

# THE SURVEYING DEPARTMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ENGLISHMAN.

SIR,—Having seen a letter in your valuable columns from the captain of the *Bertha*, also a statement, the following day, to the effect that Captain Stewart had explained the matter, I venture to think, if you will give publicity to the enclosed correspondence, it will go far to prove to your numerous readers that there is much that is radically wrong in the Surveying Department of Calcutta.

In conclusion, allow me to draw your attention to the date of the last letter received from Captain Stewart. The motive speaks for itself. I left dock the 5th instant.

J. B. T. CATOR,  
Master.

*Magnolia*, September 28, 1875.

P.S.—I am not at present at liberty to publish the correspondence between Messrs. Findlay Muir and Messrs. Gladstone Wyllie, but may mention that Messrs. Findlay Muir having tendered the fees for work which was never performed, is not intended as an expression of opinion in favour of the views held by Messrs. Gladstone Wyllie and the surveyor of Lloyds.

J. B. T. CATOR.

Ship *Magnolia*, Calcutta, 20th Sept., 1875.

To the President of the Chamber of Commerce.

SIR,—As I think that all the members of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce are more or less interested in shipping and marine matters generally, I do not think that I am unwarrantably intruding on your valuable time in asking you to be good enough to lay before them the following statement of facts, and to beg the Chamber to give expression to their opinion thereon. I am acting in this matter solely in the interests of my owners and brother-shipmasters generally.

Had I been differently situated, matters might have ended most unfortunately for me; but, thanks to influential agents, I got through a difficulty that would probably have overwhelmed a master less favourably placed.

I command the Barque *Magnolia*, and arrived here in July last with salt from Liverpool. My vessel was surveyed in February 1875 at home, at the request of my owners, by Lloyds' and Veritas' surveyors, and the date of survey is duly entered in their respective registers. On arrival here, I found that a large portion of the sheathing had come off the bottom of my vessel on the passage out. I therefore decided to dock her for examination, and engaged the Caledonia Dry Dock for the purpose. I was induced to select this dock, as I liked the superintendent's manner, and considered his terms rather more favourable than that of the other docks. On proceeding off the Caledonia Dock, and whilst waiting outside for tide, &c., I was boarded by Captain Stewart (Lloyds' surveyor), who, to my surprise, addressed me in the most authoritative manner, asking if it were true that I was going into Mr. Dean's dock; and, on my replying in the affirmative, he said: "Well, if you do so, I shall not survey the vessel, and you will get no insurance on her cargo here." To which remark I replied: "We shall see all about that; but, after what has occurred, I shall certainly not call you in to inspect the *Magnolia* on my account." On reaching my agents' office, I found that Captain Stewart had written to Messrs. Finlay, Muir, and Co. to somewhat the same effect, but alleging as an excuse that the Caledonia Dock had only one European shipwright, which objection, I may observe, applies equally to every dock here; but, before proceeding further, I may state at the same time that Captain Stewart advised me to go into the Commercial Dock. Now, as the Commercial Dock at the time had no European in it at all, but an ex-assistant harbour-master, and as it is a very small inconvenient dock.

I could not see any just grounds for such a recommendation.

My vessel was 30 days in dock, and, during the whole time her repairs were in progress, Captain Stewart never set his foot either on the dock or on board my vessel, and from first to last never examined the ship in any way, or went below in the hold, or took the slightest trouble to satisfy himself with regard to her condition, though he subsequently sent me, unsolicited, a special report on her, and, furthermore, certified, on account of Lloyds' register, that she had undergone periodical survey by him, acting in his capacity of Lloyds' surveyor.

On the completion of the repairs, and preparatory to leaving the dock, I applied to my charterers, Messrs. Visram, Ebrahim, and Co., to send me a few boats of cargo for stiffening, to which application I received an answer that as all the underwriters to whom they applied had declined to take any insurance on the *Magnolia*, they were, therefore, unable to carry out the terms of the charter-party. On representing this to my agents, they wrote to Captain Stewart, requesting him to be good enough to call upon them, which he did, and some conversation occurred between him and Messrs. Finlay, Muir, and Co., which I did not hear, but which appears to have induced Captain Stewart to change his mind with regard to the *Magnolia*; for, as I was leaving the office, I met Captain Stewart in the street in the act of leaving also, who said to me: "Well, I must now undo what I did yesterday." Next morning Captain Stewart came on board, and, sitting in the cabin, took down all the particulars of the vessel's repairs as I told him; and, in the course of the forenoon, Messrs. Visram Ebrahim told me that they had received the letters of cover they required, and would, of course, now proceed with the loading of the vessel.

I think it is unnecessary for me to say anything further in order to show the Chamber the urgent necessity that exists for some steps being taken to protect the interests of ships and underwriters connected with this port in matters of this kind.

If Captain Stewart has really, as he boasts to have, all the powers of Lloyds' surveyor and Lloyds' Classification Committee combined in his own person, all that I can say is that he ought to use that great power with more moderation and discretion.

An opinion seems to prevail here, more especially with regard to country charters, amongst native brokers and merchants, that Captain Stewart's special survey report, for which he charges a fee of Rs. 48, is a *sine qua non*, and that, without such a document, no vessel, no matter what her condition may be, need apply for insurance in the offices he represents. Surely, there must be something abnormal and unhealthy in such a state of affairs; and if Captain Stewart receives, as I am led to believe he does, a liberal salary from the different underwriting agencies he represents, common honesty demands that he ought to furnish them with truthful reports, without reference to future emolument or reward. I should therefore most respectfully ask the Chamber to consider these matters carefully; and, in the protection of their own interests, to insure such orders to their surveyors as would prevent for the future any touting for fees other than those to which they are legally entitled.

I enclose copies of certain letters and other documents on the subject under reference in this letter, which, I think, will go far to support what I have said; and, if any additional proofs are required, I am in a position to substantiate them by good and reliable witnesses.

In conclusion, I may observe that I am no disappointed man, with a grievance to get rectified; all that I wanted on my own account I have got, and had Captain Stewart attended at the dock, and honestly and carefully performed his duty as he ought to have done, in the interests of the various underwriters he represents, and reported ever so unfavourably on my ship, I should never have called his opinion in question. It could but be an opinion in any case, and therefore liable to error on either one side or the other; but I must most emphatically protest against any improper interference in the management of my vessel's affairs, and shall never permit any surveyor, no matter who he is, to dictate to me what dock, ship-chandler, and sail-maker I shall employ.

Allow me to draw your attention to the accompanying copy of report and endorsement, apologising for the length of my letter.

I remain, Sirs, your most obedient servant,  
(Sd.) J. B. T. CATOR.  
(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

112, Hastings Street, August 4, 1875.

MESSRS. FINLAY, MUIR, AND CO.

DEAR SIRS,—I hear the *Magnolia* is about to dock in the Caledonia Dock. I beg to say I have a strong objection to attend a vessel in that dock, because there is no European assistant under the foreman, as there is in the other

docks. When there is, the objection will be removed.

I am, dear Sirs, your faithfully, W. STEWART.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

Calcutta, August 16, 1875.

CAPTAIN STEWART.  
DEAR SIR,—I have called at your office several times, but failed to find you in.

I thought you might wish to see the *Magnolia*, so called to inform you she is stripped, &c. I am after caulking her, going to sheath with teak, and yellow-metal her.

I am, dear Sirs, your obedient servant, (Sd.) J. B. T. CATOR.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

Lloyds' Surveyors' Office, No. 12, Hastings Street, August 17, 1875.

My DEAR CAPTAIN CATOR,—Having been very busy and away, I have just seen your note of the 16th instant, for which many thanks. I shall be most happy to visit your vessel in the Caledonia Dry Docks if there is a European foreman in the dock besides the superintendent; if not, I must decline to inspect her, as I do not approve native supervision during the superintendent's absence. I beg to point out to you that all the other docks have a proper European staff, and the Caledonia Dock must have the like before I can countenance it.

I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully, (Sd.) W. STEWART, Lloyds' Surveyor, Port Calcutta.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

*Magnolia*, August 20, 1875.

CAPTAIN STEWART.  
DEAR SIR,—Yours of the 17th duly to hand. I am much surprised at the attitude you have assumed in the matter, having been always under the impression that surveyor's duty was to recommend any repair he thought necessary, also to inspect such repairs, and see they were properly done.

I put my ship into the Caledonia Dock, because I could get my work done as reasonably as at any dock, also as well and better than in some.

Allow me to point out to you that none of the work has or will be done under native supervision. Mr. Dean, who is, I need not say, a thoroughly practical shipwright, has been at the dock the whole time the work has been going on, and has superintended the whole of the repairs. I have also an experienced shipwright as carpenter, who supervises the work, and I myself am seldom absent. I am so satisfied with all that has yet been done, that I can positively state it is impossible to get better work done anywhere.

Surely it is better to put a ship into a dock where there is a shipwright superintendent than into a dock where there is no practical man at the head, and a foreman picked up anywhere for the occasion.

Allow me to draw your attention to the fact that while Mr. Dean has had the superintendence of the dock I am now in, he has had forty-seven ships under repair, and in no one instance has there been any complaint of work badly done, which is more than can be said of some docks.

In the event of there being any question as to why Lloyds' surveyor did not come to look at the ship (which, I trust, may not arise), I must send this correspondence home to my owners, and to people who do not know the perfectly honourable character you bear, and the high position you hold in Calcutta, the fact of your recommending some docks to the exclusion of others will be liable to misconception.

I am, dear Sir, yours obediently, J. B. T. CATOR.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

Ship *Magnolia*, Calcutta, September 16, 1875.

MESSRS. GLADSTONE, WYLLIE, & CO.

GENTLEMEN,—Not having had any business relation with your firm, I am at a loss to know in what way I am indebted to you Rs. 96. I have received a bill from you for that amount. Will you kindly explain the matter?

Yours obediently, J. B. T. CATOR.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

Calcutta, September 16, 1875.

Captain J. B. T. CATOR, Ship *Magnolia*.

DEAR SIR,—The bill referred to in your letter of date is for the fee due to us for the survey held on the *Magnolia* by our surveyor on 2nd instant for the purpose as stated in certificate No. 1705, which is countersigned by us, and which was delivered at your agent's office along with our bill about a fortnight ago, of ascertaining what repairs had been effected in order that the ship might be reported for insurance. As the certificate has been so long in your or your agent's possession, without any exception being taken, we presume we are right in assuming this statement, and the one that the survey was held at your request, are correct, and we have therefore to request that you will pass our bill without further delay.

Yours faithfully, GLADSTONE, WYLLIE, & Co., Agents to Lloyds.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

Calcutta, Ship *Magnolia*, Sept. 18, 1875.

TO MESSRS. GLADSTONE, WYLLIE, & CO.

GENTLEMEN,—Enclosed you have survey report and bills returned. I most decidedly refuse to pay the amounts charged, viz., Rs. 96 and Rs. 33, total Rs. 129, one hundred and twenty-nine, considering your surveyor reported on the ship not for my benefit, but for the insurance. I do not see that I am morally or legally called on to pay the sum of Rs. 129 to you or your surveyor, as I have already paid the survey-fee to two surveyors who attended the ship during the time she was in dock, and who gave me valuable suggestions as to what repairs were necessary to make the ship a good insurance risk. Allow me to inform you that your surveyor was never below in the ship, never before the mainmast, and, in fact, has never looked at the ship at all. All the information he has about her was got from me sitting in my cabin; and why should I rob my owners of Rs. 129 to pay for this.

I have had two surveyors, as I have remarked before in the letter. One of them Captain Brown, attended the ship at least twelve times, and gave me much assistance. His charge is not as much as you make for doing nothing. I am writing home to my owners to lay before "Lloyds' Committee" a full account of this transaction as to how your surveyors try first to make me go into a dock of his choosing.

then—(but it is of no use my entering into the whole matter with you).

I remain, Gentlemen, yours obediently, —, Master, Ship *Magnolia*.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

Calcutta, September 21, 1875.

CAPTAIN CATOR, Ship *Magnolia*.

DEAR SIR,—The tone of your letter of 18th instant is so objectionable that we did not think it advisable this correspondence should be further continued. We wish to say, however, that Captain Stewart has satisfied us of the incorrectness of your statement regarding him, and that your agents have promised to pay the fee for surveying and reporting on the ship under your command.

Yours faithfully, (Sd.) GLADSTONE, WYLLIE, & Co., Agents to Lloyds.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

*Magnolia*, September 23, 1875.

MESSRS. GLADSTONE, WYLLIE, & CO.

GENTLEMEN,—Yours of the 21st to hand. I am quite of your opinion the correspondence should cease, but must regret you did not think it necessary to hear my side of the story before arriving at the conclusion my statement was not correct.

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently, (Sd.) J. B. T. CATOR.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

LLOYDS' Surveyors' Office, No. 12, Hastings Street, the 22nd September, 1875.

CAPTAIN CATOR, Barque *Magnolia*.

SIR,—I have to request that you will be good enough to return to me the Lloyds' certificate with regard to the late repairs executed to the *Magnolia*, granted by me, and dated the 3rd of September 1875, as from the appearance of the vessel's metal, since she has been afloat, I am compelled to withdraw my opinion therein expressed.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, (Sd.) W. STEWART, R.N.R., Surveyor to Lloyds' Register of B. and F. Shipping.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

*Magnolia*, 23rd September 1875.

Surveyor to Lloyds' Register of B. and F. Shipping in Port of Calcutta.

SIR,—The certificate you ask for I shall send direct to Lloyds' Committee, London, with endorsement as per copy enclosed, with your letter, 22nd instant, appended.

In conclusion, allow me to remark I do not think you have ever seen a vessel leave a dock with metal in better order, and it is rather late for you to begin now to survey the *Magnolia*, unless you do it, as before, from a distance.

Yours faithfully, J. B. T. CATOR.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

Lloyds' Register of British and Foreign Shipping, Port Calcutta, 3rd September 1875.

This is to certify that I have surveyed the Barque *Magnolia*, No. 117, on Lloyds' Register of British and Foreign Shipping, belonging to Messrs. Patton, Vickers, and Co., and that I have transmitted to the Committee of Lloyds Register of British and Foreign Shipping, London, a report stating that all repairs recommended by me have been completed to my satisfaction, and the requirements of the Society's rules fulfilled, and that I have recommended that she be continued as classed, being fit to carry dry and perishable cargoes.

(Sd.) W. STEWART, Surveyor to Lloyds' Register of B. and F. Shipping, Port of Calcutta.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

We, the undersigned, Captain and officers of the *Magnolia*, certify that Captain Stewart never surveyed or in any way examined the vessel during her stay in this port, or while she was in dock.

J. B. T. CATOR, Master; J. STEWART, Mate; R. MCPHERSON, 2nd Mate; and DUNCAN MCCALL, Carpenter.

The undersigned can also certify that the said surveyor did not in any way survey the ship during the time she was in dock.

SAMUEL DEAN, Dock Master.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

I, the undersigned, surveyor to Lloyds' Agency, and surveyor to Lloyds' Register of British and Foreign Shipping, &c., &c., &c., do hereby certify that, at the request of Captain Cator, of the Barque *Magnolia*, I this day attended on board the said vessel, lying in the Caledonia Dry Dock at Howrah, to ascertain what repairs had been effected, in order to be enabled to report on the ship, after carefully ascertaining the extent of the said repairs, and now report as follows—that is to say:—

The Barque *Magnolia*, of 1083 tons, was built at St. John, N.B., in the year 1855, of mixed timber. She is now classed 2 F. in Lloyds' Register of B. and F. Shipping, also holds the class 5-6 A. 1.1. in the Veritas' Register, and has an American certificate as well.

This vessel was originally a strong-built ship of her class, and as she has just undergone the undermentioned repairs, I consider her a good insurance risk.

Repairs lately effected to the *Magnolia* in the Caledonia Dock.

Ship stripped, cleaned down, and caulked throughout, including all decks.

Hanging knees refastened with 350 new iron bolts. The butts of the topside planking have been rebolted where necessary.

Two new iron hanging knees have been supplied and fitted between deck, and one ditto ditto in lower hold.

Four new staple iron knees have been fitted between decks, abreast of the fore and main-masts.

The ship has been newly sheathed from the keel to the lower part of the boot topping with half-inch teak planking.

The scuppers have been repaired where necessary, and the vessel has been remetalled over ordinary felt with 16, 18, and 20 oz. sheathing metal.

W. STEWART, R.N.R. Registered in this Agency, dated in Calcutta, September 2. Gladstone, Wyllie, and Co., Agents to Lloyds.

Calcutta, September 2, 1875.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.

AFFIDAVIT.

I, Samuel Dean, Superintendent of the Caledonia Dock, Howrah, swear that Captain William Stewart never surveyed the *Magnolia* while she was in the said dock; said Captain William Stewart was never under the bottom or in the hold of the said vessel during the time she was under repairs.

(Sd.) SAMUEL DEAN, Superintendent, Caledonia Dock.

Mr. Samuel Dean was sworn before me this day.

(Sd.) D. DICKENS, Magistrate, Calcutta, Northern Division.

Calcutta Police Court, 28th September 1875.

(True copy.) J. B. J. CATOR.

AFFIDAVIT.

We, the undersigned, James Bence Townsend Cator, Master, John Stewart, late Chief Mate, Roderick McPherson, 2nd Mate, Duncan McColl, Carpenter, and Henry Langridge, Apprentice of the Barque *Magnolia*, now lying in Hastings Moorings, Port of Calcutta, do most solemnly swear as follows:—

That Captain William Stewart, Lloyds' Surveyor, port of Calcutta, never has surveyed the *Magnolia* or her repairs during the time she was in dock undergoing said repairs, or during the time she has been laying in the Port of Calcutta.

We also swear the said Captain William Stewart has never been below in the hold of the *Magnolia* during the time she has been in this port, or ever under her bottom while in dock.

(Sd.) J. B. T. CATOR, Master; J. STEWART, late Chief Mate; R. MCPHERSON, 2nd Mate; DUNCAN MCCOLL, Carpenter; and H. A. LANGRIDGE, Apprentice.

The above depositions were severally sworn before me this day.

(Sd.) P. DICKENS, Magistrate of Calcutta, Northern Division.

Calcutta Police Court, the 28th September, 1875.

(True copy.) J. B. T. CATOR.