correspondence has been frequently mentioned in the press, and is one of public interest, it is published accordingly.

##### I.

14, Mogul Street, Rangoon, 29th May 1917. Messrs. Bulloch Bros & Co., Ltd., Agents, B.I.S.N. Co, Ltd, Rangoon.

Sirs,—I am desired by the signatories to the accompanying letter to forward it to you, which I hereby do, and to express a hope that you will attend to the various complaints to which they have drawn your attention therein at your early convenience. Copies of the letter are being forwarded to the Government of Burma and to the press.—I remain, yours most obediently,  
(Sd.) P. J. MEHTA.

##### II.

No. 14, Mogul Street, Rangoon, dated 24th May, 1917. Messrs. Bulloch Bros. & Co., Ltd., Agents, B.I.S.N. Co, Ltd, Rangoon.

Sirs,—We, the representatives of the various communities residing in Rangoon, beg to bring to your notice the great hardships and troubles which the deck passengers going from and coming to Burma are subjected to by your employees, at your office and the wharf. It is not possible to describe some of the heart-rending scenes that are witnessed at these places every time the steamer is about to leave or arrive. To get an idea of them, they ought to be seen. We hope we will not be appealing to you in vain, if this representation can induce you to go on the spot and see, personally and *in cognito* as far as possible, how the intending passengers have to spend days after days under the hot sun in attempts to obtain tickets; how much money they have to pay for each ticket and what is passing behind the scenes; how they are assaulted with *lathies* and canes, freely used against their persons, if, when tired, they attempt to move from the line or stand up; how many people particularly from up-

country have to go without tickets for days and weeks and waste their little fortune in providing bodily needs during the days of unemployment; how both men and women are hustled about with their baggage on their heads in the crush that ensues when the passengers are allowed to make their way to the steamer as best as they can; how hundreds of passengers are abused and assaulted with *lathies* and canes by your durwans as well as employees of higher grade; how some of them manage to get into the steamers long before others, how they scramble for places on the steamer, the seats and spaces not having been numbered and registered as they ought to be; how many people with tickets are in every steamer shut out; how the coolies employed on the wharf make unconscionable demands for carrying luggage, etc., etc.

Many of the signatories have made personal investigations on the above points and have witnessed such scenes and sights as ought never to happen under the British flag.

They are satisfied that many of the troubles are due to want of a proper system and method in issuing tickets and checking them, to want of proper supervision over the employees; to keeping the passengers outside the gate until within an hour of the steamer's departure, etc., etc.

Many of the troubles would disappear if the company were to issue tickets in the order in which the passengers apply; to number and register the seats for deck passengers as is done in other lines, and when one steamer is full, to issue tickets for the succeeding one and so on; to set apart separate space for women in every steamer, etc. A radical change is necessary in many of the present methods of dealing with the passengers.

We hope that you will be able to attend to the above and many other complaints of the people travelling by your line at an early date, and do your best to relieve the sufferings of the poor.

We urge upon you the immediate necessity of the stoppage of beating the passengers with sticks, canes, etc., by your employees, and we hope that you will issue instructions to them to stop doing so.—We remain, yours faithfully. (Here follow 148 signatures.)

## III.

30th May 1917. P. J. Mehta, Esq.,  
Barrister-at-Law, 14, Mogul Street, Rangoon.

Dear Sir,—We have yours of yesterday enclosing a letter addressed to us by a number of residents in Rangoon on the subject of grievances of Indian passengers travelling by this company's steamers. In reply to the latter we beg to state that the inconvenience to Indian passengers during the last three passenger seasons has arisen mainly from the fact that so many of this company's steamers have been taken up by Government for transport service in connection with the war, that it has been impossible for the company to place on the different passenger berths the number of steamers which they were able to employ in their passenger services previous to the war. The result has been that there have, at times, been accumulated in Rangoon a greater number of passengers than it has been possible to accommodate at one time in the steamers available.

The complaints enumerated in the letter under reply may be summarised as follows—

(1) That deck passengers coming to Rangoon are unable to secure passages and have on occasions to wait for suitable accommodation for some time.

(2) That they have at times to pay for tickets sums in excess of the actual cost.

(3) That having obtained tickets, they are shut out of the steamers for which the tickets have been obtained.

(4) That in the course of embarkation they are assaulted by this company's durwans and other employees with *lathies* and canes.

(5) That they have difficulty in securing places on board the company's steamers owing to space for each passenger not being numbered and registered.

(6) That the company's coolies on the wharf make extortionate demands for carrying passengers' luggage.

With regard to the first, we have already explained why the company have been unable to provide for the Rangoon passenger traffic the number of steamers they were in the habit of employing in this service previous to the war. As to the question of want of accommodation for passengers in Rangoon arriving from upcountry, this is a matter over which the company have no control. We may say, however, that before the last passenger season commenced, we approached the Municipality and the Commissioner of Police with a view to additional accommodation being provided, and we understand that proposals are now before the Local Government in connection therewith.

With regard to the second, we have done everything possible to protect passengers. We have had notice boards posted inside and outside of this office, written in six different languages, advising passengers of

the actual fares to different ports, and warning them against paying higher rates for their tickets. We have endeavoured again and again to get evidence with regard to the sale of tickets by durwans and other employees of the company, at rates higher than the actual cost, but have never succeeded in getting anyone to come forward and identify any such durwan or employee. We have received repeatedly anonymous letters on the subject which we have been unable to follow up. We have also received many letters bearing addresses and signatures which appeared to be genuine, but which followed up with a view to getting evidence from the writers, have been found to have been fictitious. We have had calls from different persons, who have told us that these abuses are being carried on. We have asked these persons to bring forward any passenger who had been charged a higher rate than the proper fare for his ticket by any employee of the company. We have made it known to these persons that any employees of the company selling tickets would be dismissed. But we have failed in every case to induce them to bring any passenger forward to give evidence. So far as this company's employees are concerned, any one against whom it could be proved that he had sold company's passage tickets on his own account to intending passengers, would be dismissed, but in the case of the sale of tickets by outsiders, we are advised that there is no legal remedy. If a passenger, notwithstanding the warnings we have published, both by notice boards and in the press, pays for a ticket to any one not in our employment a sum in excess of the actual cost, this company cannot protect him.

With regard to the third, unless through some fault of their own such as failure to attend at the wharf at the time of embarkation notified, passengers have never been shut out of any steamer after having been supplied with tickets for the steamer, except in a few cases in which at the last moment it has been necessary for the military authorities to impress passenger space for the conveyance of troops after tickets have been sold to the full extent of the passenger space of the steamers on the berth in these instances.

With regard to the fourth, this company's employees have definite instructions to treat passengers with courtesy and consideration, and we believe that these instructions are given effect to, although at times, when passengers over-anxious to secure good places attempt to rush a steamer, there may be cases where company's employees may have been compelled, in order to prevent accident to other passengers, to use a certain amount of force in conjunction with the police. We have never had a case of any passenger complaining to any senior officer of the company, or to this office, that he had been assaulted by any of the company's servants. Had any passenger done so, the matter would have been enquired into, and

If an employee of the company had been found to have been at fault, he would have been punished.

With regard to the fifth, some of the company's steamers take over four thousand deck passengers, the smallest with one or two exceptions take over a thousand, and your suggestion that separate places should be marked out for each passenger is quite impracticable. Were passengers to exercise more consideration for each other there is no reason why everyone on board should not travel in reasonable comfort, as the company's steamers never carry more passengers than the number laid down by Government as the complement of the ship, in terms of her passenger certificate. Unfortunately, however, there would appear to be in nearly every large complement of passengers persons who insist on fighting for the best places to the great discomfort of their fellow passengers.

With regard to the sixth, this company provides, in respect of every steamer carrying deck passengers, a large number of coolies—usually eighty—to assist passengers in loading their baggage, and this is done free of charge. Special notices are exhibited

warning passengers not to make any payment to these coolies, and the coolies themselves are notified that if any one of them be found accepting a gratuity he will be dismissed. In spite of this, however, it frequently, we understand, happens that better-off passengers, rather than await their turns for the assistance of the coolies, give gratuities in order to secure their immediate services. We have been told repeatedly by passengers that this is done, but only a few specific cases have been brought to our notice, and in each case the coolie has been dismissed on the spot.

With these particulars before them, we trust that your clients, who have addressed us, will realise that this company is working under considerable difficulties as to providing the tonnage necessary for the Rangoon passenger traffic, that they are doing all they can to ensure the comfort of deck passengers, but that in this they are very much handicapped by the action of the passengers themselves.

Yours faithfully,  
BULLOCH BROS. & CO., LTD.,  
Agents, B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd.

[Extract from the "Rangoon Gazette" of 15th June 1917]

#### B. I. DECK PASSENGERS.

##### PUBLIC MEETING AT KAREN HALL.

A public meeting was held at the Karen Hall on Wednesday to consider the reply received from Messrs. Bulloch Bros, Ltd., Agents, B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd, to a communication sent to them by the representatives of various communities of Rangoon respecting the hardships which deck passengers on B. I. steamers were stated to have to undergo. There was a very large gathering, the stage, main body of the hall and balcony being filled. On the stage among others were: Messrs V. N. Sivaya, U. Ba. Thein, C. S. Mani, M. H. S. Mall, E. M. Patail, Rev. R. H. Courtenay, Mother Ita, S' Tayabji, Mansooklal D. lachand, D. K. Melvani, S. Modi, Poonamchand Mulchand, Khoja Rehama-tollah Mahomed, Dr. Rao, Israel Khan, Rai Sahib Mukherjee, S. S. Halkar, K. B. Banerjee, S. M. Bose, P. K. Thumbay, Dr. P. J. Mehta, and Mr. Moosa Jamal.

On taking the chair on the proposal of Mr. Sivaya, Mr. B. Cowasjee, Barrister-at-Law, said the subject of the formation of a social service league, which was one of the objects of the meeting, was one in which he was very much interested. There was such a league in the Theosophical Society known as the "Sons of India Social Service League." He was interested in the social side. With the political side he had nothing to do. He did not understand politics and did not want to. As to the hardships and annoyances of deck passengers they were there to consider, he had not given that question much thought of late and he proposed to allow other

speakers to address them first and later in the meeting tell them his experiences of similar troubles with the same company some years ago. Dr. Mehta would lay before them the first resolution and the object of the meeting.

Dr. Mehta proposed the first resolution, which was as follows.—

"That this meeting of the citizens of Rangoon views the sufferings of the deck passengers and others travelling by the B.I.S.N. Co.'s line with great concern and considers the reply to their letter of the 29th May 1917, from Messrs Bulloch Brothers & Co., Agents of the said line in this province, though courteous, absolutely unsatisfactory on the issues in the matter and urges the company to view the whole situation from a sympathetic and moral standpoint, and not to take up the narrow legal attitude as they have done therein towards the class of men that are really their best patrons."

Dr. Mehta spoke at length on the letter originally sent to the B.I. Company and on their reply. He said the size of the meeting before him augured well for the future of the deck passengers. He saw the treatment meted out a few days ago to the well-known contractor, Mr. Nairam Ram Bux, who, he stated, had sent his servant with his ticket to the wharf to see about his luggage and who was refused admittance even after he had got the ticket, until he had found someone to identify him. This, Dr. Mehta said,

showed how second class Indian passengers were treated. They could imagine for themselves what a poor, ignorant coolie had to put up with. Dr. Mehta then said the sanitary arrangements on board ship for both sexes of deck passengers were insufficient. He denounced the separation of husbands from their wives and children, and particularly condemned the present system of obtaining steamer tickets which, he said, led to swindling and extortion. If the company could not stop these abuses, it was high time something was done to compel them to do so.

The Rev. R. H. Courtenay, in seconding the resolution, said he knew what deck passengers suffered, particularly the jungle coolie. The coolies came to Burma to do necessary work and afterwards they were anxious to get back home to India. He had often seen them waiting in Sparks Street to buy their tickets, every day's delay eating into their savings. A letter of protest had been sent, and how had it been answered? With a promise to punish the offender if pointed out. They did not want a man punished; they wanted the system that allowed such abuses as Dr. Mehta had told them of altered (Cheers.) He knew of instances where as high as Rs 17 had been paid for a ten-rupee ticket. An intending passenger who went to purchase a ticket at the B.I. office would be told that they were all sold for the steamer about to sail. He would then be given a quiet tip that if he went around the corner he might find a man willing to sell him one. These men were not going to run the risk of losing their steamer by going to the office and reporting and probably being abused for their pains. Dr. Mehta's statement about the separation of husbands and wives and children was news to him, and he could not speak too plainly in denunciation of it. Mr. Courtenay then referred to the manner in which the troubles of five years ago were abated. Then the B.I. Company had opposition, and the B.I. agent and the agent of the opposition line carried on a canvassing campaign, steamer rates were cut, and every accommodation was given to the deck passenger. If they could do it then to offset competition, they could do it now. There were cases in which steamers, he had been told, had taken as many as 4,000 deck passengers at Rs 10 a head. How much of that Rs 40,000 did the company spend for the comforts of those who paid the money? In England it was well-known by ship owners that it was the third class passengers who paid expenses. The question of proper treatment was not one that they should beg for; it was one that they should come forward and demand and keep on demanding until the abuses were abolished (Cheers.)

Mr. Virgimuthu, editor, *Rangoon Mail*, supported the resolution in Tamil, Mr. J. M. Chowdhury in Bengali and Mr. Manilal Ratnachand in Guzerati.

The Chairman in putting the resolution said that the preceding speakers had gone pretty well into the subject and had told them of the abuses and remedies. The company's answer had laid stress on the alleged fact that the abuses were exceptional and due to present conditions brought on by the war. He could tell them of the same grievances against the same company in 1906, when the worm turned, and it would turn again. He felt proud in being able to state that he was the leader of the movement then which led to the formation of the Bengal and Madras Steam Navigation Companies, which for a time gave severe opposition to the B.I. Company. When these companies started working, the grievances against the B.I. Company stopped. This company, which was now pleading impotence, did so then; but when the opposition came nothing was too good for B.I. deck passengers. The company had to mend their ways then and they would have to do so now. He sincerely hoped the B.I. Company would take up the matter sympathetically as the resolution asked them to do. He then put the resolution, which was carried by acclamation.

Mr. S. S. Halkar presented the second resolution which was as follows —

"That a committee consisting of the following gentlemen, with power to add to their number, be appointed as a provisional managing committee of this body, to be hereafter called the Social Service League, to take up the work of social service, such as attending to the needs of the passengers at the wharf and work of a humanitarian nature that the league may decide to undertake, to devise constitutional and conciliatory ways and means for carrying on the said work, and to frame such rules and regulations as would meet the requirement of the purposes in view: President, Mr. B. Cawasjee; Secretary, Dr. P. J. Mehta; Treasurer, Sarajamal Lullabhai; committee, Babu Natram Ram Bux, Rai Bahadur Bhaji Vandra, Messrs. V. N. Sivaya, J. K. Dass, N. C. Sen, Babu Mansookhlal Dolatchand, Babu Muljee Dharsee, Babu Tarachand, Babu Mathura Singh, Babu G. N. Sircar, W. P. Ekambaram Mudeljar, Dr. G. C. Dass, G. Shankar, K. B. Govindaram Pillay, K. B. Banerji, S. S. Halkar, Dr. Duarte, J. C. Billimoria, F. R. Bomanji, Dr. Rao, S. Tyabji, Alibhai Mahomed, M. H. S. Mall, J. K. Ghosh, A. E. Singapor, V. D. Mehta, Manilal Ratanchand, K. T. Mehta, P. A. Maricar, Abubacker Manilal, J. C. Chatterji."

Mr. Halkar in putting forward this resolution referred to the treatment of deck passengers when there was opposition to the B.I., and said that if the B.I. did not make improvements they would eventually have to have their own steamers again. He then stated that deck passengers were driven below deck after the steamer left port, unless they were willing to pay an additional fee, and criticised the letter of the company and denied its contentions. He spoke of death

occurring on a certain steamer he was on from lack of air.

The resolution was supported by Mr. K. B. Banerji in English, Mr. Kirthan in Marwari and Gupta Singh in Hindi.

Mr. Cowasjee in putting the resolution said it was a glorious opportunity for the B.I. to do their duty and for the Social Service League to do theirs. Their work had only begun with the meeting; there was much to be done. He hoped they would do it.

Mr. Sivaya moved the third resolution: "That this meeting authorise the Secretary of the Social Service League to send copies of the first and second resolutions passed unanimately this day to the Local Government, to Messrs. Bulloch Bros, Rangoon, and Mackinnon Mackenzie & Company, Calcutta, Agents, B.I.S.N. Co., Ltd." An

amendment was added to this including Messrs Binny & Company, Agents of the B. I. Company at Madras

Mr. Sivaya reviewed his experiences on B.I. ships and other steamers since 1866. If the B.I. would not ameliorate matters, he said, there was the Japanese line which would carry deck passengers

Mr. Melvani seconded the resolution which was carried unanimately;

Dr Mehta announced that application forms for membership in the league were on the stage. The fee was Re. 1 a year. They could sign there or send the form with the fee to his office, 'No. 14, Mogul Street.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Moosa Jamal for the use of the hall and also to the chair brought the meeting to an end.

### B

#### GOVERNMENT OF BURMA, COMMERCE DEPARTMENT, RESOLUTION.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Burma in the Commerce Department,—No 4S., dated the 21st June 1917.

Representations have been received by the Local Government that considerable inconvenience, amounting in some cases to actual hardship, is suffered by deck passengers travelling between India and Burma on their arrival at, and departure from, Rangoon. The reduction in the amount of travelling accommodation available, owing to a curtailment of the steamer services between Rangoon and Indian ports, is responsible for a large congestion of passengers desiring to return to India. The Local Government has already made arrangements with the British India Steam Navigation Company to reduce the number of waiting passengers as far as possible. It has however been suggested that more can be done to avoid cases of hardship and discomfort by a more careful organization of the booking, embarking and disembarking facilities afforded to passengers. The question has already been ventilated in the press, and the public meetings, and it is understood that a great improvement has been effected. In order to ensure that the subject may be thoroughly investigated, and that everything possible for the comfort of passengers embarking and disembarking shall be carried out, the Lieutenant-Governor is pleased to appoint a small Committee to enquire into the existing arrangements, and to recommend what action is necessary to remedy any abuses that may be discovered. The members of the Committee will be.—

Mr J. P. HARDIMAN, I.C.S.,—Chairman.

Mr. J. W. A. BELL, British India Steam Navigation Company, Ltd.

Mr. P. J. MEHTA, Barrister-at-Law.

The enquiries of the Committee should include the following matters:—

(i) the facilities for obtaining passage tickets promptly and without any exactions above the standard fare;

(ii) the methods of marshalling passengers, and the allegations as to the use of sticks and canes by the wharf or steamer durwans,

(iii) the alleged illegal demands of wharf coolies for carrying luggage;

(iv) the time allowed for passengers to board the steamer on departure;

(v) the amenities provided for women passengers;

(vi) any other deficiencies in the arrangements for the booking, embarkation and disembarkation of passengers that may come to the notice of the Committee.

2. The propriety of the measures taken by the Police, Customs and Health Departments of Government do not fall within the scope of the enquiries to be made, but it is open to the Committee to consult the officers of these departments with a view to effecting an improvement in the methods of administration adopted and to make any suggestions concerning their working which would conduce to the comfort of the passengers.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Chairman and members of the special committee hereby constituted. Ordered also that the Resolution be published for general information.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma,

C. M. WEBB,  
Secretary to the Government of Burma.



COMMERCE DEPARTMENT.—NO. 4S-17.

Dated Rangoon, the June 1917.

Copy forwarded to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, with the request that the Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, may be asked to give all assistance in his power to the Committee in carrying out their enquiries.

Copy forwarded to the Financial Commissioner, Burma, with the request that the Chief Collector of Customs, Burma, may be

asked to give all assistance in his power to the Committee in carrying out their enquiries.

Copy forwarded to the Sanitary Commissioner, Burma, with the request that the Port Health Officer, Rangoon, may be asked to give all assistance in his power to the Committee in carrying out their enquiries.

C

[Extract from the "Rangoon Gazette" of Wednesday, 19th November 1913.]

A Marconigram was received by the Commissioner of Police on Monday from Diamond Island from a passenger on the steamer "Aronda" that deaths had taken place on board while the steamer was coming from Calcutta carrying the English mails to Rangoon. The Marconigram read.—

"Aronda" overcrowded Suffocated. Deaths. Count passengers."

On the arrival of the "Aronda" in port yesterday an investigation was made by the Port Police and it was found that there had been four deaths on board, and all of them,

it would seem, might be rightfully laid to the practice of Brahmín passengers abstaining almost entirely from food during the voyage owing to caste prejudices. There was no overcrowding. The ship is allowed to carry 3,186 passengers and carried all told some 2,500 passengers of all classes. The "Aronda" is a new up-to-date vessel with the latest improvements in passenger accommodation. Owing to her booking these 2,500 odd passengers the "Aronda" could not take her freight, which the "Jellunga" will now carry.

D

[Letter dated the 17th September 1917, from the Chief Collector of Customs, Rangoon, to the Chairman, Deck Passengers' Committee.]

Owing to the health precautionary measures taken at this port, it is necessary for deck passengers to be examined at Sparks Street Jetty on all occasions. When the vessel by which they come to Rangoon is not a Calcutta mail steamer, the passengers are either landed directly at the Sparks Street Wharf or else sent there direct from stream. In the case of the Calcutta mail steamers, the deck passengers are taken on the vessel to the wharf for which she is bound (either Latter Street or Sule Pagoda) and are then transhipped from there to Sparks Street Jetty. The B.I., thanks to the universal shortage of tonnage, are somewhat hard pressed to keep a regular and efficient mail service between Rangoon and Calcutta. It is therefore important that such vessels should be subjected to as little delay as possible. The Rangoon river being a tidal one, it is important that in the movement of vessels, which have to be quickly turned round, a tide should not be missed, particularly as cargo cannot be worked by the Calcutta mail steamers at Sparks Street Jetty. For this reason deck passengers by the Calcutta mails are transhipped from Latter Street or Sule Pagoda Wharf, as the case may be, to the Sparks Street Jetty. I admit that some inconvenience and delay is caused by this arrangement. The question has been frequently discussed by me with Mr. Bell, Mr. Tarleton and Mr. Holmes, and we have invariably come to the same conclu-

sion, *viz*, that though the arrangement is inconvenient, especially from a Customs and Police point of view, in existing circumstances, it is unavoidable. The true remedy is, the building of a suitable arrival wharf with rooms for examination of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class passengers and facilities for undertaking necessary precautionary health measures. It is not likely that this project could be even considered by the Port Commissioners until after the war, when financial conditions may be expected to be easier. In any case the transhipment of deck passengers is much more inconvenient for the Customs and Police than it is for the passengers themselves. So far as they are concerned they are put to certainly no more inconvenience than that to which passengers have nowadays to submit at British ports all over the world owing to the fact that our country is engaged in war.

The general procedure of examination is as follows—

On arrival at Sparks Street Jetty the passengers are at once attended to, and I have never heard any complaint of any delay on account of either my officers or the Police not being ready to deal with passengers. The male passengers, as they arrive, proceed to a large shed, from which they pass through a turnstile to another shed, where the Customs examination is carried out, and from there to another enclosure where they pass the doctor. The female passengers go to an enclosure

on the jetty, from which after examination they are passed directly on to the street. The examination, except in the case of female passengers, is done entirely by the Customs. The Police are there to perform their ordinary police duties.

Since the introduction of more rigid examination, I have received only one complaint and that from an outsider (*i.e.*, not a passenger). This was immediately enquired into and necessary action taken. On the other hand, on several occasions my officers have represented that there appeared to be some sort of organised attempt to harass and interfere with the Customs officers in their work, apparently with the object of getting them to lose their temper and do something rash. It is significant that this occurred shortly after Government published the notification appointing the Deck Passenger Committee. The arrangements for Customs examination are under the control of a Senior Appraiser who is on special duty. The work is actually performed by the Preventive Department. Instructions have been frequently given that the work is to be carried out with the greatest courtesy, consistent with efficient discharge of duty, and I have every reason to suppose that the instructions are being carried out, inasmuch as I have had, as mentioned above, only one complaint from the public. It is absurd

to think that complaints would not have been made to me had Customs officers thrown away passengers' things indiscriminately. It is possible that things may have been lost or even pilfered—things have been known to have been lost and pilfered at Indian and English railway stations, even when there was no examination. I should surely have had complaints of the thieving or pilfering, if it existed to any extent.

Women are always searched by the lady searcher in, I understand, the presence of a lady doctor. The Customs Department are not in a position to know what goes on and I cannot say what methods are adopted in the search. It is fatuous for any reasonable person to suppose that in searching females it is not sometimes necessary to get the searched persons to remove garments. In every civilised country in the world women are searched by women and smuggled articles have been commonly found, which never would have been found had no article of dress been removed. The number of women being less than that of the men, it is only natural that they are finished sooner, and have to wait for the men. The Criminal Investigation Department do not take away books and papers. The Customs officers occasionally do, but I regret I must decline to give any further information on this matter.

## E

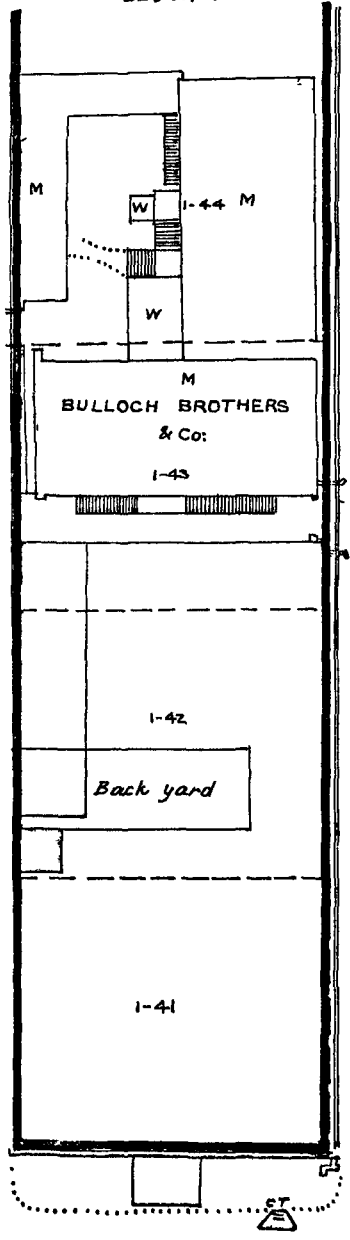
## STATEMENT

*Showing the number of deaths on board ship reported on arrival at Rangoon during the last 10 years.*

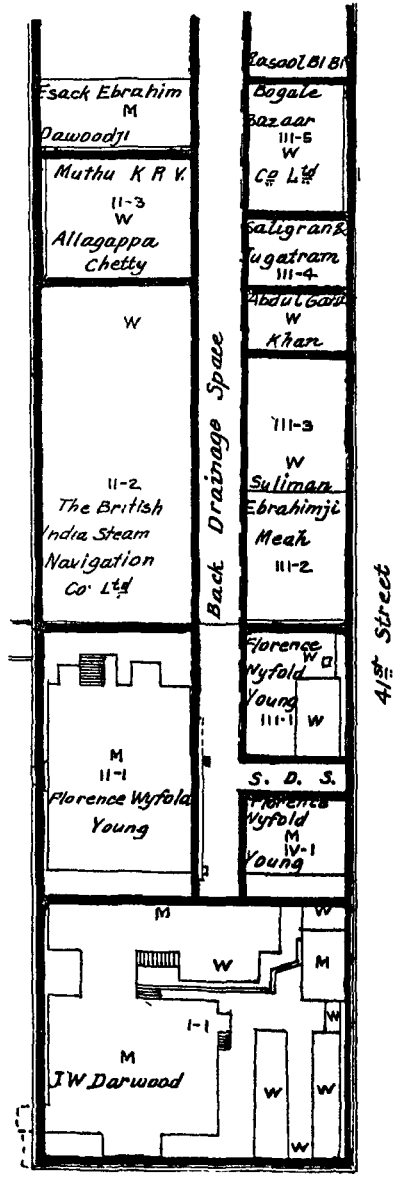
Year.	Infectious.	Non-infectious.	Remarks.
1908	...	8	
1909	3	20	
1910	7	24	
1911	...	9	
1912	...	12	
1913	1	17	
1914	10	13	
1915	16	21	
1916	7	33	
Total	44	166	

SCALE 50 FEET = ONE INCH.

BLOCK F



BLOCK G



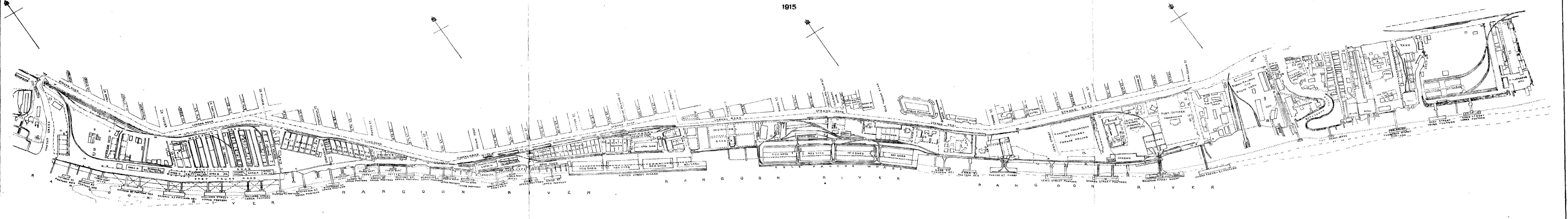
SPARKS STREET

41<sup>ST</sup> STREET

Strand Road

REFERENCES

RANGOON PORT TRUST  
GENERAL PLAN SHOWING STRAND BANK WHARVES AND JETTIES  
1915



SCALE 400 FEET=1 INCH

SCALE 400 FEET=1 INCH

SCALE 400 FEET=1 INCH

SCALE 400 FEET=1 INCH

# REPORT

OF THE

Committee appointed to enquire into the allegations  
of inconvenience and hardship suffered by Deck  
Passengers travelling between Burma and India



RANGOON

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT GOVERNMENT PRINTING, BURMA.

1918