

SA 142/9
23/05/1883

Recd. 20. 6. 83.

Desp. N^o 57 - 12. 7. 83.

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Mauritius

No. 188

Downing Street,

23 May 1883.

Sir,

I have the honour to ac-
-knowledge the receipt of Mr
Napier Broome's Despatch N^o
153 of the 19th of April last,
reporting the despatch of the
Acting Magistrate for the Oil
Islands (Mr Dupont) to Diego
Garcia to examine into the
the Officer Administering
the Government of
Mauritius

present circumstances and con-
-dition of the Island, as
affected by the establishment
there of the Coaling Stations
of the Orient and Lundo Lines
of Australian Steamers.

2. I approve of the action
that has been taken in the
matter, and shall be glad to
hear the result of Mr Duports
visit.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most Obedient
humble servant

Derby

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From the Secre
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SUBJECT: Visit
to Diego Go

FURTHER PAPERS E

ACTION TAKEN: Let

G. O. to

To
Mr. E

Drift

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Despatch MINUTE PAPER No. 188¹/₈₃

From the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

~~No~~ Despatch No. 188¹/₈₃ Dated 23 May, 1883.

SUBJECT: Visit of the Magistrate for the Oil Islands
to Diego Garcia - To be informed of result.

FURTHER PAPERS ENCLOSED: Nos. _____

ACTION TAKEN: Letter to _____ Despatch No. 57 date 12 "7" 1883.

G. O. to _____ No. _____ date _____ 188

To

His Excellency the Governor.

Draft reply submitted for approval.

2/7/83.

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12/7/83

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COLONY OF MAURITIUS

REPORT

OF

THE ACTING MAGISTRATE

FOR THE

LESSER DEPENDENCIES

ON

DIEGO GARCIA.

9

Report on Diego Garcia.

No. 2.

Bambous, Black River,
4th June 1883.

The Honorable
The Colonial Secretary.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for submission to His Excellency the Governor, the Report called for by the instructions of His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor F. Napier Broome, Esq., C.M.G., conveyed to me with your letter A/597 of the 16th April 1883.

I have &c.,

IVANOFF DUPONT,

Acting Magistrate for the Lesser
Dependencies of Mauritius.

REPORT of the Acting Magistrate for the Lesser Dependencies of Mauritius on the changes and circumstances produced in the Island DIEGO GARGIA, since it has become a coaling Station for the lines of Australian Steamers.

1. The Island Diego Garcia since it has lately become a coaling Station is visited occasionally by several Mail Steamers of the Orient Company, and many others, in all probability, will call before long in its beautiful Bay.

* 2. Messrs. Lund & Co., of London have two Steamers (Cargo Boats) the "Yoman" and the "Delcomyn", which twice a year, in April and September, run from England to Australia and back. Of these two Steamers the "Delcomyn" only has called at Diego Garcia: In the month of July or August 1882 (the precise month and date could not been ascertained) bound to Australia from England; on the 21st October 1882, bound from Australia to England, and on the 29th January 1883 bound to Australia from England.

I was informed that the low price of freight in Australia has been the cause that only one of those Steamers has called at Diego Garcia.

Lund & Co., have an agent at Diego Garcia, Mr. G. Worsell.

The Orient and Pacific Steam Navigation Companies have twelve Steamships on the line between England and Australia, the largest of which is the "Austral" 5588 tons register, and the smallest the "Lusitania" 3825 tons register.

The agent of the Companies at Diego Garcia is Mr. James Spurs.

From the 1st day of October 1882 to the 17th day of May 1883 nineteen Steamers of the said Companies have called at Diego Garcia, as shown in the annexed table.

3. Messrs. Lund & Co. have contracted for the supply of coals to fifty steamers of different lines trading between England, Australia, China, &c., but none have called as yet at Diego Garcia for several causes, the principal of which is the length of time during which steamers are delayed at Diego Garcia, and which is due to the insufficient number of labourers which have as yet been obtained at the Island as colliers. It is expected that, as soon as a proper number of colliers can be procured, at least three steamers a week will call at Diego Garcia besides the "Orient" and "Pacific" steamers, outward and homeward bound, which will call twice each month; about the 15th or 30th of the month.

4. Up to this day the dates of calling have not been regular.

The number of days from Adelaide have been 12 days on an average, but I could not obtain the average number of days from Port Said. The steamers do not regularly call at Aden.

5. Besides the nineteen steamers already mentioned, three others and two sailing ships have come to Diego Garcia from England to bring coals and materials for the construction of iron lighters for the Orient Company, and nine English rivetters and carpenters, and 40 Somaulis from Port Said. I could not ascertain the names of those vessels.

For Lund & Co. four sailing ships have come in with coals; three from England and one from Australia.

6. The mail steamers have up to the present stayed at the Island from 24 to 68 hours; but it is intended that they should not stay longer than 24 hours.

7. The number of passengers on board the various steamers that have called at the Island either way has varied from 300 to 400, as far as could be ascertained by me.

8. Up to the present time the European workmen and the Somaulis in the employ of the Orient Company as colliers and laborers, and who have been on the Island, the former since the 9th of November 1882 and the latter since the 26th of February of this year, have been provisionally provided with lodgings on "Pointe de l'Est" Establishment. It is not decided yet whether the Orient Company will have their establishment on "East Island", at the entrance of the Bay, or whether they will come to understanding with the proprietors of Diego Garcia in order that they may have their establishment at "Pointe de l'Est," or at some other part of the principal Island.

No special workmen or labourers and colliers are employed by Lund & Co. the labourers of the Island being employed for unloading the coal ships of the Company, and supplying coals on board the steamers.

The proprietors of Diego Garcia have entered into an agree-

ment with Lund and Co. and share in the profits derived from the coal supplies.

The Orient Company do not intend to send to the Island a larger number of colliers and labourers if they can come to an agreement with the proprietors of the Island. The coaling is carried on at present by the Somaulis and also by labourers hired from the proprietors of Diego Garcia.

9. Since Diego Garcia has become a coaling station the population has increased by :—

Europeans	{ Englishmen Italians Greeks }	18 men
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Somaulis, from Port Saïd,
under engagement for one year. 40 „

Total 58 „

Seventeen of these Europeans are likely to leave from January to March of next year, after the completion of the iron lighters; and Mr. Spurs, the agent of the Orient Company, does not intend to keep the Somaulis, but to send them back to Port Saïd as soon as he will have received from Mauritius 40 to 50 labourers whom Messrs. Blyth Brothers & Co. have been instructed to engage for the Orient Company. He has found that the Somaulis do not give the amount of work obtained from labourers from Mauritius, although they receive much higher wages *i. e.* : R. 1.20 per diem, and further that they are not easily managed.

These Somaulis were engaged before the French Consul at Port Saïd. I saw the written agreement, but I gave no opinion as to its validity.

All provisions necessary for the rations of the Europeans and Somaulis are imported from England and Australia.

10. No changes have taken place at Diego Garcia since it has become a coaling station of such a radical character as would necessitate any important change in the law, but I would suggest that in the new ordinance now under consideration a clause should be inserted which would give the Magistrate power to modify or annul, as he may judge proper, contracts of service made out of the jurisdiction of the Courts of Mauritius.

Very few of the passengers by the Mail steamers land on the Island, and then only by leave of the Managers. No disorder of any kind has been caused, as I was informed.

11. A revenue of about £ 1400 has been obtained since January 1882 by the proprietors of the Island for charges on labour supplied for unloading and loading coals, and for ballast (sand and coral).

How far the supply of ballast will not at some later period prove prejudicial to the Island I must leave to more competent persons to decide. A fact I must however mention which has been related to me by Mr Spurs is this : that since he has been in

the Island, about seventeen years, he has observed that the island has been losing yearly in breadth. He even goes so far as to state that it has lost nearly 18 feet during that length of time.

It is estimated by Mr Spurs that when matters have been properly settled and Steamers call regularly at Diego Garcia, about 50,000 tons of coals will be imported yearly to the Island. Since the 30th October 1881, i.e. : during the last 18 months, only 15,100 tons have been imported of which 9,600 by the Orient Company and 5,500 by Lund and Co.

Goods in the stores of the Island have been occasionally sold to the Europeans and Somaulis labourers in the employ of the Orient Company, and also to the sailors of the colliers, in the same manner as to the labourers of the Island, and the produce of the sales is estimated by Mr Spurs not to have exceeded Rs 350.

From the investigations I have made, no illegal traffic has been carried on; some provisions, however, have been occasionally obtained by the Managers of the Island from the steamers when needed. Fowls have also been sold by the labourers to the Captains of the colliers.

12. The Orient Company do not sell their coals which are brought only for their own steamers, and coal would be refused to chance steamers except in cases of emergency.

Messrs. Lund & Co. are coal merchants, and will sell their coals to all who may apply for them at £2 5s per ton.

The amount of coals for the Orient Company at this moment at Diego Garcia is 4,000 tons, 2,600 of which are stored on two hulks anchored opposite "Minimini" establishment, and 1,400 deposited on land at "Pointe de l'Est."

The amount for Lund is 3,000 tons stored in two hulks and deposited on shore, at Pointe de l'Est.

The coals are brought to the Island at irregular intervals up to the present time, by steamers and sailing ships.

13. The Mauritius Government has the right to resume possession, on each of the establishments "Pointe de l'Est," "Pointe Marianne," and "Minimini," of two acres of land, this right was reserved at the time of the sale of the Island on the 12th day of September 1865, and it was stipulated that the land so to be resumed possession of would be taken for the erection of a school, church or chapel, police station, prison, court house, naval station or store or other public buildings or works, without any compensation beyond the actual value of any crop, plantation or building thereupon.

I do not see for the moment the expediency of laying out a village; but the erection of a school and principally of a chapel would certainly have a very good effect on the population of the Island.

14. No changes as to the health of the Island have taken place. No cases of disease have been introduced.

I am informed by Mr Spurs, the agent of the Orient Compa-

ny, that should a mail steamer arrive with a contagious disease on board no communication would be allowed by him; that coals, if any were required, would be taken by the sailors of the steamers themselves from the hulks which are anchored one mile off the land to leeward; that in a case of a collier he would cause it to anchor two miles off the land at the entrance of the bay, and would see that no communication took place.

Mr. Le Conte, actually the head Manager of the Island, informed me that his intention was to carry out these measures.

No means exist however for preventing communication, if it were attempted, and I think that it would be advisable that powers be given to the Head Manager of the Island for this purpose.

15. The Orient Company intend building two light-houses, one at "Horsburgh" point, in the South East part of the Island, and another on "West Island" at the entrance of the bay. For the present it is only contemplated to erect poles with lights.

All vessels are piloted by Mr. Spurs, and he charges £ 6 per Steamer, and £ 8 per sailing ship, in and out.

16. No shops besides those formerly existing have been opened in the Island, and no goods are sold to the passengers and sailors who occasionally land, save sometimes to the sailors of the colliers, as I have already stated.

No disorder nor debauchery have taken place, and I am happy to be able to attribute it to the good order maintained by Mr. Spurs.

17. Several days after my arrival at Diego Garcia on the 6th of May, one of the Steamers of the Orient Company, the "Garonne" came in from Australia. I had occasion the same day to see the Captain of the Steamer who informed me that it was the intention of the Company to establish a line of Steamers between Diego Garcia and Mauritius and to employ two Steamers on the said line. This, he said, however, would not take place before the end of the year.

Mr Spurs, the agent of the Orient Company, stated to me that he had written to the Managers of the Company suggesting to them the advisability of such line, and to communicate thereon with the Colonial Government.

18. On my return from my visit of inspection to the other Islands of the "Chagos" group, on the 14th May, Mr Spurs brought to my notice that the Steamer "Orient" was expected from Australia on the 17th and that another Steamer from England was expected also on the same day.

On the said date the "Orient" did not come, but the "Chimborazo" arrived in the evening, 26 days out from England, 13 days from Port Said, and 11 days from Suez, and left the next day at about 11 o'clock a.m.

I had agreed with Captain Hounslow, in charge of the Stella, to leave the same day in the afternoon, but Mr Spurs, who had gone to take the "Chimborazo" out, having only returned

All of which is respectfully submitted for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor.

IVANOFF DUPONT,

Acting Magistrate for the Lesser
Dependencies of Mauritius.

Bambous, Black River,
4th June 1883.

TABLE SHOWING THE STEAMERS WHICH HAVE CALLED AT "DIEGO GARCIA" FROM THE 1ST OF OCTOBER 1882 TO THE 17TH OF MAY 1883.

[illegible]

TABLE SHOWING THE STEAMERS WHICH HAVE CALLED AT "DIEGO GARCIA" FROM THE 1ST OF OCTOBER
1882 TO THE 17TH OF MAY 1883.

OUTWARDS.						HOMEWARDS.			
Names of Steamers	No. of days from England	No. of days from Port Said	No. of days from Suez	Arrival at Diego Garcia	Departure from Diego Garcia	Names of Steamers	Number of days from Australia	Arrival at Diego Garcia	Departure from Diego Garcia
Orient ...	24	Could not be ascertained	Could not be ascertained	16.11.82	17.11.82	Sorata ...	11	1.10.82	2.10.82
Chimborazo ...	unknown			4.12.82	5.12.82	Cuzco ...	11	16.10.82	18.10.82
John Elder ...	24			15.12.82	16.12.82	Garonne ...	13	21.12.82	23.12.82
Sorata ...	25			30.12.82	31.12.82	Orient ...	10	12. 1.83	14. 1.83
Cuzco ...	24			13. 1.83	15. 1.83	Chimborazo...	12	29. 1.83	31. 1.83
Liguria ...	23			25. 1.83	26. 1.83	John Elder...	12	10. 2.83	12. 2.83
Cephalonia ...	24			9. 2.83	13. 2.83	Sorata ...	12	23. 2.83	25. 2.83
Garonne ...	24			17. 3.83	19. 3.83	Cuzco ...	13	10. 3.83	12. 3.83
Lusitania ...	24			19. 4.83	20. 4.83	Garonne ...	12	6. 5.83	8. 5.83
Chimborazo ...	26	13	11	17. 5.83	18. 5.83				

4th June 1883.

IVANOFF DUPONT,

Acting Magistrate for the Lesser
Dependencies of Mauritius.