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“Commerce and Companies,”

BEING A REPRINT

FROM

THE “PIONEER,”

From August 1884 to September 1885.

Calcutta:

T. BLACK & CO., PRINTERS, 56, BENTINCK STREET.

1885.

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COMMERCE AND COMPANIES.

CALCUTTA, 16th August 1884.

INVESTORS who have hitherto pinned their faith to "the elegant simplicity of the four per-cents" must view with a certain amount of complacency the present state of the Calcutta share-market and the serious discount to which almost every description of stock has fallen, and must feel very strongly, that two-per-cent paid regularly every half-year is after all much more satisfactory, than spasmodic dividends of occasionally an unusually high amount.

Last year, at this time, the general run of shareholders in Jute Manufacturing Companies were jubilant; they had had two years' unexampled prosperity, and though a few discerning ones saw the little white cloud, which surely betokened the coming squall, the great majority laughed to scorn the idea that a first-class Jute Mill in this country, reasonably managed, could possibly work at a loss. The revulsion from a half-yearly dividend of 15 per cent. to nothing at all, no doubt is painful, yet sad to say is true, and as things look at present may continue for a while. For the first half of last year the dividends declared by Jute Manufacturing Companies, the shares of which are quoted in our stock lists, amounted to no less than, in round numbers, 11½ lakhs of rupees. For the first half of this year the dividends declared by the same Companies will not likely exceed 1¼ lakh; while on the other hand the loss of working will probably total up 2½ lakhs; so that taken as a whole, the great jute manufacturing industry of Bengal, with a capital of probably nearly four crores of rupees, has worked at no profit at all.

This is now the season of Reports, and those that have been issued have been with one exception of a most dismal and unhappy character. The first to make its appearance was that of the Budge-Budge Jute Mills. This Company has, for some time past, been a favourite stock in the share market; for the half-year ended 30th April 1884 the profit made was Rs. 14,928, the paid-up capital being Rs. 14,40,000. For the same period of 1883, the profit made was Rs. 2,58,441 and a dividend of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the half-year was paid, while Rs. 75,000 were credited to the Reserve Fund. This year by adding to the miserable profit of Rs. 14,928, the sum of Rs. 10,000 from the Reserve Fund, a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, was declared. Shares in this concern of Rs. 100, with Rs. 80 paid-up, can now be bought for Rs. 83: last year they touched Rs. 155. This represents a depreciation of Rs. 72 per share, or, in round numbers, nearly 13 lakhs of rupees! The Managing Agents of the Budge-Budge Mills are prudent men of business, and believe in making hay while the sun shines, so having tickled the shareholders into a good humour by the payment of large dividends, it was not difficult to induce them to increase their remuneration from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 per annum. What will the Agents do now that the prosperous period has passed away?

The next Report to follow was that of the Fort Gloster Jute Manufacturing Company for the half-year ended 31st May 1884. For the same period of 1883 the Mill made a profit of Rs. 1,42,869, paid a dividend of 5 per cent. for the half-year, and took Rs. 68,129 to the credit of Reserve. This half-year they have managed to make a loss of Rs. 48,992, and shares of Rs. 100, which last year reached Rs. 100, can now be bought for Rs. 37 to Rs. 38.

The next to enter an appearance was the Report of the Goosery Jute Mills Company for the five months ended 30th June 1884. For an almost similar period last year the profit made was Rs. 31,710, and a dividend of 10 per cent. was declared. This year the loss on the working amounts to Rs. 63,820, and the Reserve and Depreciation Funds have virtually disappeared. Shares in this concern last year reached Rs. 190; they can now be bought for Rs. 85.

Next on the list comes the Asiatic Jute Company. For the first half of last year this concern made a profit of Rs. 32,803, and for the first time in the annals of its history paid a dividend, and that, too, of 5 per cent. This effort would seem to have been beyond its strength; it has drooped ever since, and for the first half of this year has managed to work at a loss of Rs. 19,491. Shares in this concern have dropped from Rs. 80 to Rs. 22.

The Gourepore Mills were the next to follow. For the first half of last year they netted a profit of Rs. 1,66,405, paid a dividend of 6 per cent., and took some Rs. 93,500 to Reserve and Improvement Accounts. This half-year the profit made, it is true, amounts to Rs. 72,353, but inasmuch as the large stock of jute remaining is of greater invoice value, and would show a smart loss on realization, and having regard to the present depressed position of the bag market, the Directors do not recommend a dividend. Shares which last year were Rs. 125 can now be had at Rs. 72.

The Agents of the Howrah Mills Company, Limited, are gentlemen wise in their generation, and they also believe in providing for a rainy day, so seeing that the shareholders were becoming demoralized at receiving such large dividends they applied to them for an increase to their remuneration. There was some manoeuvre attempted, and at one time there was a very pretty quarrel between the Directors and the Managing Agents. The result was, however, that Messrs. Ernsthausen & Co.'s commission was raised from a minimum of Rs. 20,000 per annum to something like Rs. 36,000. The profit made by this Company for the first half of 1883 was Rs. 2,06,717. A dividend of 10 per cent. was declared and Rs. 67,000 taken to the credit of Reserve and Depreciation Funds. The times, alas! have now changed; the result of the working of the past half-year is a loss of Rs. 19,282. The shareholders are resigned and Messrs. Ernsthausen & Co., whose remuneration has been raised are, I understand, as cheerful as can be expected. Shares in this concern have declined from Rs. 130 to Rs. 66.

The next Report to enter an appearance was that of the Union

Jute Company. The Managing Agents of this concern also took advantage of the then prevailing mania for raising the remuneration of Managing Agents of Jute Mills, to get their commission increased from a yearly minimum of Rs. 20,000 to one of Rs. 30,000. The profit made for the first half of last year was Rs. 1,94,158. For the past half it has amounted to Rs. 1,14,266, and this appears to be the only concern which has really earned a dividend; and a dividend of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the half-year is not to be despised. Shares in this concern have naturally been affected by the prevailing depression, but there are no sellers, and no business has been done for some time past.

The Kamarhatty Company is one of those concerns which are supposed to show other people the way. They have made very large profits in the past and have no less than Rs. 7,12,680 at credit of Profit and Loss Account. For the first half of 1883 they made a profit of Rs. 2,82,421, and paid a dividend of 20 per cent. This half-year they have managed to lose Rs. 49,627 through having unfortunately happened to buy their jute in the dearest market and sell their bags in the cheapest. These things do occur sometimes, *que voulez.?* Agents are not immaculate. *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus!*

The Kanknarrah Mill is not as yet complete; it is, however, just now at work helping to increase the production of gunny bags and keep down prices in the interests of consumers. The shareholders have not as yet received a six-pence by way of dividend and may esteem themselves fortunate if they get anything for some time to come.

The last to enter an appearance as yet has been the Seebpore Jute Manufacturing Company. For the first half of 1883 this concern made a profit of Rs. 1,50,605; a dividend of 6 per cent. was declared for the half-year, and Rs. 60,605 taken to a new machinery account. This half-year the loss on the working has been Rs. 76,688; and the Managing Agents of this concern are the only ones who have made any refund of commission. Shares in this Company, which reached Rs. 106 last year, can now be bought for Rs. 48.

The following little table contrasts the working of these Jute Mills for the first half of 1883 and 1884:—

	1883.		1884.		Capital. Rs.
	Profit.		Profit.	Loss.	
	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.	
Budge-Budge	2,58,441		14,928	.....	14,40,000
Fort Gloster	1,42,869			48,992	14,00,000
Goosery	31,710			63,820	3,98,500
Asiatic	32,803			19,491	3,99,900
Gourepore	1,66,405		72,358	.....	12,00,000
Howrah	2,06,717			19,282	17,47,498
Union	1,94,158		1,14,256	.....	6,75,000
Kamarhatty	2,82,421			49,627	4,00,000
Seebpore	1,50,605			76,688	15,00,000
Total	14,66,129		2,01,537	2,77,900	91,60,898

The above little table fitly points a moral to adorn a tale.

The Report of the Goosery Cotton Mills Company discloses a profit of Rs. 75,106, and the Directors propose that Rs. 75,000 should be paid away in a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. Ten per cent. per annum is a good dividend when earned. We would just remind the shareholders that they cannot eat their cake and have it too. There is such a thing as depreciation of machinery. In our opinion the results do not disclose good management. The Directors gravely tell us that the Company's yarns received a first-class certificate and the only Gold Medal awarded at the Calcutta International Exhibition. We should like to know how many Mills competed and the names of the jurors. There is a curious similarity between the name of one of the Directors of this Mill and one of the jurors.

Debentures, as a rule, are a pretty safe form of investment, and yield better results than Government Paper. Investors should, however, carefully scrutinize the security offered, and make sure that it may not be prejudicially affected in the future. We are led to these remarks by observing that the Inland Flotilla Company, Limited, are inviting tenders for a Debenture loan of Rs. 8,75,000 (which will rank *pari passu* with any subse-

quent issue) on the security of the Company's fleet of steamers and flats, its receipts and revenues, and uncalled capital of Rs. 8,75,000. The said loan to be for ten years, and to bear interest at 7 per cent. The security here is undoubted, and the interest liberal; but there is nothing to prevent the Company borrowing another eight or ten lakhs or more, and as this second loan will rank *pari passu* with the present, the undoubted security of to-day may be very seriously diminished to-morrow.

The Report of the Great Eastern Hotel Company recommends a dividend for the year of 6 per cent., and takes some Rs. 45,000 to Reserve. The mortgage loan on the Company's Hotel for Rs. 2,57,000, bearing interest at 7 per cent., has been renewed in England in sterling at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The Calcutta share market is very inanimate; shares are dull and depressed, and transactions very limited.

CALCUTTA, 23rd August 1864.

At the present moment when the value of the shares in all our Jute Mill Companies has been so seriously depreciated, a few words on the jute manufacturing industry in India may not be out of place.

Few of our readers are, we imagine, aware of the amount of capital invested, and the number of persons interested in Jute Mills here. Many of them have been erected quietly, and most of them have been increased or added to from time to time, so that at the beginning of this year there were 20 Jute Mills at work, containing just 6,000 looms, while during the present year some 1,000 additional looms must have been set up, all adding to the production and tending to keep down the price of the manufactured article. Now the cost of a Jute Mill, if we may judge from the published accounts, varies from Rs. 4,500 to over Rs. 6,000 per loom, so that if we take the Mills all round as averaging in cost Rs. 5,000 per loom, it follows that the capital invested in these undertakings cannot be less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees. We are inclined to believe that when all the extensions now in contemplation are completed, the invested capital will be nearer five than four crores of rupees. The number of persons engaged in a Jute Mill works is nearly ten per running loom, so that we may take it, that at the present moment some 70,000 hands are engaged in these Mills, quite independently of the number who are indirectly supported thereby. The jute manufacturing industry in India seems to work in cycles of alternate depression and extreme prosperity. Up to the year 1874 the manufacture was almost a close borough here; there were not above six Mills at work with a total number of certainly not more than 1,500 looms, and the trade was conducted with very great profit to all concerned. The year 1873, however, saw a very great impetus given to the erection of Jute Mills, and in that year and 1874 at least ten new concerns were floated. With the commencement of 1875 came the first great crisis in this industry—the supply overtook the demand, prices for the manufactured article receded, the large profits of former years

dwindled down in many instances to losses, and shares in Jute Mill Companies went to a serious discount. This state of things continued, with some little fluctuations, until about the middle of 1880, and during the interval several concerns had an uncommonly bad time. The Balliaghatta, Rustomjee, Calcutta, and Oriental Companies, with a combined capital of some 44 lakhs of rupees, succumbed, and have been liquidated, the return to the shareholders having been infinitesimal; while shares in nearly every other Company went to a serious discount, varying from 10 to 85 per cent. The pressure on the Mills became at last so serious that they were compelled to seek foreign markets, and Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, California, and Valparaiso were successfully invaded, and after a hard struggle wrested from Dundee. Indeed the depression in trade became so great that in 1878-79 and the early part of 1880 large quantities of gunny bags were shipped from Calcutta to the United Kingdom, and the Mills here met the Dundee spinners upon what had hitherto been considered peculiarly the latter's ground.

In 1880 an impetus was given to the gunny bag trade by Mr. Plimsoll's Bill, while the largely increased shipments of grains and oil-seeds from India, within the last few years, have caused a greater demand for bags; so that the year 1881, 1882, and 1883 have proved very profitable ones to jute manufacturers, both in Bengal and Dundee. Unfortunately this improvement in trade was at once seized upon by many of the Managing Agents—who saw therein a considerable increase to their emoluments—as an excuse for considerable extensions; while one or two mercantile firms, with a handsome commission in prospective, issued circulars to confiding investors, wherein were depicted in the most glowing terms the large profits to be made in the jute manufacturing industry. The result might have been anticipated. On the 1st January 1881 some 4,600 looms only were at work in India; but three Mills, which were then silent, are now at full work, and additions have been made to other concerns, so that on the 1st January 1884 the number of looms at work amounted to 6,000, while some 2,200 more looms were under construction, of which we expect some 1,000 are now at work. In other words

the manufacturing capacity has been increased fully 50 per cent. during the last three years, and there are further extensions in progress, so that the question to be seriously considered is, what is to become of the outturn of the Mills ?

The years 1882 and 1883 were rendered more profitable than usual to the local Mills by reason of the extremely large crops of jute in 1881 and 1882. Prices of gunny bags were most moderate, while the Mills were enabled to make a very handsome profit on the manufacture; in fact, everything worked to put money into the pockets of those who bought their jute and sold their bags with judgment. There is no doubt that the gunny bag trade is an expanding one, but there are reasonable limits to everything, and signs are not wanting to show that at present the supply has overtaken the demand. Thus in 1879 68 million bags were exported by sea from Calcutta, and 67 millions in 1880. In 1881 the number rose to 74 millions, in 1882 to 81½ millions, and in 1883 to nearly 91 millions. But the exports for the first half of this year are only 4 per cent. above those of last year; and it is noteworthy that the increase in one year over the other has almost invariably taken place during the first six months of the year. It is evident that the increase in production this year will be considerably more than 4 per cent. Again enormous numbers of bags are required for the ordinary export trade of the country; for the three months, April to June 1884, the exports of grain and oil-seeds were some 295,000 tons less than for the corresponding period of 1883. This means that nearly eight million gunny bags were not required this year, which were used in 1883. At the present moment the Calcutta share market, so far as regards Jute Mill Scrip, is completely demoralized, and the depreciation of this particular kind of stock has been something terrible. The causes of this reaction may be shortly stated as dear jute, dear money, and over speculation by weak holders; the Bears on the Stock Exchange here have also something to answer for, though stern retribution has overtaken them, in a manner which they little anticipated. About the beginning of August last year prices of Jute Mill Scrip may be said to have been at their highest,

and considerable sales having been made for forward delivery, the sellers naturally looked to cover themselves at lower rates. That there would be a crisis in the jute manufacturing industry few persons who had intelligently watched its expansion could doubt; but it was not generally considered to be so near at hand, and the Bears thought that there was an opportunity for a little safe gambling in the interval. Having accordingly sold well-forward at the then prevailing rates, dismal reports were put in circulation about the prospects of the then coming jute crops, of possible over production, and so forth, and a few bogus sales at lower rates having been announced, jute stock commenced to decline. The next move was to induce a bank or two to call upon weak holders of stocks pledged to them, to give more cover; then followed a forced sale or two, and so the game went on; an uneasy feeling began to pervade the minds of holders of Jute Scrip and a desire to sell supervened.

When Jute Mill Stock had declined to an extent sufficient to land, the confiding buyers forward in a very respectable loss, the Bears then bought up the necessary stock, so as to be in a position to tender the shares when the due dates of the contracts arrived. Unfortunately, however, the Bears this time had made a slight mistake; the buyers forward were almost in every instance unable to take up their shares, and the Bears found themselves landed with a lot of shares in concerns in which every sale reported was at a lower figure than before. The crisis had arrived before its time, bringing ruin and desolation in its track; there was a general stampede to get out of jute, banks refused to lend, except to uncommonly good parties, on Jute Mill Scrip, and *saute qui peut* was the order of the day.

But though the jute manufacturing industry is at present depressed, and though the immediate prospect of dividends is unlikely, there is no class of industry in which we have a more thorough belief, or which stands on a firmer basis. It must not be forgotten that hitherto Bengal is the only place from which jute can be obtained, and that therefore to place the seat of the manufacture here was to secure for it advantages which no other country could afford.

It is extremely satisfactory to observe that the second half of this year has opened well, and that the exports of gunny bags during July are greater than have been known before; and if this only continues, 1884 will show as large an increase over 1883, as that year has over 1882. The extreme cheapness of gunny bags has caused a strong demand for them in the Straits, and if they can only succeed in ousting the mat bag at present in vogue in Siam and China, there will be a grand outlet for our bags; but it must not be forgotten that this unexpected demand has been caused by the unusually low prices obtaining for the manufactured article, and that had it not been for this sudden spurt at the Straits, our export figures would have looked very different. The following little table shows the shipments of gunny bags from Calcutta for the first six months, and the month of July, of the last three years:—

	1882.		1883.		1884.	
	No.	Value.	No.	Value.	No.	Value.
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
January to June ..	44,167,686	1,09,38,831	54,246,251	1,14,91,818	56,081,400	1,14,99,160
July ..	5,551,044	14,97,315	4,097,221	9,87,151	7,703,113	14,71,815
Total for 7 months ..	49,718,680	1,24,36,146	58,343,472	1,24,78,964	63,784,513	1,29,70,975

It is noteworthy that, in consequence of the low price of jute last year, though the number of bags exported was fully 17 per cent. more than in 1882, their value was almost the same, and it evidences the severe character of the present depression, that with jute this year at a considerably higher range of prices the value of bags has not at all increased. At the present moment well-managed Mills, with no large stock of dearly bought jute, should be able to work at a small profit, and the extreme depression in some of our Jute Mill shares would hardly seem to be warranted.

The future of the jute manufacturing industry here is largely bound up in the question of railways. Extend the railway system, and you increase the export of agricultural produce and *ex necessitate rei* the demand for gunny bags. There seems now

to be every probability of a great impetus being given to the construction of railways; this is the best news that the Mills have had for some time. Investors in the stocks of well-managed Mills at present prices may have to play a waiting game, but the ultimate results should more than compensate them for their forbearance. It should not be overlooked, that the share market in the beginning of 1880 was in quite as bad a state as it is now; yet since then we have had nearly three years of very good trade and very large profits.

The Champdany Jute Company, Limited, is a Glasgow concern and managed by cannie men. It has a capital of £200,000 and two fine Mills, the Champdany and the Wellington, with some 618 looms. It is nearly double as large as the Budge-Budge Mills, and their commercial year ends on the same day, the 30th April. For the period ended 30th April 1884, this Company has made a profit, including the balance from last year, of £10,091-4-3 say Rs. 1,20,000; for the same period the Budge-Budge Mills, with 322 looms only, made a profit of Rs. 1,97,470. The Calcutta Agents, out of the princely income which they derive from this Company, have returned the shareholders £1,000; and the Directors, not to be outdone in generosity, have taken £3,500 from the Reserve Fund. These amounts give a total available for distribution of £14,591, and the Directors have arranged to credit Depreciation Account with £6,000, to pay a dividend of 4 per cent., and to carry the balance forward.

The Dunbar Cotton Mill Report is to this extent satisfactory, that it does not disclose an actual monetary loss—a gross profit, however, of Rs. 4,708 on a paid-up capital of Rs. 13,28,500 is hardly a matter to congratulate the shareholders on, and so we will not dwell further on the subject in this letter.

The Empress of India Cotton Mill has made an apparent profit for the half-year of Rs. 57,352. A dividend at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum is to be paid, Rs. 16,000 laid aside for the purchase of new machinery, and the balance carried forward. Before expressing any decided opinion on this concern, we should like to see some further details of the stock of manufactured goods, cotton and stores, entered as an asset of the value

of Rs. 4,75,576. Is all the yarn in stock of a quality readily saleable, and would it fetch the amount at which it has been valued? When this question is answered, we can review the report with confidence.

The Report of the Managing Agents of the Tarkessur Railway Company states that the line is being pushed on rapidly, and that the rails are laid to within a short distance of the Tarkessur terminus. Material trains will be started in a few days, and it is expected that the line will be completed and taken over by the East Indian Railway early in the cold season. The terminal and intermediate stations are being constructed in accordance with designs approved by the East Indian Railway, and every precaution that experience can suggest is being taken to provide for the convenience of the public. The great feature about this little railway is that there is no risk of loss, as it will be worked by the East Indian Railway, the gross receipts being divided in a given proportion between the working Company and the Tarkessur Company. The East Indian Railway have to maintain and work the line, the receipts being divided in certain shares. This, in point of fact, is a guarantee against loss, and is an arrangement which should commend itself to prudent and cautious people. There is also another point, and that is that the line will render possible a suburban residence to scores of people in Calcutta. The Tarkessur district is the paternal home of hundreds of keranis, who work in Calcutta offices. The prospects of goods traffic appear also from the reports to be very encouraging.

Shares are much the same as last week, but there has been some inquiry for Press shares, it being generally understood that the coming jute crop will be a large one. Present prices are somewhat above the ideas of prudent investors.

As we were about to close this letter, the Report of the Managing Agents of the Hooghly Mills Company has been put into our hands. The loss on the working amounts to Rs. 77,310, and as the jute in stock is stated to have been entered in the accounts at its cost price, and its market value on the 30th June "was about Rs. 40,000 less," the total loss to the shareholders may be put at Rs. 1,17,310! Shareholders in this concern may usefully

contrast this report and balance sheet with the glowing prospectus issued about two years ago, and will find therein food for a good deal of painful reflection. The factory engine has broken down, from a fault in construction, and is awaiting the arrival of new gear from home. The boilers have throughout been leaking and have been continually under repair. The crank shaft has developed a flaw of such serious nature, that it will be unsafe to use the engine until a new shaft can be fitted. Temporarily, therefore, the Mill is silent, and in pity to the shareholders we follow its example.

CALCUTTA, 30th August 1884.

THE cotton-spinning industry in Bengal is not nearly so large or so important as jute manufacturing—the capital invested is not probably more than 75 lakhs of rupees, and whereas there are 22 Jute Mills in Bengal, there are only seven Cotton Mills. Bombay is the real seat of the cotton manufacture in India, and is a competitor, which now and again Bengal discovers to be a very formidable one. Taken as a whole, the manufacture of cotton in this Presidency has not been a grand success, though one or two Mills have hitherto shown good results; but this industry, like jute, seems to move in alternate cycles of prosperity and depression, it generally happening that when jute was down, cotton was up; so that shareholders in good concerns in both could generally make sure of a fair average dividend. At the present moment, however, both cotton and jute are depressed, and investors in these stocks wear a rueful countenance.

There are only five Mills, the shares of which are quoted in our stock lists; they are the Bengal, the Bowreah, the Dunbar, the Empress of India, and the Goosery. The Bengal Mills is an English Company, but the shares are occasionally sold here.

The Bowreah Mills—formerly the Fort Gloster Cotton Mills—are probably the oldest Mills, but the present Company only acquired them in 1872. The capital of this Company is Rs. 18,00,000, with debentures for Rs. 3,39,500, bearing interest at 7 per cent. The Mill contains about 45,400 spindles, and is valued in the books at Rs. 18,95,204, or say Rs. 41-12-0 per spindle. A Mill far superior to this could be erected for Rs. 30 per spindle, so that the block in round numbers is overvalued by some Rs. 5,50,000, without taking into account depreciation or wear and tear. During the first five years of its existence this Company paid a dividend averaging $11\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. It ceased paying dividends in August 1877, and the Secretaryship was transferred from Messrs. Macallister & Co. to Messrs. Kettlewell, Bullen & Co. in the middle of 1879. Messrs. Kettlewell, Bullen & Co. drew a very handsome commission for managing the Mill, and the shareholders, as Mr. Atkins would say, “wagged

their tails like little dogs with expectation." For the years 1880 and 1881, according to the published account, the Secretaries drew Rs. 68,933 as commission; in subsequent accounts, the amount has not been stated, but for 1882 was probably not less than Rs. 30,000. Towards the end of 1882, the Secretaries having managed to work the Mill at a considerable loss, the other concerns having made a profit, were smitten with a strong desire to do something liberal for the shareholders; they accordingly accepted a yearly sum of Rs. 21,000 as salary, and commission of 5 per cent. on the profits, instead of on the sales. From that time the Mill has worked at a profit. During the five years Messrs. Kettlewell, Bullen & Co. have had this Mill under their fostering care, they must have drawn at least Rs. 1,25,000 as commission and salary. The shareholders have not been quite so fortunate; during the same period they have received one solitary dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the last half-year, amounting to Rs. 45,000; they are, however, hopeful now, though a dividend at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum is not a kind of thing to brag about.

The Dunbar Mills has not altogether been a happy concern for the shareholders. It has a capital of Rs. 13,28,500, and debentures for Rs. 8,00,000. It contains, we understand, about 46,500 spindles, and the block account, deducting the amount laid aside for depreciation, stands in the books at about Rs. 17,75,000, or say Rs. 38 per spindle. It has now been at work for $8\frac{1}{2}$ years, and during this period the shareholders have received a total dividend of 28 per cent., or a trifle under $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. For the last year and a half it has paid no dividend at all. The Secretaries, however, draw a fat commission on the sales, which we fancy cannot now be less than Rs. 42,000 per annum. Rs. 100 shares in this concern are nominally at Rs. 50.

The Goosery Cotton Mills, Limited, has, for many years past, been a favourite investing stock, and Rs. 200 shares have been sold for Rs. 300. At the present moment quotations (ex-dividend) would probably be below par. Since it started working in 1867 the average dividend paid has been 13 per cent., though for the last two and a half years it has been at the

rate of 10 per cent. only; this shows a distinct falling off. For the last six months the profit made has been only Rs. 72,374, though a dividend of Rs. 75,000 has been declared. These results cannot be considered satisfactory, for we understand that the Bengal Mills, with a much smaller number of spindles, have made a very much larger profit. The management of the Goosery Mills, during the past few years, has been in new hands, Mr. Robinson, their valued Secretary, having virtually retired from the direction of the Company's affairs, and it seems clear that since his departure this concern has receded from the very high position it once occupied. There are, no doubt, other elements which in the management of a Cotton Mill may deeply affect its profit, but the two which stand prominently forward as contributing most to favourable or unfavourable results are the buying of the raw material and the selling of the manufactured article; and we are somewhat afraid that, in the departure of Mr. Robinson, the Mill has lost a good deal of that practical ability and experience that commands success. The valuation, too, of the block of the old Mill in the books of the Company, is also beginning to attract the attention of investors; it is natural to ask whether, as this Mill has been working for the last eighteen years, the paltry sum of Rs. 1,56,000 at credit of Reserve Fund adequately represents the depreciation of the Mill; and we fear that no one, who is at all conversant with Cotton Mill property, could answer this question in the affirmative. The Lancashire standard of depreciation is $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on buildings and 5 per cent. on machinery. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the old Mill

		Rs.
Representing a block, costing ...	...	10,05,779
Less Reserve Fund ...	...	1,56,500
Total ...		8,49,279

or Rs. 35 per spindle, is far above the actual value of the property. A valuation of Rs. 20 per spindle for such old machinery, no matter how well tinkered up, would, we imagine, be very much nearer the mark. There seems reason to believe that the Mill is drifting into an unsatisfactory condition, and it would be well if

the Directors, before it is too late, were to give more consideration to the maintenance of the value of the property, and to display less anxiety to declare high dividends, which, in the past half-year, have clearly been in excess of the profits earned.

The Bengal Mills are situated at Garden Reach ; they contain 30,276 spindles ; their block account, after deducting the amount that has been laid aside for depreciation, works out £83,470, or say Rs. 27-8 per spindle. This Company has also a Reserve Fund of £16,450, and has paid off all its debentures. During the ten years it has been at work, the dividends paid have aggregated $64\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., or an average of nearly $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This does not sound very high, but it must not be forgotten that nearly £50,000 have been retained in the concern out of the profits for Reserve Fund and depreciation of machinery, so that the Company is in an unusually strong position. The capital of this concern is £79,000, and the accounts are published yearly ; but a little bird has whispered to us that the profit made for the first half of this year has amounted to over a lakh of rupees. £100 shares in this excellent concern are nominally quoted at Rs. 1,300, but we have not heard of any recent transactions, the shareholders being chiefly investors.

The Empress of India Cotton Mills is almost entirely owned by natives of this country, and it is extremely satisfactory to see them putting their money into industrial enterprises. The original capital of this concern was Rs. 6,25,000 and the Mill contained 20,000 spindles. Some 12,000 spindles have since been added out of the profits, and bonus shares have been issued to the shareholders for Rs. 2,50,000, making the present capital Rs. 8,75,000. The block of the Mill, which has been at work about seven years, stands in the books at Rs. 7,94,000 or a trifle over Rs. 24-8 per spindle ; this is a very reasonable amount. And there is a sum of Rs. 30,000 at the credit of Reserve Fund. The shareholders in this concern have had a very good return for their money, and if we were thoroughly satisfied that the yarn in stock was readily saleable and worth the sum of Rs. 2,53,239, at which it is entered in the accounts, we should speak of this concern with great confidence.

The following is a synopsis of the working of the Cotton Mills for 1883:—

NAME.	Capital.	Profit made.	Dividend paid.	Amount at credit of Reserve and other Funds.	Value of Mill as set forth in the books.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Empress ...	8,75,000	1,55,397	59,062	46,000	7,94,000
Bengal ...	7,90,000	1,84,180	79,450	4,95,950	11,66,150
Dunbar ...	13,28,500	23,965	Nil	1,54,000	19,29,133
Goosery ...	15,00,000	1,61,833	1,22,500	2,59,182	15,30,724
Bowreah ...	18,00,000	1,85,308	45,000	45,000	18,95,204

The present war in China is, we fear, likely to exercise a very prejudicial effect on the working of our Cotton Mills, for we find from the Trade and Navigation Accounts that in 1883-84 India exported to China 41,040,629 lbs. of cotton twist and yarn, and 2,147,278 yards of cotton piece goods. The great bulk of these exports have been from Bombay; the total value of cotton goods exported from Bengal to foreign ports having been Rs. 4,48,963 only, as against Rs. 2,39,97,046 from Bombay; but the effect of the curtailment of these exports will drive Bombay to send her yarn here in much larger quantities, and will probably result in a very serious decline in prices. Already we observe that shares in the Bombay Cotton Mills have experienced a sharp decline, and we are afraid that the Mills in Bengal will be similarly affected.

When the Government of India took over the management of the Eastern Bengal Railway, it was fondly hoped that it would be worked with some little regard to the interests of the mercantile community, which, if one is to believe the evidence taken before the Railway Committee, were to be carefully considered with a view to the development of the country. It is, of course, in the best interests of the jute trade, that the management of this railway have raised their rates for the carriage of jute at the commencement of the season from 6 annas to 9 annas 4 pie! This has simply strangled business, and imports of jute have fallen from between 30,000 and 40,000-maunds to 6,000 and

8,000 maunds. The shipments are now being made by country boats, at 2 to 3 annas per maund.

There has been a better feeling in the share market this week and more disposition to invest in Jute Mill and Tea Shares.

The coming jute crop is said to be the largest on record; the rivers are, however, unfortunately lower than usual, and there is a consequent scarcity of water for steeping and retting the jute. The season will be a very late one, which the kindly action of the Eastern Bengal Railway will intensify. The season has opened at a higher range of prices than usual, but men competent to form an opinion incline to the belief that there will be a great fall in prices later on.

The prices realized at the last Tea Sales were considered satisfactory, and in a good many instances were in excess of previous valuations.

CALCUTTA, 6th September 1884.

IN a previous letter we pointed out the magnitude and importance of the jute manufacturing industry in Bengal; but it may not be generally known that next to opium the value of raw jute exported from Bengal is in excess of every other article of export, while as regards quantity it heads the list. The exports of jute from Bengal were for the last three official years 375,515 tons, 517,445 tons, and 350,899 tons respectively; this includes jute, jute rejections, and jute cuttings, which are used for different purposes, and which therefore, with a charming absence of intelligence, the Financial Department classify under one head in the Trade and Navigation Accounts. Unlike a good many other commodities, jute has to be specially prepared for shipment by being pressed into conveniently sized bales. Years ago this was done by hand-presses, and the bales used to weigh 300 lbs. each. With the development of the trade, however, came a strong desire to lessen the expenses of transit—jute being the cheapest fibre known, and a small saving consequently working out a considerable percentage,—and it was discovered that by using hydraulic pressure a much larger quantity of jute could be pressed into the same space. In this way the weight of a jute bale gradually rose from 300 to 350 and 400 lbs., which latter is now the recognised weight, while in the case of cuttings and rejections the bales run up to 500 lbs., in weight, so that five heavy bales of cuttings weigh considerably more than the ton, which they are supposed to represent. Until within the last few years Calcutta was the only port from which jute was exported; but the gross manner in which jute shippers were treated by the Eastern Bengal Railway, who used in the most capricious way to enhance their rates during the jute season, has led to the opening of Chittagong as a port of export for jute, and last season nearly a quarter of a million of bales went forward from there. The number of bales exported from Calcutta in season 1882-83 was 2,686,785, the largest number on record, while in season 1883-84 it dwindled down to 1,375,665, which is much below average. The pressing of these bales into a

condition fit for shipment is quite an industry in itself, and there are no less than ten Pressing Companies, the shares of which are quoted on the Calcutta Stock Exchange, with a capital of some 26 lakhs of rupees, besides a number of private concerns, the capital invested in this particular kind of business in Bengal being probably not much short of 50 lakhs of rupees. At the outset these Pressing Companies all proved very remunerative ventures, and like everything else in Calcutta, were immediately overdone. From being very profitable, they commenced to work at a loss, then drifted into debt, and came perilously near to liquidation. Rs. 100 shares in the Calcutta Hydraulic Pressing Company were once at something like Rs. 10, they are now at Rs. 150; and at one time a proposal was seriously considered for making over the whole of the plant and machinery of the Strand Bank Press to the landlords in satisfaction for their claim for rent! At this eventful period the different Pressing Companies came to a mutual agreement not to press bales below certain minimum rates, and the result was most encouraging. Nearly all the concerns are now at a premium and paying good dividends. The great mistake that has been made in many of these concerns has been in building their presses on rented ground. Of course this lessens the capital and in good times increases the dividend; but it also lessens the security to the shareholders. Let there only be a few years of bad trade and the rent will eat up the capital. Thus for instance, the Calcutta Hydraulic Press Company has a capital of Rs. 1,70,000 only, and times being fairly good, pays a dividend of 20 per cent.; but the rent payable amounts to no less than Rs. 18,000 per annum, so that a year or two of bad trade would place the Company in a very awkward position, for bankers would hardly care to lend on such a property, and debentures on a building which cannot be hypothecated otherwise than subject to this rent would not be a very desirable investment. So, too, with the Riverside Press: the capital is Rs. 2,70,000, and the yearly rental Rs. 30,000! So, too, with the Strand Bank Press Company: the capital is Rs. 2,50,000, and the rental Rs. 22,800, and we understand that there are some stringent conditions regarding the removal of

the machinery. The Camperdown, Canal, Chitpore, Nasmyth's, Watson's Presses are all erected on freehold property, so that in bad times expenses can be reduced to a minimum, and the sites of these Presses have a considerable intrinsic value. They may, therefore, if reasonably purchased, be classed as fairly safe investments.

The prosperity of the jute-pressing industry depends almost entirely on the crop of jute ; last year the crop was a very small one, and shares in these concerns were unduly depreciated. This season the crop is expected to be a very large one, and the shares have run up with great rapidity, it being a characteristic feature of the Calcutta Share Market to discount everything in advance.

Jute Presses labour, however, under one very great disadvantage, and that is the risk of fire. Within the last few years the Camperdown, Chitpore, Strand Bank, and Riverside Presses have been almost burnt down, and there have been serious fires at the Nasmyth and Ramkistopore Press-houses. In the case of press-houses burthened with a heavy rental, a fire is a very serious calamity ; and altogether shares in these particular press-houses are somewhat of a speculation. At the present moment the number of press-houses is fully sufficient to keep pace with the requirements of the trade, and the price of the shares, under all the circumstances of the case, is as high as it should be.

In our letter of the 16th August we drew attention to the issue of debentures by the Inland Flotilla Company for Rs. 8,75,000 (*which will rank pari passu with any subsequent issue*) on the security of the Company's steamers and flats, its receipts and revenues, and uncalled capital of Rs. 8,75,000. We observe now that these conditions have been considerably varied ; the clause as to ranking *pari passu* has been eliminated, and the security is limited to the Company's present fleet of four steamers and 12 flats, the receipts and revenues therefrom, and the uncalled capital of Rs. 8,75,000. The loan is for 15 years, and we should like to know what the estimated value of this fleet will be then. Is the fleet to be insured ? As to the uncalled capital of, strange to say, exactly the same amount as the debentures, if the shareholders are sound and substantial men,

why not call it up? Seven per cent. is not a bad dividend; that the management should prefer to raise debentures at a high rate of interest to calling up capital, strikes us as curious. *Verbum sap.* Of course we presume that the Company has power under its articles to pledge its uncalled capital, and that all things proper and necessary have been done; for we need hardly point out that unless the Directors or Managing Agents are expressly or by necessary implication empowered to mortgage the future calls, it will be *ultra vires* to do so. At the same time that we advise caution in the matter of these debentures, we may say that we have every confidence in the future of the Inland Flotilla Company, which should supply a long-felt want, and while probably reducing the cost of carriage of jute from the interior to Calcutta, should yet yield a reasonable profit to the shareholders. The India General Steam Navigation Company have had it pretty well their own way for some time past, and a little healthy competition will be very beneficial.

The Report of the India General Steam Navigation Company for the first half of this year discloses a working profit of Rs. 3,24,479, and the balance at credit of Profit and Loss Account after crediting Rs. 99,593 brought forward, and providing Rs. 84,098 for Depreciation Fund, amounts to Rs. 3,13,239. The Directors recommend the payment of a dividend at the rate of 12 per cent., which will absorb Rs. 2,85,290, and that Rs. 27,949 be carried forward. The net profit for the half-year has been Rs. 2,13,646, so it will be seen that it is proposed to pay away a larger dividend than has been earned, but the present half year will probably be a very prosperous one, as there seems every prospect of a bumper crop of jute. The capital of the Company has recently been very considerably increased by the issue of some 11,000 bonus and 11,000 contributory shares. It is now Rs. 54,64,500, of which Rs. 49,32,250 have been called up. This increase in the capital will naturally have the result of reducing the percentage of dividend, and it would have been as well for the Company if they had done it earlier; for the payment of mammoth dividends only provokes opposition, and has probably had something to do with the formation of the Inland

Flotilla Company. We observe that the Company has Reserve Depreciation, and Casualty Funds amounting to Rs. 7,82,431 ; that its immovable property is valued at Rs. 4,52,913, and its fleet at Rs. 50,25,184. Two new steamers and three flats have been added to the Company's fleet during the half-year, and a new steamer for service between Naraingunge and Chittagong has been ordered in England. The fleet now consists of 31 steamers of 3,680 horse-power, and 51 flats aggregating 26,492 tons.

The Report of the Managing Agents of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company has just been issued. The paid-up capital is Rs. 5,10,000, and the amount at credit of Profit and Loss is Rs. 33,825, which would admit of a dividend of Rs. 6 on each share of Rs. 85 ; but keeping in view the fact that the expenditure has somewhat exceeded the capital, the Agents suggest the propriety of carrying the amount forward. The Company's flotilla stands in the books at Rs. 5,31,203 and consists of 8 steamers, 1 steam-launch, 4 barges, and 3 bhoolios ; and it was started with a view to providing regular, cheap, and well-ordered steam communication on the Hooghly and minor waters of Bengal. The idea is a good one, and only wants to be handled in a practical way to ensure the growth of a sound and substantial reality. One of the great wants of this country, underlying all her wants, political, social, and economical, is the want of easy and cheap transport. If the people of this country are afforded means of moving themselves and their produce at rates equitably proportioned to their means, they will not only move about, but will do so in enormous numbers. The Company have now regular lines from Calcutta to Khulna, Ghattal, Cutwa, Rajgunge, Oolooberriah, and Midnapore ; and it is stated that the traffic on all the lines except the Rajgunge line has been satisfactory. It is undoubtedly a great boon to the people to have a strong concentrated and united Company with a regular and efficient service of steamers ; and the Government's policy should be to remove every obstruction in the way of such a Company, and short of an actual subsidy or guarantee to encourage it in every way.

The Trade and Navigation Accounts for British India for the month of July show a continued increase in the value of im-

ports, but a decrease in the value of the exports. For the four months, April to July, the imports of merchandise are some 84 lakhs more in value than for the same period of 1883; while the imports of treasure exceed those of 1883 by 1 crore 57 lakhs. On the other hand the exports of Indian produce, manufactures, and merchandise, have decreased by 2 crores and 55 lakhs in the four months. Of the imports the great increase has been in the quantity of sugar imported into Bombay, which is some 30 lakhs more than in 1883; there has also been a substantial increase in the imports of metals, cotton goods, railway material, and mill work. In the exports the falling off in the quantity of grain is very serious, and amounts to no less than 390,000 tons in the four months. The total value of articles of food and drink exported is 3 crores and 5 lakhs less than in 1883; and of raw materials there is an increase of 30 lakhs, while in manufactured articles there is a decrease of 2 crores and 46 lakhs. The following little table summarises the value of the imports and exports for the four months April to July :—

April to July.	IMPORTS.		
	1882.	1883.	1884.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
I.—Animals	92,364	31,220	2,93,054
II.—Food and drink	1,51,53,723	1,58,30,866	1,76,97,067
III.—Raw materials and unmanufactured articles	1,06,54,397	1,05,63,357	94,90,157
IV.—Articles manufactured and partly manufactured	12,12,86,935	13,40,58,617	13,96,36,483
V.—Oils	49,99,058	21,46,308	43,14,843
Total	15,21,86,477	16,26,30,368	11,74,31,600
	EXPORTS.		
	1882.	1883.	1884.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
I.—Animals	2,22,573	3,23,816	4,15,227
II.—Food and drink	7,41,78,722	9,73,50,099	6,68,53,307
III.—Raw materials and unmanufactured articles	13,66,05,026	14,67,62,648	14,96,87,864
IV.—Articles manufactured and partly manufactured	6,43,86,130	6,76,79,790	7,01,16,131
V.—Oils	14,36,040	14,11,068	18,72,000
Total	27,67,78,491	31,35,27,221	28,89,44,539

The advocates of temperance will note with satisfaction a falling off of 77,000 gallons in the quantity of liquor imported.

There has not been much doing in shares this past week, and Government Paper still continues below par. The Bank rate still remains unchanged at 4 per cent. Demand loans in the open market on security of Government Paper can be negotiated considerably below this figure.

CALCUTTA, 13th September 1884.

We are glad to observe that the management of the Eastern Bengal Railway have listened to the voice of reason; last Saturday afternoon a circular was issued to the leading jute firms intimating that the carriage of jute would be reduced to 7 annas 4 pie. The India General Steam Navigation Company, who have also been holding out for high freights, have followed suit, and there is consequently every prospect of moderate rates prevailing for the carriage of jute this season. It is somewhat remarkable that, until a competition has been established, these Companies cannot be made to see that "quick returns and small profits" are the only means of permanently retaining one's business. The mischief has generally been done before this important business axiom becomes apparent, and the Company find, when too late, that their business has been diverted, and their constituents so dissatisfied, that an opposition Company is welcomed with open arms. We believe that a good number of shares in the Inland Flotilla Company are held by persons interested in jute, and there is no doubt that when this Company commences business it will receive a great deal of support from jute shippers, which would not have been forthcoming if the Eastern Bengal Railway and the India General Steam Navigation Companies had been only ordinarily reasonable.

There has been a smart rise in the shares of the Inland Flotilla and Calcutta Steam Navigation Companies this week. Shares in the former have risen from 7 per cent. discount to par for time, and in the latter from 85 to 95. There is no apparent reason for the Inland Flotilla Company's shares going up in this way, unless it be considered that hitherto they have been unduly depreciated. The rise in the Calcutta Steam Company's shares is caused by the withdrawal of the opposition on one of their lines, the native who was running a line against the Company having sold his steamers to them, taking payment in shares.

The Bank of Bengal has made no change in its rate of discount this week, which still remains at 4 per cent. There has been a slight rise in its shares this past week, probably due to a little

inquiry for them. The weekly statement shows a small decrease in the total amount of deposits, and an increase in the cash balances of some 8 lakhs of rupees. Loans in the open market can be obtained below the Bank rate, which in some quarters it is considered might have been reduced at the last Board Meeting.

From a telegram received in Calcutta it appears that the net profits of the National Bank of India for the half-year ended 30th June were £52,100. £25,000 is to be taken to Reserve Fund, a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. declared, and the balance of £14,500 carried forward.

For the guidance of investors in Jute Mill shares we annex a table showing the price per loom of the different Mills at the present market prices of the shares. It will be observed that the Seebpore and Gourepore Mills work out the cheapest, and there are no debenture debts. We may add that very few Mills have been put up at a less cost than Rs. 5,000 per loom. We do not advise investments in Mills under 250 looms at any price which will work out more than Rs. 1,500 per loom; for, as against a large Mill, in the matter of fixed charges, office allowances, &c., a small Mill is unduly weighted:—

Name.	No. of Looms.	Capital.		Reserve and other Funds after deducting debit balances at Profit and Loss.	Net Block after deducting Reserve Fund.	Price per loom at market value of shares.	
		Rs.	Rs.			Share.	Loom.
Budge-Budge ...	460	14,40,000	7,69,016	13,15,075	85	3,054	
Fort Gloster ...	250	14,00,000	72,695	13,86,145	38	2,472	
Asiatic ...	100	3,99,900	2,425	5,65,056	22	2,530	
Goosery ...	126	3,98,500	5,338	4,07,564	84	*2,748	
Gourepore ...	286	12,00,000	3,92,136	8,86,741	75	2,051	
Howrah ...	400	17,47,498	7,42,736	19,35,722	70	†3,777	
Kamarhatty ...	320	4,00,000	7,61,188	6,18,197	125	5,055	
Hooghly ...	300	7,43,750	77,310	16,85,226	25	‡4,284	
Seebpore ...	300	15,00,000	3,00,208	12,66,728	48	1,623	
Union ...	349	6,75,000	3,65,025	3,89,653	120	2,277	
Kankuanah ...	...	5,23,575	Nil	12,39,620	No	quota-	tion. §

* In course of extension to 200 looms.
 † In course of extension to 500 looms.
 ‡ In course of construction.
 § Mill not yet finished.

There is a good story told of the London and North-Western Railway, that in one of their advertisements the printer had inadvertently dropped the letter "l," and that consequently consignees were requested to come forward and pay the "awful" charges on their goods, or they would be sold on their account and risk. We never see a Calcutta Agent's account of his dealings with a Tea Garden without being reminded of this advertisement, for the whole vocabulary of forms of charge seems to have been exhausted therein. Commissions for buying the articles required on the garden, with probably trade discount; for selling the tea, and for advancing money; charges for office allowance, for postage, for petties invariably figure therein, it seeming to be a cardinal axiom with some Tea Garden Agents that the shareholders exist for them, and not they for the shareholders. It is an old saying that India is for the Civil Service, to which we would add, and the Civil Service for agency houses in Calcutta, who invite them to come confidently into their little parlours and leave their savings with them, when they will deposit them so safely and securely in such a nice little thing in tea that their minds will be at rest for ever. It is strange what an attraction a Tea Garden has for a Bengal Civilian, or a Military man in civil employ; and how eagerly he rushes in to open out new concerns and add to the fat commissions of the Calcutta Agents. "Blind unbelief is sure to err," so says the hymn, but it is a very safe stand to take when the prospectus of a New Company finds its way into your hands. Of the 98 Companies quoted on the Stock Exchange here, 19 are at a premium, 13 are nominally at par, and 66 are at a discount; 43 are returned as having paid no dividend for 1883, and 5 have not advanced as yet to a dividend stage. It seems clear that if tea is to be cultivated successfully for the *shareholder*, some radical change must be made in the present system, but the subject is large enough for a special letter, and we will postpone its consideration for the present.

At the Calcutta Tea Sale on Thursday no less than 16,143 chests were sold, and 581 withdrawn. The highest average price appears to have been 12 annas 10 pie per lb.

Meetings of shareholders are advertised of the Jellalpoore, Punkabaree, Dessai and Parbuttia, Central Cachar, Tukwar, Darjeeling Tea and Cinchona, Pashok, Durrung, Bengal, Singtom, and Bishnauth Tea Companies, to receive the reports.

The third call of Rs. 20 on the Inland Flotilla shares was due on the 8th instant. Calls on the Gyabaree Tea Company, Ganges Tea Company, and Selim Tea Company are due on the 15th instant, and on the Alipore Coal Company on the 18th instant. Tenders for the Inland Flotilla debentures will be received up to the 20th instant.

Shares.—The transactions of the week have been as under:—

Banks.—Allahabad, 185. Alliance, 135 and 136. Bank of Bengal 847½, 850, 852½, 857½, 860, and 862½. National Bank, 99.

Jute Mills.—Budge-Budge, 86, 85. Fort Gloster, 37. Goosery, 84. Gourepore, 75. Howrah, 71. Hooghly, 25.

Jute Presses.—Camperdown, 118. Strand Bank, 103, 104, 106.

Steam Companies.—Calcutta Steam, 86, 90, 91, 93. India General, 138, 137. Inland Flotilla, 60, 62, 63.

Miscellaneous.—Baragunda Copper Company, 1¼, 1½, 1¾. Vendors' shares, 1½, 2, 2½. Bengal Ice, 120 for time. Carew & Co., 120. Equitable Coal, 195. Titaghur Paper Mills, 71.

Tea Shares.—Dehing, 39, 40. East India, 45. Gielle, 85, 86.

CALCUTTA, 20th September 1884.

IN August 1882 a circular, which was intituled "Strictly Private and Confidential," brought to the notice of investors, "The Bengal Baragunda Copper Company, Limited." The Capital of this interesting undertaking was fixed at £200,000; namely, 100,000 Preference A shares, entitled to a cumulative Preference dividend of 10 per cent., and half the profits over 10 per cent., and 100,000 B shares, entitled to share half the profits over 10 per cent., these shares being the entire consideration payable to the vendors for the acquisition of the property. The sum of 5s. per share was payable on application for the Preference shares, and it was not expected that any further call would be required; but in any case it was stated that no call would exceed 2s. 6d. per share, nor be made during the year 1883. It will thus be seen that the Company started with a cash capital of £25,000. Such an enormous sum of money naturally required great safeguards, and consequently five gentlemen appointed themselves Directors in London, *viz.*, Sir Stuart Hogg, Sir John Swinburne, Dr. Forbes Watson, Messrs. T. Saunders and W. F. Rae. Mr. Reginald F. Saunders was appointed the Secretary; Messrs. Tarbutt and Quentin were nominated Consulting Engineers; and offices were taken in 10, Pancras Lane, London. Messrs. Barnett, Hoare & Co., were the London Bankers, and the Delhi and London Bank performed the same kindly office here; while Messrs. Bird & Co., 39, Strand, Calcutta, became the Managing Agents in India.

Apparently the directorate indulged in the most extravagant dreams regarding the profits of this venture, for they provided for their remuneration on a scale of unusual magnitude. Each Director, we understand, was to receive the sum of £500 per annum for looking after the business, and Messrs. Bird & Co. were to receive 2 per cent. on the sales of copper made. The rent of the London office would doubtless have to be paid, and Mr. Reginald Saunders could hardly be expected to work for nothing, so that altogether the expenses of the London office would probably be not less than £3,000 per annum, equivalent to 12 per

cent. of the capital paid-up. The Company was formed to acquire and work the ancient copper mines at Baragunda, in the district of Hazaribagh, Western Bengal, situated about 24 miles from Giridi, on the E. I. Railway. The area of land acquired was about 800 acres, and the property, $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles in length and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in width, was selected, so as to comprise all the old workings—the valuable slag heaps and the whole line of the run of the rocks containing the ore-bearing grounds. The vendors were stated to have recently re-opened the ancient workings with the view of testing the truth of the very favourable opinions given by the experts who had examined the property; and the Manager was said to have written from the mines that he had discovered rich copper ore *in situ* in three different shafts, indicating that the deposits are only worked out to a very shallow depth, and justifying the expectation of a practically inexhaustible yield of metal. Analyses made by the assayers to the London Mint and the Bank of England showed that samples of ore *said to have been raised* from the shafts during their works of exploration, and to be fair average specimens showed 21 to 28 per cent. of copper, and as the average percentage of copper in ores raised in Cornwall and Devonshire is only about $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., the exceptionally high quality of the Baragunda ores was at once apparent. These valuable mines had been secured by the Company, at the nominal rent of 6s. per acre, or say £240 per annum in perpetuity, for the 100,000 Deferred £1 shares, and the vendors undertook the whole of the expenses of issue up to and including allotments for the trifling sum of £3,000.

Subscriptions for the Preference shares were opened both in England and in India, because it was felt that this was too good a thing to keep altogether in England—and perhaps the fact, that if a number of shares were allotted here, there might be a little speculation on the local Stock Exchange, might have had something to do with it also. Certain it is that no sooner had this Company been announced to the Calcutta share-brokers than a lively gamble commenced in its shares. Speculation began before the allotments had been made, and £1 shares with Rs. 3 (5s.) paid-up were soon at a healthy premium, as much as Rs. 10,

we believe, having been paid for these shares. The stock was naturally a favourite with the brokers, because they got a brokerage of about $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the nominal value for selling these shares, and transactions were always for large lots. Seeing that such a demand had sprung up for the A shares, the vendors thought it only right to place some of their shares at the disposal of the public, and soon Baragunda B shares found a quotation on the Stock Exchange commencing at par, or say Rs. 12 per share. The speculation in these shares lasted for some time, and some original holders made a very good thing of it; the vendors also cannot have gone unrewarded, and must now be some thousands of pounds in pocket. But we have yet to learn of the discovery of any great lodes of copper, and at the present moment shares in this Company are depressed, although there has been a speculative inquiry during the last few weeks, which has caused A shares to rally from Re. $1\frac{3}{8}$ to Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ and Rs. $2\frac{5}{8}$, and B shares from Re. $1\frac{1}{2}$ to Rs. $2\frac{1}{4}$.

Now who, may we ask, were the vendors, of this concern? The nominal vendor was, we understand, Mr. N. K. Kenny, a gentleman employed in the Bengal Coal Company but Mr. Thomas Longmuir, of the Delhi and London Bank, Mr. George Lucas Kemp, of the Standard Life Assurance Company, and Mr. W. G. Olpherts, of the East Indian Railway, were all interested in the venture, and they appear to have sold the lease of this piece of ground in the Sonthal Pergunnahs for a cash payment of £3,000 and Deferred shares of £100,000. It is true, that as against the Baragunda Company, the contract may not have been a very unreasonable one, for it practically amounted to this, that the Company were to find the capital to work the mines and that after receiving 10 per cent. interest on their advances, any profit remaining was to be equally divided. But we would ask, how many of these vendors' shares are now in the possession of the vendors? Of the £25,000 subscribed by the shareholders, the greater portion has probably now been spent in Directors' fees, management, and exploring for the copper pyrites, which contain 21 to 28 per cent. of the pure metal, and at present it is understood that the Manager has discovered

something which "leads him to believe" and so forth, and as a consequence the shares have gone up. But we would not advise our readers to touch these shares by way of investment, though as a mild gamble they can indulge in them, always bearing in mind that the Preference shares have an uncalled liability of Rs. 9 each, and that if copper is discovered in any quantity a call will be necessary to work the mines.

There has been a relapse in the shares of the Inland Flotilla Company during the past week, and they are now at 7 per cent. discount. The speculative buying last week appears to have all been in one quarter.

The jute crop this year looks as if it would not be more than an average one, and as the Eastern Bengal Railway and the India General Steam Navigation Company have very wisely lowered their rates of freight, the prospects of the new Inland Flotilla Company are not at present so encouraging.

We hear that Colonel Conway-Gordon, the new Manager-in-Chief of the Eastern Bengal Railway, is most anxious to work in harmony with jute shippers, and to reduce the carriage on jute to the lowest point possible.

The Report of the Directors of the Bowreah Cotton Mills Company for the half-year ending 31st August will now soon be in the hands of the shareholders. We understand that the net profit made has been Rs. 84,000, and that a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the half-year will be paid and the balance taken to Reserve Fund. These results are creditable to the management, for it must be borne in mind that this Company is burthened with a debenture debt of some Rs. 3,39,500, and derives no revenue from Government Paper as in the case of the Goosery Mill. The Company appears now to have turned the corner, and the shareholders have apparently entered once more on the era of dividends.

"X. Y. Z." writes "that our criticisms on the Goosery Cotton Mills Company are calculated to create serious apprehension in the minds of the shareholders as to the position of this Mill, which until recently, and he believes deservedly so, under the direction of Mr. Robinson, was held in high estimation by

investors." He considers "that our statement that 10 lakhs of capital are only represented by very old machinery, buildings and land, plus 15 per cent. Reserve Fund, taken together with a declaration of a dividend in excess of the actual profits earned for the past half-year, would seem to lend colour to the impression that there has been a confession of weakness, and that the investing public have grounds for becoming sceptical about the property now being good value for the share capital." He adds: "if the new management is weak and incapable, which seems to be the general feeling abroad, the matter should certainly be looked to and the shareholders saved at least from a further depreciation in their property from a cause where a remedy can be easily applied." We agree with "X. Y. Z." in his remarks, but the matter is one which concerns the shareholders, and we leave them to apply the remedy. We understand, however, that Mr. Robinson is on his way out to Calcutta to once more resume the reins of management.

With reference to the little statement of the cost of Jute Mills per loom at present market prices, which appeared in our letter of the 13th instant, we are informed that when the Howrah Mills have been extended to 500 looms, the cost will probably be Rs. 27,50,000 so that at Rs. 70 per share, the cost will be reduced from Rs. 3,777 per loom to about Rs. 2,950.

There has not been very much doing in shares this week. The list of applications for debentures in the Inland Flotilla Company closes to-day. We are curious to know if they have all been taken up.

CALCUTTA, 27th September 1884.

THE Managing Agents of the Hooghly Mills have issued, what the Rev. Mr. Hastie would felicitously call, a "Note Explanatory" to the shareholders; it purports to be in the nature of remarks upon what took place at the last half-yearly meeting, is circulated for the benefit of those shareholders who were unable to attend, and is a very interesting document; but it does not explain how the Mill has cost Rs. 16,75,000 when in the prospectus issued to the shareholders, it was stated that the cost would not exceed Rs. 13,50,000, and upon the faith of which, no doubt, a great many of them took shares. No one, we presume, would desire to hold the Managing Agents responsible for accidents to the machinery, which were altogether unforeseen and could not be prevented; but when a firm of standing and respectability issue a prospectus stating that they can erect a Mill of 300 looms for Rs. 13,50,000, and the shareholders find that some Rs. 16,75,000 have been expended, it is but a poor explanation to say that the amount "exceeds the original estimate, though every effort was made to keep down expenses, and the minutest attention given to every detail." One is tempted to ask, who made the original estimate and who paid this minute attention, for there seems to have been a sad lack of business capacity somewhere. It is unfortunate perhaps that the Managing Agents are remunerated by commission on the sales instead of the profits, for there is always a temptation to go in for extensions; for extension means an increased outturn, and an increased outturn means an increased commission.

"If self the wavering balance shake,"

It's rarely right adjusted."

and we cannot help thinking, that it would have been more for the interests of the shareholders, if the Managing Agents had confined themselves to building a 300-loom Mill complete, which is quite large enough to be worked with the utmost economy, and had not wasted money in arranging for extensions which may never be brought into play. Thus we read that there is room in the present buildings, and ample engine-power

for 350 looms, and that the full design of the Mill can hardly be called complete until 375 looms are running, and there is space available for 400 or 425 looms. The Managing Agents are provided with a very handsome commission, which, in ordinary times, should total up quite Rs. 42,000 per annum, and if the Mill be extended to 425 looms, it will probably touch Rs. 60,000. The result of their action has been that the shareholders are now called upon to subscribe or provide for some three lakhs of additional capital, that the Mill, as it now stands, is a very costly one, and that Rs. 50 shares have been depreciated in the market to Rs. 25. The Managing Agents are doubtless in earnest when they express their deep regret at these unfortunate results, and for the state to which their ill-advised action has reduced the concern; and they can only hope that a healthier state of trade may speedily set in, such as will enable the Company to recoup its losses. We hope so too, and in the meantime we would recommend to their notice and that of those interested the following little passage from Mr. Platt's little work on "Business,"—"the bearings of this observation lays in the application on it," as Captain Bunsby would say:—"There is perhaps nothing more painful in business than the number of failures we become acquainted with, owing entirely to starting with an imperfect knowledge of how to get or manage the business undertaken; for as the stern inexorable decree of nature seems to be that we must eat or be eaten, so equally unyielding and inflexible are the laws of commerce; the one line of conduct as certainly ensuring success, as deviation therefrom, whether from wilfulness or ignorance, ends in failure."

The Report of the Bowreah Cotton Mills Company discloses as stated in our last, a profit of Rs. 84,000. It is proposed to put in another 1,000 spindles, which will utilise a vacant space in the new Mill, and lessen the average cost per spindle of the Mill.

The Bengal Mills Company, Limited, have declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 5 per cent. for the half-year ended 30th June.

There has not been much doing in shares this week, for the

last four days the Doorga Poojah holidays have intervened, but there seems to have been a little better feeling in business.

Bank of Bengal shares have improved to Rs. 870.

That prosperous and well-managed little institution, the Alliance Bank of Simla, Limited, has just issued its Report to the 30th of June last. Its net profits for the half-year were Rs. 54,706-1-11. Out of this a dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. has already been paid, absorbing Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 10,000 added to the Reserve Fund, which now amounts to one lakh of rupees, or 20 per cent. on the subscribed capital. The Directors now recommend that, out of the Rs. 19,706 remaining for disposal, Rs. 10,000 shall be added to the Bad Debt Fund, and Rs. 9,706-1-11 carried forward to the next half-year's account. "The working capital of the Bank," the Directors add, "continues steadily to increase."

CALCUTTA, 4th October 1884.

THE past week, so far as stocks and shares have been concerned, has been a complete holiday, and no transactions have taken place; this state of things, however, will end with to-day, and we shall return to the bustle of business next week with renewed vigour.

The Trade and Navigation Accounts of British India for the month of August show a decrease in the imports of merchandise as against the same month in 1883, as well as in the exports of Indian produce and manufactures. There is, however, a substantial increase in the value of the treasure imported; and the total value of the imports for the five months ended August is 29 crores 13 lakhs, as against 26 crores 59 lakhs in 1883. On the other hand the total exports sum up 36 crores 39 lakhs, as against 38 crores 70 lakhs in 1883. The imports of sugar from Mauritius to Bombay still continue on a large scale, and there have also been large arrivals of kerosene oil,—some 13 odd million gallons having been imported from April to August last, as against 4 million gallons in the same period of 1883. In exports there has been a falling off in rice, the quantity sent forward being some 150,000 tons short of that shipped up to end of August in last financial year; and in wheat the falling off has been even greater, namely, 293,000 tons less than in the same period of 1883. It is noticeable, however, that the exports of wheat from Bombay in August were largely in excess of previous years, and that the great decrease is in the shipments from Bengal. In oil-seeds there is a considerable decrease in the quantity of linseed sent forward, and an increase in that of rapeseed. The export of seeds this year, however, almost keeps pace with that of last, the falling off only amounting to about 5 per cent. The export of cotton twist and yarn to China during August shows a large increase, and for the five months is nearly 8 million lbs. in excess of 1883. And the same remark applies to the export of gunny bags to the Straits Settlements, which have taken some 6 million bags this year in excess of last; this, however, we fear does not denote good trade. The utter cheapness

of the bags has induced the demand, which probably any marked rise in price would cause to subside.

The late serious accident on the Eastern Bengal Railway should open the eyes of Government to their responsibilities as public carriers. That the accident was one due to the negligence of the railway officials there can be no doubt. It was either the fault of the native station-master at Arranghatta, or that of the European driver whose life has paid the penalty, and whose lips are now sealed in death. It is clear that if the danger signal was up at the distant post, the driver of the passenger train was to blame; if, on the other hand, the "line clear" signal was up, the station-master was in fault. The whole matter lies in a nutshell. It is a question of evidence, and the weight of the evidence is said to be in favour of the station-master, because the witnesses on the side of the poor driver have been summoned before a higher tribunal. But one thing is certain, and that is that the Government as representing the Railway Company are liable in damages to the sufferers; and we trust that there will be no cheeseparing, no resort to law courts, but that they will at once accept their responsibility in the matter. The Government do not seem to be taking over this railway under very favourable auspices, for this is the most serious accident that has occurred, we believe, in India. The present head of this railway, we know, is of opinion that "the whole of the Indian railways are alike in the marked absence of petty economies, and in the extended employment of expensive European labour in lieu of the cheaper labour of the country." We trust that this accident may not be traced to the introduction of some "petty economy," for it will prove a very expensive business in the end, as there is nothing which interferes more with the payment of a dividend than a big accident of this kind.

The Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China has declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 3 per cent. The Chartered Mercantile Bank has declared a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., taken £40,000 to Reserve Fund, and carried a balance of £15,750 forward.

One interested in the Bengal Baragunda Copper Company

Limited, referred to in our letter of 23rd ultimo, writes to say that "the prospects of the Company are good—better than ever." We are very glad to hear it. But the Directors would do well to put forth, as soon as possible, a clear statement of how matters stand now, and the reasons for the faith that is in them with regard to the eventual outturn of the project, judged by all the experience gained since the prospectus was issued. The time for a "strictly private and confidential attitude" on the part of any one in any way connected with the management of the affair has gone by, if indeed it were ever wisely adopted. It is understood that Messrs. Kemp and Olpherts, both men of good standing in their respective professions, who were among those named in our recent letter, are still very large holders of vendors' shares. May their faith be well rewarded! Mr. Olpherts is believed to hold some 20,000 of these shares.

The Egerton Woollen Mills Company, Limited, an apparently well-managed concern, doing a profitable and increasing business, is inviting subscriptions from the public to a 7 per cent. Debenture Loan of 2 lakhs of rupees, in coupons of Rs. 100 each; interest payable half-yearly. The main object of the loan is stated to be the re-payment of a bank debt of one and a half lakh of rupees, which is costing the Company an average rate of interest of 10 per cent. The Company's property, chiefly new block, plant, and machinery, which is proposed to be vested in trustees on behalf of the debenture-holders, is valued at Rs. 4,19,000, which, at the worst, should leave a safe margin of security. The debentures are, we are informed, being rapidly subscribed for.

CALCUTTA, 11th October 1884.

BUSINESS was resumed once more on Monday, and there seems to be a somewhat better feeling in the share markets.

The half-yearly meeting of the shareholders of the Bowreah Company was held on Monday last, and a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. declared. The shareholders expressed their satisfaction at the way in which the Company's affairs had been conducted by the Secretaries during the past 12 months, and desired that no change be made in the management—a somewhat ambiguous resolution to those who are not behind the scenes, but perfectly intelligible to the initiated. It is, in fact, a vote of want of confidence in one of the Managing Agents concealed under the guise of a vote of thanks to the firm.

There has been a considerable rumpus among the shareholders of the Imperial Ice Company. The half-yearly meeting took place on Wednesday, and on that morning a very severe criticism of the management of the Company appeared in one of the daily papers here. It appears that the Directors coolly proposed that the loss on the working should be added to Block Account—a unique and novel way of increasing the value of that item. There was an acrimonious discussion at the meeting, and a committee of shareholders was unanimously appointed to look into the accounts, and the working of the Company generally, which would seem to be anything but satisfactory.

The Report of the National Bank of India, Limited, for the first half of this year, shows the net profits, after providing for bad and doubtful debts, to be £49,158, and adding the balance brought forward from last half-year, £1,975, the available surplus is £51,133. £25,000 have been taken to the Reserve Fund; a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, free of income-tax declared, absorbing £11,631; and the balance of £14,502 carried forward.

The Calcutta Laundry Company is not in a very healthy condition, and is suffering from a very common disease—want of funds! It was originally started with a capital of Rs. 50,000, namely, Rs. 17,500 in Deferred vendors' shares, and Rs. 32,500.

to be subscribed for by the public. Unfortunately, only Rs. 20,000 was taken up outside, and this amount has not sufficed to give the affair a proper start. A meeting has been convened for to-day, the result of which has not yet transpired.

A meeting of the shareholders of the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway is convened for the 22nd October, to receive the report and to declare a dividend, which, I am told, will be 3 per cent.

Railway Companies in other parts of the world might take a note of how the Government in this country deal with serious accidents on railways owned by themselves. It is usual in such cases to hold some sort of inquiry, and to adopt some means to identify the bodies of the slain. In the late accident at Arranghatta this appears to have been considered superfluous, and the bodies of the unfortunate victims of railway mismanagement were promptly interred in one reeking pit, without distinction of caste or creed. Ah me! we live in strange times. If such a thing had been done by a private Company, there would have been a howl throughout the land, and it would have been said, and said rightly, that this hasty and indecent interment was with a view to save the pocket of the Company from any claim for damages, which an identification of the bodies might have led to. Government is perhaps presumed to be above such imputations; it is to be hoped so, at all events. A Resolution by the Government of India on the employment of natives as drivers and shunters appears very appropriately in the last *Gazette of India*. It is noteworthy that the Locomotive Superintendent, Eastern Bengal Railway, states that though 3 native firemen were promoted to pilotmen in 1883 on a consolidated pay of Rs. 30 per mensem each, and have thus far worked satisfactorily, it should be borne in mind that they were engaged and have been working during the slack season, and that therefore their energies have never sufficiently been put to the test, to admit of his giving his opinion as to their fitness under pressure of work or *during an emergency*. The Government of India, however, notices with satisfaction that there has been an increase of 64 in the number of native drivers, and the subject of training natives for such employment continues to receive the attention of the authorities concerned.

The Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank are inviting tenders for a Chinese Imperial Government Silver Loan of \$2,789,400, or 2 million taels. The loan will be in bonds of \$500 each, Hong-Kong currency, bearing interest at 8 per cent. per annum, and principal and interest will both be payable at Hong-Kong. The loan is divided into two portions, marked A and B. The bonds of loan A are redeemable at par within three years (1887) by three yearly instalments, the first of which will be payable on the 15th March 1885. The bonds of loan B are redeemable at par within six years (1890) by three yearly instalments, the first of which will be payable on the 30th June 1888. A deposit of 10 per cent. must accompany the tender, and the balance of the amount allotted must be paid on or before the 25th October. Applicants should state whether they desire to apply for loan A or B. Tenders will be received until noon of Saturday, the 18th October.

At the Tea Sales on Thursday last some 23,000 chests of tea were offered, and the prices realised were about half an anna per pound lower: this was understood to have been caused by the receipt of private telegrams from London intimating a decline in the prices realised there. These telegrams had a great effect on the valuations and subsequent prices realised. On Friday, however, Renter's telegram informed the mercantile community that the prices realised at home were fully up to previous sales. It is to be hoped for the sake of commercial morality that Renter is mistaken.

The Bank of Bengal made no alteration in their minimum rate of discount on Thursday last, which remains at 4 per cent.; but loans in the open market can be obtained at a much lower rate, and indeed from the Bank itself. It is, of course, to the interest of the Bank to keep the rate of discount up; a high rate of interest helps the half-yearly dividend, but it does not help business enterprise.

The Bank of England rate has been raised to 3 per cent.; this has probably something to do with the conversion of consols to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It is understood that the Bank has a very large holding of 3 per cents., and their conversion to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cents.

would be anything but a gain to it. A higher rate of money may interfere with, and perhaps prevent the conversion, and this of course would be a decided gain to the Bank.

The Report of the Committee of shareholders of the Titaghur Paper Mills on a proposal to extend the concern has just been circulated to the shareholders. The committee having made a careful investigation into the position and prospects of the Mill, report that at present prices, which are unusually low, there is a small profit apparent, supposing the Mill to continue to manufacture at its present rate, which it is well able to do, working by day only. This profit is shown after setting aside 5 per cent. on the cost of the machinery for wear and tear, and an equal amount for contingencies and interest at 8 per cent. on a lakh of rupees of borrowed money. This profit might be considerably increased by working night and day, and still more so by doubling the Mill machinery. The committee think that for the present it would be advisable to increase the outturn by night and day working only, leaving the doubling of the machinery for which the buildings, &c., were originally designed, and are already to a great extent constructed, for future consideration. By working day and night the outturn can be doubled, and in the opinion of the committee the Mill will earn a very fair profit when this is done, provided that the present prices of paper are maintained. In order to accomplish this it will be requisite to spend Rs. 20,000 upon an additional block, while it would cost Rs. 2,00,000 to double the Mill. The committee recommend that the arrangements for working by night and by day be made at once, and that the Directors be empowered to issue debentures to the extent of three lakhs of rupees, of which only one lakh should be issued for the present, and the remainder when the shareholders, at a general meeting, determine that it is expedient to double the machinery. The manufacture of paper in this country is a most legitimate industry, as nearly all the materials are at hand. The Titaghur Paper Mills possess a fine property and a substantial and well-built Mill; there should be no difficulty in placing the debentures.

Shares.—The following have been the reported transactions :—

Banks.—Bank of Bengal, 870, 872½, 875. Delhi and London Bank, 218. National Bank, 98 and 99. Uncovenanted Service Bank, 93.

Cotton Mills.—Bowreah, 50 cum-dividend; 46½ and 48 ex-dividend.

Jute Mills.—Budge-Budge, 86.

Coal Companies.—New Beerbhoom, 89. Raneegunge, 67.

Steam Companies.—India General, 128, 131, 130, 131, 132, and 133. Calcutta Steam, 88, 89, and 90, for one month.

Tea Companies.—Soom, 90. Gielle, 80, 82. Foolbari, 100.

Railway.—Tarkessur, 100.

Sundries.—Bengal Silk, 103, 103½, 104, and 105. Carew & Co., 120. Great Eastern Hotel, 85. Titaghur Paper Mills, 70.

Debentures.—Bengal Ice, Bowreah Mills, Hooghly Mills, Goo-sery Jute Mills, Dunbar Mill—all at 101.

CALCUTTA, 18th October 1884.

THE Report of the Directors of the Delhi and London Bank, Limited, for the half-year ended 30th June, discloses a profit of £12,106, which includes £84 brought forward from the previous half-year. A dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. has been declared, free of Income-Tax; £3,000 have been taken to the credit of doubtful debt account; and the balance of £665 carried forward.

The Soom, Gielle, and Hoolmaree Tea Companies have each declared a dividend of 5 per cent., payable at once.

The Jokai (Assam) Tea Company has made arrangements to purchase from the Muttuck Tea Company their Tea Plantations, which are contiguous to those of the Jokai Company, for the sum of £19,000 payable in shares. The price has been fixed by Mr. J. J. J. Keswick, who has valued the property. The Jokai Company was formed in Calcutta in 1873, and its head office transferred to London in 1882. The capital was then £30,000. Shares have now been issued to the Muttuck Company for £19,000 and an additional £11,000 is offered to the public, making the present subscribed capital £60,000. It is understood that this amalgamation with the Muttuck Tea Gardens will much lower the cost of production, as the cost of administration and European management will be considerably reduced thereby. The share list was to have closed in London on the 26th September. This appears to be a step in the right direction; there is no doubt that small Tea Gardens are seriously handicapped by the extra cost for European management; and if tea is to be cultivated successfully for the shareholders in the future, it will probably be found that the example of the Jokai Company must be imitated.

The Tea Sales on Thursday were rather flat and prices of the lower qualities weaker; some 18,000 chests were offered.

The Inland Flotilla Company has commenced operations this week; their first steamer left with flats on Wednesday morning; she has been chartered, it is understood, to load a cargo of Jute for Messrs. Finlay, Muir & Co.

The Calcutta Laundry Company, at their meeting on Saturday,

appointed a committee of shareholders to look into matters generally. These committees appear to be becoming the order of the day.

Shareholders in Jute Pressing Companies will probably have ere long to make up their minds to a reduction in the rates of their dividends. At a time when the jute manufacturing industry is so seriously depressed, manufacturers do not quite see why jute presses should be making such large profits, more especially as the number of presses has increased of late years, and the supply has probably overtaken the demand. A movement is already on foot to reduce the rates of baling very considerably, and though it may not be successful this season, it is not unlikely that it may be so next. It is high time that pressing charges were reduced somewhat. Jute Pressing Companies have been having an uncommonly good time for some years past, and with the jute industry so dull and depressed, it is but natural that there should be some reduction in baling charges.

Similarly shareholders in Ice Manufacturing Companies in Calcutta have not a remarkably bright prospect before them. Until recently the Bengal Ice Company has had it pretty much its own way, the opposition from the Imperial Ice Company having not been of a very pronounced type; there are, however, signs not wanting that there will be a keener competition. The working of the Imperial Ice Company is now being inquired into by a committee of shareholders, which includes some very practical men, and if report be true, this Company ought to be able to sell Ice at a pice a pound, and make a fair profit. The Crystal Ice Company will also soon be at work; and Messrs. Macneill & Co. are experimentalising with a Giffard's Machine, so that the public ere long will be thoroughly well supplied. Ice has now ceased to be a luxury; it is looked on as a necessity and it is maintained should be available at a pice per pound. It is noteworthy that shares in the Bengal Ice Company have receded to par; they have been at as much as 100 per cent. premium.

A petition was presented to the High Court on Thursday last praying that the Hooghly Steam Navigation Company might be wound up under the provisions of the Indian Companies' Act

as it was unable to pay its debts. The Company was started during 1882, with a capital of some Rs. 2,20,000, for the purpose of acquiring and working the steam-tugs *Bombay* and *Electric*. These steamers had belonged to Messrs. Robert & Charriol, and were sold by the Official Assignee for something like Rs. 80,000. They were then repaired and overhauled and made over to the Company. They were by no means new steamers: the *Bombay* was built by Lungley, of Deptford, about 20 years ago; and the *Electric* probably about the same time. The former steamer was run down and sunk at the Sandheads some time ago, the Company receiving Rs. 60,000 as compensation, so that the *Electric* is now the sole asset of the Company. The petitioning creditors, whose claim amounts to Rs. 4,600 odd, state that the accounts filed with the Registrar of Joint-Stock Companies up to February 1883, disclosed a loss on the working of over Rs. 4,000, and that since that time no further accounts had been filed,—a remissness on the part of the management which exposes them to considerable penalties under the Companies' Act.

The Bank of Bengal made no change in the rate of discount at their weekly meeting on Thursday last, and the minimum still remains at 4 per cent., although loans can be easily arranged outside at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. There seems no good reason apparent why the rate should be maintained at 4 per cent., more especially as the Bank's position is much stronger, there having been a considerable falling off in the public demand for money during the past week. It may be that the management consider that 4 per cent. is cheap enough for money, and doubtless people who have money to lend will be of the same opinion; but, as has been well observed by the writer of the commercial article in one of the papers here, "a great many monetary transactions are arranged, the rate of interest on which is regulated by the Bank of Bengal minimum;" and it is to say the least anomalous that money can be obtained outside at some $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., below the minimum at which the Bank of Bengal profess to lend it. At a time when the Jute Mills will be requiring advances to lay in stocks of jute, a low Bank rate would be very beneficial to them, and though 4 per cent. is considerably below the average, that

is no reason why it should not be less, if the state of the money market admits of it.

Shares.—The following transactions are reported :—

Banks.—Bank of Bengal, 870. National Bank, 98.

Jute and Cotton Mills.—Bowreah, 46. Union Jute, 120. Calcutta Hydraulic Press, 150. Barnagore Jute Co., 70. Nasmyth Press, 109.

Tea Companies.—Soom, 92, 90. Bishnauth Contributory, 80. Gielle, 81, 82, 83. Central Terai, 53, 55. Ting-Ling, 115. Hoolmaree, 105. Ringtong, 90. Singbulli and Murmah, 102.

Steam Companies.—There has been some inquiry for these shares at advancing rates. India General at 135, 136, 136½ and 137, cash; 141 for 4 months' time. Contributory shares at 30, 29½, and 30 premium. Inland Flotilla at 2 to 3 per cent. discount, and par for 6 months' time. Calcutta Steam at 91, 92, 93, cash; 94 and 95 for 3 months.

Miscellaneous.—Carew & Co., 120. Bengal Ice, 101. Great Eastern Hotel, 85 and 86. Bengal Silk, 109 for 3 months, 105, 106½ cash. Darjeeling Railway, 96.

Government Paper has remained pretty steady at 99 and 99-1 and 99-2.

CALCUTTA, 25th October 1884.

THE Bally Paper Mills Company, Limited, advertise a final dividend of 2 per cent., making 7 per cent. for the year ended 31st July, payable by warrants on London. This Company has hitherto paid a yearly dividend of 10 per cent., so the results can hardly be gratifying to the shareholders. But paper manufacturing, like everything else, is exposed to competition; and as the Titaghur Mill only commenced working a very short time before the close of the Bally Company's commercial year, it is probable that during the present year competition will be more severe and the immediate outlook, therefore, of the Company can hardly be satisfactory. It is becoming very evident, that in these days of close competition a Company cannot expect to pay high dividends for any lengthened period of time, unless it is protected in some way or other by a patent, and so secured for a certain number of years. High dividends provoke opposition and the sooner shareholders realize this fact, the better it will be for them in the long run. There has been too much disposition in the past to strain after effect, to divide the whole of the profits among the shareholders, to allow nothing for depreciation of plant and stock, to set nothing aside for reserve. Shareholders and Managers of Companies have apparently been under the impression, that they could eat their cake and have it too. The result, in many instances, has been doubly disappointing. In the first place the declaration of these abnormally high and unearned dividends has made other people desirous to participate therein, and consequently rival undertakings have been promoted, which adjusting the supply more nearly to the demand, have produced a reduction in prices and a consequent diminution of profits; and secondly, the new undertakings have generally been provided with improved and more modern machinery; so that the pioneer concern has found itself handicapped in the race, and having provided no reserve or depreciation fund, is often hopelessly distanced by the competing Company. Prudent Managing Agents and Directors of Companies should rest content with the payment of moderate dividends; and if after *amply providing*

for depreciation and reserve funds there should be a surplus, they should reduce their prices to their customers. These observations more especially apply to transit Companies, Ice Concerns, Jute Presses, and the like. Watering the capital, though generally objectionable, *is sometimes judicious*, as it, of course, tends to reduce the rate of dividend; but this must be done before any opposition has arisen: it answers no useful purpose afterwards. In this manner moderate dividends would be the order of the day; Companies would be established on a firm basis, and opposition would be disarmed. Unfortunately the experience of Calcutta shareholders has been just the reverse, and consequently at the present moment there is little or no desire to invest in Joint Stock Companies.

The weak feature about Joint Stock Enterprise in India is this, that in the majority of cases the Company is not got up for the benefit of the shareholders at all. Of course they are tempted to invest their money by the prospect of high dividends in the future, just as an unhappy donkey is tempted to run by the rider holding a bunch of carrots in front of his nose; but the results are equally disappointing. It will be found in practice, that a Company is promoted by a firm or syndicate, or some persons who expect to obtain some immediate or permanent benefit, such as the Agency, with its fat allowances, or a large price for something which it would be otherwise difficult to sell. The shareholders are quite a secondary consideration; if after the payment of large Agency Fees there is something left, well, let them have it; but a perusal of the share lists will show that in too many instances that "something" is so small as to be not easily divisible.

There is a growing feeling among shareholders, especially those in Tea Gardens, that Calcutta Agency charges need revision. It is, of course, felt that the labourer is worthy of his hire; but between muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn, and letting him eat the lot, there is surely a happy mean; and it seems scarcely reasonable that, while the proprietors are metaphorically starving, the employés should be revelling in plenty. It is true that in some cases the Agents are remunerated by a commission on the profits, but a minimum remuneration is generally fixed,

and at such a high rate that the profits would need to be something gigantic ere that minimum was exceeded, so that the so-called percentage on the profits is nothing more than a delusion and a snare. There are some Jute Mill Companies in Calcutta the Agents of which are remunerated by a commission of 5 per cent. on the profits. Nothing could be more reasonable, but a clause provides that this remuneration, no matter what the profit or the loss, shall not be less than Rs. 30,000 per annum; or in other words, unless the yearly profit exceeds six lakhs of rupees per annum no question of percentage arises; for notwithstanding that the years 1882 and 1883 were ones of unexampled prosperity to the jute manufacturing industry, the 5 per cent. percentage was not equal to Rs. 30,000! But it may be argued that Managing Agents devote considerable time and trouble to looking after the Companies committed to their charge; that they are burthened with a great deal of responsibility, and that they cannot be expected to work for nothing; true, and this argument would have great force in the case of an Agent, who had been appointed after the Company was formed, and who had nothing to do with its promotion and formation. But to how many Agents would this apply? Nearly every Company has been actively promoted by its Agents, who have drawn up and are responsible for the alluring prospectus through which the shareholders were induced to part with their money. Is it right or reasonable that these Agents should profit by their own wrong, and that they should not in some way be held responsible for their mistakes? There is a great need for a "Shareholders' Protection Association;" such an institution, by combining the shareholders, would be a real power for good. At the present moment shareholders are more or less isolated and discontented; powerless in many instances to protect their own interests; too often entirely at the mercy of the responsible management, and only too grateful if the result of the working of their Company does not disclose a loss.

The Central Cachar Tea Company has declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 3 per cent., and the Goomtee Tea Company, one of 5 per cent., both payable at once.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the shareholders of the Natwanpore Tea Company has been convened for the 3rd November next, to consider the present position of the Company and to pass such resolutions as may be considered desirable. This interesting undertaking appears to have paid no dividend for some time past, and shares in it are quoted in the share lists at 50 per cent. discount. There have, however, been no transactions for some time past.

At the Tea Sales on Thursday 11,807 chests were offered, of which 11,316 found buyers, and 491 were withdrawn. Messrs. Moran & Co., report that "the auction passed off with considerably more animation, and that there was a general advance in prices, chiefly noticeable on common and medium sorts, which may be quoted from a quarter to half-an-anna higher."

Reuter telegraphs that "at the sales of Indian Teas in London during the week 23,000 chests were offered, of which 21,000 were sold, common brokens were a shade easier, and fine qualities were in rather less request."

The Report of the Directors of the Darjeeling and Himalayan Railway intimates that the balance of net earnings on the 30th June 1884, after providing for the interest due on debentures, is Rs. 52,868-15-2, which includes a balance of Rs. 4,845-8-5 brought forward from the previous half-year, and after deducting Rs. 30,000, the amount incorporated into capital from profits in accordance with the resolution passed at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the shareholders held on the 4th June 1884. From this balance the Directors propose to pay a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the half-year, which will exhaust Rs. 48,125, to transfer Rs. 772-4-0 to reserve and insurance fund (making it up to Rs. 35,000), and to carry the balance of Rs. 3,971-11-2 forward. The dividend is at the rate of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum.

The Murree Brewery Company have issued a very satisfactory annual report, notifying to the shareholders a dividend at the rate of 12 per cent. per annum. The report states that hops and barley are reasonable in price, and that the prospects of the current year are excellent. The Company's Managing Brewer, Mr. Henry Whympers, has been on the alert exploring fresh fields

with a view to extending its operation. The Ceylon Brewery Company's premises at Newana Eliya have been purchased for a nominal sum, and the purchase of the Nilgiri Company's stock, block and contracts is provisionally agreed upon; the price to be paid in (a new issue of) the Murree Company's shares. This transaction completed the Company will hold the contracts for all the Madras Presidency until the year 1890. Then another Brewery is to be opened—at almost the opposite end of the world—in the Peshin Valley, with apparently an assured prospect of success. Altogether the vigour and enterprise displayed in the programme we have roughly sketched are refreshing.

The Bank of Bengal made no change in its rates of discount at Thursday's meeting, and the minimum still remains at 4 per cent. for loans on Government Paper. Money is still very easy in the outside market, and loans can be readily negotiated on Government Paper at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. There is a feeling that the Bank rate might easily have been reduced to 3 per cent.; but it must be presumed that the management knows its own business. The Bank, however, is gaining strength weekly, and the late spurt in its shares has ended; a considerable decline having in fact set in. From 875 shares have declined to $852\frac{1}{2}$. The present half-year is not likely to be a very profitable one, for with money so cheap high profits are out of the question.

There has been a serious decline in Calcutta Tramway shares, and £10 shares have changed hands at Rs. 80. This, taking exchange into account, is equivalent to a discount of quite 35 per cent. There is no doubt that the Tramway has cost the Company too much, but this subject we will refer to more fully in a subsequent letter.

Shares.—The share market is dull and transactions are very limited. The following are reported :—

Bank.—Bank of Bengal, $852\frac{1}{2}$, one share at Rs. 855.

CALCUTTA, 1st November 1884.

ON the 8th January 1881, the greater part of a column of the *Times* was devoted to informing Her Majesty's lieges, that the contractors of the Calcutta Tramways Company were desirous of disposing of their shares in that undertaking, and explaining the very great advantages which would accrue to such as invested their money therein: It was stated that the Calcutta Tramways Company had been incorporated under the Companies' Act, and that the liability of its shareholders was limited. The capital was £350,000 divided into £10 shares; and the Directors were:—J. R. Bullen-Smith, Esq., c. s. i., (late of Messrs. Jardine, Skinner & Co., Calcutta), Director of the East Indian Railway and Union Bank of Australia; E. C. Morgan, Esq., (late of Ashburner and Co., Calcutta); Charles Sanderson, Esq., (late Solicitor to the Government of India), Director of the Eastern Bengal Railway; W. L. Watson, Esq., (Messrs. James Finlay & Co., Glasgow); and M. M. Moore, Esq., (Messrs. W. B. Huggins & Co., Glasgow), late Director, North Metropolitan Dublin and Vale of Clyde Tramway Companies. It will be admitted that the above Board was one which should inspire confidence in the shareholders, comprising as it did business and professional gentlemen of high standing, three of whom were personally and intimately acquainted with Calcutta for many years; and the shareholders were justified in presuming that their interests would be carefully considered, and that the statements in the prospectus might be implicitly relied on; for if investors will not repose confidence in a Board of gentlemen, two of whom have held high office in Calcutta, having been Members of Council, Sheriffs, Presidents of the Chamber of Commerce, and so forth; aided by a gentleman who had been the legal adviser of the Government, a member of the home firm of Finlay, Muir & Co.; and a scion of the house of Huggins,—then is confidence a thing of the past, and the business of promoting Companies had better be relegated to limbo. Fortunately, for the contractors, the public had faith and invested. The Company was stated to have been formed for the purpose of taking over the cou-

cessions granted for constructing and working Tramways in Calcutta and its suburbs. Some interesting information regarding that city was then given, and it was added that Calcutta was *peculiarly well adapted for the economical working of Tramways*, the principal streets being wide, regular and perfectly level. The concessions which had been formally ratified by an Act of the Bengal Government were granted to Messrs. D. and A. Parrish and Mr. Robinson Souttar, by whom they had been transferred to the Company. They authorized the laying and working of about $38\frac{1}{2}$ miles of Tramways and granted the exclusive right of laying and working Tramways in the district they covered. They were in perpetuity, the Calcutta Municipality, however, having the right to purchase the Tramways and all equipment and property of the Company at the end of 21 years, and every 7 years thereafter, upon payment of $1\frac{1}{2}$ of the invested capital in cash, or bonds of the Corporation for the amount of the invested capital bearing interest at 7 per cent. The Company were to pay to the Corporation for every mile of street laid with a double line, Rs. 3,000 per annum, and for every mile of street laid with a single line Rs. 2,000 per annum. Outside Municipal limits the rate was Rs. 1,000 per mile. They were to deduct the taxes for horses, carriages or lines from this sum. This amount was stated to be equivalent to an average annual rental over the whole system of about £109 sterling per mile of Tramway, and to be but slightly in excess of the amounts paid in Municipal taxes upon some of the Tramways in England. The streets being perfectly level, the cars will, for the most part, be worked with one horse, but under the terms of the concession, mechanical power may also be used. Then was added:—The “only city in India where Tramways have been fairly tried is Bombay, where they have been worked about six years by an American Company with great success and profit; and although the city is not so large as Calcutta, and in some other respects not so well adapted, for Tramways, yet the cars are literally thronged with passengers.” Then followed some statistics, and the prospectus went on to say:—“From these figures it appears not unreasonable to estimate, the traffic of Calcutta with 38 miles of Tramway at twice that of Bombay with

13 miles. This would give a total of 14 million persons annually which, at an average estimated fare of $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ each (being less than the Bombay average), would produce a gross annual revenue of £102,000. Working expenses of Tramways are lower in India than in England, wages are about one-third as much, and horse provender considerably less. The experience of the Bombay Tramways proves that the working life of their horses bears favorable comparison with that of England. Under these circumstances, and having regard to the fact that the Tramways will, for the most part, be worked by one horse instead of two horse cars, it is thought to be within the mark to estimate the working expenses at 65 per cent. of the gross receipts, thus leaving an estimated net profit of £35,700, or more than sufficient to pay dividend of 10 per cent. on the total capital. The concessions (and the 8 miles of Tramways then constructed, together with the rolling stock, horses and equipments) have been transferred by Messrs. Parrish and Souttar to the Company, under an agreement by which the concessions to the existing and all other authorized Tramways that may be constructed by them are to be handed over to the Company fully equipped at the price of £9,000 per mile of single line of Tramway, payable in ordinary shares of the Company at par. The Tramways will be constructed upon the most substantial system with steel rails, and when the whole of the authorized lines are built, the equipment will include 160 cars, 800 horses, and the necessary stables, car sheds, repairing shops, &c." Then followed some statistics of the traffic from 1st November to 31st December 1880, on the Sealdah route of $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile of double line, which were compared with three English Tramways, the result showing an excess per car per mile in the case of the Calcutta Tramways. Now there are one or two points which stand out in very bold relief in this prospectus :—(1) That the Calcutta streets were peculiarly adapted for the economical working of Tramways ; (2) that exceptionally favorable terms had been made with the Municipality ; (3) that the working expenses in India are lower than in England. Those of our readers who peruse the stock and share lists will not need to be told that this concern has

never paid 10 per cent., and that its shares, which were at a considerable premium, are now at a very heavy discount; £10 shares can be bought, we understand, for Rs. 75.

It is apparent that the estimate of traffic has been grossly if undesignedly exaggerated. It is rumoured also that the price paid for the concern, namely, £9,000 per mile is much in excess of the actual cost—and the shareholders, we think, are entitled to ask Messrs. Bullen-Smith, Morgan, Sanderson, Watson, and Moore, what steps they took to protect the interests of the shareholders, and to verify the estimates of traffic. They might also, we think, usefully and justifiably enquire what fees these Directors draw, what number of shares they hold, and what they paid for them. These are not unreasonable questions to ask. As far as one can see at present, the only person who have really benefitted by this undertaking are Messrs. Dillwyn Parrish, Alfred Parrish, and Robinson Souttar. These gentlemen must have made a really good thing out of the business, and the concession which they obtained from the Calcutta Municipality for almost nothing must have been a large fortune.

It is affirmed by competent Judges that a Tramway like the one in Calcutta could easily have been laid for about £3,000 per mile. This would amount to £115,500;—800 horses at £40 would total up £32,000; 160 cars at £200 would amount to £32,000. Let us add £50,000 for stables, workshops, &c., &c., and we arrive at a grand total of £229,500, or let us say, in round numbers, £250,000 for the 38½ miles of Tramway complete. Yet under the agreement with the contractors, the Directors, all presumed shrewd men of business, undertook to pay £346,500, or nearly £100,000 more than the concern could have cost. This action of the Directors is most difficult to understand, and is calculated to destroy confidence in any Board. It should have been evident to the veriest tyro that a Tramway on perfectly level streets 38½ miles long could not possibly have cost £9,000 per mile, yet this sum seems to have been deliberately paid for it, and the Directors lend the weight of their names and Indian experience to induce the public to

invest in the undertaking. But it may be said that the concession was a very valuable one, so valuable as to be worth £100,000. This may be so, but we hope not; for if so the fact remains that the then Chairman of the Municipality, Mr. W. M. Sonttar, a man who had gone to his long home universally respected, allowed his own brother to obtain for nothing from the Municipality a concession worth £100,000. We do not care to dwell on this; it is pretty generally known, however, that Messrs. Kettridge & Co., the Contractors and Managers of the Bombay Tramways, which are alluded to in such flattering terms in the Calcutta prospectus, were willing and anxious to construct similar Tramways in Calcutta, but *met with no encouragement*.

Now it must needs seem that the Calcutta Municipality were somewhat wanting in judgment in these negotiations; and the result has been to burthen the town with the payment of interest on a much larger sum than was necessary; for it is clear that if these Tramways could have been constructed with a capital of £250,000, they could have been worked at a lower scale of fares than with a capital of £350,000. The maximum fares to be charged by the Tramway have been fixed by the Corporation at a ridiculously high rate (namely, 3 annas for any distance not exceeding 3 miles), and this practically gives the Municipality no voice in this matter; and altogether the whole thing is far from creditable to all concerned. At the present moment, so far as the carriage-owning part of the public of Calcutta is concerned, the Tramway may be described as a perfect nuisance. Section 5 of Act I (B. C.) of 1880 enacts that the Tramway shall be laid and maintained in such manner that the uppermost surface of the rails shall be on a level with the immediately adjacent surface of the road; and section 13 that the grantees shall, at their own expense, at all times maintain and keep in good condition and repair, in such manner as the Corporation shall direct, the rails of their Tramway, and so much of the street as lies between the rails, and as extends 18 inches beyond the rails on each side of the Tramway. And section 18 provides for a penalty of Rs. 200 and a daily

fine of Rs. 50 per day for failure to comply with these provisions. The state of the Calcutta streets near some portions of the Tramway is little short of a public scandal, and if the Chairman of the Municipality would desist for a while from his favourite dialectical exercises, and devote a little of his time to doing his duty in the matter of the Tramways, the public would feel that he was doing something at all events for the good of the town.

The present outlook of the Tramway Company is not very encouraging. The receipts seem to hover between Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000 a week, which it need scarcely be said is less than half what was estimated in the prospectus; and the dividends paid have been in accordance. If the officers of the Municipality only performed their duty, the Company would be put to a great deal of expense for the maintenance of the roads. The condition of many of the horses is very pitiable, and there are loud complaints of unpunctuality and irregularity in the working.

At the last Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday 12,992 chests were offered and 12,002 were sold; prices were generally lower, and advices from London are to the same effect.

The Bank of Bengal made no change in its rate of discount on Thursday; the financial position still improves and money is still obtainable in the open market at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

There has been a slight rise in Cotton Mill shares this week, and Bowreahs have improved to Rs. 47 and Dunbars to the same figure. Cotton Mills just now are doing very well; there has been a smart advance in the price of twist and yarn, while the raw material is somewhat easier.

Jute Mills are still doing badly and shares continue depressed. Transactions are reported in Budge-Budge at 83, Fort Gloster at 36 and 35, and Barnagore at 73, for three months.

Government Paper has declined again to 99-0 to 99-1, notwithstanding the easy money market.

The Simla Municipal Debenture Loan has been fully subscribed.

Exchange.—The heavy fall in the sterling exchanges caused

by the recent irregular policy of the Indian Council in the matter of selling their drafts is inflicting serious losses on importers and firms requiring goods from Europe, not to mention the hardship it causes to individuals in this country, who require to make family remittances. During the week the rate of exchange has steadily declined, and demand drafts are now *ls. 7½d.*

CALCUTTA, 8th November 1884.

THE committee appointed by the shareholders of the Imperial Ice Company have issued a very complete and exhaustive report to the shareholders, from which it may be gathered that there has been a great want of system in its management in the past. They recommend certain economies in the working which, when effected, they think will place the Company "in a position to realize a fair margin of profit, even were the entire output of the factory disposed of at but one pice per seer. So low a selling rate, however, is mentioned only for the purposes of comparison, as it is doubtful whether even at the present charge of two pice per seer; any rival concern could profitably compete with the Imperial." This sounds very well; and as the shareholders have elected two of the committee to seats on the Board, satisfactory results ought to be immediately apparent. *Nous verons*. Shares in this concern have been sold at Rs. 31, and it is said could now be but much cheaper. Shares in the Bengal Ice Company have changed hands at Rs. 100, and the ice manufacturing industry is probably doomed to a little healthy competition, from which the public should derive the benefit.

The Report of the committee of shareholders of the Calcutta Laundry Company is a very sad affair. The committee are of opinion that Mr. Reardon has not carried out his contract with the Company, and that the business has been conducted in a ridiculously extravagant manner; they consider that his assertion that the machinery is capable, when in thoroughly efficient hands, of turning out 100,000 pieces a week is a pure fiction; that the management has been characterised by a very regrettable want of method on the part of the Superintendent, whether as regards the office records, or arrangements or proper regulations for work or expenditure for stores, and they cannot absolve the Managing Agents from responsibility in this matter. On the 13th October last the constituency of the Company numbered 7 families and 19 bachelors; and the establishment consisted of 33 persons, exclusive of the Superintendent and his wife! The committee are of opinion that the operations of the Company should be suspended

as under existing arrangements, it is absolutely impossible to make both ends meet, and until the whole Constitution is thoroughly remodelled nothing but heavy loss can follow. In the face of this scathing report the Managing Agents have had the decency to resign, and it is now proposed to appoint Mr. J. G. Innes in their stead. The committee has also written another report, which has apparently not as yet been issued to the shareholders, but from the allusion to it in the notice of meeting, it may be gathered that under certain circumstances they recommend a resumption of business.

Mr. Justice Wilson, on Thursday last, refused to make an order for the compulsory winding up of the Hooghly River and Coasting Steam Navigation Company, as it appeared that the great bulk of the creditors were in favour of a voluntary liquidation under the inspection of the Court. The matter will probably come before the Court again in another shape.

The Directors of the Bank of Bengal, at their weekly meeting on Thursday, reduced the rate of discount to 3 per cent. Why this was not done nearly two months ago seems somewhat unintelligible to the uninitiated public. The Bank's position is very strong indeed. The public and other deposits amount to Rs. 4,77,84,714, against which they hold no less than Rs. 3,03,44,441 in cash; so that a reduction in the rate of interest was, under the circumstances, inevitable.

A meeting of the Bengal Baragunda Copper Company, Limited, is convened in London for the 18th December next, when the following Resolution will be brought forward:—"That the Company hereby determine to carry on its business by their present Managing Agents, Messrs. Bird & Co., without any Directors." This is a had look-out for Sir Stuart Hogg and Dr. Forbes Watson, who will now have to seek "fresh woods and pastures new." The former gentleman has not been very successful as a Company Director so far as cattle and copper are concerned at all events. It would be interesting to know what the Baragunda Copper Company has paid for its "guinea pigs."

The Trade and Navigation Accounts of British India for September last afford food for reflection to thinking minds. Of

course, no doubt, "one swallow makes not a spring," and it would be absurd to deduce arguments from the returns of a single month; but these accounts give the results of the six months ended September 1882, 1883 and 1884, and it seems clear from them that Calcutta is losing ground, and that Bombay is coming to the front in both imports and exports. Of course there are certain commodities, which must of necessity be shipped from Calcutta, such as indigo, tea, rice and jute, though this latter is finding a cheaper outlet *vid* Chittagong; but these are staples for which the present port accommodation is adequate. The great increase hoped for will be in wheat, and this article shows a very sad decline, while the exports from Bombay are above the average.

The following table will show the exports of wheat, oil-seeds, and cotton from Bombay and Calcutta for the six months ended September, for the last 5 years, in tons :—

			April to September.				
			1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.
<i>Wheat.</i>							
Calcutta	...	...	105,434	179,215	129,567	330,340	108,027
Bombay	...	...	67,899	236,564	173,423	320,715	257,230
<i>Oil-seeds.</i>							
Calcutta	...	...	177,545	140,478	170,208	198,343	224,537
Bombay	...	...	85,928	147,206	155,341	265,607	238,426
<i>Cotton.</i>							
Calcutta	...	...	12,417	7,913	8,575	7,484	4,224
Bombay	...	...	101,568	101,481	141,097	130,594	139,622

The following table will show the value of the Imports and Exports, Bengal and Bombay, for the last 5 years, (6 months April to September) in lakhs of rupees :—

Six months ended September.			IMPORTS—(lakhs of rupees).			
			Merchandise.		Private Treasure.	
			<i>Bengal.</i>	<i>Bombay.</i>	<i>Bengal.</i>	<i>Bombay.</i>
1880	...	...	1,066	821	96	404
1881	...	...	1,050	787	70	333
1882	...	...	1,054	818	125	732
1883	...	...	1,092	878	105	468
1884	...	...	1,676	983	139	627

Six-months ended September.			EXPORTS—(lakhs of rupees).			
			Merchandise and Produce.		Treasure.	
			<i>Bengal.</i>	<i>Bombay.</i>	<i>Bengal.</i>	<i>Bombay.</i>
1880	...	...	1,357	1,333	17	34
1881	...	...	1,377	1,516	8	39
1882	...	...	1,381	1,636	13	14
1883	...	...	1,623	1,797	7	28
1884	...	...	1,361	1,824	18	59

The above table is instructive ; it shows that the import and export trade of Bombay has steadily increased, which is not the case with Calcutta. It will be seen that for the first six months of 1880-81 the total value of the Calcutta imports and exports was 2,536 lakhs of rupees, and for the same period of 1884-85 only 2,594 lakhs, or, an increase in 5 years of 58 lakhs. On the other hand, the total value of the Bombay imports and exports for the first six months of 1880-81 was 2,642 lakhs, and in the same period of 1884-85 it increased to 3,493 lakhs, or, 851 lakhs more. In other words the trade of Bombay has increased nearly eight crores of rupees more than Calcutta, and the increase is nearly all in merchandise and produce. It seems somewhat anomalous that, under these circumstances, instead of trying to decrease the charges on exports, the responsible authorities are committing themselves to an enormous expenditure on wet docks, which, as things look at present, may not be wanted. What is

really required in Bengal is a cheap port; instead of which we find every-body bent upon making export charges dearer than they are. These navigation returns are like the mysterious writing on the walls of Belshazzar's Palace, and the translation thereof is, "Reduce the export charges, the towage, the pilotage, the railway freights, and so forth, or the trade of Calcutta is doomed not to increase":—but it is like crying in the wilderness to attempt to show this. *Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*

The first general meeting of the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association is to be held on Monday to elect a committee of a Chairman and four members, also a Secretary. This is a step in the right direction. A combination among the Mill-owners could reduce brokerage, wages, and many other charges which at present hamper the industry. May the Association prosper.

A meeting of the shareholders of the Labor Transport Company, Limited, is convened for the 17th to take into consideration the present position of the Company. This does not look healthy.

At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday about 8,000 chests of tea were sold and previous prices were maintained.

At the London Tea Sales some 21,000 chests were offered with better prices for the finer qualities; lower kinds were easier.

A curious letter appeared in one of the daily papers here on the subject of tea; it is not difficult to guess that the author is a partizan of the Calcutta Brokers and Agents, and if the letter had been signed "Leech" instead of "Lynx," it would have been more appropriate for the interests the writer evidently represents. There is not much of a lynx in a Tea Agent except where his own emoluments are concerned. The writer derides the idea of a reduction in the broker's charges. "It is like the fly on the wheel. Calcutta charges are enormous; it is a mere excuse." Of course the writer's idea of what a reasonable charge is may be somewhat different from ours, but here is a *pro forma* account sale, and let the public judge:—

	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
100 chests of Tea=8,000 lbs. at 8 annas		4,000	0 0
CHARGES—				
Lotting and inspecting at 6 annas per chest	37	8 0
Taking delivery from the railway and storing in the broker's godowns at 6 annas	37	8 0
Brokerage, 1 per cent.	40	0 0
Insurance from time of manufacture until 30 days after arrival at $\frac{3}{8}$ per cent...	15	0 0
Agents' commission at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.	100	0 0
			<hr/>	<hr/>
			230	0 0
Net proceeds	<hr/>	<hr/>
			3,770	0 0

It will be observed that the Agency charges, brokerage, &c., amount to a little over $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The charge of 6 annas a chest for lotting, &c., presses very heavily on the cheaper kinds of tea, and is almost equivalent to another 1 per cent. brokerage. The charge of 6 annas a chest for taking delivery and forwarding is a barefaced swindle, the actual cost being probably not more than a quarter of the sum. Mr. Lynx points out that the main reason of the poor prices realised at home is, that the tea is all sent home at one time, "rushed" upon the market, and sacrificed. He advocates storing the tea in this country and sending it home in suitable quantities throughout the year; the idea is not a novel one and has been already before the Tea Syndicate. Mr. Lynx complains that the tea industry is almost entirely conducted on borrowed money, and that the money available for advancing on the tea crop is limited. There is, no doubt, that the system of working Tea Gardens with insufficient capital is a vicious one, and advancing upon crops and Tea Gardens in Assam and Cachar is hardly the kind of business that a cautious banker would seek.

Meetings are advertised of the Bonded Warehouse and Scott, Thomson & Co., to declare dividends; of the Barnagore Co., Ramkistopore Press Company, and Gowhatty Tea Company, to receive reports.

The Camperdown Pressing Company has declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 5 per cent.

The meeting of the Nutwanpore Tea Company has been adjourned to the 10th, a quorum not having been present.

A call of Rs. 15 per share, payable on the 15th instant, has been made on the shareholders in the Selim Tea Company.

Shares.—There has been a little more doing in the share market. The following transactions are reported:—

Bank.—Bank of Bengal, 850.

Mills, &c.—Barnagore, 70. Fort Gloster, 35. Goosery Jute, 86, 87. Seebpore, 40. Bowraah, 46, 47, 45. Dunbar, 47. Goosery Cotton, 205. Bengal Ice, 100. Carew & Co., 120. Naini Tal Brewery, 100 ex-dividend. Strand Bank Press, 96. New Beerbhoom Coal, 90. Raneegunge Coal, 65.

Tea Companies.—Dehing, 39. Mim, 60.

Miscellaneous.—Calcutta Tramways, 80. India General, 135.

Government Paper has improved to Rs. 99-8-0. Exchange is somewhat weaker than it was last week.

CALCUTTA, 15th November 1884.

In the early part of 1883 advertisements in the Calcutta daily newspapers proclaimed to the investing public the advent of the Bengal Telephone Company, Limited. This concern was registered under the Indian Companies' Act of 1882, and floated under the auspices of the Oriental Telephone Company, Limited, of London. Its capital was fixed at Rs. 10,00,000, divided into shares of Rs. 100 each, and the Company was formed for the purpose of acquiring from the Oriental Company:—

1. Their Telephone Exchange then working in Calcutta and in course of erection in Howrah, the private lines and all the machinery, apparatus and appliances there, to appertaining, together with sufficient appliances and apparatus for 128 additional subscribers.

2. An assignment of the exclusive right to the use of the patents, then enjoyed and to be acquired by the Oriental Company in Bengal, the N.-W. Provinces, and the Punjab, and in their licenses for Calcutta and Howrah.

There were then 115 subscribers connected, so the appliances and apparatus were for 243 subscribers, of which 128 had to be connected. The price agreed to be paid for this plant was Rs. 7,60,000, half in cash and half in fully paid-up shares in the Company. The capital was divided thus:—

	Rs.
3,800 Vendors' shares	3,80,000
5,000 A shares to be issued to the public ...	5,00,000
1,200 B shares not to be issued at present ...	1,20,000
Total ...	<u>10,00,000</u>

Upon the 5,000 A shares the Oriental Telephone Company guaranteed a dividend for the first five years of 8 per cent. per annum.

The Directors of the Company were:—William Alexander, Esq.; Messrs. Geo. Henderson & Co., Director of the Bank of Bengal, and Chairman of the Standard Life Assurance Company; L. P.

D. Broughton, Esq., Administrator-General, Director of the Bank of Bengal and Universal Life Insurance Company; James Murdoch, Esq.; Messrs. William Moran & Co., Director of the India General Steam Navigation and Positive Government Security Assurance Companies, Limited; Edward Morriss, Esq., Agent, Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank, and Director, Universal Life Assurance Company; Demetrius Joseph Zemin, Esq., late Master, Trades' Association, Director of W. Newman & Co., and R. Scott, Thomson & Co., Limited; Frederick Carlisle, Esq.; Messrs. Carlisle, Nephews & Co.; Clement D. Leggatt, Esq., Agent and Attorney for the Oriental Telephone Company, and Director, Bombay Telephone Company. It will be admitted this was an unusually strong Board, representing all sections of the community; and investors might confidently expect that every reasonable and prudent inquiry had been made, and that the Directors, presumably all shrewd men of business, had satisfied themselves that they were getting value for their money, and had taken every precaution to protect the interests of the shareholders. Assuming this to be so, we would now pointedly ask them if they consider that they got value for the Rs. 7,60,000 which they so readily disbursed. It must be borne in mind that for this sum the Company has acquired some 250 transmitters and a quantity of iron posts and wire, but it seems to us that Rs. 76,000 would more adequately have represented their value than Rs. 7,60,000. As regards the exclusive right to the patents, the licenses for Calcutta and Howrah, and the agreement with the Calcutta Municipality, we look upon them as perfectly valueless. In the first place the Edison, Gower-Bell, and Johnstone are not the only patents, and, secondly, a license which is not a monopoly can be of little value. As a matter of fact since the Bengal Company was floated the Crossley Company has appeared on the scene, with the result that they have obtained for *nothing*, as we believe, all the licenses and permissions for which the former Company has paid so much, and that the Bengal Company has been compelled to reduce its charges to the subscribers very materially.

Now let us return to the Prospectus. Stress is laid on the

connection of Howrah with Calcutta and the opening of an exchange there. It was estimated that 300 ships per annum would be connected with Agents' offices, and a rental of Rs. 12,000 obtained therefrom; that the same amount would be obtained from private lines, and a similar sum from open exchanges; that from subscribers to exchanges, from private lines, from open exchanges, and from steamer and ship connections a gross income of Rs. 71,000 per annum was anticipated.

The accounts of this Company to the end of December 1883 are before us:—

	Rs.
Subscriptions and rentals accrued from 15th March to 31st December 1883, were	... 33,588
Removal charges	... 431
Profit on sales and royalties	... 523
	<hr/>
Total receipts	... 34,542
	<hr/>
<i>Less.</i>	
Working expenses for management, operators' wages, office salaries, advertisements, &c.	... 11,139
Rents and Fire Insurance	... 2,884
Secretaries' allowances, Directors' fees, Manager's commission and Auditor's fees	... 8,890
Government and Municipal licenses	... 3,884
Repairs and substitutions	... 426
	<hr/>
Total	... 27,228
	<hr/>
Gross profit for 9½ months	... 7,319
	<hr/> <hr/>

It is stated in the prospectus that a gross income of Rs. 71,000 is anticipated, and then is added:—"It is believed that an addition of 150 subscribers to those *now* on the Calcutta and Howrah Exchanges may be counted upon within the next two years, and this addition with a reasonable increase from the above-stated sources of revenue (private lines, open exchanges, and ship connections) should be sufficient to ensure a return of 8 per cent.

upon the whole capital of the Company with payment of all expenses."

Now let us test this statement.

	Rs.
The gross <i>anticipated</i> revenue was ...	71,001
The actual working expenses for $9\frac{1}{2}$ months were Rs. 27,223, and for 12 months would be ...	34,785
Total gross profit on Directors' most sanguine anticipations being realised ...	36,215

or about $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and this without allowing one pie for depreciation and wear and tear!

The balance sheets on 31st December shows the position to be this :—

LIABILITIES.

	Rs.	Rs.
Capital ...	...	8,79,500
Revenue paid in advance ...	20,752	
Sundry creditors ...	9,255	30,007
Reserve Fund ...	...	7,521
	Total ...	9,17,028

ASSETS.

BLOCK ACCOUNT:—Sum paid to the		
Oriental Telephone Co. ...	7,60,000	
Stamps and charges on transfer ...	6,636	
New construction ...	10,003	7,76,639
Stores and goods afloat ...	8,731	
Materials at exhibition ...	1,890	
Sundry debtors' goods ...	7,596	
Government Paper and Cash ...	1,21,868	1,40,085
Loss to date ...	.....	304
	Total	9,17,028

It will be observed that the Company has a Reserve Fund of Rs. 7,521, but this sum goes in reduction of the guaranteed interest paid by the Oriental Company, as well as all profits made during the first five years. At the present moment Rs. 100 shares in this concern, notwithstanding the guarantee of the Oriental Company, are very difficult of sale, and the quotation is nominally Rs. 50, which very plainly shows what the public think of the Company; while the advent of the Crossley Company has produced a healthy competition and a sensible reduction in the absurdly high rates levied in the first instance.

The Directors now admit that the revenue derived from the shipping connections has not increased according to their expectation, although, in a report laid before the shareholders early in September last, the Secretaries state that the number of working stations has been raised from 180 to 259; that the financial position is rapidly improving; that numerous fresh applications are in hand; and that the chief difficulty continues to be to get construction done quickly enough to please new subscribers. It is passing strange that in the face of this outbreak of activity, shares should steadily decline.

Now let us take a passing glance at the Oriental Telephone—the parent Company. According to the prospectus of the Bengal Company it had a large and influential Board, a capital of £300,000, and was formed to provide Telephone communication by exchanges and private lines in India, Ceylon, the Straits, China, Japan, Australia, South Africa, &c. Yet strange as it may appear, in a circular dated London, 10th April 1883, we find a firm of brokers offering for subscription 10,000 Deferred shares of this Company, £1 each, fully paid-up, for 10 shillings each, or a discount of 50 per cent., and stating that an enormous field is secured to the Company, that it embraces among other places India and Australia, and that the success that has resulted from the first subsidiary Company (Bombay) will make it clear to investors what wonderful possibilities there are in the future of the undertaking; that the capital (Bombay) had all been eagerly applied for locally, and that this was only a commencement, but it showed what could be done, and was certain to be done very shortly in other cities, &c.

It seems curious that Calcutta, the metropolis of India, has been unable to set up Tramways or Telephones without the aid of foreign jobbers, and it is somewhat humiliating to think that our merchants and men of business fell such an easy prey to the serious loss of many a trustful investor. The moral of all this is very obvious: investors should not trust to Boards of Directors, however respectable they may appear. Most of our hardworked merchants have not the time to look to the different concerns that they are asked to become Directors of; they take on trust the statements of these Company promoters, "and find too late that men betray." When an investor receives a circular of some Mill, or Tramway, or Tea Garden, or other wonderful undertaking, he should sit himself down to consider—(1) Whether the undertaking is wanted; (2) whether the price is reasonable; (3) whether the Managing Agents are likely to make it a success;—and he should inquire not only as to the respectability of these Agents, but into their business capacity, and their management of other Companies. If he is satisfied on all these points, he can invest if so disposed, but he should also bear in mind *Punch's* advice to those about to marry and better still, follow it:—

At a meeting of the Nutwanpore Tea Company on Monday it was resolved that as the Company was, by reason of its liabilities, unable to continue business, it should be wound up voluntarily. Mr. C. L. Johnstone was appointed liquidator on a remuneration of Rs. 500. This Company had a capital of Rs. 4,00,000 and 640 acres under cultivation. The Block Account stood in the books on the 31st December 1883 at Rs. 5,04,289 and the debtor balance was Rs. 60,583.

It is rumoured that there is likely to be a movement soon on the part of some of the Calcutta Tea Agency houses to reduce the Agency charges; this would be graceful on their part and would be appreciated by the shareholders.

At the Calcutta Tea Sale on Thursday some 13,011 chests were offered, of which 12,427 were sold and the rest withdrawn; previous rates are said to have been sustained.

At the London Tea Sales 18,500 chests were sold; common

sorts were $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per pound cheaper, medium quality was easier, and fine qualities irregular in price.

Mr. R. Hardie, the able Secretary and Treasurer of the Bank of Bengal, resumed charge of his office, on his return from England, on Monday last.

At the half-yearly meeting of the shareholders of the Bonded Warehouse Association, a dividend of Rs. 10 per share was declared for the six months, being at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. There has been a falling of during the six months in the demand for accommodation, which at present is slack. The Directors speak in justly high terms of their able Secretary Mr. H. W. I. Wood, who purposes retiring at the end of 1884 after 30 years' faithful service; and at the desire of the shareholders a special meeting has been called for the 28th November to devise some fitting recognition of his services. Mr. Wood's retirement will also cause the Secretaryship of the Chamber of Commerce to fall vacant, and already some canvassing is going on for the appointment. When one considers what a power for good an energetic Chamber of Commerce may be, and how much depends upon the Secretary, it is sincerely to be hoped that the Chamber will select the best man they can lay their hands on, and not some one whose best days have already passed, and who, in Government service, would be considered more eligible for a pension than for active employment. What is wanted is a man with plenty of vigour and go. The committee is always at hand to check his going too fast. But if the policy of the future is to be *dolce far niente*, perhaps it would be as well to abolish the Chamber altogether. Mr. Wood must have been little over 35 when he assumed the duties of the office which he has so ably discharged. The Chamber should bear this in mind in appointing his successor.

The Bank of Bengal made no change in the rate of interest at their meeting on Thursday and it remains at 3 per cent. The Bank's position still continues strong: the public and other deposits amount to Rs. 4,78,78,398, and the cash and currency notes to Rs. 2,51,59,409.

A scheme is reported to be on foot to revive the Behar

Tramway project. Investors will, no doubt, be careful to investigate the cost, and see that the line is not loaded with heavy sums for concessions, and contractors' profits.

Shares.—There has been somewhat more doing in shares during the past week. Pressing Companies' shares have been more inquired for, and, consequent upon the Bengal-Nagpore Railway passing through its property, the Equitable Coal Company's shares have much increased in value. Shareholders will be glad to learn that Mr. S. H. Robinson has resumed charge of the Goosery Cotton Mill.

The following transactions are reported:—

Bank of Bengal, 850. Tarkessur Railway and Deoghur Railway at par. India General Steam Navigation Company, 135, 137, and 136; Contributory shares, 29 per cent. premium. Inland Flotilla, 7 and 8 per cent. discount for cash; 5 per cent. discount for 3 months.

Mills, &c.—Barnagore, 68. Budge-Budge, 78, Goosery Jute, 88 and 89. Union Jute, 120. Dunbar Cotton, 46. Bowreah, 46 and 45. Calcutta Hydraulics, 150. Strand Bank, 95 to 98. Riverside Press, 77. Nasmyth, 108, for three months. Carew & Co., 120. Titaghur Paper, 60.

Coal.—New Beerbhoom, 85. Alipore, 110 and 130. Equitable, 220, 222½, and 225.

Tea.—Gielle, 80.

Government Paper has fluctuated somewhat during the week from Rs. 99-7 to 99-11.

Exchange has rallied during the last day or two, and on demand drafts are now *ls. 7d.*

Calcutta Municipal debentures have changed hands at Rs. 102, and a very good investment it is at the price.

Meetings are advertised of the New Mutual and Second Mutual Tea Companies for to-day, Ganges Steam Tug on the 28th, and the Budge-Budge Jute Company on the 29th.

A call of Rs. 50 has been made on Imperial Ice shares, new issue.

A meeting is convened of the shareholders of the Hooghly Mills Company for Saturday, the 29th instant, to consider how the further capital required to work the concern is to be provided.

CALCUTTA, 22nd November 1884.

IN February last Messrs. Lloyd & Co., a well known firm of Tea Garden Agents in this city, placed before a confiding public the prospectus of the Selim Tea Company, Limited. The professed object of the Company was to amalgamate five Tea Gardens, with a total acreage of 4,760 acres, of which 1,430 were stated to have been planted out, into one, and of which the estimated outturn of 1884 was 8,050 maunds. It was stated that by amalgamating these five gardens and making their interests identical, a great saving would be effected in the management of the labour, and that, with the annually increasing crop of Indian tea, large gardens by bulking on the gardens, and consequently ensuring greater uniformity in their breaks, would possess a decided advantage. Nothing could be sounder than this idea; it has long been the opinion that if tea is to be successfully cultivated for shareholders at a distance, considerable reductions must be made in the cost of supervision and management, so that the tea may be landed in Calcutta at a much less cost than hitherto; and, therefore any scheme by which adjacent gardens can be brought under one management, so that the expenses of direction, &c., may be reduced to a minimum, should have the hearty concurrence and approval of everyone really interested in this important industry. The principles upon which the Selim Tea Company was based were, therefore, a decided step in the right direction. But to be successful amalgamations must be based on economical principles. If five gardens choose to amalgamate with each other, and to make their total capital the sum of their several cost, it will probably be found that, as a whole, the new concern is not particularly cheap, because the expenses attendant on opening out 1,500 acres will probably not be so much as for opening out five gardens of 300 acres each. Still the economies that the amalgamation will render possible, may compensate for the increased cost, and so the arrangement may be a good one. But when the amalgamation takes the form of buying five separate gardens at a price very considerably more than they are worth, and of then amalgamating them into

one garden and selling the composition to a body of shareholders at a cost fully three times that at which a garden of the size could be opened out for, the idea obviously stands upon quite a different plane. Now let us see what the Selim Tea Company was to get for its money. The capital was Rs. 15,00,000, of which at present only Rs. 10,00,000 were to be issued, with Rs. 5,00,000 of debentures bearing interest at 8 per cent. The vendors were to pay all expenses incidental to forming and registering the Company and conveying the properties to it, and they were to receive as the purchase-money Rs. 14,50,000, payable, Rs. 5,00,000, in fully paid-up shares, and Rs. 9,50,000 in cash! The total acreage under plant was put down as *about* 1,440 acres, so that the price to be paid was a little over Rs. 1,000 per acre, namely, Rs. 666 per acre in cash, and Rs. 333 per acre in shares. Any person with the most elementary knowledge of tea-planting must know that this is very much in excess of what such a garden would cost; and it must not be forgotten that at the present time tea shares are in a very depressed condition, and that investors can now buy into really good gardens at considerably below cost price. The Bishnauth Tea Company, at one time a very favourite concern, is now at a discount of some 15 to 20 per cent. It has an acreage under plant of more than the Selim Company, and its capital is only Rs. 8,25,000, or, at the present value of the shares about Rs. 7,00,000, or considerably less than half that of the Selim Tea Company! Comment upon this seems almost superfluous. The prospectus then goes on to state that the gardens are fully supplied with machinery and buildings, and in this respect compare more than favourably with any estate in the district; while during the past two years no less than Rs. 30,000 have been spent in new engines, plant, roads, &c. "Taking the outturn at 8,000 maunds, and the outlay necessary to make and sell them at $7\frac{1}{2}$ annas per lb., the yearly expenditure would be Rs. 3,00,000, and taking the average price for the present year as the same as 1883, namely, *eleven annas* per lb., the profit would amount to Rs. 1,40,000; this after paying 8 per cent. on the 5 lakhs of debentures which would absorb Rs. 40,000, leaves

Rs. 1,00,000, or equal to about 10 per cent. on the shares, amounting to Rs. 10,00,000, which it is at present proposed to issue. Every anna per pound on so large an outturn is equal to 4 per cent. on the capital, and *it would not be over-sanguine to reckon* on a higher average than 11 annas per lb. from gardens of which the mark and reputation are so widely known." The crop of *parts* of the property has been sold in advance on various occasions at a rupee per pound and over. It follows from the above that if the crops sold at an *average of 8 annas per pound*, there would be a loss on the working of the garden. Messrs. Lloyd & Co. might now kindly state at what average price the crop has so far sold. We are afraid we cannot congratulate the shareholders in this concern.

At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday some 8,936 chests were offered ; 8,448 chests were sold and 488 withdrawn. Prices were generally lower.

At the London Tea Sales on Thursday 18,000 chests were offered and 15,600 sold, with a good demand for all descriptions.

The Indigo Sales commenced on Monday and have continued during the week. An assortment of Oudhs, so far of very poor quality, has been offered, and, out of 800 chests, 500 were sold at Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 below the prices obtained last year. Planters were unwilling to submit to a greater discount and withdrew their Indigo.

Orders from the Continent, London, and America are, so far very scarce and based upon last October's London Sales, where a discount of Rs. 45 to Rs. 50 on last year's Calcutta prices was established. It is reported that the Madras crop this year is large. There is an absence of speculative buyers, as in former years, owing to the general depression of trade and to there being a larger stock in Europe and America than at this period last year, and lower prices are expected. A few hundred chests of Tirhoot and Bengal Indigo sold at Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 below last year's prices.

An hysterical letter appeared in one of the daily papers here and was given a very prominent position. The writer calls upon the Government to at once close the Alipore Jail Jute Mill, in view of

the great depression in the trade, so that it may not compete with this honest but suffering industry. This is indeed a fly on the wheel; this insignificant concern contains 130 looms only, while the total number of looms at work in Bengal must be considerably over 6,000. It is a pity that this Mill was ever erected, though it must be borne in mind that when it was, trade was very prosperous. Still, its stoppage would go but little towards relieving the prevailing depression, and therefore under the circumstances it may just as well be worked as be silent. The Barnagore Mill, with 540 looms, has been silent for some time, consequent upon a strike, so are the Asiatic and Goosery concerns; yet trade does not improve.

Shares.—During the past week there has been a general collapse in Jute Mill shares, which have experienced a very sharp decline, and some of the good Mills, such as Gourepore, Howrah, and Budge-Budge, have receded to prices, which make them a cheap investment to those who are content to forego a dividend at present. Fort Gloster at Rs. 25 might also be worth consideration; they are at Rs. 31 at present. An attempt has been made to keep up the shares of the Goosery Jute Mills, the last reported transaction being at Rs. 89. But taken in comparison with other good jute stock the price is very high, and for our part we cannot recommend the concern to investors. The great bulk of the shares, too, are reported to be held by one of the ablest speculators on our Stock Exchange. Transactions in Mill shares are reported:—Budge-Budge, 68½. Fort Gloster, 31. Gourepore, 65 and 67. Howrah, 62, 63, and 60. Bowreah Cotton, 46, 46½, and 46. Goosery Cotton, 207¼. Dunbar, 47.

There is a slightly better inquiry for Press shares; a meeting of Press-houses is convened for to-day to agree upon some united action in respect to the agitation for a reduction of rates. Transactions are reported in—Strand Bank, 99 cash; 101 for 3 months. Nasmyth, 108, for 1 month; 109 for 3 months. Canal Press, 80 and 83. The Calcutta Hydraulics have declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 10 per cent., payable at once.

India General Steam Co.'s shares have been sold throughout the week at Rs. 137, and on Monday they reached Rs. 138.

Inland Flotillas have changed hands at 7 to 8 per cent. discount for cash, and 3 per cent. discount, for 4 months' time.

There have been some transactions in Baragunda Copper Co.'s shares this week, and Contributory shares have changed hands at Re. $1\frac{1}{2}$ and vendors' fully paid-up shares at Re. 1. Deoghur Mining Company's full shares of Rs. 10 have been sold at Rs. $2\frac{1}{4}$. A meeting of this very interesting Company (the shares of which are at 75 per cent. discount) is convened for the 3rd December. We shall have something to say about this concern some day; meantime the advice given by the gentleman who knew "a maiden fair" might usefully be accepted by investors.

There has been considerable inquiry during the week for Municipal and Port Trust debentures, and transactions are recorded in Calcutta Municipal 5 per cent. debentures payable, in 1,905 shares at Rs. 102 and Rs. 102-4. There is no finer investing stock for people in the Mofussil than these debentures; they carry interest at 5 per cent. and run for 20 years, while the security is unexceptional. Four-half per cent. Calcutta Port Trust debentures have been sold at par.

Government Paper has steadily improved during the week and reached 6 annas premium. It is, to-day, somewhat easier, but so long as the Government refrains from issuing a fresh loan in this—market the price seems likely to be maintained. The late enormous depreciation in joint-stock shares has turned investors' attention to Government Paper, for it is beginning now to be understood that high interest means bad security.

The Bank of Bengal made no change in their rate of interest on Thursday, and the minimum rate remains at 3 per cent. The public and other deposits amount to Rs. 4,69,10,938, and the cash in hand to Rs. 2,83,23,054. Shares have remained steady throughout the week at Rs. 850.

In miscellaneous shares sales are reported of—Darjeeling Railway Company at Rs. 92, New Beerbhoom Coal at Rs. 85, and Great Eastern Hotel Company at Rs. 89 and Rs. 90.

Tea.—There has been a solitary sale of tea shares, East India having changed hands at Rs. 38. Dividends have been declared of Teesta Valley $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and Phoolbary 5 per cent., payable at

once. A meeting of the Singell Company is convened for the 26th.

Sterling exchange has steadily improved during the week, having risen from 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1-7 $\frac{3}{4}$ for on demand bills.

P. S.—Troja fuit. The Report of the Directors of the Budget Jute Mills for the half-year ended 31st October has just made its appearance, and the sad results therein disclosed fully account for the great fall in the shares during the past week. The result of the working, after providing for Rs. 17,548 depreciation in the market value of the stock of jute, is a loss of Rs. 1,26,651. For the same period of last year there was a profit of Rs. 1,82,561. The Directors recommend that the loss should be carried to the debit of Reserve Fund, which will now stand at Rs. 52,370 ; and they much regret having to report so serious a loss on the past half-year's operations. The heavy decline that has taken place in the values of jute fabrics, and the high cost of jute with which the half-year was begun, placed the Mills at considerable disadvantage. The market continues really depressed, and there is as yet little or no margin of profit, but there has been no accumulation of stocks, and the present favourable prospects of the cereal crops should ensure extensive requirements for jute fabrics. The new Mill of 140 looms has been fully at work since the middle of August. The jute in stock has been valued at market rates, the stores at cost prices, and the cloth and bags at contract rates. The result of the working for the year ended 31st October has been a loss of Rs. 1,11,718 ; to this must be added the dividend paid in June last of Rs. 36,000, and the depreciation on the machinery for a twelve-month. So that in round numbers, as compared with this time last year, the concern is 2 lakhs of rupees to the bad. There is due by the Company on loans and for stores Rs. 4,62,825, against which it holds jute and bags valued at Rs. 3,13,510, sundry debtors Rs. 51,888, and cash Rs. 18,062—total Rs. 3,83,460 : this means that the value of the block, &c., is some Rs. 80,000 in excess of the Capital and Reserve Funds, and that for some time to come the concern will need a heavy overdraft of 2 to 3 lakhs of rupees from its bankers. The shareholders must now see the peculiar force and beauty of

their special resolution raising the minimum remuneration of Messrs. Andrew, Yule & Co. from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000; and these latter gentlemen, whose wisdom in the purchase of jute has cost the Company already nearly a lakh of rupees, should feel truly grateful that their business foresight is so highly appreciated.

CALCUTTA, 29th November 1884.

A MEETING of Press-house owners and agents was held last Saturday, for the purpose of enabling the Press Association to confer with one or two of the leading *outside* Companies as to the advisability of their joining the Association. Mr. Macdowell, of the Camperdown Pressing Company, gave in his adherence on the condition that his Company's minimum rate be two annas per bale under the Association rates, as, their premises being situated at some distance from town, they would otherwise be placed at a considerable disadvantage in competing for business. This was agreed to, and the Camperdown Company has now joined the Association. Mr. Duffus, Agent of the Nasmyth Company, also intimated his willingness to join the Association, provided that his Company's minimum rate was settled at four annas below the Association rates, as his Company's premises as well were situated on the Howrah side of the river at a long distance from town. The meeting, however, considered that three annas per bale would be ample, and the matter was left over until another meeting. Several other outside concerns consented to join the Association, certain allowances for situation being granted them. It is generally thought that the Association will make a reduction of two annas per bale in the minimum rate next season, and it goes without saying that this will materially affect the profits of the Pressing concerns. There is no doubt, that in this particular industry the supply is fully equal to the demand. The number of bales of jute and cuttings pressed in the season 1882-83 was larger than we are likely to have as a regular thing for many years to come, yet early in the season the Camperdown and Strand Bank Presses were entirely destroyed, and the Chitpore Press seriously damaged; these Presses have now been re-built, and one or two new concerns have appeared on the scene; so that, unless we have another epidemic of fires, pressing rates are bound to give way. Several Pressing concerns are already at a discount.

The talk of the week in Jute circles has been the stiff loss by the Budge-Budge Jute Mills Company, and there are some

people disposed to disagree with the opinions of the Directors, who complacently observe as a fitting finish to their gruesome report, that "the Mill continues to be maintained in a state of thorough efficiency, and the management to give entire satisfaction." It is no secret that the production of the Budge-Budge Mills, loom for loom, does not compare favourably with that some of the other first-class Mills, such as Gourepore and Howrah, and the sooner the management accept this fact, and set themselves to remedy the defects in the working of their Mill, the better it will be for the shareholders. To take shelter in "blind unbelief," when told that one's neighbours are going ahead is not a healthy sign, and the managers have allowed the high position the Mill formerly occupied to be taken by other Mills, which were then below them. We have not hesitated to bestow praise upon Messrs. Andrew, Yule & Co. whenever we felt that they deserved it, and it is but just that they should in turn be censured. We trust that when next we review this Mill our task will be more pleasing.

A meeting of the shareholders of the Hooghly Mills Company was held to-day. The Managing Agents explained to the meeting that arrangements had been made to finance the Company at a moderate rate of interest for the next three months, and that it would not be necessary to make any call payable before then; they suggested that a call of Rs. 25 should be made now, payable, as to Rs. 15, on such date after the expiration of three months as the Managing Agents should fix, and Rs. 10 on such later date as might be necessary. This was acceded to, and a resolution was passed accordingly. The Managing Agents also intimated that they hoped, when the Mill was extended to 300 looms, which would be almost immediately, to work it without loss. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished in the interests of all concerned.

Indigo.—During the four public sales held this week the quality of North-West Indigo showed no improvement, and prices ruled at about previous rates to Rs. 5 declined. Planters bought in about one-third of the indigo put up, which, perhaps, is not altogether sound policy, as the accumulation of stocks is likely to

cause a still further depression, whereas the market might improve, if a large portion of the crop were disposed of. European importers who, at lower prices would operate here, will now have to complete their assortment for the beginning of the new year from the London and Continental stocks which are still heavy, and where prices rule 4*d.* to 6*d.*, or say Rs. 10 to Rs. 17-8 per maund, below rates paid in our public sales so far. For the week ending 29th November 2,132 chests were offered and 1,844 sold.

Out of the market—

	Mds.
Bengal about ...	1,475
Tirhoot „ ...	3,900
Benares „ ...	1,700
Oudh „ ...	3,825

Total ... 10,900 against 39,250 maunds last year.

Crop this year 1,65,000 to 1,70,000 maunds against 1,56,000 last year. Shipments to date—England, 786 chests; France, 61; Trieste, 250; America, 346—total 1,443 chests.

At the Calcutta Tea Sales this week some 7,050 chests were offered, of which 7,030 found buyers. There is no material change in prices to chronicle. At the London tea sales some 19,000 chests were offered and 16,500 sold; prices much the same.

The Directors of the Bank of Bengal made no change in their minimum rate of discount on Thursday, which remains at 3 per cent. According to the last weekly statement the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,51,11,061 against which the Bank holds Rs. 2,74,17,368 in cash and notes. Shares in the Bank have been dealt in daily at Rs. 850 until yesterday, when they receded to Rs. 847½.

There has been a good deal of business in Calcutta Municipal debentures during the past week, and the price has risen from Rs. 102-4 to Rs. 102-12, at which figure the last sale was effected. As before observed, these debentures are an excellent investment for people who are satisfied with 5 per cent.

Jute Mills.—On Saturday last, in face of the very damaging

report issued, shares in Budge-Budge Mills receded to Rs. 65, at which figure transactions were recorded; they have since improved to Rs. 67, but taken in comparison with other good Jute Scrip they can hardly be called cheap.

There being the prospect of a call impending Hooghly Mill shares dropped another Rs. 10, and Rs. 100 shares with Rs. 50 paid-up have changed hands at Rs. 15.

Howrah Mills have improved to Rs. 64, Barnagore have receded to Rs. 66, Seebpore to Rs. 40, and Fort Gloster to Rs. 30.

In Cotton Mills there is no material change to report; transactions are reported in Goosery at Rs. 207½, Bowreah at Rs. 46, and Dunbar at Rs. 46½.

In Pressing shares sales are reported of Strand Bank (forced sale), Rs. 93½. Calcutta Hydraulic, Rs. 151.

Darjeeling Railways have changed hands at Rs. 91, and Tarkeasur Railway at par.

In Baragunda Copper, A shares sales are reported at 50 per cent. discount, and in B Deferred shares fully paid-up at 82½ per cent. discount.

In Tea shares transactions are reported in Singbulli and Murmah at Rs. 96, and Darjeeling tea and Cinchona at Rs. 110.

In miscellaneous shares there have been sales of Carew & Co., Limited, at Rs. 120. Murree Brewery Company at Rs. 154.

In Joint Stock Companies' Debentures sales are reported of 7 per cent. Bowreah and Bengal Ice at 101-7 per cent. Howrah Mills at 103-8 per cent. Goosery Jute at Rs. 102.

The Titaghur Mills invite tenders for a debenture loan of Rs. 1,00,000 out of an authorised issue of Rs. 3,00,000. The debentures will bear interest at 7 per cent., and will be for sums of Rs. 500 with a currency of ten years, re-payable after five years on three months' notice. A deposit of 2 per cent. must accompany the tenders, which should be addressed to the Managing Agents, Titaghur Paper Mills, New China Bazar Street, Calcutta. The security here seems good and the interest liberal.

Government Paper, which at the commencement of the week was at four annas premium, has receded to par to one anna discount.

Exchange fell on Saturday to $1-7\frac{1}{4}$, and thence on Monday to $1-7\frac{1}{8}$, where it remained until Thursday, when it rose to $1-7\frac{1}{2}$, at which figure it closed on Friday evening.

A dividend of $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. has been declared by R. Scott, Thomson & Co., Limited.

Calls have been made on the shareholders of the Deoghur Mining Company of Re. 1, payable on the 10th December, and of the Gyabaree Tea Company of Rs. 5, payable on the 18th idem.

CALCUTTA, 6th December 1884.

THE Bank of Bengal made no alteration in its rates of discount on Thursday last, and the Bank rate still remains at 3 per cent. The weekly statement made up to the 2nd instant shows that the public and other deposits amounted to Rs. 4,63,97,064 and the cash and notes to Rs. 2,81,61,915, or a reserve of 58·3 per cent. Bank shares, which receded on Friday, 28th ultimo, to Rs. 847½, have recovered again, and are now quoted at Rs. 850, at which figure there have been sales during the past week.

Indian Tea.—From Messrs. Hart and Sibthorpe's circular it appears that the London deliveries during November were 5,760,000 lbs. being 90,000 lbs. in excess of the deliveries for the same period of 1883, and 590,000 lbs. more than 1882. The stock in London on the 30th November was put down at 22,000,000 lbs. being 300,000 lbs. more than at the same time in 1883, and 1,500,000 lbs. more than in 1882. The shipments, including passes taken out during November, from Calcutta to London were 7,985,000 lbs., which is 1,384,000 lbs. less than in 1883, and 190,000 lbs. less than in 1882. The imports into London during November were 8,820,000 lbs., or 190,000 lbs. less than in 1883, and 330,000 lbs. less than in 1882. The total London deliveries from 1st January have been 58,650,000 lbs., or 4,370,000 lbs. more than in 1883, and 12,630,000 lbs. more than in 1882. At the Calcutta tea sales on Thursday 10,152 chests were put up for auction, of which 50 chests were withdrawn, and the remainder sold. At the Indian tea sales in London, 21,000 chests were offered and 18,300 sold. Fine qualities were somewhat higher and common easier.

Indigo.—At the four public sales held during the week, offerings of Indigo from the N.-W. Provinces were still very small, and European Planters have thus been able to benefit by the greater room left to them, to put up and get rid of some more of their stocks at present prices, which, no doubt, are better than were anticipated. The market continues very flat, and the quality of the Oudh crop is so bad that Continental purchasers will have to buy Kurpah or South American Indigo instead, unless prices

give way considerably. It is understood that native Planters are losing money on their produce, but the keeping back of their stocks will probably increase their loss, inasmuch as the Indigo will lose in weight and interest will accrue. There is no material change in prices to report this week.

For the week ending 6th December, there were four public sales and 3,512 chests were offered, of which 3,050 were sold:—

Out of the market—		Mds.
Bengal about	...	4,700
Tirhoot „	...	9,000
Benares „	...	2,800
Oudh „	...	6,100
		<hr/>
Total	...	22,600
against 56,000 maunds last year. <hr/>		
Shipments to date are as under :—		
		Chests.
United Kingdom	...	1,383
France	...	257
Trieste	...	617
Foreign Europe	...	10
America	...	825
Gulfs, &c.	...	15
		<hr/>
Total	...	3,107
<hr/>		

Municipal (Calcutta) 5 per cent. debentures still continue to improve in public estimation, and have risen from Rs. 102 $\frac{3}{4}$ to Rs. 103, and Rs. 103 $\frac{1}{4}$ and 103 $\frac{1}{2}$ for small sums. Now that the Municipality have got their loan taken up by the public, the executive should set themselves to work to make proper arrangements for the due discharge of the business in connection therewith, which at present has devolved on the shoulders of a cadaverous Baboo, apparently ill-paid, ill-clothed and ill-fed. The interest must be punctually paid and there must be no delay in doing it. The best possible arrangement that could be made, both in the interests of the Municipality and the public, would be to transfer the management of this business to the Bank of Bengal, whose able conduct of the Public Debt Department is a guarantee that it would be satisfactorily performed. It would be a thousand pities if the Municipal Loan should ever get into disfavour

through a want of appreciation of the requirements of the public on the part of the Municipal Office ; and the extra cost, if any, that would be occasioned by the change would be more than compensated for by the convenience that would thus be afforded to the public. It must be borne in mind that the greater the facilities for obtaining payment of interest, mutation of names and the like, the more negotiable and consequently the more valuable a security becomes. The business members of the Corporation might note this, if unfortunately the pursuit of his favorite dialectical exercises should prevent its responsible head from attending to this matter.

The Trade and Navigation Accounts for the month of October, and the seven months, April to October, for the last three years, have just made their appearance. The value of merchandise imported into Bengal in October was some 10 lakhs in excess of that for the same month in 1883, while in the case of Bombay it has decreased about $4\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs. In the exports of produce, however, there is a decrease in the case of Bengal of about $5\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs and an increase in those from Bombay of $31\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs.

The gross amount of import duty (including salt) collected in October was 9 lakhs in excess of 1883, but the export duty was less and consequently taken together the export and import duties collected from April to October 1884 were about $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs only in excess of 1883.

The exports of wheat, oil-seeds and cotton from Bombay and Calcutta for the seven months ended October of the last five years, in tons, were as under :—

		April to October.				
		1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.
	<i>Wheat.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
Calcutta	.. .. .	141,658	219,688	146,176	349,542	112,034
Bombay	.. .. .	74,347	285,380	195,672	339,012	276,171
	<i>Oil-seeds.</i>					
Calcutta	.. .. .	203,438	148,381	201,268	219,506	241,016
Bombay	.. .. .	87,237	148,744	167,839	274,036	257,531
	<i>Cotton.</i>					
Calcutta	.. .. .	12,902	8,150	9,058	7,505	4,281
Bombay	.. .. .	103,885	105,394	146,828	136,448	142,253

If it were not perhaps attributable to bad times, it would be extremely satisfactory to see India's "liquor bill" on the decline. The seven months, April to October, shows a steady decline during the last three years in the quantity of liquor imported into India. The month of October 1884, however, shows an increase in the importations notably into Bombay, and while imports appear to be decreasing *viâ* Bengal they are on the increase *viâ* Bombay.

There is a general falling off in the value of cotton goods imported, which appears to be almost entirely confined to white bleached goods, or, in other words, superior qualities; this is significant. On the other hand the imports of grey goods are steadily on the increase.

The export of cotton twist to China, the war notwithstanding, is largely on the increase, 33 million lbs. having gone forward during the seven months under review, as against 24 millions during the same period last year. There is, however, on the other hand, a great falling off in the export of piece-goods to the Eastern Coast of Africa and Aden, the quantity short this year being $5\frac{1}{2}$ million yards. The Bombay Mill-owners are, however, fully alive to this, and have taken steps to remedy it.

In gunny-bags there has been an enormous decrease in the export of Hessian bags (wheat) to San Francisco, the amount short up to the end of October being nearly 8 million bags. This has, however, been compensated for by the increased shipments of other descriptions of bags to the Straits, Australia, and the United Kingdom, the excess shipments to these three places being 16 million bags. It is a remarkable feature, showing the extreme depression in the jute manufacturing trade, that whereas in the seven months ended October 1882 some 34 million bags were exported, valued at 88 lakhs of rupees, for the same period this year 43 million bags were exported, valued at only 84 lakhs.

Shares.—There has been more doing in Jute Mill shares during the week and prices have advanced considerably in some instances. There is no apparent reason for this, unless it be considered that the shares have been unduly depressed. The prospects of the industry are very dreary, and those competent to form an opinion

incline to the belief that the worst has not been reached. Mills which depend largely on their manufacture of Hessian bags will feel the present position most acutely, and investors in Jute Mill Stock at present must not be disappointed if they receive no dividends for some time to come.

Transactions are reported in Budge-Budge at Rs. 67, 70, 71, and 72. Howrah Mills, 66, 69, 69½ and 70. Seebpore, 89, 40 and 40½. Barnagore, 67½. Asiatic, 17. No sales are recorded in Gourepore, but there are keen buyers at Rs. 65, and even Rs. 70 has been offered without success. Watson's Patent Press have been done at Rs. 111; Bowreah Cotton Mills at Rs. 45, Rs. 45½, and Naini Tal Brewery at Rs. 100. In India General Steam Company, sales are recorded at Rs. 134 and Rs. 135, and Inland Flotilla at Rs. 11 discount. Alipore Coal has been sold at Rs. 140 and Equitable at Rs. 215. There has been a solitary sale of Holta Tea Company at Rs. 60. Great Eastern Hotel shares have improved from Rs. 95 to Rs. 97, and are said to be likely to rise higher. Calcutta Tramways have improved to Rs. 87, and Tarkesur Railways have changed hands at par.

Government Paper has fluctuated from Rs. 100 to Rs. 100-5, and closed last night at Rs. 100½.

Exchange which improved on Monday to 1-7½, fell on Thursday to 1-7¼, and again on Friday to 1-7¼. The President's message recommending the suspension of the silver coinage in America may have had a disquieting effect upon the market, but the silver ring in America is very powerful, and fully as much interested in keeping up the price of silver as the other countries affected.

The following little extract may interest the shareholders in the Baragunda Copper Company, merely premising that they must catch their hare before they attempt to cook it:—

A curious story reaches us (*Bullionist*) from Swansea, which for the sake of shareholders in Copper Mining Companies, we trust is founded on fact. It is said that there is likely to be a revival in the copper trade, and Swansea is excited thereat. The introduction of iron and steel ships paralysed the industry; but it is now proposed to put a layer of gutta-percha upon the

plates and fasten copper sheathing thereto with a patent composition. The copper plates will thereby be fixed with a tenacity which will resist wear and tear. The Admiralty is investigating the matter, and if the result of the inquiries is favourable the seat of the copper trade of the world is likely to become once more very prosperous.

A meeting of the Bengal Coal Company is advertised for the 13th December, to pass the accounts to the 31st October and to declare a dividend.

The Murree Brewery Company's offer for the Nilgiri Company's block, stock and business at Ootacamund has now been formally sanctioned, and the transfer takes place on the 1st of January next. Mr. Morgan, of the firm of Barclay and Morgan, Government Solicitors, and Mr. Turnbull, of the firm of Wilson & Co., Madras, are to liquidate the Nilgiri concern. The contracts thus acquired by the Murree Company should be valuable; as they include the supply of all the European garrisons in the Madras Presidency, except that of Kamptee. But Indian malt liquor will shortly take the place of the home-brewed there also. The Company are about to erect a new Brewery near Bangalore, through Messrs. Richardson and Cruddas, of Bombay, which is designed to be the most complete and scientifically arranged manufactory of its kind in India, not excepting the Company's present property at Murree. The building will be of iron, even to the flooring and partition walls; the plant of iron, copper, and slate, fireproof throughout; and of sufficient capacity to allow of the entire quantity of liquor required for a year's consumption in the Madras Presidency being produced in the three months of November, December, and January. The elevation of Bangalore is about 3,000 feet and the mean temperature, for the time stated, about 65°. This, with the occasional aid of ice machinery, should, according to the present theories of brewing in India, answer well. The Murree Company's recent purchase at Ceylon though thought by its Managers to promise good results, does not seem so altogether satisfactory as their other ventures, coming as it has at the close of the Ceylon Company's short and troubled career, with the additional doubt hanging over it about the possible

demand for beer ever being more than very moderate. However, it is proposed by the Murree Managers, we are told, to spend grudgingly and proceed with due caution. As far as the natural recommendations of Newara Eliya are concerned—the capabilities of the site were pointed out by such a shrewd observer as Sir Samuel Baker 35 years ago, and the climate is promising, with a temperature of between 57° and 59° throughout the twelve months. Mr. H. W. Whympers, the General Manager of the Murree Company, and, it may be added, a very excellent exponent of the best school of private enterprise, relinquishes his headquarters in the Punjab for the time being, and proceeds to Bangalore, to remain in the south of India until the Breweries both there and at Ceylon are at work.

CALCUTTA, 12th December 1884.

IN compliance with a requisition of shareholders, the Directors have convened an Extraordinary General Meeting of Proprietors of the Bengal Bonded Warehouse Association for the 19th instant, for the purpose of distributing among the proprietors the amount of dividend which has not been claimed for three years and upwards. This is very much like robbing Peter to pay Paul, and denotes a somewhat singular conception of the rights of *meum* and *tuum*, which, if carried out, may involve the Association in future litigation. The Bengal Bonded Warehouse Association is an old institution established and incorporated under Acts V of 1838 and 1854, and, so far as I can ascertain from those Acts and their bye-laws, there is no power in the shareholders to confiscate the unclaimed dividends in the manner proposed. These dividends amount to Rs. 17,182, or to about Rs. 8½ per share, and would, no doubt, be appreciated by the present proprietors. But it seems very doubtful if the shareholders can pass a resolution having retrospective effect, and the simplest course would be to advertise the names of persons to whom these dividends are due, or, better still, send intimation to their registered addresses, which must be perfectly well known in the office. The best course would be to carry the amount to a Reserve Fund, and then, if not claimed at the expiration of three years, and after due publication, it might be divided, but to appropriate it in this summary manner seems neither right nor prudent. As the matter stands, any shareholder might, I presume, examine the books and take a list of these unclaimed dividends, and then by communicating with the parties concerned, he might get a handsome commission for himself, and compel the Association to disgorge the money. The Directors are, however, all prudent men of business, and will doubtless take the best legal advice before they act in the matter.

The Bank of Bengal, at their weekly meeting on Thursday, raised their minimum rate of discount to 4 per cent. The weekly statement showed the public and other deposits to be Rs. 4,62,79,629

and the cash and notes in hand to be Rs. 2,66,97,984, or 55·4 per cent. There seems no reason for this increase in the Bank rate, which has apparently been made by the Directors *ex abundantia cautelâ*. Bank shares which in the middle of last week, had recovered to Rs. 850 have receded to Rs. 845, and the present half-year can hardly show a very large profit to the Bank.

Government Paper has steadily declined during the week, and the rise in the Bank rate has further facilitated its descent. On Monday sales were made at Rs. 99·15 and Rs. 100, but on Wednesday it fell to $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. discount, and on Friday evening closed at $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$ per cent. discount.

Exchange dropped from $1\cdot7\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\cdot7$ on Monday, at which figure it remains. The message from America regarding the silver coinage is more assuring, and apparently matters will be left *in statu quo* for another three years.

The following letter, addressed to the *Dundee Advertiser* by Mr. Walter H. Hindley, one of the largest dealers in gunny-bags in London, contains a hint which might usefully be adopted by our Mill-owners' Association here. The sneer at the reduction in wages is, however, hardly called for, as operatives engaged on piece-work would probably lose by working short time considerably more than the reduction in the wages; neither does it seem altogether fair that workers should receive the same wages whether trade be dull or brisk; it is only reasonable that there should be a little reciprocity. As matters stand in Calcutta, let trade be dull or brisk, it makes little or no difference to the Mill Agents, brokers, workers, &c. It is hardly fair that proprietors of Mills, through whose capital and enterprise these same agents, brokers, &c., have been provided with employment, should be the only sufferers,—that they should starve while their employés, &c., should revel in plenty:—

THE JUTE TRADE AND OVER-PRODUCTION.

To the Editor of the "Dundee Advertiser."

SIR,—Again I notice that the spinners and manufacturers have in their usual liberal way of treating their hands whenever trade falls dull in Dundee reduced their wages another 5 per cent., making, I am informed, 15 per cent. in all. It seems to

me very hard towards their employés that this should always be the mode of trying to restore their profits. I ask, what is the cause of bad trade and unremunerative prices in Dundee just now? The simple answer is, according to your journal—over-production. Then, I say immediately remove that cause, and as this will never be done by reducing the wages,—for every reduction up till now has simply been followed by lower prices still—I say the only way is to stop machinery, say, one day per week. The jute-spinners can see for themselves what has been the effect of the 50,000 spindles stopped in the flax trade during the last fortnight. Not only would the same benefit take place, but a great deal more, if they would act properly together and get the London and Barrow Mills to fall in with them. I know that the history of such combination amongst the masters for this just object hitherto has been most unfortunate, many falling away apparently for no other reason than a distrust of his neighbour. But this, surely, can be overcome if there is the will. The masters, it is known, can combine and carry their object if it is to reduce the wages still further; why, therefore, can they not combine to accomplish that which is the only true remedy for the present state of affairs, which is ruinous to all concerned? If cotton-spinners can, and do, combine usefully and lawfully to limit production, what is there to prevent jute-spinners doing the same? I would suggest that a committee be formed, and all should bind themselves till the end of February next to stop one whole day per week. Should the committee think further stoppage needful before that time, they are to be able to compel such being done, and any one who breaks his engagement is compelled to pay a fine of £100 for each break of covenant, such fine to go to some charitable institute in Scotland, as may be agreed upon by the committee. I make bold to assert the result would be in a very few weeks that 10½ oz. Hessians would be over 2*d.* per yard, and other goods in proportion. In fact, it would restore confidence throughout the trade, and nothing else would do so.

I am, &c.,

WALTER H. HINDLEY.

LONDON, 17th Nov. 1884.

At the London Tea Sales on Thursday some 25,000 chests were offered and 20,700 sold; there was a good demand all round.

At the Calcutta Tea Sales on the same day some 11,814 chests were offered, of which 11,033 found buyers, and 781 were withdrawn.

Indigo.—There is no material change to report in prices. Oudhs are still very scarce and dear as compared with low European Indigo. At the four public sales during the week 4,171 chests were offered and 3,694 sold.

Out of the market—

Bengal about	...	...	...	Mds.
Tirhoot „	...	...	...	8,000
Benares „	...	...	...	18,000
Oudhs „	...	...	...	3,750
				8,750
			Total	38,500

as against 72,000 maunds last year.

Shipments to date :—

England	...	...	...	Chests.
France	...	...	...	2,855
Trieste	...	...	...	552
Foreign Europe	...	...	...	1,100
America	...	..	...	102
Gulfs	...	...	...	1,201
				18
			Total	5,828

The Report of the Directors of the Bengal Coal Company for the half-year ended 31st October 1884 shows a gross profit of Rs. 1,70,273; to this must be added Rs. 1,17,243 brought forward from last year, making a total of Rs. 2,87,516. Deducting from this Rs. 11,034 expended on new works, bad debts Rs. 10,723, wear and tear Rs. 17,027, and Directors' fees, &c., Rs. 14,729, amounting in all to Rs. 53,513, there remains an available surplus of Rs. 2,34,003. The Directors propose a dividend at the

rate of 12 per cent. per annum, which will exhaust Rs. 1,44,000, and that the balance of Rs. 90,003 should be carried forward. The Directors add "that the half-year has been a season of great commercial depression. This has necessarily had a restrictive effect upon the sale of coal, the depression in the coal trade is rendered more acute by the persistent policy of the East Indian Railway Company in selling large quantities of coal, and thus competing to a very serious extent with the private enterprise of the Coal Companies and individual coal proprietors and dealers. The Directors propose shortly to make a further representation to Government upon this subject." Before passing any opinion on this matter, it would be as well to hear what the Railway Company has to say. Competition is good, and the Coal Companies will find that there are other rivals to public favour. The Assam Railway and Trading Company has opened out a Colliery of very superior coal, far better than any Indian coal hitherto placed in the market; while, on the other side, there are the Rewah coal fields, so that the Companies in the Raneegunge districts may find the competition in the future even keener than it has been in the past.

If Lord Dufferin is desirous of benefitting and increasing the trade of this country, he cannot do better than inaugurate his reign by appointing a commission to examine into and report on the charges of the Port of Calcutta. At the present moment trade is simply being strangled through the terrible charges and the extremely high cost of railway carriage. All these things are entirely under the control of Government, and they could easily, if so disposed, afford considerable relief. As a commencement Lord Dufferin might call for the memorial of the Colliery-owners of Bengal, which was submitted to Lord Ripon on the 20th August 1883, and which seems to have been quietly shelved by the Public Works Department, to whom it was made over for disposal. The memorialists complain, and with great reason, that the railway freight on coal is unduly high, especially as the traffic is attended with none of the risks of claims against carriers for injury in transit, such as a rise in the case of wheat and other goods, and with no expense to the railway except for haul-

ing and shunting; and they pray that such a reduction may be made in the freights charged by the East Indian Railway on coal as shall bring the railway profits from that trade within limits bearing a just proportion to the profits derived by the Coal Companies.

Any one attentively studying the Trade Returns of British India must see that the trade of Bombay is increasing by leaps and bounds, while that of Calcutta is almost stationary. Of course, so far as the Government of India is concerned, it matters not whether exports and imports go *via* Bombay or *via* Calcutta, and a case would hardly be made out for interference because the traffic is being diverted to Bombay. But the case of Calcutta, as I understand it, is that produce is retained in the country, which would have gone forward if the charges incidental to shipping it *via* Calcutta had not rendered its export unprofitable. There are people who do not look on the Port Commissioners as an unmixed blessing: who consider that the business might be managed more economically. And at the present moment, when the export trade is being slowly strangled, there are persons who incline to the opinion that a gigantic expenditure on wet docks is somewhat premature. What is wanted is a reduction in the charges of Calcutta—in the port charges, the pilotage, railway freights, and the like. It may suit the Vice-Chairman of the Port Commissioners to advise a huge expenditure on docks; engineers have invariably a penchant for constructing gigantic undertakings, with which their names will be linked and handed down with undying fame to posterity; but most of these colossal structures are needlessly expensive, and many have never paid their owners. The Thames Tunnel and the Great Eastern Steamship are cases in point; the engineering skill has been great, but the profit has been small. It would be well, therefore, if the whole subject of the charges incidental to the Port of Calcutta were thoroughly sifted. As things stand at present, elaborate preparations are being made to provide for an expanding trade, while an attentive study of the returns would show signs of a contracting one. The matter is one of paramount importance, and nothing in the way of vested interests should be allowed to stand in the path of a thorough reform.

An amusing instance of the ignorance of some of the Calcutta papers as to what is going on in their midst was afforded by one of them the other day, who, in commenting on the introduction of a Bankers' Clearing House in Bombay, suggested the great advantages there would be to Calcutta if such an institution were established here, in happy ignorance of the fact that we have had one in our midst since July last, and that it was probably in consequence of its success that the Bankers of Bombay had followed the example of Calcutta.

Madras gold-mining is not after all extinct. The Mysore Gold Mining Company just announces that it has exported from Madras during the past five months forty thousand rupees worth of gold.

Shares.—There has not been so much doing this past week. In Jute Mill shares sales are recorded of Budge-Budge at Rs. 71 and 72. Fort Gloster, 31. Seebpore, 42. Howrah Mills, 69. Jute Presses:—Strand Bank at Rs. 95. Cotton Mills:—Bowreah, 45½. Steam Companies:—Inland Flotilla 8, 6, and 5 per cent. discount. Calcutta Steam Navigation Co., 88½. Orissa Coasting 34 and 35 per cent. discount. Railways:—Deoghur and Tarkessur at par; Darjeeling Railway at 8 per cent. discount.

Tea.—Gielle, 73. Ring Tong, 90. Singtom, 110.

Miscellaneous.—Great Eastern, 98 and 100. Lyell & Co., 100. Baragunda Copper A shares 50 per cent. discount. Equitable Coal, 215. Provincial Bank, 110.

CALCUTTA, 20th December 1884.

THE shareholders of the Barnagore Jute Factory Company, Limited, if disappointed at receiving no dividend for the year ended 31st August last, can console themselves with the knowledge that the result of the working discloses a profit of £12,600-13-3. This profit, together with the balance brought forward from last half-year, the whole of the Special Reserve Fund of £22,500, and £2,500 from the ordinary Reserve Fund, has been absorbed by the cost of the extensions undertaken last year; and I observe that the Directors have been compelled to order a new pair of engines of the most approved construction, which, it is hoped, will be in working order early next spring. The capital of this Company is £400,000; its Reserve Fund is now £10,000, and the Block Account stands in the books at £384,000. The profit made for the year ended 31st August 1883, was £84,198, and a dividend of 12 per cent. was declared. The Directors in their Report say that "prospects for the future are rather more encouraging, as there is every appearance of the raw material being comparatively cheap this year, and they may fairly look for the expansion of trade, which is sure to be the result of the excessively low prices now ruling for manufactured goods, to bring about a more profitable state of things." It is to be hoped that this forecaste may turn out correct; whether it will is another matter.

The Customs returns for November show a falling off in the value of Imports into Calcutta, as compared with 1883, of 47 lakhs; there has been an increase in the value of exports of nearly 12 lakhs. The decrease in the value of the imports has been in almost every article, the great increase being in bullion and specie of $8\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs. The exports have, however, been more diversified, the main increase being in Jute and gunny-bags of $39\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, Hides $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, Lac $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, Poppy and Rapeseed 6 lakhs, and Tea $11\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs. The decrease has mostly been in Indigo 30 lakhs, Opium 21 lakhs, Rice and Wheat 5 lakhs, and Linseed $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs.

A Resolution on the working of the Pilot Service of Bengal

appears in the last *Calcutta Gazette*. Owing to the involved way in which the accounts of this department are kept the Government is apparently not able to show the surplus of receipts over expenditure, although it seems to be generally admitted that there is a considerable surplus; the constitution of the Pilot Service wants remodelling, and if the department were economically and efficiently supervised the charge for pilotage might be considerably reduced without materially affecting the emoluments of the service generally. As it is money is needlessly and recklessly wasted. If an inquiry were ordered into all the circumstances attending the designing and building of the last pilot vessel *Sarsuti*, and the expenses consequent on the alterations which were necessary on her arrival here, it would probably be found that in this one item alone not far from Rs. 50,000 have been needlessly expended—all of which, of course, must be paid for by the shipping frequenting the Port.

The Directors of the Bank of Bengal, at their weekly meeting on Thursday, made no alteration in the rate of discount which remains at 4 per cent. The weekly statement made up to the 16th instant shows the public and other deposits to have been Rs. 4,71,26,521, and the cash and currency notes in hand Rs. 2,64,86,676, or, 54 per cent. ; this is 14 per cent. below last week, and hardly, in itself, calling for a rise in the Bank rate still there has been a steady decline in the percentage since the rate was reduced to 3 per cent., and it is better to err on the safe side. Bank shares have taken a sudden jump this week, having been dealt in at Rs: 855 and Rs. 860.

It may be interesting to your readers to know how the Calcutta Bankers' Clearing House is progressing, so I may mention that the total amount passed through for the week ending 13th December was Rs. 1,06,76,000.

It is also gratifying to learn that Calcutta Tramway receipts show a slight increase, the takings last week having been Rs. 11,728. This is, however, considerably behind the prospectus, which estimated just double this amount.

At a meeting of the proprietors of the Bengal Bonded Warehouse Association, held on Friday, the requisitionists failed

in their endeavour to distribute the unclaimed dividends, and accepted the view of the Association's Solicitors, which was totally opposed to the hoped-for distribution. They, however, sanctioned a retiring pension of Rs. 250 per month to their courteous and obliging Secretary, Mr. H. W. I. Wood, the result of whose management during the last 31 years has been a return to them in dividends of no less than Rs. 19,42,000, a sum which represents the repayment to them of more than twice their paid-up capital, and is equivalent to a net return of 220 per cent., or an average of a little over 7 per cent. per annum during Mr. Wood's incumbency; this result, of course, exclusive of the accounts transferred to the Repair and Building Fund, Municipal Taxes, and the charges of management.

Indigo.—The Market has continued very dull and the prices for low qualities are about Rs. 10 lower than those obtaining at the opening sales. So far the assortment has been so very poor that it is expected that prices will drop another Rs. 10 at least for qualities below Rs. 150. The produce of Benares and Azimghur is poorer than usual and quite neglected, selling comparatively cheaper than all other kinds. One-half of the European Indigo has been sold, whereas only one-fourth of the native has passed the hammer. It is expected that by the end of January there will be such an accumulation of low grades as will be likely to render the sale of this kind even still more difficult. At the four public sales during the past week 4,640 chests were offered and 4,329 sold.

Out of the market—			Mds.
Bengal about	...	...	10,950
Tirhoot „	...	...	29,000
Benares „	...	...	5,700
Oudh „	...	...	12,650
			<hr/>
Total			58,300
			<hr/>

against 87,750 maunds for the same period of last year.

There has been a decline in Government Paper this week, the American Silver scare having frightened a good many holders

in London, and caused a lot of paper to be thrown on the market there; in fact it has been purchased there and used as a profitable form of remittance to India. It has varied in price from 99·11 to 99·8, and closed last night at 99·8 and 99·9, and to-day is 99·7 and 99·8.

Exchange, on the other hand, has steadily improved from 1s. 7d. to 1s. 7½d. and later on to 1s. 7¼d. at which rate it closed last evening. To-day 1s. 7½d. may be quoted and the market is firm. In shares the most noticeable feature has been a rise in Darjeeling Railways from Rs. 92 to Rs. 95 and Rs. 96. There is no apparent reason other than that we are drawing nearer dividend time.

In Jute Mill shares transactions are reported in Fort Gloster at Rs. 32½, 32 and 33. The half-yearly meeting of this Company is advertised for the 31st instant; there will, of course, be no dividend, but rumour has it that the loss on the working has been very small. There have been sales of Gourepore at Rs. 71. Seebpore at Rs. 40. Barugore at Rs. 69. In Pressing Companies, Camperdown has been done at Rs. 114. Strand Bank at Rs. 95, 96 and 99. Calcutta Hydraulic at Rs. 135. Nasmyth at Rs. 104.

Steam Companies.—India General at Rs. 134, 135; Contributory shares at Rs. 26 premium.

There have also been transactions in Gielle Tea at 74, and Ting Ling Company at Rs. 110 and 115. The first General Meeting of the Selim Tea Company is advertised for the 16th January. There have been no tea sales this week.

A petition has been presented to the Court to wind up the Glencoe Tea Company, Limited, which was floated in November 1882, with a capital of Rs. 75,000. Only 410 shares were issued, of which 200 have been subsequently cancelled, leaving 210 shares on which about Rs. 5,000 have been paid. The Managing Agent has made no returns to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, and is now *non est*; so altogether the position of things is not very satisfactory. Tea Gardens on a small scale, even if honestly conducted, are rarely a success as Limited Companies; when this safeguard is wanting, the result is a foregone conclusion.

The Chitpore Hydraulic Press has declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 5 per cent.

CALCUTTA, 27th December 1884.

If a deputation of our foremost Merchants and men of light and leading in this city were to wait upon the Lieutenant-Governor of these Provinces, and point out to him that they desired to construct a Railway, which would open out a vast tract of land, pour into Calcutta an untold wealth of produce, develop the resources of the country, and be of incalculable benefit to trade and commerce; but that, as well as his sanction they required, free of cost, the Grand Trunk Road which passed through the region in question, and that the Government should maintain such road with all its bridges, embankments, &c., should pay a very stiff sum for the conveyance of the mails, and should guarantee that the traffic receipts would not be less than one-seventh of the proposed capital, the Company, in its turn, agreeing, after the line has been open for five years, to hand over to the Government one-half of any excess net profits over and above 5 per cent., the Lieutenant-Governor would probably reply that he was much obliged to the deputation for their goodness in waiting upon him, but that he was unable to accede to their modest proposals—and if that Lieutenant-Governor had been Sir Ashley Eden, he would probably have said: “Gentlemen, ye are mad.”

Change but the name of “railway” into “tramway,” and instead of developing the resources of the country, let it but enable the Lieutenant-Governor more easily to “fly to the mountains,” and the story is true in everything but the reply. In the month of April 1879, with a great flourish of trumpets, the advent of the Darjeeling Steam Tramway Company, Limited, was proclaimed. Its capital was to be 14 lakhs of rupees, and it was under the special patronage of the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who, himself a shareholder (though he afterwards sold out, at the proper time) accorded unusually liberal terms to the Company. It was called a “Tramway” Company, because the Government of Bengal could not have sanctioned a “Railway;” and it was allowed, *free of cost*, the use of such portions of the cart-road between Silligoree and Darjeeling (its entire

length), and of such other Government land as was required for its construction ; and the Government, at their own expense, were to uphold and maintain the said cart-road with all bridges, embankments, &c. The Government were to pay Rs. 10,260 yearly for the conveyance of the mails, and if the total receipts of the Company fell short of two lakhs yearly, they were to make good the difference to the Company. The Company, in their turn, were to make over to the Government one-half of any net profits over 5 per cent. after the line had been fully open for five years ; and if the Government after 25 years were smitten with a desire to purchase the property, they could do so upon paying to the Company the value of the property as a dividend earning investment, *plus* a bonus of 20 per cent. The leading spirit in this undertaking was Mr. Franklin Prestage, the then Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway, who appears to have been Chairman of the Directors ; and at the first general meeting of shareholders a resolution was unanimously passed that he be paid the sum of Rs. 10,000 as an honorarium, on the completion of the line, for his services to the Company. Not to be out-done in generosity, Sir Ashley Eden made him the Hon'ble Mr. Prestage.

The first Special Report to the shareholders is signed by Mr. Prestage, and dated the 15th December 1879, and in it he said "that by the contracts made for the execution of the works, and the supply of plant and material from Europe, there was every reason to believe that the tramway would be completed and equipped for the estimated amount"—Rs. 13,32,680. And in a very glowing report, dated the 17th June 1880, Mr. Prestage concludes :—"The estimates of the cost of construction and of equipping the line with sufficient rolling-stock to carry the estimated traffic still promise to cover all outlay.

The line was opened as far as Kurseong on the 23rd August 1880, and the Directors, in their report for the half-year ending 31st December, 1880, said that as the traffic had already exceeded the estimates, it was desirable to increase the engine-power to more fully equip the line with rolling-stock, and to improve the gradients; they accordingly obtained sanction to raise a lakh of rupees on debentures at 5 per cent. The accounts closed to

the 31st December showed a profit of Rs. 34,196, which was carried forward.

On the 4th July 1881, the line was formally opened for traffic to Darjeeling by Sir Ashley Eden, and the Directors, with a lively sense of gratitude for past favours, recorded their appreciation of the continued support accorded to the enterprise by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor; and on the 11th July 1881, the shareholders accorded sanction to the issue of a further two lakhs of debentures, and to the name of the Company being altered from the Darjeeling Steam Tramway Co., Ltd., to the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway Co., Ltd. The change may have been significant to those who remembered that a Railway Company is not expected to pay the same high dividends as a Tramway Company. Here the "little rift within the lute" became for the first time apparent; and the scale henceforth was *crescendo* as to the capital and debentures, and a little later on *diminuendo* as to the dividends paid.

The following table shows the progressive increase in the capital and debentures, the gross earnings, the working expenses, and the dividends paid, &c. :—

Half-year ended	Capital paid up.	Deben- tures.	Block ACCOUNT.		Gross Earn- ings.	Work- ing Expen- ses.	Gross Pro- fit.	Dividend Paid.	Reserve Fund. Wear and Tear, &c.	Cash.
			Rolling Stock.	Total Block.						
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
31st Dec. 1880	13,70,022	....	1,32,082	12,32,894	48,493	14,286	34,197	Nil	Nil	1,32,054
30th June 1881	13,99,240	1,00,000	1,47,391	15,45,232	1,07,261	89,893	67,366	4%	10,000	72,746
31st Dec. 1881	13,99,340	3,00,000	1,78,162	17,83,154	1,53,892	1,12,405	41,477	3%	45,000	53,690
30th June 1882	13,99,340	6,00,000	2,23,741	20,77,028	1,78,014	1,42,056	35,958	3½%	20,000	62,762
31st Dec. 1882	15,03,614	8,00,000	3,25,012	23,11,470	1,88,490	1,35,373	53,087	3½%	20,000	79,405
30th June 1883	15,80,838	8,00,000	3,83,578	25,08,561	1,98,756	1,50,871	47,885	2½%	25,000	26,866
31st Dec. 1883	17,47,993	8,00,000	3,62,135	26,04,304	2,23,187	1,55,348	67,839	2½%	25,000	87,246
30th June 1884	17,79,296	8,00,000	3,65,180	26,79,888	2,10,158	1,62,135	48,023	2½%	84,227	17,975

The above table is a short history of the Company. It will be observed that when the total block was only 15½ lakhs, the gross earnings amounted to Rs. 1,07,261, and that a dividend of per cent. was paid for the half-year. The gross earnings are

now almost double, yet the working expenses have so enormously increased that the net profit for the half-year ended 30th June 1884, was nearly Rs. 20,000 less than that shown in the accounts for the half-year ended 30th June 1881. As a matter of fact, the profit made for that half-year should have been entered in the accounts as Rs. 42,780 instead of Rs. 67,368 a sum of Rs. 24,588 expended on maintenance of the line having been added to the Block Account instead of being charged against Revenue, a footnote to the Balance Sheet stating that this is "chargeable to capital for first year after opening." This arrangement is doubtless very convenient for Company-promoters, but it is in the highest degree misleading, and enabled the Company, in this instance, to pay a higher dividend than it had earned, or has been able to pay since.

It will be observed that the working expenses of this Railway have steadily increased, and the following table will perhaps interest your readers. It shows half-year by half-year the different heads of working expenses, and their percentage on gross earnings:—

Half-year.	Locomotive Expenses.		Carriage and Wagon Expenses.		Traffic Expenses.		General Charges.		Special and Miscellaneous Expenses.		Maintenance of Way and Works.	
	Total.	Per cent.	Total.	Per cent.	Total.	Per cent.	Total.	Per cent.	Total.	Per cent.	Total.	Per cent.
31st Dec. 1880	10,149	..	402	..	2,306	..	1,427	..	..	..	..	..
30th June 1881	21,763	20·29	3,610	3·37	8,951	8·34	5,066	4·72	84	..	..	..
31st Dec. 1881	47,572	30·91	11,440	7·43	25,135	16·33	7,723	5·1	2,614	1·69	11,668	7·58
30th June 1882	53,652	30·14	9,118	5·12	20,221	11·36	15,770	8·86	8,635	4·85	21,208	11·91
31st Dec. 1882	42,918	22·77	9,709	5·15	16,295	8·64	16,441	8·69	4,802	2·54	25,706	13·64
30th June 1883	51,025	25·68	11,030	5·54	21,634	10·89	15,485	7·70	3,634	1·83	28,059	14·12
31st Dec. 1883	50,632	23·68	11,870	5·32	22,869	10·25	18,960	8·49	5,948	2·66	25,066	11·24
30th June 1884	50,568	24·06	15,809	7·52	20,307	9·66	19,867	9·46	5,166	2·46	30,415	14·47

It will be seen from the above table that the working expenses are increasing in a much greater ratio than the receipts, and that the dividends are in a fair way to become finer by degrees and beautifully less.

At a meeting of the shareholders held on the 7th July, the

Directors were authorised to borrow another $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees on debentures, making $10\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of debentures in all, and at a meeting held on the 4th June, by a majority of 7 to 6, "an item in the accounts of an honorarium of Rs. 30,000 to Mr. Prestage," was sanctioned; an amendment, that the consideration of this matter be deferred until the first meeting after the 31st December 1884, being lost. At the present moment there is a slight spurt in the shares of this Company, the last transaction being at 2 per cent. discount, though they have been as low as 8 per cent. discount, and as high as 30 per cent. premium; but the public are not very anxious to invest in this undertaking; for, on the one hand, we have the working expenses increasing, and the dividends decreasing; and on the other, Mr. Prestage asking for more. Shareholders and investors naturally get a little tired of this sort of thing, and when Mr. Prestage is prepared to cry "hold, enough," their confidence may return. The Government, however, have made a most improvident bargain; they have given over one of the finest cart-roads in India to this Company, in such sort that it is now practically useless to any one else, and have bound themselves to keep it up in good order and repair—a duty which by right should fall upon the Company; and they have agreed to pay a large sum for the conveyance of the mails, when they should have stipulated for their free carriage. If equally liberal terms were accorded in every instance, Railway enterprise would have received a greater impetus than has hitherto been the case. According to the published statements the traffic receipts from 1st July to 6th December 1884, were Rs. 1,95,274, so that if they keep up we may expect the total receipts for the half-year to amount to Rs. 2,25,000 in round numbers. If the working expenses are in the same ratio as last half-year, they will total up Rs. 1,52,000, and debenture interest will be at least Rs. 20,000, leaving a gross profit of Rs. 53,000, or just 3 per cent. This result is, however, mere guess-work, for there are no reliable data before us, of what those expenses may be.

The Calcutta Tramway receipts last week were Rs. 11,195.

The Managing Agents of the Bengal Baragunda Copper Com-

pany have issued a Christmas manifesto to the shareholders. They advise the receipt of a telegram from London intimating that the Board of Directors there has been abolished; and that they have called for full details of all expenditure in London up to date to enable them to complete accounts here; and that, as soon as they have obtained the particulars asked for, they purpose calling a meeting of the Indian shareholders when details of the position of the Company will be placed before them. They take this opportunity of circulating the Manager's last Report on the progress made in developing the mines, which, they add, will be the more appreciated that he gives a resumé of what has been done up to date, and his views as to the future. This Report is lengthy and concludes with a suggestion that dressing floors should be erected at the mines, and that means for smelting should be provided on the spot. And the Manager finishes up by saying that this programme would require more time, more patience, and more capital; but it goes without saying that he is fully persuaded that, should the shareholders decide to follow it, the issue will be a successful one.

The Report of the Directors of the Fort Gloster Jute Manufacturing Company for the half-year ended 28th November 1884, discloses a loss on the working of Rs. 21,207. Renewals of machinery and 10 per cent. of the new machinery and reconstruction accounts swell this loss up to Rs. 40,692, and make the total at debit of Profit and Loss Rs. 1,04,675. Considerable sums still continue to be expended on the Block Account of this Mill, which now stands in the books at Rs. 14,82,126, or, Rs. 1,82,126, more than when the Mill was new 11 years ago. The amount at debit of Profit and Loss will reduce the Reserve Fund to about Rs. 32,000, and altogether things are not very bright. The production of the Mill seems to be falling off, the value of goods manufactured this half-year being only Rs. 4,69,453, as against Rs. 5,50,802 for the previous half-year.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Monday some 15,220 chests were offered, of which 608 were withdrawn; prices were fully maintained. There will be no further sales until the 7th January. A meeting of shareholders of the Cinniatollah Tea Company,

Limited, is convened for the 3rd January to discuss the financial position of the concern. The Agents of this Company are Messrs. Jardine, Skinner & Co. Its capital is 2½ lakhs, and the area under tea 272 acres. The debtor balance at the end of last year was Rs. 41,800. I hear that fully paid-up Rs. 100 vendors' shares in the Selim Tea Company, Limited, have been sold at Rs. 62½. I have very good reason for believing that, as a whole, the Selim Tea Garden has never paid its proprietors from the time it was first started some 20 years ago, yet it was sold at over Rs. 1,000 per acre to the Selim Company! There has been a solitary sale of Gielle Tea shares at Rs. 74.

Indigo.—There have only been two public sales this week owing to the holidays. Prices are unchanged, and out of 2,340 chests offered, 2,128 chests were sold.

Out of the market—

	Mds.
Bengal about ...	12,550
Tirhoot ,, ...	33,800
Benares ,, ...	6,500
Oudh ,, ...	14,350

Total ... 67,200, against 1,01,000 maunds in 1883.

Shipments to date:—

	Chests.
England ...	5,349
France ...	717
Trieste ...	1,497
Foreign Europe ...	402
America ...	2,075
Gulfs, &c. ...	22
Total ...	10,062

The Bank of Bengal Statement to 20th December shows the deposits to have been Rs. 4,61,33,783, and the cash and currency notes Rs. 2,54,08,415. The Bank rate on Tuesday was raised to 5 per cent. There has been a sale of shares at Rs. 860.

The Clearing House returns for the week ended 20th December show the total sum passed through to have been Rs. 1,10,34,452.

From a statement published by the East Indian Railway the falling off in the traffic receipts from 1st January to 30th June 1884, as compared with the same period of 1883, was Rs. 49,18,160; of this amount wheat totalled up Rs. 34,61,000: seeds Rs. 3,66,000; rice Rs. 2,53,000; and coal Rs. 2,41,000, and yet, in the face of these figures, the new dock scheme is being pushed forward with great vigour, and a Bill will shortly be introduced into the Bengal Council to enable the Port Commissioners to borrow some crores of rupees. It is somewhat anomalous that there should not at present be a single merchant in the Bengal Council. It is just one mass of officials; this is the way in which the Bengal Government shows its sympathy with commerce and industries!

There are not many transactions to report on the Stock Exchange.

Government Paper, in sympathy with the rise in the Bank rate, has receded to Rs. 98½.

In Mill shares transactions are recorded in Budge-Budge at Rs. 68. Fort Gloster at Rs. 32 and 33. Gourepore, 70. Barnagore, 69. Bowreah, 45. Nasmyth Press, 104. Carew & Co., 120.

Railways.—Darjeeling, 98. Deoghur, 96.

Miscellaneous.—Naini Tal Brewery, 100. Great Eastern Hotel, 98. India General Steam, 136 and 137.

Exchange rose on Monday to 1-7¼, but declined on Tuesday to 1-7⅛ and is very firm at that.

Holder of Calcutta Municipal 6 per cent. debentures of 1864 should present them for payment.

The Calcutta Hydraulic Press has declared a further *ad-interim* dividend of 6 per cent.

A meeting of the New Beerbhoom Coal Company is convened for the 8th January to pass the accounts for the half-year.

CALCUTTA, 3rd January 1885.

THE Tarkessur Railway was opened for traffic on the 1st of this year, though the formal inauguration will not take place until Tuesday. This is the first broad-gauge railway constructed in India without any Government guarantee, and it is to be hoped that the results will be gratifying to the shareholders; at the same time the line is so short that it seems doubtful if a very large goods traffic will be attracted to it, as the facilities for conveying produce by country carts for short distances in this country are so great that the inconvenience to a native of unloading and loading his carts and dancing attendance at railway stations may, we fear, outbalance any saving in freight. It will, therefore, be obvious that every thing will depend on the tact and courtesy of the railway authorities; and it would be well, therefore, if the salaries of the employés in the goods departments were made, to some extent, dependent on the quantity of goods carried. The line, however, passes through a populous district, having its terminus at a celebrated Hindu shrine; the prospects of passenger traffic, therefore, seem good, though the East Indian Railway have done their best to discourage it by reducing the speed of the trains to the level of a well-appointed ticka gharry; thus, starting from Howrah on the East Indian Railway's own line, the distance of fourteen miles to Seoraphuli is run in forty minutes, whereas from Seoraphuli to Tarkessur, a distance of twenty-two miles, the time occupied is one hour and forty-two minutes; in other words the first part of the journey is accomplished at the rate of twenty-one miles an hour, and the second at a speed of thirteen miles an hour (both instances inclusive of stoppages); and if this railway is really constructed of first-class material it is difficult to understand why the speed should be so ridiculously slow. It is quite a mistake to suppose that natives do not appreciate the value of time; increased facilities, both here and all the world over, simply mean additional traffic. Stress has been laid on the fact that the Tarkessur district is the home of thousands of keranis, who, under present circumstances, are compelled to reside in Calcutta; but how

they can derive much benefit from a railway in which they would be compelled to spend four hours and fifty-six minutes daily, all questions of waiting at the stations and getting to and from it apart, does not so easily appear. It is a well-grounded source of complaint against Indian Railways in general and State Railways in particular, that the speed is ridiculously slow ; and we cannot say that we consider it a good omen, in the first railway constructed without a guarantee, that the speed should be even lower than the abnormally slow rate which already prevails, and is so much complained of. It is to be hoped that the East Indian Railway Company have provided additional carriage accommodation for the increased passenger traffic which this line is expected to bring, for at the present moment they seem quite unable to cope with ordinary traffic on their own line, and passengers are not unfrequently left behind at wayside stations owing to the paucity of the accommodation afforded. As there will be only one through train to Howrah daily there will probably be a lively scramble at the Seoraphuli junction ; and if precautions are not taken by the Tarkessur Railway Company to ensure that all the passengers will be forwarded on by the corresponding trains of the East Indian Railway, they should, at least, take care that proper waiting and refreshment-rooms are provided. Turning again to the goods traffic, while sincerely wishing that we may be mistaken, we have our doubts regarding it. Speaking generally, as a rule, the elements of success in a railway are long leads and tapping of rivers, which, in their turn, serve as feeders to the line. In both these respects the Tarkessur Railway is sadly wanting. To illustrate precisely our meaning, suppose the East Indian Railway terminated at Burdwan, and the Eastern Bengal Railway at Arranghatta, both running through populous districts presenting features of country similar to that of the Tarkessur line, what would the goods traffic be worth ? It is further unfortunate that this line is not upon the routes of either of the two projected through lines from Calcutta to Bombay, and so cannot be utilised in this direction. While thus pointing out the inherent drawbacks to this line we sincerely trust it may be successful

and prove a wholesome stimulus to the construction of further railways in this country, and although it may not be so profitable, as its promoters hope, this should not deter other capitalists from embarking in railway enterprise in India, which, if projected on lines answering the requirements of this country, cannot fail to command success. While, however, wishing the promoters of this line every success, simply because we really wish to see railways developed in India, it may still be doubted whether the system under which this railway has been projected is the wisest one in the real interests of railway extension. It is no secret that the railway, as a whole, has been sold to the Tarkessur Company for some $16\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees by an Association, the paid up capital of which is only 10 lakhs, divided into one anna shares of Rs. 62,500 each. A profit of $6\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees is very handsome, and while we do not grudge it in this instance, for the line is of no commercial importance, we think it would be financially sounder either for the Government to construct the railway itself, or the Companies themselves without the expensive medium of these Associations. In the real interests, therefore, of railway extension in India, we think it highly desirable that the true cost of this line should be published; the shareholders of the Tarkessur Company, of course, know exactly what it has cost them; but what the investing public and those who have at heart the development of the resources of India want to know is the *actual* cost per mile of railways in India constructed by private agency—a matter on which they have not as yet been enlightened.

A paragraph in a local paper on the first day of the year announces that the Government of India have sanctioned a loan of 15 lakhs of rupees to the Calcutta Port Commissioners to enable them to proceed with their new dock scheme at Kidderpore. It is a curious anomaly that, whereas in Bombay the Chamber of Commerce nominates a certain number of the Port Trustees and in Madras the Chamber of Commerce and Trades' Association both nominate, in Calcutta these bodies have no such privilege, and the Merchants are entirely unrepresented in the Bengal Council; thus, with a shrinking export Wheat Trade, we find enormous sums are to be spent on wet docks and bur-

thens laid upon the commerce of the port, which is already surcharged enough in all conscience. Lord Dufferin should appoint an independent commission to report on the port charges of Calcutta before it is too late.

Indigo.—On account of the holidays there have only been two sales during the week. The demand has been rather better for European Indigo, the market showing an advance of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 per maund. Native Indigo sells as low as before and the quality does not improve, the assortment remaining very poor. As the quality is not suitable for the Continent, and as America is not likely to take more than the usual 6,000 to 7,000 chests, prices must come down, especially when it is considered that only 23,000 maunds out of 85,000 maunds have been sold.

For the week ending 3rd January 2,916 chests were offered and 2,666 chests sold.

Out of the market—

				Mds.
Bengal about	...	...	...	15,000
Tirhoot	„	...	...	41,500
Benares	„	...	...	8,250
Oudh	„	...	...	17,250
			Total	82,000

as against 1,10,000 maunds for the same period of last season.

Shipments to date—

				Chests.
England	...	...	...	8,457
France	...	...	...	2,296
Trieste	...	...	...	2,198
Foreign Europe	...	...	...	637
Gulf, &c.	...	...	...	198
America	...	...	...	2,872
			Total	16,658

An advertisement in the London *Daily News* of the 9th December invites the attention of investors to the Mercantile In-

vestment and General Trust Company, Limited, capital £1,000,000. The Board is an influential one, and the following extracts from the prospectus sufficiently explain the objects of the Company :—

Experience has shown that private investors regard with more favour securities which are considered by them as likely to return a steady and certain dividend than those in which the dividend although larger, are of a more fluctuating nature.

While the latter may be equally sound and *bond-fide*, and even more remunerative, the ordinary investor, being obliged to rely upon dividends of as unchangeable a character as possible, is almost precluded from participating therein.

In consequence of the shares in many Companies of undoubted position not being quoted in the Official Stock and Share List, which gives a holder a ready market in case of sale, full advantage is not taken by the public of the profits which they return. Hence it is seen that shares in the numerous sound industrial and other undertakings which have for many years yielded considerable dividends, although varying in amount from time to time, may be procured at prices which show an average profit of a very substantial character.

A widespread investment of the capital of the present Company in as large a number of such undertakings as possible will enable its members to share the average profits thereby produced, while the fluctuating character of any single investment will not be perceptibly felt.

The business of the Company will be entirely under the control of the Trustees, who propose to issue debentures to half the amount of the capital of the Company from time to time subscribed. An investment of this additional sum in the manner above indicated would, after providing for the debenture interest and increased management expenses, place an annual surplus at the Trustees' disposal sufficient to materially increase the dividend on the Deferred Stock.

The success of similar projects to the present is well known.

The Preferred Stock of the Foreign and Colonial Government Trust Company stands at Rs. 119, and the Deferred Stock at

Rs. 123. The Preferred Stock of the American Investment Trust Company stands at Rs. 112, and the Deferred Stock at Rs. 111.

A complete list of the shares and securities for the time being held by the Company will be forwarded to each shareholder and debenture-holder with the annual report.

The Articles of Association provide that the management expenses of every kind shall, in no case, amount to more than half per cent. upon the capital employed; that not more than one-fiftieth of the capital of the Company shall be invested in any one security; that no investment shall be made in any shares or stock upon which, for the previous three years, an average dividend or interest of less than 5 per cent. has been paid; and that the resolutions of the Trustees as to any investments being made shall in all cases be unanimous. -

What is wanted is a similar Company for Calcutta, which, if efficiently managed, would command a great success. It will generally be found in practice that, by judiciously varying one's investments, a very good and safe income may be obtained, but the necessary knowledge and experience is not possessed by everyone, and so there should be a grand field for a Company of this description.

The Bank of Bengal have made no alteration in their rates of discount, and the minimum still remains at 5 per cent. The weekly statement to the 29th ultimo shows the public and other deposits to have been Rs. 4,61,62,620, and the cash and currency notes Rs. 2,60,07,067, or 54 per cent. of the liabilities; so that the rise in the Bank rate would seem already to have restricted business.

Loans are obtainable in the open market at 4 per cent. No transactions are reported in Bank shares during this week.

The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House for the week ended 27th December was Rs. 63,58,150.

There have not been many transactions in Jute Mill Stock during the past week, and such as have been reported are at declining rates. The prospects of this industry are very dreary indeed, and there is at present no redeeming feature. Some of our crack Mills are not paying their expenses, and it looks as if

the matter would eventuate in the survival of the fittest. A comparison of the prices ruling now and at the beginning of last year will show the fearful depression in this industry, and it is, by no means, certain that the bottom has been reached as yet. Advices from the other jute manufacturing centres are equally gloomy; and what deepens the gloom is that prices of the raw material show an upward tendency, while those of the manufactured article are decidedly weaker, the market in all positions for manufactured goods being absolutely glutted. Transactions are recorded in Budge-Budge at Rs. 69. Howrah at Rs. 66 and 65. Fort Gloster at Rs. 33. Gourepore at Rs. 70.

In Cotton Mills there have been transactions in Bowreah Company at Rs. 44 cash, Rs. 46½ for three months.

There have been no Tea Sales this week. In shares, transactions are reported in Gielle Rs. 74 cash, Rs. 76 and 76½ for three months. Jetinga Valley Rs. 63 cash, Rs. 65 for three months. Cherra Rs. 25.

India General Steam Co.'s have changed hands at Rs. 138 and 139. Contributory shares at Rs. 28½ and 29½ premium.

Government 4 per cent. Paper, which opened at Rs. 98, 13, rapidly fell to Rs. 98-9, subsequently recovered to Rs. 98-12, but is weaker to-day at Rs. 98-9 to 98-10. Exchange, which closed firm last week at 1-7½, has steadily improved, and is now 1-7½ for Bank bills on demand.

Indigo Planters and others in the North-West would do well to turn their attention to the patent fibre-extracting machines of Messrs. Death and Ellwood which obtained the Government prize at the late competition. There is a wealth of fibrous-growing plants in India. The rhea plant which is successfully worked by these machines grows wild, yet the fibre is a perfect substitute for silk and wool. The machines are not expensive, and the power required to drive them very small. There is more money in this than most people would suppose, and if rhea fibre is exported in any quantity from India it will revolutionise the silk trade of the world. Every Planter who has steam-power on his premises should try his hand at fibre-extracting, the demand for which is practically unlimited.

CALCUTTA, 10th January 1885.

THE Report of the Directors of the New Beerbhoom Coal Company, Limited, for the half-year ended 31st October last, discloses a loss on the working of Rs. 2,897, but since the closing of the accounts returns have come with results that cover this loss. The Directors report that coal raising has been stopped at Munglepore, and that at Dhadka raisings are being reduced. They add that though their tenders to the railways have been at greatly reduced figures, there have been others lower, and as owing to the state of trade the consumption by Railway Companies must be 40 per cent. less than usual, the position of the coal trade can be easily understood. The Borrea Coal, however, is an exception; it has come into great favour with Mills and Steamer Companies, and though necessarily at low value, yet its future is very promising. The weight of coal raised during the half-year was 15,01,530 maunds against 17,35,494 maunds in the previous half-year. The deliveries were 12,91,538 maunds as against 17,12,512 maunds in the previous half. The stock of coal on hand amounts to 12,43,306 maunds, valued at Rs. 1,54,218. A line of railway is being constructed by the Company, and about half of it has been opened, resulting in facilitating the despatch of the coal and reducing its cost by 2 annas 4 pie per ton. There is no doubt that coal prospects at present are depressed, and shareholders must "wait and hope."

The Trade and Navigation Returns for November show a decrease in the imports of merchandise into Bengal of 58½ lakhs of rupees, and into Bombay of 10½ lakhs. In the exports of Indian produce Bengal shows an increase of 7¼ lakhs, and Bombay a decrease of 7 lakhs. So far as can be gathered from the accounts, the decrease in the value of imports into Bombay is chiefly in cotton goods 8 lakhs, metals 7½ lakhs, sugar 1½ lakh. in this last item the decrease is simply in the value, the quantity imported being larger by 250 tons. On the other hand there has been an increase in wool manufactures of nearly 2 lakhs, mill work and machinery 2¼ lakhs, and railway plant nearly

2 lakhs. In Bengal the decrease in imports has been all down the line, notably in cotton goods $15\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, metals 7 lakhs, mill work and machinery $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, railway plant $11\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, liquors $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, woollen goods 2 lakhs. Turning to the exports we find that the decrease in value of those from Bombay has been chiefly in opium $18\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, wheat $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, and cotton 1 lakh. On the other hand there have been increases in rice $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakh, seeds $13\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, cotton manufactures 3 lakhs. In Bengal exports there have been decreases in opium 21 lakhs, Indigo $29\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, rice 4 lakhs, wheat $3\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, and cotton 3 lakhs; and increases in jute and gunny bags $31\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, tea 11 lakhs, and seeds 4 lakhs.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday 12,658 chests were offered, and 598 chests withdrawn; there was no change in prices. At the London Tea Sales of the same day 25,000 chests were offered and 22,500 sold; finer qualities being in demand and other sorts unchanged. A meeting of the Cinnia-tollah Tea Company is convened for the 12th instant to pass the necessary resolutions to wind up the Company, and appoint Mr. C. L. Johnstone, liquidator, at a remuneration of Rs. 500. The first ordinary meeting of the Selim Tea Company is advertised for the 16th instant. There has been a little more inquiry for tea shares during the past week, and transactions are reported in Jetinga Valley, 63 and 64. Gielle, 74, $74\frac{1}{2}$ cash, 77 and 77 for 3 months. Hoolmaree, 100. Holta 60 and $56\frac{1}{2}$. Soom 85.

Indigo.—European Indigo has ruled firmer during the week, an advance of fully Rs. 5 having been established during the public Sales. The assortment of Oudhs has somewhat improved, and desirable parcels, owing to eager competition, have likewise fetched Rs. 5 advance on previous rates, whilst indifferent lots continued neglected. For the week ending 10th January 1885, there were four public sales; 4,458 chests were offered and 4,231 chests sold.

Out of the market—				Mds.
Bengal about	...	...	...	17,300
Tirhoot „			...	49,400
Benares „	...	...	...	12,300
Oudhs „	...	...	...	21,000
				<hr/>
			Total	... 1,00,000
against 1,22,500 maunds last year. <hr/>				
Shipments to date—				Chests.
England	...	...	...	10,270
France	...	...	...	2,761
Trieste	...	...	...	2,433
Foreign Europe	...	...	...	903
America	...	...	...	3,267
Gulfa, &c.	...	...	...	221
				<hr/>
			Total	... 19,855
<hr/>				

We are informed that we were incorrect in stating that the capital of the Tarkessur Railway Association was 10 lakhs of rupees only, or that the Association made a large profit. As we said at the time, we do not grudge them their profit, be it large or small, for the line is of no commercial importance; our informant does not state what the capital was or what was *paid up*, or what the line really cost, details which we should have been happy to have published, as of great interest to our readers. We know exactly what a line should cost, but we should have liked actual figures. We also know what the Government estimate of the cost of this very line was; but sufficient has been said on the matter and we wish the Company every success. Time will soon show whether the line will answer the sanguine anticipations of its promoters. We hope it may. There have been transactions in the shares at par, which, as they were fully paid up before the middle of last year, is really equivalent to loss of six months' interest and 1 per cent. brokerage to the vendors, but all manner of shares are very depressed just now. People are not disposed to speculate.

The Directors of the Bank of Bengal, at their meeting on Thursday, made no alteration in the Bank rate which remains at 5 per cent. As the books were in course of closure no weekly statement was issued, but it was announced that the profit made during the half-year was Rs. 7,59,602, or nearly 3½ per cent. on the capital. Adding the balance of Rs. 3,10,516 brought forward from last half-year, the available surplus becomes Rs. 10,60,118. The Directors have declared a dividend of 4½ per cent. for the half-year, which will exhaust Rs. 9,00,000, have taken Rs. 25,000 to Bad Debt Fund, and carried the balance of Rs. 1,35,118 forward. Considering the low rate of interest obtaining during the past half-year the results cannot be considered otherwise than highly satisfactory. The result of the year's working has been the payment to the shareholders of a dividend of 9½ per cent., the transfer of Rs. 1,50,000 to the Reserve Fund, Rs. 59,000 to the bad and doubtful debt account, and Rs. 37,000 to the gratuity and pension account, leaving a sum of nearly Rs. 1,10,000 unappropriated to be carried forward. The dividends for the last 5 years have been 8½, 10, 9½, 9½ and 9½ per cent. or an average of 9½ per cent. ; and during the same period no less than 18½ lakhs of rupees have been taken to the Reserve Fund. These results are highly creditable to the responsible management, and contrast very favourably with the Banks of Bombay and Madras. There have been sales of Bank shares during the week at Rs. 855 and 857½.

The amount passed through the Clearing House for the week ended 3rd January 1885, was Rs. 1,42,97,439-6-10.

The *Englishman*, in a leading article on Wednesday, remarks "that though Limited Liability has proved a marvellous incentive to speculation it has also been the means of inflicting heavy losses upon small shareholders." People who speculate cannot expect to win, always. The drift of the article appears to be to warn people against certain persons in London connected with the promotion of new Limited Liability Companies, who are constantly on the watch for retired Indian Colonels and Civilians and any others who are known to be anxious to make some addition to their incomes. The shares are only £1 shares and the

first call is only 5 shillings a share, so that the risk seems small and the chance of the loss immaterial. But soon new calls have to be paid up, further capital is needed, debenture loans, mortgages, and other encumbrances follow, and the Company is brought into court to be wound up, and so on. The writer adds that it has recently been declared from the English Bench that a £1 share is almost a certain trap for the unwary, and retired Indian officers will do well to be shy of such Limited Liability Companies. The only English Company on the Stock Exchange here with £1 shares, on which 5 shillings have been paid up, and with which retired Indian officers have been connected, is the Bengal Baragunda Copper Company. These shares can be bought in the market at Re. 1-4 each, equivalent to a discount of about 58 per cent., but it is doubtful if many retired officers have invested therein. There are two or three Indian Companies composed of Rs. 10 shares, but if one may judge from the share quotations they are not in much favour. The Calcutta Laundry Company is not in a good way. The Deoghur Mining Company's Contributory shares may be had almost for the asking, and fully paid up Rs. 10 shares at about Re. 1. The Arakan Oil Company's shares are not eagerly sought after so it would appear that the Indian public are pretty shy of such Limited Liability Companies already, and hardly require the warning of your contemporary, with which, however, most people will agree. It is a far cry from Calcutta to retired Indian officers and others in England; and it would be far more to the purpose if the *Englishman*, being on the spot and in a position to do so, were to advise its readers of what is going on in Calcutta in the matter of Joint Stock Speculation. It will probably be found that Indian officers and civilians have lost far more by Calcutta Limited Liability Companies than through the "spiders" of the Stock Exchange in London.

Government 4 per cent. Paper, which closed on Saturday last at Rs. 98-9, rapidly declined on Monday and touched 98 on Tuesday; it has slightly improved since and is now Rs. 98-3 to 98-4. The cause of this decline has been the American silver scare. Holders of paper in London threw it on the market, and it was largely

bought up by Banks for remittances to India; the immediate effect has been to overload the market here, and a smart fall in price has been the result, which the recent rise in the Bank of Bengal rate, with a foreboding that higher interest may prevail for the next few months, has also conduced to.

Exchange, which closed on Saturday at $1-7\frac{7}{8}$, improved on Monday to $1-7\frac{1}{4}$, and on Wednesday to $1-7\frac{3}{4}$, it declined $\frac{1}{4}$ on Friday and may be quoted at $1-7\frac{1}{4}$.

Shares.—There seems to have been more doing during the past week. The following transactions are reported:—

Mill Shares.—Barnagore, $69\frac{1}{2}$, 70, 69, 70 and 69. Union Jute, 120. Howrah, 66 and 67. Budge-Budge, 69. Asiatic, 15. Goosery Cotton, $207\frac{1}{2}$. Bowreah, 45, $45\frac{1}{2}$ and 45. Strand Bank Press, 95. Carew & Co., 120.

Railways.—Darjeeling and Himalayan, 98. Tarkessur, 100. Deoghur, 100. Calcutta Tramway, 88.

Miscellaneous.—India General Steam 138, 139, and $139\frac{1}{2}$ cash, 145 for four months time. Contributory shares $29\frac{1}{2}$ and 30 premium. Bengal Silk, 98. Baragunda B shares fully paid up Rs. $1\frac{7}{8}$; A shares (Rs. 3 paid up) Re. $1\frac{1}{4}$.

A meeting of the Jheel Press Company is advertised for the 23rd instant.

The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the week ended 3rd January were Rs. 10,815.

CALCUTTA, 17th January 1885.

THE scheme for providing new wet docks for Calcutta proceeds apace; the Port Improvement Act Amendment Bill has been introduced into the Bengal Council and referred to a Select Committee with instructions to report in a fortnight; so before long, no doubt, the port will be committed to an expenditure of some three crores of rupees, which according to Mr. Reynolds, the mover of the Bill, "will involve no increase of taxation, and will enable the Port Commissioners to lighten the burthens upon trade, and help Calcutta to compete on more favourable terms than before with places possessed of greater natural advantages." This Bill has been introduced and the docks will be constructed on the report of a committee of merchants and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Port Commissioners which is dated 3rd September 1883. At that time the export grain trade from Bengal had developed unusual proportions, and almost everybody one met had got "Indian Wheat" upon the brain. It was fondly hoped that India was going to be the granary of the world, that all the wheat required by the United Kingdom and the Continent could be provided by India, and that America would be out of the running altogether. The only thing needed to bring about this desirable state of things was to extend and increase the Indian Railway system. As a consequence of all this a Parliamentary Committee was formed, witnesses were examined, and a voluminous report printed; but in the meantime what has become of the export trade in wheat from Bengal? Freights in the past year have been abnormally depressed; wheat in the home markets has been lower in price than has ever been known; and shipments from India have fallen off very considerably, especially so far as Bengal is concerned. For the five months ended the 31st August 1883, when the Dock Committee's Report issued, the exports of wheat from Bengal were 280,477 tons; for the same period of 1884 they have dropped to 100,162 tons! The exports of rice for the same period of 1883 were 144,236 tons, and for 1884 they have fallen to 89,681 tons. Oil-seeds, indeed,

show an increase from 162,683 tons to 196,814 tons, but trade is depressed all over the world, and it looks at present as if everything had been overdone.

Now what is the great increase that is expected in the trade of Bengal for which these elaborate and expensive preparations are necessary? Is it the wheat trade, which the anticipated extension of the railway systems in India is expected to increase to enormous proportions? Surely there must be a limit even to this, and signs are not wanting that certain influential members of Parliament are beginning to feel dubious about the propriety of such enormous railway extension in India. It is not, they conceive, in the interest of the United Kingdom that wheat should be poured into that country; that the British farmer should be swept off the face of the earth; that the whole agricultural interest should be destroyed; and so a cry for fair trade and protection has gone forth, and has not as yet quite died away. The truth is that the advocates of railway extension in India have proved too much, and some people at home are beginning to be a little alarmed. But, be that as it may, if India is to be developed into a great wheat-exporting country, the ports of export will be Bombay and Karachi, not Calcutta. A study of the export returns very plainly shows this to be the case. For the eight months ended November 1883 and 1884, the exports of wheat were as under:—

			1883.	1884.
			Tons.	Tons.
Bengal	...	...	357,390	112,161
Bombay	...	...	368,217	303,258
Karachi	...	...	159,710	130,613

It will be seen from the above that, notwithstanding the recent stagnation in the wheat trade, the exports from Bombay and Karachi have fallen off very little over $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; whereas from Bengal they have not been one-third of what they were. Surely these are significant facts which should be pregnant with interest to the Port Commissioners here. It seems clear that the wheat ports of the future will be Bombay and Karachi, and that this staple will only go from Calcutta in very

large quantities under particular circumstances, and not as an ordinary thing. It must also not be forgotten that there must be a limit to England's power of absorbing wheat, and that India is not likely to have it altogether her own way. The import of wheat into England in 1880 was 55 million cwts., and in 1881 it rose to 57 million cwts. The great bulk of all this came from the United States, and there will be a severe tussle before India ousts them from the field; every economy, therefore, should be practised, and every means adopted to lessen the transit charges, not to keep them stationary, with, if anything, a tendency to increase.

Mr. Reynolds estimates the receipts of the new docks at 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, and the interest and working expenses at 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, leaving a surplus of about three-fourths of a lakh. The receipts may be divided into two classes, those from the ships and those from the cargo. Ships unloading in the docks will pay 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ annas a ton, and those loading 3 annas. We were told the other day that Calcutta was a free port, and that there were no port dues! It is expected that 173 vessels of an average tonnage of 1,375 tons will use the docks for discharging and pay Rs. 66,912 in dues. It is also anticipated that 403 vessels will load export cargo from the docks and pay Rs. 91,215. The charges, therefore, proposed to be levied directly from the shipping will be Rs. 1,58,127. As regards import cargo, it is calculated that 72,617 tons of iron will be landed at the docks instead of overside, which, at Re. 1 per ton, will amount to Rs. 72,617, that 45,513 tons of coal will be discharged at 10 annas, amounting to Rs. 28,445; and 200,000 tons of salt at Re. 1, equivalent to Rs. 2,00,000, making the total receipts from import cargo Rs. 3,01,062. Of course, if it is made compulsory for ships to use the docks, these fees will doubtless be realised; but if any option is allowed, we have our doubts regarding them. Salt, it will be seen, is the great item, and the present practice is for native buyers to be allowed so many days to discharge the cargo, the result being that they make a warehouse of the ship and sell the cargo retail out of her. We do not see any advantage to native salt buyers in the new dock scheme.

Next, as regards export cargo, it is stated that 1,324,148 tons of goods were exported to places other than Ceylon, the Coast Ports, and China during 1882-83; and deducting 10 per cent. from that, leaves 1,191,734 tons, which are expected to go *viâ* the new docks and to pay Re. 1 per ton wharfage, making a total under this head of Rs. 11,91,734. Now of these 1,324,148 tons of produce, jute represents 459,599 tons, gunny bags 48,530 tons, oil-seeds 281,975 tons, wheat 222,011 tons, and rice 175,791 tons, the balance being made up of hides, cotton, tea, indigo, &c., most of which go *viâ* the jetties.

As regards jute nearly the whole of it comes alongside the export ship by water in cargo-boats from the different Press-houses on the river bank, and the cost of exporting it this way varies from 12 to 14 annas per ton; so that unless the Port Commissioners levy a tax on cargo-boats entering the docks with export cargo, which would be a most unjust, iniquitous, and arbitrary proceeding, we may safely assume that this article of export will yield no revenue to the new docks. It must also not be forgotten that a very large proportion shipped to the United Kingdom is loaded into vessels going direct to Dundee. These vessels, unless compelled, will certainly not use the new dock; for the season 1882-83 no less than 84 vessels, carrying 152,742 tons of jute, sailed direct from Calcutta to Dundee; not one of these would use the new docks. This means a sad decrease in the estimated receipts.

As regards gunnies, of which 48,530 tons were exported in 1882-83, these are almost all shipped in cargo-boats from the different Mills on the river bank, and the same remarks apply to them, and it will also probably be found more convenient to ship rice from Hatkhola by water. Seeds and wheat will naturally go *viâ* the new railway bridge at Hooghly, direct from up-country to the new docks.

The rent of lands in the vicinity of the dock is put down at Rs. 1,20,000, and wharfage from the boat dock at Rs. 75,000.

Thus, to summarise, we have :—

		Rs.
Receipts from ships direct (dock dues) ...	...	1,58,127
Wharfage on import cargo ...	...	3,01,062
Do. on export do. ...	...	11,91,734
Rent of lands ...	...	1,20,000
Wharfage from boat dock ...	...	75,000
		<hr/>
Total ...	...	18,45,923
		<hr/>

These are the figures upon which Mr. Reynolds bases his anticipations of receipts of 18½ lakhs.

As regards jute and gunnies, estimated to produce (deducting 10 per cent.) Rs. 4,57,317 out of the total, I have no hesitation in telling Mr. Reynolds that further dock accommodation is not required for this staple and manufacture, and that the figures of 1882-83 are very misleading, as the export of jute in that year was one of the highest on record; indeed shipments of jute are likely to average much less, and those for 1883-84 were in fact, 166,546 tons below those for 1882-83, which would mean a decrease in the dock receipts of 1½ lakh of rupees, assuming the docks to be used. I am of opinion that if the present system of jetties be extended down the river, as occasion may require, it will answer all the demands of the trade for very many years to come. I consider this scheme to be altogether ill-advised, and calculated to add to, rather than to decrease, the burthens of the port. It is a curious coincidence that not one of the mercantile members of the committee has anything to do with the export of jute, which may perhaps account for the error in assuming it would go *via* the new dock. Mr. Robert Steel, a very large jute shipper, who was on a former committee, expressed a decided opinion that "the dock scheme was premature, and that the means exist for providing for the accommodation of a trade double in extent of that hitherto carried on, by improving the port of Calcutta itself." Mr. Steel is a merchant whose views are entitled to great weight; I can only add that I thoroughly agree with them. It would, therefore, seem from the foregoing that these docks are to be constructed to provide for

the wheat and oil-seed trade of Bengal. The wheat trade shows ominous signs of contraction, and so soon as the railway system of Rajputana is altered to the broad-gauge, will probably almost entirely be diverted to Bombay. There is an old saying that you must first catch your hare before you cook it. The Port Commissioners appear to be providing an elaborate system of cooking utensils, while the hare is bounding off in an opposite direction. The *Englishman*, on Wednesday, concludes an extremely guarded article on the subject as follows:—"A decrease in the port charges is an exceedingly important matter to the prosperity of the commerce of Calcutta. If the docks are conducted in such a manner as to reduce those charges, they will be a boon to the local trade, which, on the other hand, will not regard the new works with favor should the figures, on which the estimates have been framed, prove to be ill-considered, and their construction render, in however small a degree, the port more expensive than it is to the shipping." With these remarks I entirely concur.

It seems to me that if the Jute Mill-owners and Press Associations and the Calcutta Jute Balers and Exporters are wise, they will immediately take steps to obtain from the Government of Bengal, or, failing it, the Government of India, an authoritative assurance (1) that vessels will not be compelled to use the new docks, and that no unfair means will be resorted to by raising the dues, &c., outside, to induce them to do so; (2) that cargo-boats carrying export cargo or entering the dock to unload import cargo direct ex-ship, will be admitted to the new docks, as in London, free of charge; and these Associations should also place themselves at once in communication with the Chambers of Commerce at Dundee, Liverpool, and London, and take steps to bring the matter, if necessary, before Parliament.

The traffic returns of the East Indian Railway show the receipts for the first 10 days of 1885 to have been Rs. 11,74,658 as against Rs. 17,76,207 for the first 12 days of 1884—decrease Rs. 6,01,549. I should be glad to see weekly returns of the receipts of the Tarkessur line published, and there should be no difficulty in doing so, as the East Indian Railway work it. I hear

good accounts of the passenger traffic, and complaints of delay and want of attention at the Seoraphuli junction.

In my letter in your issue of the 18th November, I said that a scheme was reported to be on foot to revive the Behar Tramway project; and an advertisement in the daily papers now invites investors to place their superfluous cash in the Behar Tramways Company, Limited—Capital: Rs. 4,00,000, with power to issue debentures for Rs. 1,50,000, divided into 4,000 ordinary shares of Rs. 100 each, of which 3,000 will be issued at present. The Managing Agents and Secretaries are Messrs. Lloyd & Co., of this city, who, in February of last year, placed before the public the prospectus of the Selim Tea Company, Limited, Rs. 100 shares, which may now be purchased at a considerable discount. The prospectus is delightfully vague. It states that the first object of the Company is the construction of a Tramway between Patna City and Bankipore, under powers contained in a concession granted to Mr. Gilbert Finlayson. This concession has been obtained by the Company upon very favourable terms, but what those terms are we are not informed, though the agreement embodying them can be inspected at Messrs. Lloyd & Co.'s office by any one curious on the subject. The line will be of metre-gauge, laid with steel rails weighing about 45lbs. per yard. It will be a single line, but with turn-outs or passing places at frequent intervals. After very careful consideration, based upon figures placed at their disposal, and so far as they can see, reliable, it is estimated by Messrs. Lloyd & Co., that the capital expenditure will not exceed Rs. 40,000 per mile, including construction, cost of cars, live stock, and necessary buildings. There are no engineering difficulties to encounter, and the road upon which the Tramway will be laid is already well metalled. The estimated annual expenditure is put down at Rs. 83,590: and if the anticipations of the promoters are realised, the coaching traffic will amount to Rs. 1,09,500, and the goods traffic to Rs. 18,250; leaving a profit of Rs. 44,160, equivalent to 14 per cent., for distribution annually among the fortunate proprietors. Before advising investors on this subject I should like to have full details of the agreement with Mr.

Gilbert Finlayson, and of the way in which it is proposed that the line should be constructed and equipped; for if the line is properly constructed and worked it should be a success. There is, I believe, also a movement on foot to construct a Tramway from Howrah to Hurripal. I can only repeat the advice I gave in my remarks on a former occasion. When an investor receives a circular of some new Company he should ask (1) Is the undertaking wanted? (2) Is the price reasonable? (3) Are the Managing Agents likely to make it a success; and he should inquire, not only as to the standing and respectability of these agents, but into their business capacity and management of other Companies.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal, at their weekly meeting on Thursday, raised the rates of interest one per cent. all round, and the minimum rate now is six per cent. As no weekly statement of assets and liabilities has been published, I am unable to remark on the Bank figures. It is reported, however, that during last week there was an increased public demand. Shares have been dealt in at Rs. 832½, 830. National Bank at Rs. 94, 95. Delhi and London, Rs. 175.

The amount passed through the Clearing House, Calcutta, during the week ended 10th instant, was Rs. 1,33,27,636, which is 9¼ lakhs less than last week. The Tramway receipts during the same period were Rs. 11,512.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday 12,735 chests were offered, and 12,393 sold; common qualities were easier. At the London sales 24,000 chests were offered and 20,100 chests sold at full rates. There have been a few transactions in tea shares this week, and sales are reported in Central Terai, 50, Dnr-rung, 33 (forced sale), Bengal, 30, Gielle, 74, Tukvar, 175, Holta, 60, and Soom, 85. The Assam Tea Company have declared an *ad-interim* dividend of five per cent.; and meetings for declaration of dividends are advertised of the Singtöm on the 21st current, and the Teesta on the 28th. The following statement, kindly furnished by the Secretary to the Indian Tea Association, will be of interest to your readers:—

Exports of Indian Tea from Calcutta.

	1884.	1883.	1882.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain in December	7,157,796	8,587,810	5,764,887
Exports to Great Britain from 1st May to 31st December	50,795,180	47,397,247	42,193,623
Exports to Australia and New Zealand in December	271,454	23,349	467,643
Exports to Australia and New Zealand from 1st May to 31st December	848,972	229,885	2,251,062
Exports to America in December	12,056	19,860	104,932
Exports to America from 1st May to 31st December	61,104	121,691	573,649
Exports to other places in December	20,421	60,118	26,127
Exports to other places from 1st May to 31st December	237,089	207,483	234,175
Total Exports from 1st May to 31st December	51,942,345	47,956,806	45,252,509

Indigo.—The market has continued very firm for all European qualities, and native Indigo has also fetched rather better prices, especially the better grades, supplies of which continue scarce. There is a report that the outturn of the crop has been over-estimated, and also that several lots are likely to be kept back up-country if prices do not improve. An improvement, however, is not very probable. The season is expected to close in about a month. For the week ending 17th January there have been four public sales, in which 4,287 chests were offered and 3,869 sold.

Out of the market—

	Mannds.
Bengal about	18,500
Tirhoot „	55,500
Benares „	15,000
Oudhs „	26,250
Total ...	1,15,250

as against 1,40,000 maunds last year.

Shipments to date :—			Chests.
England	...	...	11,963
France	...	...	3,554
Trieste	...	...	2,856
Foreign Europe	...	...	1,418
America	...	...	4,136
Gulfs, &c.	...	...	355
		Total	24,282

Jute Mills, &c.—The Report of the Gourepore Company for the half-year just ended will disclose a loss on the working of some Rs. 26,000. It will be remembered, however, that the balance brought forward at credit of Profit and Loss from last half was Rs. 74,136, so that there is a credit balance of some Rs. 48,000. Considerable pressure has, I understand, been brought to bear on the Directors by large holders of shares to declare some kind of dividend, and it will, therefore, I hear, be recommended that 8 per cent. should be declared which will exhaust Rs. 36,000. It would, perhaps, have been better to have foregone this happiness; but shareholders, especially large ones naturally look for some return for their money.

The *Englishman* fell into a curious error on Tuesday last in reviewing the Trade and Navigation Accounts. It stated that the exports of jute from Calcutta for November 1884, were 1,112,367 cwts., and for the eight months ended November 3,284,217 cwts. These figures include shipments from Chittagong, which, owing to the fearful charges of the port of Calcutta, is fast rising into importance as a jute port; and which, if these new docks become an accomplished fact, will expand by "leaps and bounds."

There have been transactions in Jute Mill stock as under: Budge-Budge, 70. Seebpore, 40. Fort Gloster, 33. Gourepore, 71. Chitpore Hydraulic Press, 80. Strand Bank, 96. Bengal Mills, 1,300. Goosery Cotton, 207½.

A meeting of the Nasmyth Press to declare a dividend is convened for the 2nd February, and of the Calcutta Hydraulic on the 4th idem.

Government Paper has fluctuated throughout the week. It closed on Saturday at $98\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ and rose steadily on Monday and Tuesday until it reached $98\frac{3}{8}$ on Wednesday, when it again declined to $\frac{1}{8}$. It was variable on Thursday, on Friday improved to $98\frac{1}{2}$, and to-day is about $98\frac{1}{8}$ to $98\frac{1}{4}$.

Exchange remained at $1s. 7\frac{1}{4}d.$ for demand drafts until Wednesday, when it declined to $1-7\frac{1}{8}$, and improved again on Friday to $1-7\frac{1}{4}$; to-day it may be quoted $1-7\frac{1}{8}$.

Miscellaneous Shares.—Sales are reported in India General new shares at Rs. 30 and 31 premium, old shares at Rs. 138, Inland Flotilla $10\frac{1}{2}$ and 10 per cent. discount; a meeting of this Company is convened for the 31st instant. Calcutta Tramways, 90. Bengal Telephone, 40. Imperial Ice Company, 25. Deoghur Railway, 100. Great Eastern Hotel, 95. T. F. Brown & Co., 30. Naini Tal Brewery, 100. Baragunda A shares, $1\frac{1}{4}$; B. shares 2.

The Calcutta Customs Returns for December show an increase in the value of foreign imports of 39 lakhs. The chief increases are in cotton goods $22\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, and bullion $9\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs; the remainder is made up of miscellaneous increases. The chief decreases are in white cotton goods 2 lakhs, machinery 4 lakhs, copper $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs.

CALCUTTA, 24th January 1885.

IN the month of January 1882, Messrs. Burn & Co., a well-known firm of Contractors of high standing in this city, circulated among their friends the prospectus of the Deoghur Railway Company, Limited. No advertisements, however, appeared in the Press, nor was there any "high falutin" about developing the resources of the country, or any reference to the great public spirit of Messrs. Burn & Co. in offering this investment to the public. Messrs. Burn & Co., simply said that they believed there was an opening for a line of Railway on the metre-gauge to connect Baidyanath Station, on the East Indian Railway, and the village of Rohini with the famous Hindu temple at Deoghur; that the length of the line would be about $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles; and that they were willing to construct it, provide it with rolling-stock, and pay all preliminary costs and expenses for Rs. 2,75,000 which was fixed as the capital of the Company, and made up as follows: construction of line Rs. 1,95,921, rolling-stock Rs. 71,100, preliminary expenses and contingencies Rs. 7,979—total Rs. 2,75,000. It will thus be seen that the cost per mile of the line only amounted to Rs. 31,347; and it must be mentioned that within this short distance of $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles there were two bridges, one over the Derwa of five spans of 65-feet each, and the other over the Jumna Jore of one 25-feet span; a bank 25 feet high and 1,200 feet long; and a rock-cutting through trap and gneiss over a quarter of a mile long. Messrs. Burn & Co. stated in their prospectus that the East Indian Railway Company were conveying about half a million passengers yearly to Baidyanath, that about the same number of pilgrims from the surrounding districts were in the habit of walking over the ground covered by the railway, and that 4,00,000 maunds of goods would be received annually. They based these statements on information supplied to them by an officer of the East Indian Railway, who invested a good portion of his savings in the concern, and who, as events turned out, proved to have been egregiously mistaken. Upon these figures Messrs. Burn & Co. estimated that 500,000 passen-

gers would annually use the line and pay Rs. 42,968, and that 4,00,000 maunds of goods would be carried, yielding Rs. 9,375 making the total receipts Rs. 52,343; and deducting 50 per cent. for the working expenses, this would leave a net profit of Rs. 26,172, or, about $9\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of a dividend. The railway was duly opened in the beginning of 1883, and as, after some little time, the traffic did not answer the expectations of the promoters, inquiries were made, and it then transpired that the estimates in the prospectus were based on erroneous data, and that the traffic on the East Indian Railway was considerably less than had been stated; whereupon Messrs. Burn & Co. came forward in the frankest manner possible. They at once admitted their responsibility for the mistake that had been made, and offered either to return the money subscribed, with 4 per cent. interest to any shareholder who desired it, or to present him with additional shares gratis out of their holding in the Company, guaranteeing a five per cent. dividend. There was not an angry word said on either side, and those shareholders who elected to take their money parted with Messrs. Burn & Co. with every expression of regard and good feeling. But though the traffic may not have realised the sanguine expectations of the projectors, it has steadily increased, and is still increasing. For the half-year ended 31st December 1883, the total receipts were Rs. 9,645. For the half-year ended 31st December last the receipts will total up nearly Rs. 13,000, and the net profit will amount to about Rs. 7,000, equivalent to a dividend of 5 per cent. per annum. This, as things go, is not at all a bad dividend for a railway to pay.

It is curious to note the difference in cost of some of these Railway and Tramways. The Deoghur Railway, metre-gauge, length $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles, cost Rs. 43,733 per mile, and this included two bridges, one of five spans of 65 feet, and one with a single span of 25 feet, a quarter of a mile of rock-cutting, and about 1,000 feet of a bank 25 feet high, together with rolling-stock. The Tarkessur Railway, broad-gauge, length $22\frac{1}{2}$ miles, through a perfectly level country, with no bridges or engineering difficulties whatever, and without any rolling-stock, promises to cost

the Company Rs. 75,000 per mile. The Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway, metre-gauge, 50 miles in length, complete with rolling-stock, embankments, &c., cost up to 30th June Rs. 53,600 per mile. The Calcutta Tramways complete with all appliances, rolling-stock, horses, stables, &c., length $38\frac{1}{2}$ miles, cost the Company £9,000 per mile! The Behar Tramways are to cost about Rs. 40,000 per mile.

The Custom House Returns for December show a falling off in the value of exports from Calcutta to foreign countries, as compared with the same month of 1883, of no less than $43\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees. The chief decreases are in cotton $12\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, Indigo 34 lakhs, wheat $7\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, gunnies 8 lakhs, sbellac $3\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, saltpetre 2 lakhs, linseed $7\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, and tea $12\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs. The increases are in jute $32\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, opium $11\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, rice 1 lakh, hides $3\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, button lac 1 lakh, poppy and rape-seed $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakh. The exports of wheat in December 1881 were 38,820 tons, in 1882 17,729 tons; in 1883, 11,730 tons; while in December 1884, they dropped to 1,300 tons: so much for the new docks.

The Bank of Bengal made no alteration in its rates of discount on Thursday, and the minimum remains at 6 per cent. The publication of the weekly statements has been resumed, and on the 19th instant the public and other deposits amounted to Rs. 4,81,82,050, and the cash and currency notes to Rs. 2,66,10,055, or, 53·2 per cent.

The balance in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India seems steadily increasing. On the 30th December it was Rs. 1,39,43,989; on the 20th January it had risen to Rs. 1,65,93,744. The Government of India in the Financial Department might usefully "read again" the papers regarding the man who wrapped his talent in a napkin: it might enable them to evolve a sensible resolution regarding these Reserve balances.

Bank of Bengal shares have been dealt in at Rs. 830 and $832\frac{1}{2}$ ex-dividend.

The weekly return shows that for the week ended 17th January there was passed through the Clearing House, Calcutta,

Rs. 1,08,81,248, as against Rs. 1,33,27,636 for the week ended the 10th, and Rs. 1,42,97,439 for that ended 3rd instant.

Government Paper, which closed at 98 $\frac{1}{4}$ on Saturday, rose to 98 $\frac{1}{2}$ on Monday, and to 98 $\frac{1}{4}$ on Tuesday; but on Friday it dropped to 98 $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$.

Municipal 5 per cent. debentures have been dealt in at Rs. 102 $\frac{1}{4}$.

Exchange, which closed on Saturday at *ls. 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.* for demand drafts, has steadily declined during the week, on Monday to *ls. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.*, Tuesday *ls. 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.*, Friday *ls. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.*

The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the week ended 17th January were Rs. 11,359.

Indigo.—There is no change to report in the market. European Indigo is nearly all sold, previous prices having continued to be paid. The quality of North-West Indigo has lately improved to a certain extent, and better lots sold at rather cheaper prices. The lower grades continue at about the same prices as before. London advices state that holders of Indigo were very anxious to sell in the January sales, and the market, therefore, gave way quite unexpectedly, as an improvement had generally been looked for. Prices were about *5d.* to *8d.* below October rates, or, say *4d.*, or Rs. 10, for good European kinds; *6d.* to *8d.*, or Rs. 15 to Rs. 10, for North-West Indigo below current Calcutta rates. During the past week there have been three public sales in Calcutta, at which 3,491 chests were offered and 3,173 chests sold—Out of the market—Bengal about 19,750 maunds, Tirhoot 59,000 maunds, Benares 17,000 maunds, Oudhs 32,000 maunds—total 1,27,750 maunds; as against 1,50,000 maunds last season. Shipments to date—to England 13,234 chests, France 3,841 chests, Trieste 3,029 chests, Foreign Europe 1,630 chests, America 5,154 chests, Gulfs, &c. 415 chests—total 27,303 chests.

Tea.—According to Messrs. Hart and Sibthorpe's circular, the deliveries of Indian Tea in London during December were 5,420,000lbs., as against 4,810,000lbs. in 1883, and 4,460,000lbs. in 1882. The stock, however, in London, on 31st December was 27,100,000lbs., against 24,100,000lbs. for the same period of 1883, and 21,700,000lbs. for 1882. The imports during December

1884, were 10,400,000lbs. as against 7,260,000lbs. in 1883, and 5,710,000lbs. in 1882. The total deliveries for the year 1884 have been 64,070,000lbs. as compared with 59,090,000lbs. in 1883, and 50,480,000 lbs. in 1882. Messrs. Jardine, Skinner & Co. are having what might perhaps be called a little "clearance sale" of tea gardens. The Nutwanpore Tea Company is in liquidation, and the garden is to be sold on an early date. The Cinniatollah Tea Garden is in the same way, and a meeting is convened for the 15th February to consider the financial position of the Jellal-pore Cachar Tea Company, with, I suppose, the same result. These gardens, however, it is right to say, were not of Messrs. Jardine, Skinner and Co.'s formation, but were merely handed over to them to manage on the failure of the firm of Robert and Charriol, their projectors. There have been no Calcutta tea sales during the last week, but telegrams from London report that at the public sales there 22,000 packages were offered and 20,400 sold. There was a good demand for all descriptions, and fine and finest qualities were very firm. In tea shares sales are reported of Gielle Rs. 74 and Holta Rs. 60. Meetings are advertised of Soom Company, for payment of dividend, 20th February, of Gielle, for like purpose on the 4th February, and of Arcuttipore for 30th January, Dessai and Parbuttia on the 4th February, and Iringmara on the 11th February.

Jute Mills, &c.—The Report of the Gourepore Mills was, as foreshadowed in my last, a loss on the half-year's operations of Rs. 26,549. For the purposes of a proper comparison of what the concern has done, the results of the year must be looked at, and they were as follows :—Profit on the Jute Mill for 1884 Rs. 45,813, profit on the Oil Mill Rs. 6,951—total profit Rs. 52,764, add balance from 1883 Rs. 1,783, available surplus Rs. 54,547; of which the distribution is:—Village improvements, Rs. 4,300, written off Boat Account, Rs. 4,054, dividend at 3 per cent. Rs. 36,000, to be carried forward Rs. 10,193—total Rs. 54,547. If the Union Mills, which is exceptionally situated, be excluded, the results disclosed by the Gourepore Company will contrast very favourably with other concerns. A movement is on foot, and is now beginning to assume a definite shape

for reducing the outturn of the Indian Jute Mills by stopping work altogether two days in every week. This will soon effect an improvement in the bag market, though Mills that are weighted with debentures will find themselves at a considerable disadvantage. The half-year's accounts of the Asiatic, Howrah, Hooghly, Kamarhatty, Kanknarrah, Goosery, Seebpore, and Union Jute Mills, and of the Dunbar, Bengal, Empress, and Goosery Cotton Mills closed on the 31st December, so we shall soon be deluged with reports. The Howrah Mills advertise their meeting on the 11th February, that of the Gourepore Company comes off on the 5th proximo, and of the Asiatic on 7th idem. The export of gunny bags (power loom) from Calcutta during December were nearly five millions less than in the same month of 1883. The total shipments during the last six years from Calcutta to Indian and foreign ports were:—1879, 67,957,957, value Rs. 1,46,33,060; 1880, 67,146,095, Rs. 1,46,95,732; 1881, 74,373,436, Rs. 2,88,63,827; 1882, 83,666,493, 2,14,64,606; 1883, 100,855,181, Rs. 2,12,49,825; 1884, 113,761,878, Rs. 2,21,47,784. It will be observed that the exports during the past year are only 13 per cent. above those of 1883, whereas the producing power of the Mills is very considerably greater: the result, of course, is inevitable, and this is always the case when the laws of supply and demand are not properly attended to.

The following transactions are reported in shares:—Fort Glos-ter, 32. Asiatic, 15. Hooghly, 20. Howrah, 68. Barnagore, 68. Goosery Jute Mill Debentures, 102. Meetings are advertised of the Watson's Press for the 4th February to declare a dividend. The dividend to be declared by the Nasmyth Press is, I understand, at the rate of 8 per cent., the gross amount earned aggregating 12 per cent. In miscellaneous shares sales are reported in Imperial Ice at Rs. 25, India General Steam Navigation Company at Rs. 139, and new shares at Rs. 31 premium. Bengal Coal Company Rs. 1,340, ex-dividend.

A meeting of shareholders is convened of the Labour Transport Company for the 23rd February to pass the necessary resolutions to wind it up; and of the Calcutta Landing and Shipping Company for the 31st instant, to receive the accounts and declare a dividend.

CALCUTTA, 31st January 1885.

IN my letter of the 12th December I suggested the advisability of the Calcutta Jute Mills going on short time, and I am happy to report that a movement to do so has been made, and at one time assumed a very definite shape. A meeting of Jute Mills Managers and Agents was held last week, at which Mr. J. J. J. Keswick presided, and the following concerns were represented :—Kamarhatti, Kanknarrah, India, Seebpore, Budge-Budge, Hastings, Gourepore, Howrah, Hooghly, Samnuggur, Titaghur, Ganges, Barnagore, Clive, Champdany, Wellington, and Serajgunge. All present considered a reduction in the time of work desirable, and the Barnagore scale of weaving wages fair and reasonable,—Budge-Budge only asking for a small additional allowance on the score of inaccessibility. Almost all considered that a reduction in the time of working and in the weavers' wages might simultaneously be effected. Messrs. Birkmyre Brothers suggested that the reduction in wages might be postponed until full work was resumed, as they feared that the simultaneous curtailment of time and wages might disperse some of the hands. It was agreed that the working days should be from Monday to Thursday inclusive, work not to commence before 5 A. M., and continue later than 7-30 P. M.; and that from Thursday to Monday the Mill engines should be silent save for calendering, sack-sewing, packing, baling, bag-cutting, and working the mechanics' shop and cranes. It was proposed that the short-time movement should commence from the 15th April to allow of existing contracts being finished, and that it should extend to four or six months. The Fort Gloster, Union, Goosery, and Asiatic Mills were unrepresented at this meeting, and the Chairman undertook to endeavour to convert them to its views. The movement has already had a good effect, and prices of bags are firmer. I, however, understand that the Directors of the Gourepore Mills have since declined to join in the short-time movement; and, as to be successful an arrangement of this kind must be unanimous there is reason to fear that the combination may fall through. It is

believed that the grounds on which the Directors of the Gourepore Company base their resolve is this: (1) that they have not extended the size of their Mills and in any way caused this depression; (2) that it would disarrange their workers; (3) that if they were to stop two days a week it would necessitate a rise of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on bags to place them in the same position as they are now. None of these reasons will hold water: in the first place we are not dealing with the past but the present; the extensions are here; additional looms are running; the production is in excess of the demand; and the whole industry is suffering; if the matter could resolve itself into the survival of the fittest, this selfish policy of the Gourepore Company would be intelligible; but unfortunately the Mills are here, and whatever may happen to the unfortunate shareholders, they will remain. If when the Company suspended payment the Mill fell flat like a pack of cards, the argument would be good; but no sooner does the Company go into liquidation, than, as in the case of the Oriental, Calcutta, Rustomjee, and Balliaghatta Companies, the Mills are bought up dirt cheap and worked more vigorously than ever. As regards the second ground, it is strange that the workers of the Gourepore Mills should be more disorganised than others; this does not look like good management. As regards the price of gunnies, it must be obvious to the merest tyro that if the outturn of the Mill is diminished a higher price must be obtained for the production, or the operation would considerably reduce profits. If all the Mills curtail their production one-third, there will be a considerably higher rise than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in bags; if there is not, it is obvious that if they continue further full working there will be a smart fall in present prices.

Now that the Jute Mill-owners' Association is *au fait accompli*, it is to be hoped that it will continue in the path of usefulness and reform. Many shareholders are of opinion that the Agents of some of these Mills are too highly paid; but they will not complain of this if the Mill Agents satisfy them that they are effecting every economy in the working, and carefully protecting their interests. The question of brokerage is one that should use-

fully occupy the attention of the Association, and which should next be taken up. Gunny-bag brokers draw a commission of 1 per cent., which in many cases is fully equal to a dividend of that amount. It is strongly felt that $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would be ample remuneration, and in the interests of the shareholders, which the Managing Agents are handsomely paid to protect, no time should be lost in reducing the brokerage to a reasonable level. Another question which the Association should at once take up is that of the new wet docks. Of course, so far as the Association is concerned, whether the Government like to sink 3 crores or 30 crores in this business is of no moment; but it is of importance that gunnies should not be taxed to pay for all this. At the present moment it is estimated that 43,677 tons of gunnies will be exported to foreign countries *via* the new docks, and pay Re. 1 per ton wharfage. Now, with the exception of the Samnuggur, Serajgunge, Union, Asiatic, and Hooghly Mills, which will be in railway communication with the new docks, all the Jute Mills, by reason of their situation on the river bank, must send their goods alongside the export ship by cargo-boats; and therefore, as things look at present, these new docks will mean an additional tax on the export of gunny bags to foreign ports of Re. 1 per ton. No time, therefore, should be lost in obtaining an authoritative assurance from Government that cargo-boats will be allowed to enter the new docks free of charge, and that no dues will be levied on goods coming alongside the export ship by water. Unless this is promptly done, the jute manufacturing industry may find itself burthened with a new impost. It is no use shutting the door after the steed has gone; and if the Jute Mill-owners' Association stand by and let the docks be built, knowing that it is proposed to tax them when they are finished, it will hardly lie in their mouths to complain when the burthen is laid upon them.

A good deal has been said of late about the East Indian Railway selling large quantities of coal, and thus competing to a serious extent with private enterprise, and a representation has been made to the Government upon the subject. It may not be generally known that the East Indian Railway is prohibited from selling any *steam* coal, unless it is surplus raised in reasonable and

bond-fide anticipation of the requirements of the traffic, but left on hand owing to an unexpected failure in the demand. In the early part of last year the East Indian Railway Company, like the Dock Committee, thought they were going to do an enormous traffic in wheat, and like prudent men of business the responsible management naturally made provision for it. They accordingly raised from the mines an additional quantity of 10,000 tons of *steam* coal (equal to about a fortnight's supply) in natural anticipation of a steady rise in the consumption, and the sale of this quantity as surplus was specially sanctioned by the Government of India. No other steam coal has, we understand, been sold by the Railway. The Company is only allowed to sell smithy and refuse coal, and other bye-products of their mines, which cannot be used in the locomotives, and whatever is sold, full public tariff rates are stated to be invariably charged for its conveyance over the line. The prices at which it should be sold are decided on between the Agent and the Consulting Engineer at an estimated paying rate, and every sale is formally and separately sanctioned, both as regards quantity and price, by the Government of India. It is very comforting to consumers of coal, who have a right also to be considered, to know that the Railway Company has Collieries, and the cheaper coal can be laid down the better for trade generally. Cheap coal means cheaper locomotion, cheaper production of manufactures, and on the principle of the greatest good to the greatest number, it is a fair matter for consideration whether the Railway Company should not be allowed to work their Collieries and sell the output. Notwithstanding the intense wickedness of the East Indian Railway Company, assisted by all the depravity at the command of the Government in the Public Works Department, the Bengal Coal Company have declared a dividend of 12 per cent. Some people are never satisfied. But by all means let the different Companies agitate for a reduction in the rates of railway carriage; this is a matter in which the consumers will be with them. The sale of a paltry 10,000 tons of coal by the Railway Company is neither here nor there; and would be worth at the mines about Rs. 35,000. Is it worth while making such a fuss about such a little matter?

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal made no alteration in the rate for discount at the last weekly meeting, and the minimum still remains at 6 per cent. The weekly statement to the 27th of January shows the public and other deposits to have been Rs. 4,84,76,020, and the cash and currency notes to have been Rs. 2,66,62,676, or 53 per cent. Shares in the Bank have been dealt in at Rs. 832½ and 835. The Himalayan Bank has declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 5 per cent.

The Alliance Bank of Simla, Limited, has made gross profits for the last half-year amounting to Rs. 1,82,298, which leaves a divisible balance, after deducting working expenses and including some undivided profits of the half-year ending 30th June 1884, equal to about 24 per cent. per annum on the Bank's subscribed capital. A dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. has already been declared out of the surplus; Rs. 10,000 will probably be added to the Reserve Fund, bringing it up to Rs. 1,20,000, and the balance of Rs. 24,691 be carried forward for disposal at the next general meeting of shareholders in May ensuing. The Bank's deposits amount now to about 34 lakhs of rupees, its subscribed capital being 5 lakhs. But so long as the affairs of the institution are administered with that prudence and sobriety which has hitherto characterized the policy of its managers, there is no danger in the disproportion. The Bank is paying a handsome, though relatively moderate, dividend and steadily building up a substantial reserve. Nothing more can be desired.

The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House for the week ended 24th January, which covered only four working days, was Rs. 1,19,55,622, or 10½ lakhs more than the previous week.

The balance in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India had increased on the 27th January to Rs. 2,25,33,089.

Railways.—The traffic returns of the East Indian Railway from the 1st to 24th January were Rs. 28,65,398, as against Rs. 38,72,182 to 26th January of last year, or a decrease of over 10 lakhs of rupees. The Port Commissioners might note this. The traffic returns of the Tarkessur Railway to the 17th January were as under: January 1st to 10th—Passengers Rs. 5,123, Goods

Rs. 97; January 11th to 17th—Passengers, Rs. 4,148, Goods, Rs. 119—total Passengers, Rs. 9,271, Goods, Rs. 216. The passenger traffic is very satisfactory, but the great bulk of it is through traffic from Howrah, the intermediate traffic being small, and the goods traffic also. It remains to be seen whether this traffic will be sustained during the very hot months and the rainy season. The arrangements at the Seoraphuli junction are of the feeblest description. The Company, if one may judge from an article in a local paper, appears already to have embroiled itself with the Mohunt of Tarkessur, by endeavouring to start a rival bazar. The Mohunt has appealed to the Government not to let the Land Acquisition Act be put in force to enable land to be taken up by a Private Company under colour of a public purpose. If the Railway Company is wise it will endeavour to avoid the threatened complications with the Mohunt until the line is in thorough working, and the natives have been accustomed to use it. It would be an easy matter now for the Mohunt to interdict the use of the line to devotees, and if he were to do this and a by no means impossible accident were to occur at the Seoraphuli junction, the traffic would disappear as if by magic, for the pilgrims would look upon it as a judgment. A small lot of shares in the Tarkessur Company has been sold at Rs. 101, and another sale has been passed at Rs. 100 cash, Rs. 107 for 6 months.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday 13,351 chests were sold and 70 withdrawn. There was a better demand for fine qualities, and the rates were maintained for other descriptions. Meetings are advertised to receive the reports and declare a dividend of the Holta Tea Company on 14th, and the Punkabari Company on the 28th February; and to receive the report only, of the Gyabaree on the 11th idem. The Jetinga Valley Tea Company has declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 10 per cent. payable at once. There have been sales during the week of Holta Company at Rs. 58.

Indigo.—All the European Indigo has been sold and the auctions now only contain native, both Benares and Oudhs; the assortment of the latter has lately improved. Prices have been easier for all kinds and are now on a par level with those of the

cheapest period; fine qualities, however, find ready buyers at Rs. 25 to 30 below last year's rates, whilst lower kinds may be quoted Rs. 30 to 40 discount as compared with last season. The season is now expected to close by 10th or 15th February. For the week just ended there have been four public sales at which 3,264 chests were offered and 2,742 chests sold. Out of the market: Bengal, about 20,000 maunds; Tirhoot, 59,600; Benares, 19,600; Oudhs, 38,550—total 1,37,750 maunds, as against 1,57,000 maunds last year. Shipments to date:—England, 14,380 chests; France, 4,749; Trieste, 3,502; Foreign Europe, 1,936; America, 5,808; Gulfs, &c., 569—total 30,944 chests.

The Report of the Directors of the Inland Flotilla Company is not a very lengthy one; the accounts to the 31st October are submitted, and the Directors announce that they have decided to issue debentures for Rs. 8,75,000, but, strange to say, they do not state whether these debentures have been taken up. Since the date of last Report three steamers and nine flats have been taken delivery of; and one steamer and three flats have yet to be taken delivery of; they are all in an advanced stage of construction. The contractor having failed to deliver the fleet within contract time steps are being taken to obtain compensation. So far there has been no difficulty experienced in securing full cargoes of jute from Naraingunge, but as the season is now far advanced freights are lower than they were.

The Calcutta Tramway Receipts for the week ended 24th January were Rs. 10,601. Under colour of an apparent reduction, the Company have substantially increased their fares for short distances.

Jute Mills, Pressing Companies, &c.—The Report of the Nasmyth Press Company shows that 103,268 bales were pressed as against 80,113 for the corresponding period of 1883, and that the profit made was Rs. 37,712; adding Rs. 527 brought forward from last half-year, the available surplus is Rs. 38,239. The Directors recommend that Rs. 3,000 be written off stock account; that a dividend of 8 per cent. be paid, which will exhaust Rs. 25,600, and that the balance of Rs. 9,639 be carried forward; these results are satisfactory.

The Report of the Calcutta Hydraulic Press Company shows that 94,503 bales have been pressed as against 101,143 for the corresponding half of 1883. The gross profit made appears to have been Rs. 48,125, and adding the net balance carried forward from last half-year, namely, Rs. 11,056, the available sum at credit of Profit and Loss works out Rs. 59,181. *Ad-interim* dividends of 16 per cent. have already been declared, exhausting Rs. 35,900, and it is now proposed to declare a final dividend of 5 per cent. amounting to Rs. 8,500; to carry Rs. 11,500 to Reserve and Wear and Tear Funds, and the balance of Rs. 3,281 forward. As a good portion of the jute crop has still to go forward, the Directors hope to be able to show again fairly good results for the present half-year. Shares in this concern, Rs. 100 paid-up, were some eight years ago at an enormous discount; to-day they are paying 21 per cent. for the half-year, and talking of more to come. Such are the ups and downs of commercial life. Meetings are advertised to receive the half-yearly report of the Kamarhattya and Kanknarrah Companies on the 11th February, the Seebpore on the 12th. The Report of the Union Mills is not yet out, but I am informed that a dividend of Rs. 5 per share will be declared and Rs. 54,000 carried forward. This Company has been most excellently managed during the past year. I will review it more at length when the report is out.

Sales are reported of the following Mill shares:—Fort Gloster, 33, 32½ and 33. Howrah, 69. Budge-Budge, 70. Nasmyth Press, 98. Watson's Press, 106. Strand Bank Press, 98, 100½ cash; 102 for 3 months. Titaghur Paper Mills at Rs. 52, and a forced sale at Rs. 51. Barnagore Jute Mills, 70.

Government Paper has experienced a further smart decline this week, and will soon at this rate afford a convenient opportunity for investors. The uncertainty regarding the intentions of Government, and the probability of a Port Trust 4½ per cent. guaranteed loan being offered to the public at par; or, may be a small discount, may have had something to do with it. It has steadily declined from Rs. 98-6 at Rs. 98-5, on Saturday last to Rs. 97-14 at Rs. 97-15, and may be quoted to-day Rs. 97-12 to 97-13.

Exchange closed on Saturday for demand bills at 1-7½, dropped on Tuesday to 1-7¼; improved to 1-7½ on Wednesday, declined to 1-7 on Thursday, and closed on Friday night at 1-7½ and is firmer to-day at 1-7½.

The Report of the Directors of the Calcutta Landing and Shipping Company for the last half-year discloses a profit of Rs. 12,954, and, adding the balance brought forward from the previous half-year, the amount at credit of Profit and Loss is Rs. 14,534.

The Directors recommend the payment of a dividend of 3 per cent. which will exhaust Rs. 12,600, and that the balance of Rs. 1,934 be carried forward. The dividend for the first half of 1883 was 5 per cent., so that the shareholders receive 8 per cent. for the year. We should like to see money laid aside for Wear and Tear in this concern. The Directors report that they have lately secured a remunerative contract with the Eastern Bengal Railway.

In miscellaneous shares sales are reported in W. Newman & Co., at Rs. 100. Great Eastern Hotel, Rs. 93. A meeting of this Company is advertised for the 21st instant to declare an *ad-interim* dividend. India General Steam Company at Rs. 137 and 138; Contributory shares at Rs. 31, premium 7 per cent. Hooghly Mill Debentures, 100. The Rajmehal Stone Company has declared a dividend for the past year at the rate of 9 per cent.

CALCUTTA, 7th February 1885.

WHEN Mr. Reynolds introduced the Port Improvement Act Amendment Bill into the Bengal Council, considering that he is the Chairman of the Port Commissioners and the Member in charge of the Measure, it was not unreasonable to expect that the public would have the most complete and accurate information regarding the subject; yet, apparently, so incomplete and inaccurate was the knowledge possessed by the Hon'ble Gentleman, that the details he afforded to the Council are absolutely misleading, and an important measure likely largely to affect the future weal or woe of the trade of Calcutta has been put before the Council in a manner, which is calculated to convey an altogether erroneous impression of the great wet dock scheme, which, we are told, is to "involve no increase of taxation, and enable the Port Commissioners to lighten the burthens upon trade and help Calcutta to compete on more favourable terms than before with places possessed of greater natural advantages." When asking for leave to introduce the Bill into Council, Mr. Reynolds pointedly alluded to the Dock Committee's Report of 1883, which he stated had been submitted to several experts both in England and this country, approved by the Government of Bengal, recommended by the Government of India, and sanctioned in all essential particulars by the Secretary of State. This was on the 20th December. Later on, namely, on the 10th January, when Mr. Reynolds introduced the Bill and moved that it be referred to a Select Committee, he again referred to the Report of the Committee of 1883, and stated that the estimated receipts would be $18\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, and the expenditure $17\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs; and that the proposed docks would accommodate 864 ships *in addition* to the 200 ships now berthed at the jetties. Turning to the Report of the Committee of 1883, one finds that these receipts are made up as follows:—173 import ships discharging coal, iron, and salt at $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas per ton, Rs. 66,912; wharfage on their cargoes, Rs. 3,01,062; 403 export vessels to foreign ports at 3 annas per ton, Rs. 91,215; wharfage on their cargoes of produce at Re. 1 per ton, Rs. 11,91,734; rent of lands, Rs. 1,20,000; dues on boats using the Boat Dock, Rs. 75,000—total Rs. 18,45,923.

It is clear from the above that the contemplated wet docks were intended for import ships laden with salt, coal, and iron and for export ships (other than those employed in the China and Coasting trade, which were specially excluded) loading Indian produce. It is with great surprise that I now learn that, these docks are not intended for anything of the sort; that no coal, iron, or salt-laden ships will be accommodated therein; but that, on the contrary, all the general cargo import ships and steamers will be berthed at the docks, two miles away, instead of at the jetties as heretofore, and that their cargoes will be brought up to the jetties by the Tramway and made over to the consignees there, the jetties themselves being given up to vessels employed in the coasting and inland trade, which were expressly excluded from consideration in the Committee's Report. This being so, it would seem that the Secretary of State has been deceived, and the Government of India imposed upon; for it is clear from their despatch, dated 30th October 1883, that the Government were under the impression that there was urgent need for increased accommodation for the development of the trade in wheat, rice, and seeds. How this is to be afforded by transferring the general cargo ships to the docks, and giving over the jetties to the country trade, it is difficult to see. In my letter of the 17th January I gave my reasons for urging that these docks were not wanted; and having had access to several recent papers, and the advantage of hearing what could be urged in its favour by those most interested in the undertaking, I see no reason materially to change the views therein expressed. It will be observed that in Mr. Reynolds's estimate of the receipts of the new docks, which, inasmuch as they will not be used for their avowed purpose, is now mere waste paper, it is calculated that 1,191,734 tons of jute, seeds, wheat, rice; and other produce will go *via* the new docks. As regards jute, gunny-bags, and rice, totalling up 614,528 tons, I said that no facilities were required, as they could, and would continue to be exported more cheaply by water, unless a tax was put on cargo-boats, which would only increase the expenses of export. A curious confirmation of this is afforded by the Port Commission-

ers themselves in their proceedings of the 9th June 1884, para. 7, page 206, where replying to a proposal of Mr. Rendel to reduce the width of the Dock, the Dock Committee record that "it may be assumed that when the docks are completed, and most sea-going vessels use the dock, there will never be less than 500 or 600 cargo-boats in the dock." Now if all the goods are shipped from the docks, what is the use of all these cargo boats? The fact is, that when the docks are completed and the vessels are *forced* to use them, the great bulk of the goods will come by cargo boats still, the result being that the charges of the port will be made prohibitive, and trade curtailed to the utmost possible limits. Besides which it is an intolerable injustice that the piece-goods houses and tradesmen of Calcutta should have their goods unloaded at Kidderpore, when they can have them now *ex ship* at the jetties in town. The Trades' Association should take this matter up at once. It has been stated in one of the daily papers, and never denied, that Mr. Duff Bruce is to receive a commission on all the iron-work and machinery ordered out from England. If this be so, this commission will amount to many thousands of pounds, and without wishing to say one word in disparagement of Mr. Bruce, for whom we have a very high esteem, it must be obvious that such an arrangement would unfit him from taking a calm and unbiassed view of the situation; and that by making this compact with him the Commissioners would materially lessen his value as a trusted adviser,—

"If self the wavering balance shake, it's rarely right adjusted."—

And considerable doubt has been felt whether the Port Commissioners have really sanctioned such a departure from the principles which should guide them in dealing with their officers. That a servant should receive a commission on goods supplied to his master is *dustoori* pure and simple, and is about as objectionable an arrangement as it is possible to devise.

The Trade and Navigation Accounts of British India for the month of December last show an increase in the value of imports both to Bengal and Bombay, as compared with the corresponding month of 1882 and 1883. There is a decrease, however,

in both cases in the value of the exports. In the imports a most noticeable feature is the very large increase in sugar to Bombay ; for the nine months ended December 1884, no less than 48,455 tons were imported as against 26,970 tons and 21,421 tons for the same periods of 1883 and 1882 respectively. In cotton goods the month of December shows an increase in the value of imports into Bengal of 21 lakhs, and a decrease in Bombay of $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs as compared with 1883. But taking the nine months, the decrease in the value of the imports of these goods has in the case of both Presidencies been just about the same. In metals, Bengal for December, shows a decrease of nearly 4 lakhs, and Bombay of $\frac{1}{4}$ lakh ; but whereas for the nine months Bengal shows a decrease of over 15 lakhs, Bombay shows an increase of over $20\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs. Similarly, for the nine months, Bengal shows a decrease in the value of machinery imported of nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, while Bombay shows an increase of $2\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs. So also in railway plant and rolling-stock, Bengal for the nine months, shows a decrease of $20\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, while Bombay shows an increase of over 22 lakhs. Turning to the exports, we find that the shipments of wheat from Bombay were well maintained, while those from Bengal have dropped to nothing, and those from Sind show a considerable increase. The following are the figures of wheat, rice, and oil-seed :—

Exports.			April to December.				
			1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.
			Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
<i>Wheat.</i>							
Bengal	...	...	164,847	295,945	185,199	369,120	118,548
Bombay	...	...	105,584	420,303	262,385	402,599	330,897
Sind	...	...	6,720	68,136	98,577	174,261	148,800
<i>Rice.</i>							
Bengal	...	...	172,862	220,377	223,455	252,329	160,469
Bombay	...	...	30,017	17,894	15,668	17,595	24,669
<i>Oil-seeds.</i>							
Bengal	...	...	253,674	174,757	239,809	262,298	279,509
Bombay	...	...	99,303	167,895	214,976	323,093	311,782
Sind	...	...	12,858	6,617	27,642	56,090	66,577

There is a falling off from 11,952 tons to 5,538 tons in the cotton exported from Bengal for the nine months ; but the falling off in shipments from Bombay is not so appreciable, those for 1884 having been 156,750 tons, against 157,017 tons in 1883. In cotton manufactures, however, shipments from Bombay have taken a great jump, being nearly 7 lakhs in excess of those for December 1883. The value of the shipments from Bombay for the nine months ended December 1884 was 209 lakhs as against 181 lakhs for the same period of 1883. From Bengal the export was only $3\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs as against $4\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs in 1883. The great bulk of this trade is cotton, twist or yarn, of which the export to China alone is valued at $159\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, and that to Japan at 18 lakhs. In piece-goods the principal places of export are—Aden $14\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, Ceylon $11\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, and Straits Settlements nearly 11 lakhs. The war in China appears to have stimulated rather than to have depressed exports ; the value of yarn exported thither being 39 lakhs more than in 1883. Indian twist and yarn is daily increasing in favour, it being an honest article.

I hear that arrangements have been made in London under which the Oriental Telephone Company have bought up the Crossley Telephone Company, of Calcutta, but that there is some difficulty in the way of carrying out the transfer, inasmuch as the eighth clause of the Government license forbids the assignment, or transfer by the Crossley Company, of any of its rights under it ; and the Government of India, on the principle, I presume, of "once bitten twice shy," are not disposed to offer any assistance to the Oriental Company in the matter. Negotiations are, I believe, now going on with the Bengal Telephone Company, and it is proposed that the Crossley Company should surrender its license and that all work done under it should be treated as done under the license to the Bengal Telephone Company. There is much to object to in this proposal ; it seems entirely in the interests of the Companies ; the public do not appear to have been considered ; and as soon as the amalgamation is an accomplished fact, we shall, no doubt, see a return to the former exorbitant rates of the Bengal Company, who will virtually have a monopoly of the traffic. The Government should take advan-

tage of the opportunity to compel the Bengal Company to agree to some maximum yearly rate, which should be Rs. 150 for merchants and Rs. 100 for shop-keepers and private individuals; or, better still, seeing that the Crossley Company are willing to dispose of all their plant and patent rights, &c. (which it is generally understood are much superior to the Bengal Company's), the Government should step in and buy them up at a fair valuation, and carry on the Crossley Telephone system in connection with the Telegraph Department. The Calcutta public have been so copiously bled by the Tramway and Telephone Companies' promoters, that they would like to see these concerns, as they ought to be, thoroughly under the control of the Government or the Municipality.

Banks.—At their meeting on Thursday the Bank of Bengal made no alteration in the Bank rate, which remains at 6 per cent. The usual weekly statement made up to the 3rd February shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,59,26,870, and the cash and currency notes Rs. 2,49,44,521, or, 52·4 per cent. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India are steadily increasing, and on the 4th instant had reached Rs. 2,48,35,628, or, 23 lakhs more than last week. If the Government were to place even one crore of this at the disposal of the Bank of Bengal it would enable them to reduce their rate of discount; but trade is strangled and impeded while the Government looks calmly on. Oh! for the "passionate earnestness" of an esteemed contemporary, to declaim against the "utter un wisdom" of all this. Bank shares have been dealt in at Rs. 835. The Directors of the Bank of Upper India, Limited, have declared an *ad-interim* dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum for the half-year ending 31st December last, payable from 1st instant.

The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House for the week ended 31st January was Rs. 1,07,22,936.

Railways, &c.—The receipts on the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 24th January were:—Passengers, Rs. 5,580; goods, Rs. 146; sundries Rs. 15,—total Rs. 5,741. For the previous two weeks they were:—Passengers, Rs. 9,271; goods

Rs. 216; sundries, Rs. 45—total Rs. 9,532. This is a steady increase, but it will be observed that, as I predicted, the traffic is almost entirely passenger. It is too early to speak confidently about the traffic on this line one way or the other, however hopeful its prospects, for the Tarkessur "season," I understand, is just commencing. The receipts on the Calcutta Tramways last week were Rs. 11,579; shares have been dealt in at Rs. 90. A meeting of the shareholders of the Darjeeling Railway is convened for the 18th instant, for, amongst other things, the declaration of a dividend. The traffic receipts on this line for January are considerably below the same period of 1884, being a decrease of Rs. 4,000 to 24th January. The decrease in the East Indian Railway receipts for January 1885, were Rs. 11,37,913 as compared with 1884! Let us by all means increase the Port accommodation and enlarge the house when the inmates are leaving.

When the Directors of a Public Company issue a Report to the shareholders, whose servants they are, it is presumably for the purpose of giving them some information and of acquainting them with the progress of the Company during the period under review, and whether it has been worked at a profit or a loss. Language it has been said, has been given to mankind to enable them to conceal their thoughts; but any board issuing a Report which practically conceals what it is the highest interest of the shareholders to learn cannot hope to retain the confidence of the public. These remarks seem called for by a perusal of the so-called Report of the Bengal Ice Company, Limited, for the half-year ended 31st December last. The shareholders are certainly presented with a balance-sheet, but in which one vainly looks for a profit or loss account; they are also told that the machinery has been working satisfactorily; that the machines have had a thorough overhaul; and that certain additions have been made and paid for during the half-year,—but not one word is said on the financial working of the Company, and the shareholders are left in happy ignorance of the true position of their property. Anything more unsatisfactory it is difficult to conceive, and yet, an ex-President of the Chamber of Commerce figures on the direc-

tion. So far as can be ascertained from the balance sheet, the Company is indebted to its Bankers, and for stores, &c., some Rs. 42,172, and its only available assets appear to be stores Rs. 4,830, outstandings, Rs. 3,275, and cash Rs. 261. Comment on this seems almost superfluous. I prognosticated in my letter of 18th October that shareholders in Ice Companies were in for a bad time. As the Directors have not considered it worth while to afford the shareholders any information regarding the progress of the Company, I will endeavour to supply the omission, by contrasting the position of the Company on the 31st December with the 30th June; and here are the balance sheets:—

LIABILITIES—	30th June.	31st Dec.
	Rs.	Rs.
Capital paid up	4,95,000	4,95,000
Debenture Loan Account	2,36,000	3,00,000
Debenture Redemption Account	8,858	8,858
Debts owing -	93,566	42,172
Dividend declared	12,375	nil.
Total	8,45,799	8,46,030
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ASSETS—	30th June.	31st Dec.
	Rs.	Rs.
Block Account	8,04,113	8,08,889
Removal Account	19,524	24,654
Stock of ether, stores, rolling-stock, &c.	11,255	8,340
Outstanding Bills	4,314	3,275
Insurance, taxes, &c., paid in advance	995	610
Cash	5,593	262
Total	8,45,799	8,46,030

On the 30th June the debts owing and dividend declared amounted to Rs. 1,05,941, and the outstandings and cash to Rs. 9,912. Apparently to meet this deficit the Debenture Account has been increased by Rs. 64,000 and Rs. 22,358 borrowed from

the Delhi Bank. To-day the debts owing are Rs. 42,172 and the outstandings are Rs. 3,537, leaving a deficiency of Rs. 38,635. It is just as well to remind the Direction that they cannot go on borrowing for ever. Shares in this concern have not changed hands for some time. There has been a forced sale of Rs. 100 shares in the Imperial Ice Company at Rs. 14, and the Crystal Ice Company will be at work almost immediately. So if the Bengal Ice Company has been unable to work at a profit during the past six months, the outlook for the present half-year is by no means encouraging. The reticence of the Directors is, however, the worst feature in the business. One of the most disquieting items in the accounts of the Company is the sum of Rs. 1,76,000, entered in the Block as purchase of vendors' certificates by way of good will. These certificates entitled the holders to share in the profits over 10 per cent. ; and now it is seen that the profits are likely to be *nil*, this enormous sum has been paid for these valueless certificates !

Tea.—The Calcutta Tea Sales are drawing to a close ; at Thursday sales only 6,749 chests were offered, of which 6,615 were sold and 134 withdrawn. There is a general improvement in prices for finer sorts. The London deliveries for January were 6,390,000 lbs., the largest on record. The stock on 31st January in London was 28½ million pounds, which is one million more than 1884, and nearly five millions more than 1883. Meetings are advertised of the following Tea Companies, to declare dividends :—Springside on the 11th ; Good Hope on the 14th ; Kurseong and Darjeeling on the 21st. Some 20,000 of Debentures in the Singbulli and Murmah Tea Company will be drawn for on the 4th March and paid off on the 30th June. There has been a sale of shares in the Goomtee Tea Company at Rs. 101. At the London Tea Sales 24,000 chests were offered and 21,000 chests sold, with a good demand for all descriptions. The steamer *Justitia* with 600,000 lbs. of tea has been totally lost off Ceylon.

Indigo.—There is hardly any change to report. The market continues dull, and the assortment of native indigo being very poor, sellers have to accept lower prices. The season will close by the end of next week. For the week ended this day, there

have been four public sales, at which 3,345 chests were offered and 2,723 sold—out of the market: Bengal about 20,400 maunds, Tirhoota about 60,000, Benares about 22,000, Oudh about 46,000—total 1,48,400 maunds. Shipments to date—to England, 16,462 chests; France, 4,879; Trieste, 3,690; Foreign Europe, 1,825; America, 6,752; the Gulfs, &c., 611—total 34,219 chests.

Mills, &c.—When all around is dull and drear it is pleasant, if one can, to turn to a bright spot which will shed some light on the prevailing gloom: and so we herald with a sense of relief and thankfulness the Report of the Union Jute Company, Limited. For the year 1884 the Union Jute Company has been worked so successfully that a dividend of 20 per cent. can be declared. This Company has been exceptionally fortunate and the shareholders can well afford to “rest and be thankful.” During the past year the profits made have aggregated Rs. 1,48,033, and adding Rs. 57,569 brought forward from 1883, the amount at credit of profit and loss is Rs. 2,05,602. Of this Rs. 1,35,000 will be distributed in dividends, Rs. 16,800 have been taken to Reserve and other Funds, and the balance of Rs. 53,802 is to be carried forward. But there is one significant little fact that should not be overlooked, and it is this,—namely, that of this Rs. 1,48,033 earned by the concern, no less than Rs. 1,14,256 was made in the first half of 1884, the sum of Rs. 33,777 representing the profit of the second half, this will give some idea of the depression in the trade. As a matter of fact the dividend paid for the last six months is more than the Mill has earned. It is never wise to prophesy unless you know, but it may be doubted, looking at the state of the trade and the fact that the short time movement may be treated as fallen through, if the profits to be earned during the present year 1885 will admit of a dividend of anything like what has been paid for 1884; time no doubt, will show, but if my prognostication proves true, shareholders should not be discontented: a profit of 20 per cent. is not made every day. During the past year the Company has paid off its debentures, and is now virtually free from debt, and no less a sum than Rs. 38,956 has been expended out of revenue in purchasing new machinery and improving the engines.

The Report of the Howrah Mills Company is, however, by no means such pleasant reading: the loss disclosed on the working for the half-year amounts to Rs. 34,575 and for the half-year previous Rs. 19,611, making the loss for the year 1884 no less than Rs. 54,186. It goes without saying that the shareholders have received no dividend, and as things look may whistle for one for some time to come. The major portion of the loss is ascribed to an error of judgment in the purchase of the jute. The cost of the extension to 500 looms, which was estimated at Rs. 6,60,000 has turned out to be Rs. 7,24,038 and since this extension has been carried out, more additions have been considered necessary, which will, no doubt, cost a further smart sum. These additions, which have been recommended by the Mill Manager and Agents, have been approved by the Directors and are in course of progress. It is almost needless to say that they will effect great economies: these additions always do. To meet the loss on the year's working a sum of Rs. 50,000 has been taken from the Reserve Fund, which will enable a balance of Rs. 8,161 to be carried forward at the credit of profit and loss. Shares in this Company are at a serious discount, a matter which might have been expected.

The Report of the Kamarhatty Company for the past half-year discloses a loss of Rs. 30,125 on the working. The management very honestly state that this result is very unsatisfactory, more so than the stock of dear jute brought forward from the previous half-year accounts for, considerable trouble having been experienced with the weavers in August and September, for which months the outturn was poor. The bag market they add, continues very depressed, and with stocks accumulating in foreign markets and the production here on the increase as the days lengthen, prospects are far from favourable, notwithstanding the moderate price of jute.

The Report of the Dunbar Cotton Mill Company for the past half-year shows a loss on the working of Rs. 62,665. Out of their swinging allowance of over Rs. 25,000, the Secretaries have had the consideration to forego Rs 12,000, so the actual money loss to the shareholders, occasioned through what appears the

incompetency displayed in the management of their Mill, has been reduced to Rs. 50,665, and to this must be added deterioration of plant and machinery. Any thing less creditable to the Directors and Secretaries it is difficult to conceive. This Mill, which, in point of excellence of machinery and plant, is second to none, has worked at a loss for the year of Rs. 45,956. While an old concern, like the Bowreah Mills, has declared a dividend of Rs. 90,000!

The Egerton Woollen Mills Company, Limited, have just announced the payment of their first half-yearly dividend, at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, carrying forward a substantial sum to the next half-year's account. Mr. Halsey, the Manager, is to be congratulated in having brought about these results in the face of many early difficulties and discouragements. The Woollen trade in India is probably never destined to become an extensive one, but there is ample room for the two or three Mills already existing on this side of India to do a profitable business.

A meeting of the shareholders of the Asiatic Jute Company was held to-day to consider its present position. If the shareholders are wise they will not throw good money after bad; the concern is burthened with a mortgage debenture debt of two lakhs of rupees, a sum that no sane man would give for the Mill, which has never paid and never will pay, and had better be broken up and sold. The result of the working of this unfortunate concern for the past half-year is a loss of Rs. 19,595. The available assets are just sufficient to meet the present liabilities, but on the 1st March Rs. 8,000 will be due for Debenture Interest, and as things look there will not be the wherewithal to pay it. The Managing Agents suggest the issue of Rs. 50,000 in Preference shares, but if the Mill can only work at a loss it is difficult to see where the "Preference" comes in, unless it be a preference to losing one's money over keeping it.

The Report of the Seebpore Jute Manufacturing Company for the past half-year, after taking credit for a refund of Agents' commission, Rs. 12,500, discloses a loss on the working of Rs. 4,826. Judged in connection with some of its neighbours this is by no means a bad result. The only item in the balance sheet that

we do not like is "Shipment Account" Rs. 76,192. We have doubts regarding this asset. Mills should not ship, it is beyond their business.

In Mill shares this week there have been transactions in Barnagore at 70, 69 and 71 for cash and 73 for three months; Union Jute 115; Budge-Budge 70, 71; Asiatic $6\frac{3}{4}$ (forced sale) and 8. Howrah 69. Seebpore 41. Strand Bank Press 100. Riverside 50. Watson's Press 109. Carew & Co., 120. Bengal Silk 85. There have been sales of General India Steam Navigation Company at $136\frac{1}{2}$, 137 cash, 138 and 139 for one month, 140 for two months; and of Calcutta Steam Company's at 88, 89; of 7 per cent. Hooghly Mill Debentures at $100\frac{1}{2}$; and 7 per cent. Dunbar Debentures at 100. The Watson's Patent Press have declared a dividend of ten per cent.

The Report of the Titaghur Paper Mill Company for the half-year ended 31st December is, under all the circumstances of the case, by no means unsatisfactory. As the Directors rightly say, there are many difficulties and drawbacks to fight against when starting a new concern like this, for, unlike gunny bags or cotton twist, or tea, paper is not saleable in large wholesale quantities; it partakes more of the nature of a retail business, and, therefore, it is a satisfaction to know that, in spite of everything, there is a small balance of Rs. 1,392 at the credit of Profit and Loss Accounts; and if the concern gets a share in the coming year of the Government contracts for country-made paper, there is no reason to believe that the results of the present half-year's working will be other than satisfactory. The Directors state that they expect by the first of May to be able to turn out fully 100 tons per month, and they anticipate no difficulty in finding a market at fairly remunerative rates, as they are satisfied they can produce and sell white paper at a profit, at rates below those at which European producers can compete.

Government Paper has been pretty steady throughout the week at 97-12 to 97-13. It was somewhat easier yesterday probably owing to the news from Egypt, and closed at Rs. 97-12 to 97-11. To-day it may be quoted at Rs. 97-10 to 97-11 and the market is flat. Exchange rose $\frac{1}{4}$ on Monday and has continued

at $1-7\frac{1}{2}$ for demand bills on London until Friday, when it fell to $1-7\frac{1}{4}$. To-day it is again lower, the quotation being $1-7\frac{1}{8}$.

The Murree Brewery Company have advertised a new issue of their shares, to the extent of 100 shares of Rs. 100 each, to assist in paying for the Nilgiri Brewery Company's property which they lately purchased. The purchasers of the new shares will be entitled to half a year's dividend; the last seven dividends, it is stated, having averaged 13% per annum; applications to be made to the Agent of the Alliance Bank of Simla, Limited, at Rawul Pindi, up to the 28th instant. The Murree Company have always done a profitable business, which seems likely to be augmented by the extensions now being undertaken on the Madras side, and the prudent investor may, I think, safely take the offer advertised into consideration. The Company's shares, I notice, are quoted at Rs. 140 for the Rs. 100 share at present.

CALCUTTA, 14th February 1885.

The Port Trust.—If the Government were to direct an independent inquiry into the working of that gigantic monopoly, the Port Trust of Calcutta, and into the charges of the Port itself, the result would disabuse their minds of the idea that it has been managed with such marked efficiency; and they would probably come to the conclusion that the high encomiums, which upon all and every occasion it has been considered fitting to pass on the administration of that department, were based in some cases upon erroneous data; and that the charges of the port of Calcutta might very materially be reduced without in any way impairing the efficiency with which at present the business is conducted. It has been considered for some time past “the correct thing” to refer to the prosperous state of the finances of the Port Trust as the result of good administration, and it seems altogether to have been overlooked that the Port Commissioners have really had a monopoly of the shipping business of the port, and have charged almost what they pleased. Under these circumstances it would indeed have been extraordinary if the concern was not a paying one, and if the finances had been in anything but a prosperous condition. The state of things now and some fifteen years ago is contrasted with the utmost complacency, and the manifold benefits which have resulted from the Port Commissioners are dwelt upon with smug satisfaction; it is indeed said that landing and shipping charges are cheaper now than they were then, and the Commissioner of the Port are held up to the Commissioners of the Municipality as models of what Commissioners ought to be. But it seems to have been entirely forgotten that the whole character of the Indian trade has changed since the opening of the Suez Canal, and that the gigantic profits formerly made no longer exist. The introduction of telegraph and steam communication has reduced profits to a minimum, and some houses here are quite content if they can see two per cent. on a transaction. Now the commodities in which it is hoped that the trade of India will expand are exceptionally cheap articles of produce; they are grain, that is wheat, rice, and

Indian corn, oil-seeds and jute, and they vary in price from about Rs. 2 per maund upwards. It must be obvious, therefore, that with such goods transit charges have to be watched very carefully, for with rice and wheat half-an-anna per maund means a profit. Every attempt, therefore, should be made to reduce the charges of the port, the dues on ships, the haulage, the charge for moorings, and the like, which at present amount, in the case of import ships, to about four and-a-half annas per ton; and also to reduce the charges on goods using the Port Commissioners' jetties and wharves. The matter is very important and one of supreme urgency, for there is little doubt that, owing to the terrible charges of the port of Calcutta, the trade is gradually being diverted to Bombay and Karachi. Now to commence with, the whole constitution of the Port Commissioners is wrong. They ought almost entirely to have been elected by the Chamber of Commerce and the Trades' Association; it is the members of these bodies that pay the great bulk of the dues; it is the members of these bodies that have made Calcutta what it is; and it is the members of these bodies who will expand the trade of Calcutta if it is capable of expansion. It is, therefore, to these two bodies that the Government should have entrusted the Port Trust in the first instance. Instead of which we find, that the Government has reserved to itself the right of appointing these Commissioners, and that out of a total number of thirteen members no less than seven are Government officials. The consequence is that the Chairman is a Bengal Civilian, generally a member of the Board of Revenue, with his time fully occupied with his legitimate business; that the Vice-Chairman, who is really the working man, is a Government Engineer; while the great bulk of the officers have had no previous experience whatever of the management of docks and jetties. The supreme mistake has been in appointing a Civil Engineer to be the responsible head of the Port Trust. By all means have an engineer to consult and advise, and pay him well; but the responsible chief should be a man of business thoroughly conversant with the details of working large docks, and accustomed to daily contact with an exacting public. Engineers, it is well known, have a weakness for

carrying out extensive undertakings, and, too often, a disregard for economy, which results in the needless expenditure of large sums of money; and if a thorough inquiry were made into the cost of these jetties, embankments, warehouses, and the like, which have been built, pulled down, and rebuilt during the last fifteen years, it would probably be found that their actual cost to date is very considerably above their real value. As a result the charges on the shipping are unduly high, and as one consequence freights from Bombay are generally ten shillings lower than those from Calcutta to the United Kingdom. A great deal has been said of late about Calcutta having been made a "free port," but ship-owners, if they were consulted, would probably beg to be preserved from such freedom. In the *Journal of Commerce* of January 12th, in an article on the pilotage of the Hooghly—another item urgently requiring the pruning knife—it is stated that the port charges, including haulage, Government moorings, tonnage and jetty hire on the vessels quite "lick all the gilt off the gingerbread." This does not look very much as if Calcutta were considered a "free port." The objectionable feature in the working of the Port Commissioners is the secrecy of their proceedings; no reporters are admitted from the Press, and the public knows nothing of their doings. If one takes up a Thacker's Directory the salaries and emoluments of all public functionaries and municipal officers are plainly stated, but no such information is available regarding the officers of the Port Trust; nothing is known of the internal working of this huge monopoly, which is allowed unchecked to silently interfere with private enterprises, such as the Bonded Warehouse, while if the East Indian Railway sells a paltry 10,000 tons of surplus coal it is considered of sufficient gravity to memorialise the Government on the subject. The work of the Port Commissioners cannot be adequately judged of from the financial results. They have a huge monopoly and can charge what they please; of necessity, therefore, the financial results must be satisfactory. But the question to ask is—are the fees charged the very lowest compatible with the work being efficiently done, and do the Port Commissioners really know what it costs them to do the work?

At the present moment a grievous and scandalous wrong upon the general import ships is in contemplation. It is no secret that a very large proportion of the block of the Port Commissioners has been paid for out of revenue (this matter has formed the subject of more than one representation to Government), and this revenue has been largely contributed by the ships using the jetties, and the cargoes which they bring. In strict justice therefore, these jetties ought almost to be free, very little more than the actual cost of the removal of the goods being charged. Yet it is now proposed to make these jetties over to the inland steamers, for which they are altogether unsuited, and to the coasting and China Steamers which at present are quite contented to load in the stream; while the steamers and ships bringing general import cargo are to be discharged in the proposed Kidderpore Docks, and charged four and-a-half annas a ton for the privilege, whereas in common fairness they ought to be entirely exempted from jetty dues. Colonel S. T. Trevor, R. E., writing on this subject in August 1882, said:—"But if we are content to go on as we are, and merely expand existing arrangements, there is no doubt that we shall never succeed in making Calcutta a cheaper port, and that is perhaps the thing most to be desired. In much of the produce exported, jute and wheat for instance (to which must be added oil-seeds and rice), the margin of profit is very small, and the very existence of the trade depends on the cost at which such produce can be delivered at the ship's side, and on the charges for freight." He then proceeds to say that the existing arrangements are about as expensive as can be devised; and as a remedy, therefore, we are now presented with a scheme for wet docks, with a charge of Re. 1 per ton on cargo, when at the present moment it can be shipped for from eight to fourteen annas! It must not be forgotten that for tea, indigo, hides, opium, and cotton, which might possibly bear a somewhat high export charge, no additional facilities are called for; that part of the export trade which it is hoped may largely expand, is the wheat and oil-seed trade, and also perhaps that in jute and rice. Now let us see how the jute trade is hampered and burthened. If an inland flat comes down to Calcutta and discharges her cargo of jute at Hatkhola, a tax of

over two annas per ton is levied on the jute for passing over the Port Commissioners' wharves, and when that jute has been pressed into bales a further charge of the same amount is made when it is shipped. If it is desired that the jute should be pressed on the Howrah side of the river the like fee is charged when it leaves the Calcutta side, and another fee of the same amount when it is unloaded at Seebpore. The Port Commissioners thus get some nine annas per ton for nothing at all. This is not far short of half per cent. *ad-valorem*. The *Englishman*, in its Thursday's money article, writing on the subject says that any increase in the charges on shipping jute would probably lead to larger exports being made from Chittagong, and adds that "it is a matter of surprise and regret that the Port Trust should have acted with so much precipitation in acquiring and clearing land for the works, and should have been granted a loan by the Local Government to enable them to defray the expenses so prematurely incurred." The whole thing is due to the absence of a "thorough business man" at the head of the Port Trust, and in saying this I do not, in the least, intend to disparage Mr. Duff Bruce, an Officer of unusual ability in the great service to which he belongs, and who in his proper sphere as Consulting Engineer to the Port Trust would be an Officer, whose services would be simply invaluable. The Government should refer to Mr. George Yule's speech at the Chamber of Commerce on the 18th February 1879, on this subject, where he very ably and succinctly showed that the whole of the jetties had been paid for out of revenue; and he made this observation, which should be printed in letters of gold and posted up in a conspicuous place in the Port Trust Office: "The Port Commission is a trust, not for the purpose of deriving a large commercial profit from the public, but for facilitating the commerce of the country, as far as that lies within its sphere, at the least possible expense; and being a public trust the charges should be such as simply to pay the cost." The above is a description of what it ought to be: the expansion of the trade from Bombay and Karachi but too truly points out what it is. I hear that a memorial against these proposed

docks, addressed to the Government of Bengal, is in course of signature.

Railways.—The receipts from the Tarkessur Railway still steadily increase; for the week ended January 31st they amounted to Rs. 5,798 from passengers, and Rs. 200 from goods; some small items making the total Rs. 6,012 for the week. For the three weeks previously they summed up Rs. 15,274, so that the receipts for January were Rs. 21,286; of this amount only Rs. 572 represented goods traffic. The number of passengers carried during the month was 77,833, and it remains to be seen whether this traffic, which I understand is very largely "through traffic," is due to the novelty or will be maintained. An extraordinary meeting of the shareholders of the Deoghur Railway has been convened for the 19th instant, to consider the desirability of applying a portion of the Reserve Fund towards providing for additional rolling-stock to meet the increasing passenger traffic which, during the present year, has expanded at a remarkable rate. The receipts for the month of January last were Rs. 3,490 as against Rs. 2,524 for January 1884, and to the 7th February had totalled up Rs. 4,658 as against Rs. 3,114 to the same date in 1884. There is a big *meld* on at the present moment, however, which may account for some of the increase, the number of passengers carried from 1st January to 7th February 1885, having been 37,087 as against 23,375 for the same period of last year. The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the week ended 7th instant were Rs. 11,681. The provisional Report of the Darjeeling and Himalayan Railway for the half-year ended 31st December shows the total traffic and other receipts to have been Rs. 2,24,333, and the working expenses Rs. 1,46,381, or 65·22 per cent., leaving a gross profit of Rs. 78,002. Debenture interest amounts to Rs. 22,145, and so the net profit for the half-year works out Rs. 55,857 or a trifle over three per cent. Adding, however, the sum of Rs. 3,972 brought forward from last half-year, the available surplus appears to be Rs. 59,829, and the Directors propose to pay a dividend of three-and-a-quarter per cent., which will make six per cent. for the year, and exhaust Rs. 56,875, leaving a balance of Rs. 2,954 to be carried forward. The working of this Company was reviewed at

great length in the *Pioneer* of 30th December last, and a few further remarks may not now be out of place. The receipts, it will be observed, were Rs. 2,24,383, the largest of any half-year hitherto, and the working expenses, including debenture interest amount to Rs. 1,68,526, the largest also of any previous half-year; the result being that the profit shown, Rs. 55,857, is considerably below that made for the same period of 1883. In fact the profit made during 1884 was Rs. 1,03,880, whereas the profit made in 1883 was Rs. 1,15,724, while the paid up capital was much less. It is satisfactory to observe a considerable reduction in the percentage on gross earnings of such items as locomotive, carriage, wagon, and traffic expenses, and maintenance of way and works; but any saving under these heads is more than balanced by increases under general expenses and debenture interest, so that the result is to leave things pretty much as they were. During the half-year under review there has been expended on construction, plant, land, &c., some Rs. 9,320, and on rolling-stock some Rs. 7,779, making a total expenditure of Rs. 17,099; on the other hand permanent way materials, valued at Rs. 19,978, have been sold to the Northern Bengal State Railway, and four locomotive to the Government of India for Rs. 32,223; so that to this extent the Block Account has been decreased and reduced, standing on the 31st December thus:— Rolling stock Rs. 3,40,737; total block Rs. 26,44,786. The balance sheet shows the capital to be Rs. 17,80,000 and the debenture loans Rs. 9,35,080; the Reserve and Insurance Fund Rs. 33,786, and the cash in hand Rs. 1,15,283. The last debenture loan for Rs. 1,45,000 appears to have been issued at a discount of Rs. 9,920, and instead of being entered in the accounts at the full amount as a liability of Rs. 1,45,000, it is put down at the net sum received, namely, Rs. 1,35,080; this does not seem correct, and will probably altogether alter the state of the accounts at the final audit. The receipts for the present year show signs of shrinkage, and the expenses will probably be heavier. We look forward to the next accounts with some curiosity. Some interesting papers on the construction of the Nagpore-Bengal Railway, of somewhat ancient

date, appear in the supplement of the last *Gazette of India*. If railways are to be constructed in India on a reasonable basis, they must be carried through by the State without the intervention of Calcutta agency houses. No one can raise the money so cheaply as the Government, and judging from a recently constructed private line, Government can probably construct them cheaper also. It must be borne in mind that a railway is in the nature of a monopoly, and that it is of the first importance that it should be constructed and worked at the lowest possible cost, otherwise trade is restricted and commerce suffers. It would be as well, if the Government were to ascertain if some of these firms who are so desirous of constructing railways, have really the money to do so ; or whether they propose to borrow on the strength of the Government guarantee. The Government of India can borrow much cheaper directly than through this intermediate agency, and there is the gravest possible objection to guaranteeing private lines, promoted more in the nature of a speculation than in furtherance of the development of the resources of the country. Thus, for instance, if a line which could easily have been constructed for 12 lakhs of rupees is made to cost the Company $16\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees, it follows that it cannot be worked on the basis of, say, a six per cent. dividend, anything like as cheaply as it should be ; the result being that the public are taxed for the interest on $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees or, Rs. 27,000 per annum, for which they have absolutely derived no benefit. The Government should satisfy themselves before dealing with private firms (1) that they possess the resources necessary, and (2) that they have the practical ability to carry out the undertaking at the lowest possible cost. It must not be forgotten that what India wants is *cheap* communications, as the traffic to be carried is of very low value. The matter is a very vital one, and on its proper decision a great deal of the prosperity of the country will depend.

Banks.—At the usual meeting on Thursday last no reduction was made in the charge for interest by the Bank of Bengal. The public and other deposits amount to Rs. 5,03,08,055 and the cash and currency notes to Rs. 2,98,77,373, or, 57·5 per

cent. Shares in the Bank have been dealt in at Rs. 835 and 832½. There have also been transactions in National Bank's shares at Rs. 100 and 101.

The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House for the week ended 7th instant was Rs. 1,08,63,321.

Exchange, which closed at 1-7¼ for demand bills on Saturday, declined on Monday to 1-7½, on Thursday to 1-7, on Friday to 1-6 ¾ and closes week to-day at 1s. 6½ d.

Government Paper, owing to the news from Egypt and the lower prices wired from London, has also steadily declined during the week, until it reached 96-14 on Wednesday; it rallied a little on Thursday and Friday, and closed on the latter date at Rs. 96-15 at 97. To-day it closed weak at about 96-14. Four-and-half per cent. Paper of 1878-79 has been done at 99-13 and 99-8.

Miscellaneous Companies.—The *ad-interim* Report of the Directors of the Great Eastern Hotel Company recommends the declaration of a dividend of 2½ per cent. payable on the 28th instant. The mortgage on the Company's property for £25,700, which falls due at the end of this month, is to be paid off; and a fresh mortgage of £16,000 has been arranged for at 5½ per cent. instead of 7 as hitherto. The saving thus effected under the head of interest alone will amount to £919 per annum, or nearly 1 per cent. on the capital of the Company. The Report of the Kanknarrah Jute Company for the half-year ended 31st December shows a loss on the working of Rs. 84,513. The Managing Agents regret that the result is not more satisfactory, but considerable difficulty was experienced for a time in obtaining a fair outturn from either mill or factory in consequence of most of the native hands available having been unskilled in the work required of them. But now that they have learnt their work, a great improvement in production has taken place, and in December not only were all expenses, including debenture interest covered, but a little profit made besides, and the outturn continues good. I have great pleasure in reproducing the following paragraph from the Report:—"The Managing Agents having seen it stated by the Calcutta correspondent of the *Pioneer* in

August last that they appeared to have drawn Rs. 24,765 for commission already, take this opportunity of informing the shareholders that they have not charged or received a farthing of commission in connection with the forming of the Company, the purchase of iron work and machinery or other material at home or here or on the expenditure for the erection of the buildings. Until the looms were put in motion in July last, their whole remuneration consisted of an office allowance of Rs. 200 per month; since then they have charged commission on proceeds of cloth and bags in accordance with the terms of the Articles of Association. Home expenses, however, have been paid in connection with the ordering, purchasing and shipping of iron-work and machinery, amounting to Rs. 21,126. These expenses had to be paid to home agents employed, who made no return of any description to the Managing Agents."

The Report of the Muir Mills Company for the year ended 31st December last discloses a net profit of Rs. 1,94,490; an *ad-interim* dividend of 8 per cent. was paid in August last, exhausting Rs. 80,000, and it is now proposed to pay a further dividend of 8 per cent., equivalent to Rs. 80,000; to place Rs. 34,000 to Reserve Fund; and to carry the balance of Rs. 490 forward. The capital of this Company is Rs. 10,00,000; the debentures Rs. 3,98,500, and the reserve and other funds Rs. 3,27,311. These figures are excellent but the cotton manufacturing industry is a fluctuating one, and does not at present call for extension. In 1880-81 the cotton manufacturing industry in Bengal was doing remarkably well, the Goosery Mills having paid dividends of 24 per cent. the natural sequence was excessive extensions, and the inevitable result a collapse in the industry. The lesson is not likely to be lost on the Muir Mills' Directors, who are reputed to be cautious men. The meeting of shareholders of this Company takes place at Cawnpore on the 20th instant.

Tea.—There have been no tea sales at Calcutta this week, but at the London tea sales 23,000 chests were offered, and 21,000 sold, prices being firm. Meetings are advertised for the declaration of a dividend of the Balasun Company on the 21st, and

the Phoolbari Company on the 23rd instant, and for receiving reports simply of the Eastern Cachar on the 27th and the Dehra Doon Company on the 28th. The following statement of exports has been kindly furnished by the Secretary of the Tea Association. From the exports to Great Britain, however, will have to be deducted the 603,801 lbs. lost in the steamer *Justitia* :—

Exports of Indian Tea from Calcutta.

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain in January ...	5,423,582	5,887,625	5,232,303
Exports to Great Britain from 1st May 1884 to 31st January ...	56,218,762	53,284,872	47,425,926
Exports to Australia and New Zealand in January ...	205,962	70,040	74,242
Exports to Australia and New Zealand from 1st May 1884 to 31st January ...	1,054,934	299,925	2,325,204
Exports to America in January ...	35,080	33,785	54,721
Exports to America from 1st May 1884 to 31st January ...	96,184	155,476	628,380
Exports to other Places in Jan. ...	48,913	61,917	19,656
Exports to other Places from 1st May, 1884, to 31st January ...	286,002	269,400	253,831
Total Exports from 1st May, 1884, to 31st January ...	57,655,882	54,009,673	50,633,441

Indigo.—The season's crop has been cleared with the exception of about 700 chests of very low undesirable stuff bought in by the planters in previous auctions, and put up again in this week's public sales with the same result, holders being unwilling to accept the low prices offered. For the week ended to-day there have been four public sales, at which 3,337 chests were offered, and 1,785 chests sold—Out of the market; Bengal about 20,500 maunds; Tirhoot 60,000; Benares 24,000; Oudh 50,500—total 1,55,000. Shipments to date—to England, 17,167 chests; France, 4,829; Trieste, 3,697; Foreign Europe, 1,854; America, 7,533; Gulfa, &c., 652—total 35,732 chests.

Shares.—There has been considerably more doing in shares this past week, and number of transactions have been recorded :—

Mills, &c.—Howrah Mills, 69. Asiatic, 8. Budge-Budge, 70. Gourepore, 70 ex-dividend. Fort Gloster, 33, 33½ and 34. Seebpore, 42, 43½, 44 and 45. Union, 115. Barnagore, 71. Riverside Press, 56, 58, 62, 63 and 64 cash; 65 and 66 for three months. Watson's Press, 100 and 99 ex-dividend. Cawnpore Cotton Mills B shares at par. Goosery Cotton, 207½. Bengal Silk, 84. Carew & Co., 120. Titaghur Paper, 52.

Railways, &c.—Tarkessur, 100 and 101. Calcutta Tramways, 88 and 90; a small lot. Darjeeling Railway, 98. India General Steam, 139 cash; 141 for one month: new shares at 32 premium. Calcutta Steam, 88½.

Miscellaneous.—Great Eastern Hotel, 93. Bengal Baragunda A shares, 1¼. Raueogunge Coal, 64. Alipore Coal, 141. Naini Tal Brewery, 98.

Tea.—Jetinga Valley, 56 ex-dividend for six weeks. Soom, 58. East India, 32; and Durrung, 35.

CALCUTTA, 21st February 1885.

Trade.—The monthly commercial guide of imports and exports by sea, published by the Collector of Customs, Calcutta, for January, shows a very serious decline in the values as contrasted with January 1884. It may be summarised thus :— Decrease in value of merchandise imported, Rs. 58,72,766, decrease in value of produce exported, Rs. 73,76,260, total decrease in foreign trade, Rs. 1,32,49,026. In the imports the decreases are all down the line, the total increases being only 2 lakhs, of which $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh is in dyed or printed cottons. The decreases are principally in grey and white piece-goods $25\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, twist and yarn 2 lakhs, liquors $2\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, machinery $5\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, railway plant 7 lakhs, copper $4\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, iron 2 lakhs tin 1 lakh, woollen goods $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh. In exports there is a little more diversity, there is an increase in caoutchouc $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh, hides 2 lakhs, gunnies 4 lakhs, poppy, rape and teel-seed $6\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs ; but there is a decrease in cotton of 25 lakhs, indigo and other dyes of $18\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, wheat $\frac{3}{4}$ lakh, jute $10\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, opium $12\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, saltpetre $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh, linseed $4\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, silk 3 lakhs, and tea $7\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs. The export of wheat during the month was 3,114 tons, as against 3,948 tons in 1884, 10,472 tons in 1883, and 25,177 tons in 1882. Let us by all means increase the facilities of the port, the wharf dues and charges : it will no doubt stimulate a dying trade.

The Port Trust.—A memorial is in course of signature by the commercial community addressed to the Government of Bengal against the proposed Kidderpore Docks. What is really wanted is an impartial commission, willing and able to devote some time to the subject, to inquire into the working of the Port Trust and the expenses of its management. As before pointed out it does not follow because it has been a financial success that it has even been worked with the most ordinary economy. The Indian wheat craze has much to answer for, and has been a golden opportunity for the Port Commissioners, which they have not been slow to take advantage of. Under the fond delusion that Calcutta was going to do an enormous trade in wheat, and while still excited by the fact that the

Howrah terminus was blocked with wagons of wheat, it was not difficult to persuade the Dock Committee that this accommodation was urgently required. But we appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. I would ask all interested in the development of the trade of Bengal to refer to the proceedings of the Chamber of Commerce in the beginning of 1881, and notably their letter to the Government of Bengal of the 22nd February 1881. Has anything, I would ask, since occurred to cause the Chamber to depart from the able and well-considered views therein expressed? Here are a few extracts:—"The committee would venture to point out that the possession and all but irresponsible control of such large sums of money as the surpluses now exhibit, are apt to engender extravagance, and to encourage the formation of projects, which, though possibly improvements, are not really or pressingy needed for the proper and economical carrying on of the trade of the port. It is probable that had the charges been originally upon a scale which left only a narrow margin of profit, after providing cost of management, less money would have been expended on the works now in existence. In illustration of their meaning the committee need only point to the Commissioners' new offices, and inquire to what degree the trade of the port is benefitted by the illuminated clock erected thereon, even if the building itself, with its spacious offices and luxurious lift, was so urgently called for as to justify a postponement of a reduction of the burthens on trade." These cost Rs. 3,26,569! Then again:—"The committee consider the present moment one in which they cannot too strongly urge upon His Honor's attention the desirableness of reducing in every possible way the charges upon the trade of Calcutta. The comparative cheapness of Chittagong has already resulted in a diversion of a portion of our jute trade; this and the opening and extension of railways in Western and Northern India point to an early interference with the monopoly which Calcutta has hitherto enjoyed of the produce of the large district intersected by the rivers running into the Ganges and Brahmapootra and of the trade in imports, more especially piece-goods to the North-West; whilst the competition of the ports of Burma for our

rice trade grows yearly more formidable. The course of events at Liverpool shows that the building of docks and extensive facilities for trade do not always attract business. There, in spite of increased appliances, trade has of late been actually diverted from the port, as it could not afford to pay the heavy charges necessitated by the large sums which have been spent on improvements; and recent papers from home advise that the Liverpool Dock Board have found it necessary to reduce dues to the extent of no less than £111,960 per annum, in order to endeavour to satisfy the demands, of those using the port. Calcutta is known to be the most expensive port of India. Hitherto this has not been a matter of very critical importance, for our river systems and railways have so cheapened the cost of inland transit as to compensate for the heavier charges at the port. But, as has already been remarked, this comparatively cheaper inland transit is endangered by the opening of the railways from Bombay, a port which is favored by being upon the sea-board, and therefore saved heavy pilotage and towage charges." And the committee close their very able and exhaustive letter by entreating the Lieutenant-Governor to cause a close examination to be made into the whole subject with a view to according some relief to the commerce of this port before the course of events elsewhere shall have caused a diversion of a serious proportion of our business. Experience has shown that once diverted it is most difficult to bring back the flow of trade into its former channels. Replying to this letter in his usual thorough and statesmanlike way, Sir Ashley Eden told the Port Commissioners that "it was imperatively necessary to the inland trade of Bengal that charges imposed at the port of supply should be reduced to a minimum," and directed several works, which it was proposed to pay for out of revenue, to be transferred to capital account. In the language of the Chamber of Commerce what is required is "a large and immediate reduction of charges not grudgingly here and there, but freely wherever reduction is possible; and a careful, economical and unambitious administration of the affairs of the port and of the river for the future." But constituted as the Port Commission is at present, it would be hopeless to expect it. The Calcutta Press, I am

glad to see, are now taking up the subject, and several articles have appeared deprecating the construction of these docks. The *Indian Daily News* in its issue of yesterday draws attention to a piece of wanton high-handedness on the part of some official in the Port Trust, which should be dealt with by stopping from his salary the loss he has inflicted on the public, the goods being Government property. The *S. S. Craighton* arrived the other day with a cargo of some 2,500 tons of sleepers consigned to the Eastern Bengal (State) Railway. The Port Store-keeper naturally inquired as to the cheapest mode of landing them, and discovered that this could be done by cargo boats overside for Re. 1 per ton ; when in step the Port Commissioners, and under powers given them by their Act (which I was told the other day by a very high official of the Port Trust were never exerted), compelled the steamer to go alongside and discharge at the jetties, thus imposing an additional tax of Re. 1 per ton, on the cargo and of some Rs. 200 on the ship. The fact is that this Port Trust is by no means an unmixed blessing, and the burthen of it on the port will soon become intolerable. The Chamber of Commerce here lately addressed a circular letter to all the Chambers of Commerce at home, asking them to agitate for a reconstruction of the India Council, on the ground that its members were becoming ancient and obstructive. Let them address a similar letter on the subject of the Port Trust ; and let the merchants, as some one has suggested, add a clause to their memorial praying for a reconstruction of the Port Trust here, and the relegation of the officials to their proper spheres. At the present moment all the round men appear to be in square holes and *vice versa*. The matter is one that concerns the Government in connection with their purchase of the Eastern Bengal Railway. It is no secret that since Major Conway-Gordon has assumed the management of this railway, every endeavour has been made to win back to Calcutta the trade, which the extortionate charges hitherto levied on that line, had diverted to Chittagong, and it is understood that satisfactory arrangements had been made with Messrs. Ralli Brothers and George Henderson & Co., whereby their jute was to be conveyed to Calcutta at a remarkably reasonable

through rate,—but of what avail is cheap carriage to Calcutta, if when the goods arrive here, the terminal charges are made prohibitive; of what possible use can it be for the Eastern Bengal Railway to reduce their rates to a minimum if the Port Commissioners are to step in, and block the way with their terrible charges? Then again, only a year or so ago the East Indian Railway, at considerable expense to themselves, enlarged the Howrah station, and afforded large additional facilities for the export of goods received, not intending to make the slightest extra charge therefor; when in walked the Port Commissioners and actually had the audacity to demand that the Railway Company should be prohibited from further extending these facilities, but that the Port Commissioners should carry them out and make a charge of two annas a ton for that which the Railway intended to do, and are at present doing gratis. Defeated in this the Port Commissioners next get the sanction of the Government to the construction of a useless Tramway to Shalimar Point, on the Howrah side of the river, so that goods coming by the East Indian Railway might run direct to the Port Commissioners' wharves there. When this was completed, it was found that the accommodation at Howrah was ample, and that merchants preferred that their goods should be shipped direct from the Howrah station without the imposition of a toll, to being sent to Shalimar, where an export tax of two annas per ton would be levied; whereupon, in the coolest manner possible, the Port Commissioners proposed that an export tax of two annas per ton should be levied by them on all goods shipped from the Howrah station, which at present go free. This is what Messrs. Reynolds, Duff Bruce & Co. call "lightening the burthens on the port." Defeated in this, they return to the attack in another form, and propose to reduce the terminal charges levied on account of the Hooghly Bridge to one-half, if they be allowed to impose this tax of two annas per ton on all goods exported from the Howrah station, coolly ignoring the fact that the toll charged in respect of the Hooghly Bridge is only leviable on certain articles, and falls, to be entirely taken off in three years' time; so that this proposition resolves itself into one

for *permanently* increasing the dues on goods : or, in the language of the Port Commissioners, for "lightening the burthens on the port." This episode in the annals of the Port Commissioners reflects but little credit on them.

I understand that the joint committee of the Chamber of Commerce and Bonded Warehouse Association have selected Mr. Rutherford as their future Secretary, and their nomination will, without doubt, be confirmed at the half-yearly meeting of the Chamber on the 27th instant. There is some talk of amalgamating the Indian Tea Association and the Jute Mill-owners' Association, and we trust that the Chamber will enter on a further sphere of usefulness, as there are many most important subjects requiring its early and careful consideration, the charges of the port of Calcutta being foremost.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal made no alteration in its rates of discount on Thursday, and the minimum now remains at 6 per cent. The weekly statement made up to the 17th February shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,92,59,895, and the cash and currency notes Rs. 2,93,13,763, or 57·3 per cent. Shares in the Bank have been dealt in at 832½, and in the National Bank at 100 and the Simla Bank at 460. The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House for the week was Rs. 1,04,93,330. It is satisfactory to see that the Government have had the good sense to make some reduction in the amounts locked up in their Reserve Treasuries, the total now being Rs. 1,85,54,840. If they could manage to unload themselves of a little more, it would be a step in the right direction : but let us be thankful for small mercies. The Report of that excellent little institution, the Allahabad Bank, Limited, for the past half-year, discloses a net profit of Rs. 27,430, and adding Rs. 6,738 brought forward from last half-year, the available surplus is Rs. 35,168. The Directors recommend a dividend at the rate of 12 per cent. per annum, and a bonus of 3 per cent. per annum that Rs. 6,000 be added to the Reserve Fund, and that the balance of Rs. 6,668 be carried forward. During the past year the fortunate shareholders in this concern have received a dividend and bonus equal to 15 per cent., and Rs. 11,500 have been added to

the Reserve Fund, which will now stand at Rs. 1,51,014, or a little over 50 per cent. of the capital. The fixed deposits amount to Rs. 25,30,523 and the current deposits to Rs. 3,68,864, which very plainly shows the confidence reposed in this undertaking, and explains the reason of a high dividend being perfectly compatible with cautious and prudent management.

Government Paper, which closed at 96½ on Saturday, rapidly declined on Monday and Tuesday until it reached 95¼, it firmed on Wednesday to 96½ on Thursday to 96½, and on Friday to 96¼; to-day business has been done at 97¼. It closes easier at 97¼ at 97¼.

Exchange declined on Monday to 1-6¼, on Tuesday to 1-6¼; on Wednesday rose to 1-6¼ and on Friday to 1-6¼. To-day it closes firm at 1-6¼ for bank demand drafts.

Municipal 5 per cent. debentures have been sold at 102.

Railways, &c.—The traffic returns of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 7th February show a falling-off in the passenger receipts, the figures being as follows:—Passenger Rs. 4,814, goods Rs. 288, sundries Rs. 5—total receipts, Rs. 5,107, as against Rs. 6,012 and Rs. 5,741, for the two previous weeks. The goods receipts show a slight increase. From the 1st January to the 7th February the number of passengers carried was 97,496 paying Rs. 25,463. The goods receipts were Rs. 860, and sundries Rs. 70, making the total takings Rs. 26,393. The falling-off in the passenger traffic is large, but it is too early yet to speak one way or the other. The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the week ended 14th instant were Rs. 11,710. The receipts of the East Indian Railway have steadily decreased this year as contrasted with last; from the 1st January to the 14th February 1885, they were Rs. 56,56,046, as against Rs. 69,01,936 for the same period of 1884, being a decrease of Rs. 12,45,890. Now that the Government are becoming largely interested in railways, it would perhaps be as well if the restrictions that have been placed on the working of the Collieries of the East Indian Railway were further considered. It is of the first importance that the working expenses of these railways should be reduced to a minimum, and the

item of coal is a large one. Of course if the various State Railways can obtain their supplies of coal as cheaply elsewhere as they can from the East Indian Railway, by all means let their orders be placed with the different private Collieries; but if, on the other hand, they can purchase more advantageously from the Collieries of the East Indian Railway Company, it is preposterous that a few private Companies should be allowed to stand in the way of a saving from which all the travelling public and the commercial world at large would to a certain extent benefit. What is wanted is the most economical working possible of our railway system, so that the carriage on goods may be reduced to a minimum. In this way only will trade be encouraged and extended. There have been sales during the week of Deoghur Railway at Rs. 85, Tarkessur at Rs. 101, and Calcutta Tramways at Rs. 88. India General Navigation Company 139½ and 138. There have been sales of shares in the Alipore Coal Company at Rs. 141 and of Burrakur Coal Company at Rs. 145 ex-dividend; this does not look as if the action of the East Indian Railway was interfering much with the coal trade.

Tea.—At the London tea sales this week some 19,000 chests were offered, of which 17,100 were sold, there being a good demand. At the Calcutta tea sales on Thursday some 9,017 chests were offered, of which 8,602 were sold. Common qualities were weaker, other sorts were unchanged. Meetings to declare dividends are advertised of the Goomtee on the 25th, Phoenix and Teendarea on the 28th: to receive reports of the Chenga on the 28th instant; Central Terai on the 4th March; Ring Tong on the 2nd March, and to pass a resolution to wind up the Subtigoree Tea Company on the 25th February. A dividend of 4 per cent. has been declared by the Good Hope Tea Company payable at once. In tea shares sales are reported in Majagram at Rs. 20. Soom, Rs. 85. Eastern Cachar, Rs. 42. Jokai Tea Rs. 50.

Mills, &c.—The Report of the Managing Agents of the Hooghly Mills Company for the past half-year is indeed a sad affair. The loss on the working is Rs. 61,630, and adding interest on debentures and overdrafts, totals up Rs. 89,924; the actual monetary loss on the working of the Company for the year 1884

being Rs. 1,67,233. It is a melancholy pleasure to know that all the machinery is now working satisfactorily, including the boilers, that the production of the Mill is steadily improving, and that it is estimated that manufacturing expenses are being covered; but though the Mill is paying the lowest scale of wages, the Managing Agents fear it will be impossible to cover debenture and other interest charges during the present half-year, without some improvement in the market for gunnies, of which there seems to be no immediate prospect. A call of Rs. 15 per share is due and payable on the 1st March, and the date on which a further call of Rs. 10 shall be made will be fixed at the meeting of shareholders. The full 300 looms were at work on the 15th December, and the block of the Mill appears to have cost Rs. 16,44,439 after taking credit for Rs. 47,980 paid for land sold to the Port Trust. In other words the estimate in the prospectus, on the faith of which the shareholders subscribed their money, has been exceeded by some Rs. 342,418, to which must be added the loss occasioned through the working of the concern. If certain evidence taken in a recent land acquisition case be correct, Messrs. Gillanders, Arbutnot & Co., only six months before the Company was floated, bought the land on which the Mill stands for some 20 per cent. below what they sold it to the Company, and the idea should perhaps suggest itself to them that they might refund this profit to compensate the shareholders in some slight degree for the excess cost over estimate of the Company's Mill.

Since the issue of the Hooghly Mills Report there has been no disposition to invest in Jute Mill shares, but earlier in the week sales were recorded in Fort Gloster at 35, Seebpore 45, Howrah, 68, and Union 115 with dividend, 110 ex-dividend. Barnagore 71. In Pressing shares there have been sales of Watson's 99 ex-dividend. Calcutta Hydraulic, 120 and 122 ex-dividend. Chitpore, 81, Riverside 63, 64, and 63, for three months; Nasmyth, 85 ex-dividend. Strand Bank, 99; Muir Mills, 300. There are reports that an error has been discovered in the Dunbar Cotton Mill accounts, which increases the loss on the working by some Rs. 20,000. A meeting of the Goosery Cotton Mill is convened

for the 28th instant to declare a dividend, which it is reported will be 3 per cent. ; of the Camperdown Press Company for the same purpose on the 25th instant, and of Carew & Co. for a like purpose on the 28th instant. I hear that this concern has not done so well as usual.

In miscellaneous shares there have been sales of Crown Brewery at 115, Baragunda Copper Company A shares at $1\frac{1}{2}$ and $1\frac{1}{4}$. Bengal Telephone, 48. Titaghur Paper, 55. At a meeting of the Asiatic Jute Company to-day it was resolved to call a meeting of shareholders to pass the necessary resolutions for putting the Company into liquidation, unless in the meantime the shareholders agreed to submit to a voluntary assessment of Rs. 5 per share being levied to meet the immediate liabilities of the Company.

CALCUTTA, 28th February 1885.

THE memorial against the proposed new docks at Kidderpore has been very numerous and influentially signed, only those firms who are themselves connected with the Port Trust or have had representatives on the Dock Committee having kept aloof, not so much from any want of sympathy with the movement, but because they have, as it were, committed themselves unguardedly to the opposite view.

It is understood that the Lieutenant-Governor is quite prepared to appoint a committee as desired, so that the only matter to be arranged would be its constitution and the nature and scope of its inquiries. As to the constitution of the committee His Honor might usefully take a hint from that of the Conservators of the River Thames, which is composed of seven members appointed by the Corporation of London, two by the Admiralty, two by the Board of Trade, two by the Trinity House, two by the ship-owners, one by the owners of passenger steamers, two by the owners of lighters and steam-tugs, one by the dock-owners and wharfingers, and four elected under the Thames Navigation Act. The constitution of the Port Trust wants remodelling on somewhat similar lines. Let the Chamber of Commerce, the Mill-owners, the cargo-boat proprietors, the ship-owners, and the Trades' Association, send representatives, and let a certain number be elected; any person, who on his own behalf or as representative of any Company, has paid Rs. 250 as dues to the Port Commissioners being eligible for election, and any person who has paid Rs. 100 being entitled to a vote. Then let the Marine Department appoint one member and the Government two more. At the present moment no expenditure can be incurred without the sanction of Government, and what was intended as a safeguard really operates in a contrary direction, inasmuch as the sanction of the Government, which seems to be accorded as a matter of form, relieves the Port Commissioners of a responsibility, which ought by right to rest entirely on them. Some correspondence has appeared in the *Indian Daily News*, from which it would seem that the statements made regarding the steamer *Craighton* are not altogether

correct; and that the Port Commissioners did not insist in the first instance on her discharging at the jetties; what they appear to have done was, to refuse to allow the consignee of the steamer's cargo to withdraw an application he had made for her to be berthed at the jetties. As the cargo was Government property, and as at the time the application was made the steamer was still in the moorings, the refusal on the part of the Commissioners, involving as it did extra expense in the landing, was certainly very arbitrary. An important letter appeared in yesterday's *Statesman* from Mr. Franklin Prestage, late Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway and a member at one time of the Dock Committee. Mr. Prestage says that if docks are to be constructed, everything points to the Howrah side of the river as the proper site, and he adds that they would be one-fourth the cost. As Port Trust $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. debentures were sold yesterday at Rs. 94, and as the Government have stopped work on the Manickpur-Jhansi and Bengal-Nagpore Railways for financial reasons, the memorial lately sent in regarding these docks will enable the responsible authorities to retire gracefully from a position, which would have landed them in embarrassment, for there can be little doubt but that any Port Trust Loan at the present juncture would result in a miserable fiasco.

Railways, &c.—During the week ended the 14th February the great *Shiborathri Melá* took place at Tarkessur and occupied three days. This is the festival of festivals and the traffic receipts were beyond the average, 29,174 passengers having travelled, paying Rs. 8,921. The goods receipts, however, showed a decrease, being only Rs. 241, and other receipts of Rs. 5 brought the total takings up to Rs. 9,167. From the 1st January to the 14th February the coaching traffic was Rs. 34,384, goods traffic Rs. 1,101, and other receipts Rs. 75, making a total of Rs. 35,560, considering that the *Shiborathri* is the great *melá* the receipts are a little disappointing, some discussion has been going on at home on the subject of railway terminal charges, and a contemporary suggests that the matter should receive attention in this country. It may not be generally known that the rates on the East Indian Railway are nearly all on a mileage basis, it is true

that there is a terminal charge of Rs. 2 per 100 maunds on all goods (except special class and minerals) booked in or out of Calcutta or Howrah, but as special class and minerals form the bulk of the traffic, and the former includes grain and oil seeds, the matter is hardly worthy of consideration, as the articles affected are well able to bear the impost. The traffic returns of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 21st February show a decrease of Rs. 58,021, and the receipts from 1st January to 21st February a decrease of Rs. 13,03,911 contrasted with the same period of 1884. The Calcutta Tramway receipts for last week were Rs. 11,476. There have been sales of both Darjeeling-Himalayan and Deoghur Railway shares at Rs. 92. India General Steam Navigation at Rs. 140. The half-yearly meeting, to declare a dividend, of this latter Company is convened for the 11th March :

The Report of the Chamber of Commerce to be presented at their annual meeting to-day shows that good work has been done by this useful body during the past year : it deals with railway extension in India ; the insidious attempts of the Port Commissioners to obtain possession of the East Indian Railway wharves, which were perfectly seen through ; the extortionate charge made for the use of the Port Commissioner's crane ; the pilotage charges ; the levy of an octroi duty ; the scheme for sanitary and structural improvements in Calcutta ; the stamping of cotton piece-goods ; the block of business in the High Court, and several other important matters relating to trade and commerce, which must be reviewed in a subsequent letter. Mr. H. W. I. Wood, the courteous Secretary of the Chamber, retires from office to-day ; it has been mooted that he should receive a public dinner, and no man more richly deserves one.

Tea.—There have been no Calcutta tea sales this week, but at the London tea sales some 16,000 chests were offered and 14,800 sold, there being a good demand and previous prices being maintained. The meeting of the Tea Association took place on Thursday, and several important matters affecting the tea interest in Assam and Cachar were discussed, notably the system of coolie bonuses. The Chairman, Mr. A. Wilson, hit upon the happy idea of printing and circulating his address beforehand, so that

members came fully prepared to discuss it. Meetings to declare dividends are advertised of the Tukvar and Ting-Ling Tea Companies, and to receive reports of the North-Western Cachar and Puttareaah Tea Companies. Dividends have been declared by the Soom Tea Company at 3 per cent., Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company at 2 per cent., Phoolbari at 1 per cent., Goomtee 3 per cent., and Phoenix 2 per cent. There have been sales reported of Tukvar at Rs. 165.

Banks, &c.—At the weekly meeting on Thursday the Bank of Bengal raised the rates of discount 1 per cent. all round, and the minimum now stands at 7 per cent.; it is understood that this action has been caused by the demand for money from Burma. The public and other deposits amounted on the 24th instant to Rs. 4,59,38,978, and the cash and currency notes to Rs. 1,47,30,672, or, 51.9 per cent. The public deposits at head office have been reduced during the week by over 23 lakhs, while the balance in the Reserve Treasury here has increased by some 5½ lakhs only, so that the Government demand on the Bank has been for its own purposes and not with the view of locking up its money. The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House for the week ended 21st February was Rs. 1,14,22,544. Bank of Bengal shares have been dealt in at Rs. 832½ and 830.

Exchange, which closed on Saturday at 1-6¼ for demand drafts, improved to 1-6¼ on Monday, to 1s. 7d. on Tuesday, and to 1-7½ on Thursday. It, however, dropped to 1-6¼ on Friday, and to-day closes steady at the same rate.

Government Paper has fluctuated all the week. It closed on Saturday at 97.2, rose on Monday to 97.4, and then declined to 97. It steadily declined on Tuesday and Wednesday until it reached 95.12, but then steadily rose during Thursday and Friday, closing at 96.5. To-day it loses firm at about 96.12 for 4 per cent. Government Paper.

Debentures.—There have been sales of Municipal 5 per cent. Debentures at 102; of 7 per cent. Dunbar Cotton Mills at 100 and 7 per cent. Hooghly Mills at 101.

Mills, &c.—Only one Jute Mill Report remains to be issued, that of the Goosery Jute Company. It will doubtless see light

shortly and form a fitting finish to the mournful array of those that have preceded it ; but it seems strange and does not favourably impress one with the business capabilities of the management that these reports should be so much delayed. The Report of the Gourepore Company was out by the 19th January and there is no valid reason why the reports of these Companies should not be in the hands of the shareholders within a month of the close of the half-year. The promptness and despatch shown by an agent in issuing his report may not unreasonably be taken by the shareholders as a sign that the mill is managed in the same business-like manner ; while the delay and procrastination shown by a good many agents in getting out their accounts may not unlikely extend to the general management of the business. If shareholders draw these inferences, who is to blame ?

The Report of the Goosery Cotton Mills Company marks a distinctly new epoch in the conduct of the concern, which is pregnant with significance to investors in the Company. The manufacturing profit for the half-year amounts to Rs. 28,662, and adding the balance brought forward from last half-year and a confiscated dividend, the balance at credit of Profit and Loss amounted " on the 31st December to Rs. 36,078, but against this the account had to be debited with Rs. 24,129, the amount of some errors in carrying forward the cotton stocks and liabilities on 30th June last, so that the amount actually appearing at credit in the Balance Sheet is reduced to Rs. 11,948 ; effectual precautions have been taken for preventing such errors of account in future." Two years ago, it was proposed by the directors and sanctioned by the shareholders, that any excess of profits over 10 per cent. per annum should be taken to the Reserve Fund until it had accumulated to two lakhs of rupees, with the object of gradually improving that fund and also of equalizing dividends. Since then Rs. 26,500 have been carried to Reserve Fund, which now amounts to Rs. 1,56,500 ; and as the Directors consider that there is no reason to suppose that the recent and, still to some extent, existing depression in the trade will be permanent, they consider that the fund may now be fairly drawn upon for the balance required to provide a dividend of 3 per cent. for the half-

year, which, with the 5 per cent. paid last half, will make 8 per cent. for the year. They add that the Fire Insurance Fund has now accumulated to Rs. 1,05,577, and that it was instituted in 1875 with the object of gradually building up, a sufficient sum to cover the fire risks of the Company, in consequence of the excessive premia charged by the Fire Insurance offices at that period. As the rates have recently been reduced to reasonable limits, the same incentive for maintaining the fund no longer exists. The Directors would therefore recommend that it be kept at one lakh of rupees, and that the present surplus over that sum be transferred to Profit and Loss, when a further transfer of Rs. 27,474 from Reserve Fund will enable them to pay the much-desired dividend of 3 per cent. When this concern was reviewed in the *Pioneer* of 30th August last, it was observed that "there seemed reason to believe that the Mill was drifting into an unsatisfactory condition, and that it would be well if the Directors, before it was too late, were to give more consideration to the maintenance of the value of the property, and to display less anxiety to declare high dividends, which, in the past half-year had clearly been in excess of the profits earned." This is the first time in the annals of the history of this concern that dividends have been declared out of the Reserve and Fire Insurance Funds ; it marks a new departure in the policy of the management, which it is to be feared the shareholders will have cause to regret. "Several inquiries having been made by the shareholders as to the condition of the older portions of the machinery, which they apprehended were worn out by long service, the Directors have the satisfaction to state that the machines are kept in a thorough state of efficiency by the constant renewal of all working parts, and that there is no deterioration in the work done, which is sufficiently proved by the results." If anything is proved by the results, it is apparently quite the other way, for there has been a marked falling off in the profits made by this Company of late.

The Report of the Empress of India Cotton Mills is also not very cheery reading, the manufacturing profit being Rs. 4,795 and adding the amount brought forward from last half-year,

the total at credit of Profit and Loss is Rs. 12,208. This Mill is, however, very much smaller than the Goosery concern and does not work by artificial light; these are facts which cannot be overlooked when reviewing its working. It seems after all as if the old and despised Bowreah Mills were at last going to show the way; burthen with an enormous capital and debenture debt it has held its own gallantly, and left its younger competitors a long way behind.

The Report of the Strand Bank Press Company discloses a balance at credit of Profit and Loss of Rs. 71,074; Rs. 28,500 have been transferred to Reserve, Building, and Tramway Accounts, and while two of the Directors recommend the payment of a dividend of Rs. 15 per share, and that the balance of Rs. 5,074 be carried forward, the third and more prudent Director is of opinion that it would be to the benefit of the shareholders that a dividend of only Rs. 10 per share should be paid, that a further sum of Rs. 10,000 should be added to the Reserve Fund, and the balance of Rs. 7,574 be carried forward. If the shareholders are wise they will adopt the last resolution and husband their resources. There has been a sale of shares at Rs. 100.

There has been a holy horror of Mill shares during the past week; a solitary sale of Seebpore's being recorded at $42\frac{1}{2}$. Titaghur Paper Mills have improved to 60, and a sale is reported of Egerton Woollen Mills at 101. Baragunda Copper A shares have been sold at $1\frac{1}{4}$, and Burrakur Coal at 145. A meeting to put the Asiatic Jute Manufacturing Company into liquidation has been convened for the 14th March, and the ordinary half-yearly meeting of the Chitpore Hydraulic Press for the 11th March. The Camperdown Pressing Company has declared a final dividend of 15 per cent. payable at once, making 20 per cent. for the year.

CALCUTTA, 7th March 1885.

THE half-yearly meeting of the Chamber of Commerce took place on Saturday, and as Mr. Keswick, the President, is a member of the Port Trust and sat on the Dock Committee, it was only right and proper that he should say something regarding the Kidderpore Docks. Mr. Keswick, while welcoming the criticism that has lately been passed on the dock scheme, regretted that it had come so late, and said that even now, if the arguments against the scheme persuaded him that the docks were unnecessary and would become a burthen on trade, he would not hesitate to advocate their being stopped. There is much virtue in an "if." He, however, felt certain that there was needless alarm, and was not one of those who refuse to believe in the revival of trade and who consider, that because of the forward strides made by Karachi and Bombay, Calcutta has entered on a permanent decline; I am not aware that anybody holds these views; what has been urged in these columns is that the natural ports of export for the wheat trade of India are Bombay and Karachi, and that unless Calcutta can offer facilities in the way of cheaper export charges and freights, that particular trade, save under exceptional circumstances, will not increase. Of necessity, there are certain articles of produce that must go *viâ* Calcutta—indigo, opium, hides, lac dye, shellac, jute, gunnies, rice and tea—no matter how high the export charges are; but on the other hand there are two other great items, wheat and oil-seeds, and it will be found that Bombay will obtain considerably more than, judging from the map, would appear to be her fair share, unless the charges of the port of Calcutta are reduced very materially. One of the great complaints against this dock scheme is the incomplete and haphazard way in which the receipts are estimated. The Dock Committee's Report provided for docks to accommodate the salt, iron, and Coal import ships, 173 in number, and also for 403 export vessels, which at present load in the steam. In my letter in the *Pioneer* of the 17th January I went very fully into the estimates of anticipated receipts, and showed that they were very much overrated and were not likely to be realised. I was

then informed by the presiding genius of the Port Trust, that the docks were not intended for these ships at all; that the Report of the Dock Committee, which has been circulated among the public, which was referred to by Mr. Reynolds, and of which, according to Mr. Keswick, 90 copies were distributed broadcast amongst the merchants of Calcutta, was *not* to be acted upon; but that the general import ships and steamers which now load at the jetties, were to be transferred to the docks, and the jetties made over to the Coasting, China, and inland steamers, which were specially excluded from consideration; while the salt, iron, and coal ships with the 403 export ships, for which the docks were solely intended, are to remain exactly as they were and to have no additional facilities afforded them. This is very plainly stated and alleged in the memorial of the merchants and Millowners, the figures in which Mr. Keswick admitted he "had looked at" and that "the shipping charges therein stated would be found about right." It may well be asked, under these circumstances, what does Mr. Keswick mean by referring to an obsolete Report? The public have a right to demand that a careful estimate should be made of the anticipated receipts under the altered aspect of the case, and the Government should insist upon it. Mr. Keswick then proceeded to say that the new docks were bound "to strike a heavy blow at cargo-boats, and he was sorry that this was inevitable, for he disliked to see any person's interests injured." This sounds very pretty, but did Mr. Keswick think of this when, as a Port Commissioner, he allowed large, costly, and unnecessary warehouses to be erected at the jetties, to compete against the Bonded Warehouse and interfere largely with the owners of private godowns? Practice is better than precept, and the cargo-boat owners will not complain of the new docks if, as in London, *they are allowed to enter free by the shortest route, and no obstacles are placed in their way*; they only ask a fair field and no favour. If Mr. Keswick were to visit London and amuse himself one day by going in one of the Woolwich steamboats from London Bridge to Woolwich, it would disabuse his mind of the idea that docks injured cargo-boats. If the new docks

are completed and the wharfage charge is made Re. 1 per ton, cargo-boats being allowed free and uninterrupted ingress and egress,—for it must be borne in mind that they pay a large license fee annually,—the great bulk of the jute and rice will go by water alongside the export ship as heretofore. As regards wheat and oil-seeds, it is intended that they shall come *via* the new Hooghly Bridge to the new docks; this will be a great convenience; but is it proposed that the railway freight from, say, Cawnpore to Kidderpore Docks shall be no more than it is at present to Howrah? If so, who is to pay for the Hooghly Bridge, and the increased mileage, for wheat and oil-seeds are carried at so much per mile? If there be any extra charge for railway freight, and Re. 1 per ton be added for wharfage, the cargo-boats will have no cause to grumble, for the great bulk of the produce will still continue to come to the Howrah station—these goes without saying. But if the Port Commissioners and the Government are so satisfied that these docks will be a “boon and a blessing” to the trade; if they are convinced that steamers and ships will prefer to use them, let them act up to their convictions. Let the accounts of these docks be kept entirely distinct, let no compulsion be put on ships to use them, and let cargo-boats freely and without obstruction enter and depart by the shortest route. If this be conceded; let the docks be built; but let the Government remember that they will have to make good the deficit,—let them take heed in time. Mr. Keswick can find “a good deal of abuse” for the East Indian Railway, yet he cannot but admit that the Port Commissioners have done and are doing a great deal for Calcutta, and it has become a free port through their management. But, it may be asked, how has it become a free port? And the answer shall be given in the language of the Chamber in their letter to Government of the 31st August last:—“But the opinion of some members of the Chamber is that in working the affairs of the port already under their control, the Commissioners have heretofore shown a disposition to cheapen and make the port popular with the shipping interest without always sufficient consideration for the merchants and others concerned; and in illustration of this it is pointed out

that since the reduction of port dues from 3 annas to 1 anna per ton came into force on 1st April 1882, the funds required to meet the expenditure of Rs. 4,36,369 under the heading of *Port Approaches Account* have had to be made up by contributions of Rs. 1,19,500 from jetties, Rs 96,000 from inland vessels' wharves, and Rs. 98,000 from Strand Bank Lands, or a total contribution of Rs. 3,07,500. These funds, it is argued by some, might more properly have been applied to the reduction of the charges levied under these various headings upon imports, &c., and in the future great care should be taken to avoid any abuse of the system of working the port as a whole, such as might lead to the undue subordination of one interest to the undue amelioration of others." To state the case briefly, the Port Commissioners have been "robbing Peter to pay Paul." The charges on the ships have *not* been reduced through the economical working or any reduction in the expenses of the management of the Port Commissioners, but simply because the charges on goods are so exorbitant that, notwithstanding their most extravagant management, there is a large surplus of receipts over expenditure. This surplus, derived entirely from goods, has been misappropriated towards reducing and finally abolishing the tonnage dues on the ships; this is called "lightening the burthens on the Port!" Mr. Keswick says that "the docks not being in private hands, will not be worked to pay a dividend, but only to return the interest on the money invested and the cost of management." It may fairly be asked, what is a dividend but interest on money invested; and the "cost of management" can cover any form of extravagance. Besides which there is no guarantee, that as in the case of the jetties and inland wharves the surplus receipts, if any, will not be devoted to other purposes, perhaps to reduce the pilotage or to defray the up-keep of an extra yacht or two for the Port Commissioners, or some other extravagance in the working. Mr. Keswick then proceeds to discuss the ways and means, and trusts that the Government will lend the money at 4 per cent. As a man of business, Mr. Keswick knows very well that credit is the life and soul of a firm. A concern that does not enjoy good credit can never hope to do

a good business. A firm whose cheques are sent back from the Bank with the significant memo. "Refer to drawer," is generally deservedly shunned; it enjoys no credit, and gets into bad repute. A man with the most elementary knowledge of business is aware that nothing is more serious than the dishonour of a firm's cheques, it is an act of bankruptcy. I should not like to say that the Government of Bengal was a bankrupt, or the Port Commissioners either; but this I can say, that of late several cheques drawn by the Government Collector under Act X (Mr. C. W. Bolton) on the Bank of Bengal in payment of land taken up by the Port Commissioners and the fees of Assessors, have been dishonoured, and returned by the Bank of Bengal with the ominous remark. "Refer to drawer." One such cheque, No. 57199, dated 28th February, for Rs. 35,079-14-0 was presented twice on that date and once on the 2nd March without being honoured, the Port Commissioners having failed to provide the funds to meet it. It reflects the greatest discredit on all concerned and is eminently calculated to make the public fight shy of the bonds of the Port Commissioners. But the significant part of Mr. Keswick's speech was that in which he admitted that the present rate of shipping charges stated in the memorial was correct; and this being conceded, it is clear that the docks cannot "lighten the burthens on the port," but that, on the contrary, the present shipping charges, which do not as it is allow this port to compete with Bombay, will be considerably raised! Is not this fact in itself sufficient to condemn the whole scheme?

But though Mr. Keswick accepted the figures of the memorial, those interested in the trade of the port find it difficult to accept his figures regarding cargo-boats; for if it be true that there are 4,900 cargo-boats, and these boats only made one trip a week, they could carry 1,300 tons each per annum, or a total of considerably over six millions of tons, or nearly double the trade of the Port. Meantime the Port Commissioners are pushing on the dock works with the most indecent haste, and endeavouring, by every means in their power, to irretrievably commit the Government to the scheme. Tenders for the execution of the

earthwork, concrete and brickwork required in the construction of the quay walls were called the first time in print on the 1st March, and must be sent in by the 11th. I may add that the memorial against the proposed docks has been signed by such firms as Ralli Brothers, Graham & Co., George Henderson & Co., Ernsthausen & Co., Gladstone, Wyllie & Co., Peel, Jacob & Co., Schoene, Kilburn & Co., Reinhold & Co., Carlisle Nephews, Tamvaco & Co., Schroder, Smidt & Co., Ewing & Co., Apar & Co., Birkmyre Brothers, Thomas Duff & Co., Petrocochino Brothers, Bird & Co., Frankissen Law & Co., E. D. J. Ezra, and many others too numerous to mention.

The Trade and Navigation Accounts of British India for January disclose a falling off in the value of imports of merchandise to Bengal of 59 lakhs, to Bombay of $12\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs; in export of produce from Bengal of $88\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, from Bombay of 11 lakhs only. The total decrease under these two heads is in Bengal $147\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, in Bombay $23\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs. Taking the ten months, April to January, there is a decrease in the imports of merchandise to Bengal of 94 lakhs, while in Bombay there is an increase of $79\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs; in exports of produce Bengal shows a decrease of $385\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, while Bombay exhibits an increase of $24\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs. In other words, while under these two heads the trade of Bengal for the ten months has decreased $479\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, that of Bombay has increased 104 lakhs. These figures are of special significance in connection with the Calcutta Port Trust. Turning to the imports, the following table contrasts for the 10 months some of the principal items of import in lakhs of rupees :—

		April to January.				
		1880-81.	1881-82.	1882-83.	1883-84.	1884-85.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
COTTON GOODS—						
Bengal,	lakhs ...	1,207	1,071	1,070	1,076	1,016
Bombay,	" ...	692	640	669	722	678
METALS—						
Bengal,	" ...	152	146	198	202	179
Bombay,	" ...	107	94	134	155	169

		April to January.				
		1880-81.	1881-82.	1882-83.	1883-84.	1884-85.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
MILL-WORK AND MACHINERY—						
Bengal,	lakhs ...	28	36	49	64	55
Bombay,	" ...	18	42	40	56	57
RAILWAY PLANT, &c.—						
Bengal,	lakhs ...	.....	.....	35	67	40
Bombay,	" ...	.....	.....	33	52	74
SUGAR—						
Bengal,	lakhs ...	7	4	.....	.....	4
Bombay,	" ...	120	99	78	87	157

And the following table shows the principal items of export common to the two Presidencies :—

		April to January.				
		1880-81.	1881-82.	1882-83.	1883-84.	1884-85.
		Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
OIL-SEEDS—						
Bengal	...	268,512	193,430	256,668	275,238	292,164
Bombay	...	115,476	185,064	233,325	355,174	344,574
Sind	...	12,941	10,376	29,089	59,854	75,288
WHEAT—						
Bengal	...	179,684	321,123	195,672	373,568	121,707
Bombay	...	127,008	495,893	293,277	417,763	372,000
Sind	...	7,882	85,159	101,688	183,093	160,743
RICE—						
Bengal	...	232,095	277,104	290,125	304,353	211,978
Bombay	...	34,689	22,900	20,269	19,954	28,777
COTTON RAW—						
Bengal	...	29,682	21,558	18,321	20,128	8,577
Bombay	...	120,972	152,100	178,672	175,287	166,894
COTTON MANUFACTURES—						
Bengal	} lakhs of Rs. {	1	1	5	4	4
Bombay		139	147	182	199	232

In the face of these figures can it be argued that the trade of Calcutta is not being eaten into by Bombay and Karachi? Every effort should be made to decrease the charges, not to add to the burthens on Calcutta.

Railways, &c.—The traffic returns of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 21st February show the coaching receipts to have been Rs. 5,085, goods receipts Rs. 197, sundries Rs. 5—total Rs. 5,287. For the period from January 1st to February 21st the number of passengers carried has been 1,44,398, yielding Rs. 39,469; goods Rs. 1,298; sundries Rs. 80—total Rs. 40,847. Mr. Keswick, though he could admire the working of the Port Commissioners, could find nothing but blame for the feeble efforts of the East Indian Railway; and yet in a quiet unassuming way a good deal of excellent work has been done at Howrah. At the present moment if consignees will remove their goods from Howrah within two days of their arrival, the railway could easily deal with 10,000 tons daily at that terminus; it must not be forgotten that the weight of goods traffic that can be dealt with at Howrah depends to a great extent on the promptness of consignees in taking delivery. Ten thousand tons daily means over $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons a year!

The Report of the India General Steam Navigation Company for the last half-year shows a working profit of Rs. 6,17,880, and the balance at credit of Profit and Loss Account, after crediting Rs. 2,79,490, brought forward from last half-year and setting aside Rs. 91,331 for depreciation fund is Rs. 5,40,602, which the Directors recommend shall be dealt with as follows:—Dividend at 9 per cent. on the full shares and *pro rata* on the contributory shares, Rs. 4,43,902, and the balance of Rs. 96,700 to be carried forward. The paid-up capital of this Company is now Rs. 50,68,150. The reserve and other funds Rs. 8,16,871. The landed property of the Company is valued at Rs. 5,94,110, and the steamers and flats at Rs. 51,29,304; machinery and stores, Rs. 2,45,432; and the cash and investments, Rs. 5,54,643. The dividend for the year has been 15 per cent. It is rumoured that negotiations are in progress by which this Company takes over the flotilla of the Eastern Bengal Railway, when the Company's fleet will run in closer connection with the Railway Company, to the advantage of all concerned.

The traffic returns of the East Indian Railway for the first two months of the year show the total receipts to have been

Rs. 75,71,943, as against Rs. 89,09,146, for 1884, or a decrease of Rs. 13,37,203. The receipts of the Calcutta Tramway for the week ended 28th February were only Rs. 10,880. There have been sales of India General Steam Company's old shares during the week at Rs. 137, and of new shares at Rs. 31 premium.

Banks.—The usual weekly return of the Bank of Bengal made up to the 3rd instant shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,53,42,603, while the cash and currency notes were Rs. 2,56,62,471 or 54·4 per cent. The Bank rate remains still at 7 per cent. The balance in the Reserve Treasuries on the same date were Rs. 1,67,83,756 or nearly 34 lakhs below those of last week. The amount passed through the Clearing House, Calcutta, during the week ended 28th February was Rs. 1,02,81,033. The Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank for the last half year has declared a dividend at the rate of 18½ per cent., and carried forward \$61,500 to next half-year's account. Bank of Bengal shares have been dealt in at Rs. 830 and Rs. 827½, and National Bank shares at Rs. 97.

Exchange, which closed at 1-6¼ on Saturday, declined on Monday to 1-6½, and on Wednesday to 1-6¼. It improved on Thursday to 1-6⅞, and on Friday to 1-6¼, and closes steady at that rate to-day for on demand bills.

Government Paper has, consequent on the unsettled state of the political horizon, rapidly and steadily declined during the week. It opened on Monday morning at Rs. 96¼ and closed on Friday evening at Rs. 95⅞. To-day it opened at Rs. 95½ and on receipt of telegrams from London giving hopes of a peaceful settlement with Russia, rapidly improved and closed firm at Rs. 95⅞.

Tea.—At the weekly London tea sales 19,000 chests were offered, and 17,500 sold, with a good demand for all descriptions. At the Calcutta tea sales on Thursday 3,226 chests were offered, all of which found buyers. Meetings are advertised to declare dividends of the Adulpore Terai Company on the 9th March, and the Loobah on the 12th March, and to receive reports of the Durrung and Chumta on the 16th March. Dividends have been declared of the Teendarea and Singell Companies at 2½, Central

Cachar, Lackatoorah, and Indian Terai at 3 per cent. ; Punka-baree at 4 per cent. and Gyabaree at Rs. 10 per share. A call of Rs. 15 per share has been made on the shareholders of the Selim Company, payable on March 14th, and of Rs. 10 on the shareholders of the Gyabaree Company, payable on the 6th April. The *London Times* advocates an increase in the duty on tea of three pence per lb., which is cheering news for this depressed industry. There has been a solitary sale of Eastern Cachar shares during the week at Rs. 40.

The Report of the Bengal Telephone Company, Limited, for the year 1884 is certainly not very encouraging. The capital of this concern is no less than Rs. 8,79,500, and the result of the working is a profit of Rs. 9,246 only; interest and *increased valuation of Government securities* raises this amount to Rs. 14,572 of which Rs. 9,500 has been placed to Reserve Fund, and the balance of Rs. 5,072 goes towards the 8 per cent. dividend guaranteed by the Oriental Telephone Company. The Directors say, that during the year under review, they have had special difficulties to contend with in connection with the staff, and that the Crossley Company's opposition has to some extent operated as a check on their business. The use of the Telephone by the shipping and at the Call Office is disappointing, but an improvement may be hoped for as their list of subscribers increases. The Directors also deplore the continued reluctance of Government to allow their offices to join the exchange. The gross receipts from subscriptions, rentals, and removal charges during the past year were Rs. 49,623, as against Rs. 34,542 for the 9½ months during which the Company was at work in 1883. On the other hand the working expenses, rents, Secretaries' allowances, &c., &c., totalled up Rs. 40,377, as against Rs. 27,223 for the 9½ months of 1883; so that the gross profit for the whole year 1884 was only Rs. 9,246, as against Rs. 7,319 for the 9½ months of 1883; in other words, the profit for 1884 has been proportionately less than that made in 1883. So that, though the receipts have increased, the expenditure has increased in still greater proportion. The balance-sheet shows that the paid-up capital is Rs. 8,79,500; the reserve fund, Rs. 17,250, subscriptions paid in advance,

Rs. 27,119; and sundry creditors, Rs. 10,231; dividend to be declared Rs. 40,000, making a total liability of Rs. 9,74,100. The assets are:—block account, including new construction, Rs. 7,97,927; stores, Rs. 21,654; Oriental Telephone Company, Rs. 34,928; sundry debtors, Rs. 11,123; cash and investments Rs. 1,08,468—total Rs. 9,74,100. The working of this concern was reviewed very fully in the *Pioneer* of the 18th November, and the present report fully bears out the opinions therein expressed. At the annual meeting held last week the Report of the Directors was adopted and the guaranteed dividend of 8 per cent. declared, which, we presume, the Oriental Telephone Company must have remitted.

Mills, &c.—The Goosery Cotton Mills Report is a melancholy catalogue of lame excuses and pointless conclusions. The manipulation of the last half-year's accounts, which, owing to certain obvious errors, showed an apparent profit of Rs. 71,636, whereas in reality it was only Rs. 47,507, proves that the criticisms upon the new management were perfectly justifiable. These criticisms have evidently led to some of the shareholders inquiring about the condition of the old machinery, for in the present Report the Directors state that all "working parts are kept by constant renewal in a thorough state of efficiency, and that there is no deterioration whatever in the work done, which is sufficiently evidenced by the results, the Company's yarn continuing to command the best prices current in the market." If the mere renewal of working parts is regarded as a sufficient provision for wear and tear of machinery that has been wrought for 18 years and upwards, then the Lancashire standard of 5 per cent. per annum must be founded on a wrong basis, and not on the careful results of accumulated practical experience. The assertion that the Company's yarn realises the best price proves nothing, as the condition of the machinery is not so much indicated in the quality of the yarn, which depends on the cotton used, but by the quantity produced; and the Report very plainly shows that there has been a serious falling off in the outturn during the last few years, while the explanation that the Mill has been working on higher counts is an altogether insufficient excuse for the di-

minished production. Looking at the past of this concern and then taking a glance at the future, it seems probable that this remarkable Report may one day form a curiously instructive page in its once prosperous history.

Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co. have issued a circular to the shareholders of the Hooghly Mills Company in which they announce the fact that the result of the working of the Mill for January, after payment of all interest charges, amounted to Rs. 300, and they hope that the working for February and March will not be less satisfactory. In face of these results they are able to modify the paragraph in their last Report, in which they expressed a doubt of the possibility of being able to cover the charges for interest during the current half-year, and they only regret that they have not yet quite sufficient confidence to cancel it altogether. They trust that these remarks will be considered of interest and encouraging after recent misfortunes. A call of Rs. 10 per share in this concern is payable 1st May. I notice in your issue of 6th March, a letter from RUPES regarding the sale by Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co. of the land on which the Hooghly Mills stands to that Company. It is quite true that this firm took payment in shares, and that they are now at a serious discount, but they were at one time at a premium. Besides the interest which they expected to get, however, from their shares, Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co. receive as agents of the concern $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. commission on the sales. This should gross in fair times Rs. 40,000 per annum. If the shares in this concern are at 60 per cent. discount, who is to blame for it, the shareholders or the management?

There has not been much doing in Mill shares during the week, transactions are reported in Howrah, 66. Gourepore, 69. Strand Bank Press, 98. Nasmyth, 80. Calcutta Hydraulic, 120. Baragunda Copper A shares Rs. $1\frac{1}{2}$, B shares Rs. 2. Goosery Jute Mill Debentures, 101.

CALCUTTA, 14th March 1885.

IN a despatch dated 30th October 1883, addressed by the Governor-General in Council to the Secretary of State on the subject of the proposed Kidderpore Wet Docks, it was stated that the measure then contemplated was "formally supported by an absolute concensus of official and non-official opinion, and had the entire approval of the local commercial public." And in acknowledging that despatch on the 6th March 1884, the Secretary of State notices "the unanimous recommendation by a body representing the interests concerned, of a scheme to which the Governor-General in Council was able to give his support." In the now burning question of the Kidderpore Docks two things are clear: 1st, that the Government of India informed the Secretary of State that the project had the *entire* approval of the local commercial public; and 2nd, that the Secretary of State based his sanction upon the representation so made. This being so, it is incumbent on the Government of India to at once inform the Secretary of State that this absolute concensus of opinion in favour of the docks no longer exists; that on the contrary, a memorial signed by the largest and most influential firms in Calcutta, doing at the very lowest computation three-fourths of the whole business of the place, has been presented to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and his Council, praying them to refrain from passing the Kidderpore Dock Bill now before them, and giving very cogent reasons, none of which have been attempted to be answered, why the scheme is wholly uncalled for, and little short of a waste of public money; and pending the receipt of a reply, the Government of India should stop all work in this direction. The six hours' discussion on the proposed Bill was remarkable for two things. It showed in a very clear light that those members, who supported the Bill and who were supposed to know all about it, had very little knowledge on the subject; and that the official members of the Council had come prepared to vote for the Bill, no matter what might be said against it. Thus we have Mr. Reynolds quoting with marked approbation Mr. Keswick's address at the Chamber of Commerce, and though the

Hon'ble Gentleman was forced to admit that Mr. Keswick's figures regarding the annual upkeep of cargo-boats was a good deal beyond the mark, he considered that speech a perfect answer to the memorialists. Mr. Irving regaled the Council with a school-boy's essay on the subject, with liberal quotations from McCulloch's *Commercial Dictionary* on the state of London in 1795, from which he deduced the extraordinary argument that because docks were a benefit to London in 1795, they ought to be carried out in Calcutta in 1885. It may be asked of Mr. Irving if these London Docks have been a financial success. The first docks that were built in London were the London and St. Katherine's Docks—are the shares in those docks at a premium or a discount? the last reported transactions were at £43 for £100 shares! It was argued by one brilliant member, that the memorialists ought to have gone round and converted those merchants who were in favour of the docks to their views, but this is a strange misrepresentation of facts; the memorial now before the Bengal Council is the first document on the docks that is signed by any mercantile firm at all. A few members of mercantile firms in their individual capacities have signed the Dock Committee's Report: but the memorial is the first expression of the views of the merchants of Calcutta, and as against the individual signatures is as "Lombard Street to a China Orange." Lord Dufferin was careful to explain to his Council that the Rent Bill was not carried by the force of the official vote; if he desires the public to attach any weight to his utterances on this subject, let him withhold his consent to the Kidderpore Dock Bill, which, notwithstanding the singularly lucid and able objections urged against it by the Advocate-General and Mr. A. B. Miller, will be forced down the throats of the public by the official vote of the Lieutenant-Governor and his Secretaries. The memorial was one of the most weighty and influential that has ever been submitted to the Bengal Council, and the merchants of Calcutta are not likely to submit to its being treated with anything but respect.

Banks.—The Report of the Directors of the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation for the half-year ended 31st December shows that the net profits made, after deducting

rebate on bills not due and remuneration to the Directors, were \$687,773·50, and adding the balance of \$51,443·69, brought forward from last half-year, the available surplus was \$739,217·19. From this sum the Directors recommend the payment of a dividend of £2 sterling per share, which at the exchange 3s. 6½d., will exhaust \$677,647·05, and leave \$61,570·14 to be carried forward. The following is the Balance Sheet:—

LIABILITIES.		\$
Paid up Capital	...	7,500,000·00
Reserve Fund	...	4,800,000·00
Marine Insurance Account	...	227,078·88
Notes in Circulation	...	4,733,074·11
Deposits	...	51,997,906·69
Bills Payable	...	15,641,946·08
Profit and Loss	...	752,819·61
		<hr/>
Total	...	85,652,825·37
		<hr/> <hr/>
ASSETS.		\$
Cash	...	12,418,907·87
Indian Government Securities	...	2,362,545·49
Bills Discounted, Loans and Credits	...	36,007,243·99
Bills Receivable	...	34,313,779·27
Bank Premises	...	449,620·03
Dead Stock	...	100,728·72
		<hr/>
Total	...	85,652,825·37
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It will be observed that the notes in circulation, deposits, and bills payable amount to 72 million dollars, while the cash and Government securities aggregate 14½ million dollars only. Apparently this Bank is able to utilise its funds to the utmost, and hence the payment of a dividend at the rate of 18½ per cent.

The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal, made up to the 10th March, shows the public and other deposits to have been Rs. 4,56,42,545, and the cash and currency notes Rs. 2,57,31,633, or 54·3 per cent. The Bank rate still remains at 7 per cent.

The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India have decreased to 138 lakhs, the great decrease being at Calcutta, where the main demand seems to have been. The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House during the week ended 7th instant was Rs. 1,17,96,381. There has been a sale of Bank of Bengal shares at Rs. 825. Mussoorie Bank, Rs. 100. Simla Bank, Rs. 460.

Government Paper has experienced considerable fluctuations during the week; it closed firm on Saturday at $95\frac{1}{2}$ and opened on Monday at 96, advancing to $96\frac{1}{4}$: later in the day it declined to $95\frac{1}{2}$, and on Tuesday fluctuated between $95\frac{3}{8}$ and $95\frac{5}{8}$: on Wednesday it remained at $95\frac{1}{2}$; and on Thursday, opening at $95\frac{1}{4}$, declined to 95. On Friday it declined to $94\frac{1}{4}$ and closed at $94\frac{1}{8}$. To-day the market opened at $94\frac{3}{4}$, but owing to the receipt of more peaceful telegrams, the price rapidly advanced and closed at from $95\frac{1}{8}$ to $95\frac{3}{16}$.

Exchange improved on Monday and Tuesday to $16\frac{1}{8}$, but declined on Wednesday to $16\frac{1}{4}$. It has recovered to-day, and closes firm at $16\frac{1}{8}$ for Bank bills on demand.

Railways, &c.—The Report of the Managing Agents of the Deoghur Railway for the half-year ended 31st December last, shows a considerable increase in the traffic receipts over the same period of 1883, though the mileage run was less, the total amount earned in the second half of 1884 having been Rs. 12,928 against Rs. 9,645 for 1883. During the same period the working expenses were Rs. 6,212 or 48 per cent. of the gross receipts, as against Rs. 7,247, or 75 per cent. of the gross receipts for the same period of 1883. The profits of the half-year amount to Rs. 6,716 which is equal to 5 per cent. per annum, and at this rate a dividend will be paid. The Managing Agents report that there have been no accidents during the half-year; that the line has been regularly visited and inspected; and that the rolling stock, permanent way, bridges, buildings, &c., are all in first-class order. The half-yearly inspection by the Consulting Engineer to Government was made on the 6th February, when he remarked in his report that the "banks are well kept on the main line and in fair order on the branch; that the permanent way on the main

line is in good order, has sufficient ballast, is well trimmed and neatly kept, and on the branch quite sufficiently well for the traffic; that the bridges and culverts are in good order and the rolling stock also." The traffic for the present half-year is stated to show a marked improvement over the corresponding half of 1884 up to the present time.

There have been sales of India General at Rs. 136, 137, 138 and 137. Inland Flotilla at Rs. 20 discount.

The receipts of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 28th February amount to:—passenger traffic, Rs. 5,860; goods, Rs. 215; sundries, Rs. 5—total Rs. 6,080. The audited accounts for the eight weeks previous, somewhat increase the estimated receipts hitherto published. They are:—passenger traffic, Rs. 41,434; goods, Rs. 1,792; sundries, Rs. 48—total Rs. 43,274. It will be observed that the goods traffic on this line is at present not one per cent. on the capital of the undertaking and fully bears out the views enunciated in the *Pioneer* of the 6th January last. There has been a sale of shares at Rs. 100.

The traffic returns of the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway for the first two months of this year amounted to Rs. 47,665, as against Rs. 50,996 for the same period of 1883, or a decrease of Rs. 3,331.

The traffic receipts of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 7th March show a decrease of Rs. 76,557 as contrasted with last year. From 1st January to 7th March 1885 they total up Rs. 84,42,658, as against Rs. 98,56,419 for 1884, or a decrease of Rs. 14,13,761.

The Calcutta Tramway receipts were Rs. 11,216 for the week ended 7th March.

Tea.—There have been no tea sales this week and very little of the crop remains to be sold. The Indian Tea Association have addressed a letter to the Viceroy regarding the proposed increase to the duty on tea in England. "It was their duty, and they did;" but we are afraid it will not have much effect. The advocates of a "free breakfast table" in England will have a good deal more weight with Parliament. Meetings are advertised of the Hoolungorie, Gowhatty, Kornafuli, and Dehing Companies

to receive reports, and of the Mothola and Singbulli and Murmah to declare dividends. Dividends have been declared by the Tukvar 5 per cent.; Hoolnaree 4 per cent. Ting Ling 3 per cent.; and Long View $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The following figures have been furnished by the Secretary to the Indian Tea Association. The exports to Great Britain include the 603,801 lbs. lost in the steamer *Justitia* :—

Exports of Indian Tea from Calcutta.

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain in February	3,768,203	3,461,460	3,649,562
Exports to Great Britain from 1st May to 28th February ...	59,986,965	56,746,332	51,075,488
Exports to Australia and New Zealand in February ...	206,063	14,290	348,146
Exports to Australia and New Zealand from 1st May to 28th February	1,260,997	314,215	2,673,450
Exports to America in February ...	9,462	21,008	12
Exports to America from 1st May to 28th February	105,646	176,484	628,392
Exports to other places in February	14,381	4,200	194,907
Exports to other places from 1st May to 28th February ...	300,883	273,600	448,738
Total Exports from 1st May to 28th February	61,653,991	57,510,631	54,826,068

The Managing Agents of the Bengal Baragunda Copper Company have issued another manifesto to the shareholders. It appears that Mr. Mallet, of the Geological Survey, has recently inspected the mines, and as soon as his report has been published it will be printed and circulated among the shareholders. The Managing Agents are, however, informed that Mr. Mallet is of opinion that the deposit is not a true lode; that the ore now being raised was neither very rich nor decidedly poor, but that he could form no opinion as to whether the mines would eventually pay, as he had no data as to the expenses of mining, dressing, smelting, &c. The cash balance on the 31st December was Rs. 66,441, and the liabilities of the Company Rs. 13,579,

leaving a sum of Rs. 52,862 available for advancing operations; and as the Agents put the estimated expenditure at Rs. 4,300 per month, the funds will just last out the year. At an informal meeting of shareholders held on the 12th of last month, it was represented that ore of such a quality was being raised as would probably pay if it could be smelted on the spot; and as in a few months the quantity capable of being raised will in all probability be sufficient to keep employed a furnace capable of turning out one ton of pure copper per day, the Managing Agents propose to call a meeting some three months hence to decide whether such further capital should not be called up, as will be required to erect a furnace, refinery, &c., on the Australian principle. It is needless to add that the captain of the mine has the fullest confidence in the venture, and is of opinion that the ore being raised is much richer than the average of ores worked to a profit in England. Since this informal meeting the prospects of the mine have still further improved, and the Managing Agents propose to order the most suitable style of dressing plant for the ore from England at once. A shares have been sold at Rs. 2 and B shares at Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$.

Mills, &c.—At the half-yearly meeting of the shareholders in Carew & Co. (Limited) on Saturday last, a dividend of 2 per cent. for the half-year was declared, Rs. 5,000 taken to Fire Insurance Fund and the balance of Rs. 5,514 carried forward. The sugar manufacturing industry does not at present seem to be doing so well, probably owing to the enormous imports from Mauritius, which for the 10 months only of the present financial year are larger than the imports during any of the 10 preceding years, and are probably the largest on record. The cane crop also was an unsatisfactory one, and so, instead of a dividend of 6 per cent., the shareholders must rest content with 2 only.

In the jute manufacturing industry the depression has reached such a length that there must soon now be a crisis. Gunny bags have declined to a price which means ruin to the Mill that sells them, and it is felt now that the time for, "fooling round" has gone and that something must be done to reduce the pro-

duction of the Mills, or they will soon be involved in one common ruin. The doctrine of "the survival of the fittest" is about played out, and the "short-time" movement will probably now be carried through. It is time that shareholders woke up to the fact that the unworthy and petty jealousies of some of their Directors and Managing Agents have caused a serious and unnecessary loss. Had the "short-time" movement been put through when it was advocated in the *Pioneer* on the 17th December last, shareholders would have been saved much loss. After three months' dilly-dallying it comes to it in the end. There has been a serious accident to the cylinder of one of the engines of the Fort Gloster Mill, so that this concern needs must go on short-time for the present.

There have been but few transactions in Mill shares, but such as are reported show a serious decline in rates :—Fort Gloster, Rs. 31, 29 and 27. Howrah, Rs. 61. Bowreah, Rs. 32.

The shareholders of the Strand Bank Press are apparently determined to take all they can out of the concern while they may. In their last report two of the Directors recommended a dividend of 15 per cent., while the other advised the shareholders to be content with 10. At the meeting it being ascertained that the available funds would admit of 17 per cent. the shareholders passed the accounts, rejected the Directors, Report, and declared a dividend of 17 per cent. by a large majority, unanimously re-electing the Director who had stood out for 10 per cent., to mark their confidence in the soundness of his advice which they had studiously departed from. There has been a sale of Bengal Coal shares at Rs. 1,250.

CALCUTTA, 21st March 1885.

Port Trust.—The writer of the *Englishman's* Freight-market Report observes :—" A few weeks ago we alluded to the gradual deterioration of the river Hooghly above Diamond Harbour. We then instanced the S. S. *City of Agra* as having been detained for seven days at Diamond Harbour. To-day we have again to report that no less than three steamers, the *Kohinur*, *City of Edinburgh*, and *Governor* have been neaped at Diamond Harbour from three to five days, which means a daily loss of a hundred pounds to each steamer. Besides these the sailing ships *Orealla*, *Lady Ruthven*, *Queen of Scots*, and *Misley Hall* have all been more or less detained. We beg to draw the attention of all concerned to these facts, which conclusively prove that the evil is very serious, and that the channels of the river are going from bad to worse. Can nothing be done to remedy this? All representations regarding the river and its navigation are treated with silence." At the present moment, though the charges under this head have enormously increased, the surveying of the river is anything but satisfactory. In olden times the survey brig and buoy vessel remained down the river doing good and useful work for four or five months at a time. Now it is left to the pilots to discover the soft places; when a ship bumps or grounds on the way up or down (which was the case with the mail steamer the other day, on a spot where 18 feet of water was marked and 13 feet found) intimation is sent to the Port Office, and the surveyor then proceeds to inspect the place in a steam-launch; this is called surveying. In the course of his Financial Statement Sir Auckland Colvin gives some figures regarding the export trade of this country, which he is "afraid will yield but little ground for hoping that we may expect any speedy return of the prosperity with which we were favoured in the years 1882 and 1883, and more especially in the latter year." This, of course, will be considered an authority for constructing elaborate, expensive, and unnecessary docks, and to justify an expenditure of three millions thereon. The *Times'* Calcutta correspondent telegraphing regarding the Kidderpore Docks and the memorial of

the merchants of Calcutta adds, after commenting unfavourably upon the scheme:—“ On the whole the arguments against the project, if not absolutely unanswerable, are at least so strong that the Government, although it has already made a large outlay in acquiring land, should pause before finally committing itself to a very much larger expenditure, which may have results so disastrous as the memorialists point out.”

The monthly Commercial Guide, published by the Collector of Sea Customs, shows a net decrease in the value of merchandise imported into Calcutta during February of Rs. 19,35,040 as compared with 1884. The main decreases are in twist and yarn $6\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, white piece-goods $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, machinery 6 lakhs, copper and iron $5\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, railway plant 5 lakhs. The main increases are in grey and coloured piece-goods 10 lakhs, tin $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh. In exports there is a net increase of Rs. 56,86,375 in the value of produce exported as compared with 1884. The main heads of increase are:—Indigo $89\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, Rice 16 lakhs, Jute $7\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, Opium $6\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, Lac $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, Hides 5 lakhs, Castor Oil and Seed 3 lakhs, Gunny Cloth 1 lakh, Lin and Poppy Seed 3 lakhs. The chief heads of decrease are:—Cotton $18\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, Gunny Bags $6\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs, Rapeseed 2 lakhs, Wheat 1 lakh. The exports of Wheat during the month were 4,649 tons, as against 5,207 tons in 1884, 10,777 tons in 1883, and 8,987 tons in 1882. Is this such an export as would justify a very large expenditure on docks? It must not be forgotten that the trade of Bombay and Kurrachoe as against last year is now increasing; the figures for February are not yet out, but for January the exports of wheat were 41,552 tons as against 15,169 for 1884; while Kurrachoe showed 12,023 tons against 8,831 in 1881!

Railways, &c.—The traffic returns of the Tarkossur Railway for the week ended 7th March show passenger receipts to have been Rs. 5,300, goods Rs. 342, sundries Rs. 5. From 1st January to 7th March they were:—passengers, Rs. 52,594; goods Rs. 2,349; sundries Rs. 58—total Rs. 55,001. The Calcutta Tramway receipts last week were Rs. 10,534.

The telegram announcing that the British Parliament has especially approved of the Secretary of State's borrowing 10 mil-

lions sterling in London for the purposes of railway extension is cheering news for persons interested in the development of the trade and commerce of this country, and is indeed a step in the right direction. As observed in the *Pioneer* of the 17th February if railways are to be constructed in India on a reasonable basis, they must be carried through by the State without the intervention of Calcutta agency houses. No one can raise the money so cheaply as the Government, and they can probably construct them cheaper also. It must be borne in mind that a railway is virtually a monopoly in this country, and that it is of the first importance that it should be constructed and worked at the lowest possible cost, otherwise trade is restricted and the country suffers. It is to be hoped that these 10 millions sterling which are to be raised in London will not be appropriated to other objects, but that they will be entirely expended on railways, and railways only. It is to be trusted that no part will be diverted to useless and unnecessary wet docks, or to military expenditure.

The traffic returns of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 14th March amounted to Rs. 10,14,413, as against Rs. 8,33,911 for the same period of 1884; this is an increase of Rs. 1,80,502, and would be very satisfactory, were it probably not due to exceptional causes; thus of the increase, Rs. 50,000 is on the coaching traffic, owing to the Barooni bathing festival and running of troops extra trains; and a good deal of the balance will probably be found to be due to the conveyance of stores and equipments to Rawul Pindi. But one satisfactory feature in the returns, indicative of careful management on the part of the Traffic Department, is that, though some 20,000 maunds more stuff has been carried, the mileage run has been nearly 2,500 miles less. The total decrease in the traffic receipts from 1st April 1884 to 14th March 1885, as contrasted with the previous year, is 76½ lakhs! There have been sales of Darjeeling Railway shares at Rs. 90, and India General new shares at Rs. 30 premium.

The Report of the Managing Agents of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company for the six months ended 31st December

will probably prove somewhat disappointing to the shareholders. The paid-up capital of the Company is Rs. 5,95,000, and the flotilla employed in its services comprises 10 steamers, 4 steam-launches, and 23 cargo and passenger craft, valued at Rs. 6,21,717. The Company was started to provide regular, cheap, and well-ordered steam communication on the Hooghly and minor waters of Bengal, and, as was observed in the *Pioneer* of the 9th September last, the idea is a good one, and only wants to be handled in a practical way to ensure the growth of a sound and substantial reality. The Company has regular lines from Calcutta to Rajgunge, Ooloobariah and Midnapore, Gewankhali, Santipore and Cutwa, and during the half-year 451,455 persons were carried; and it is stated that a stimulus has been given to the traffic by reduced rates, which are as low now as it is possible to make them, consistent with efficient services, the Company having silenced the opposition by buying up its fleet for Rs. 85,000, which were paid for in shares. The Managing Agents state that the Company have now the use of convenient landing stages within port limits, and that its position is stronger and more efficient than it was at the beginning of 1884; "but progressive development of the traffic should be looked forward to, and for some time to come it would seem to be a matter of prudence for the shareholders to be content to see a portion of their profits devoted to an increase of their fleet." This is doubtless very sound advice, but the shareholders may perhaps inquire where the profits are: they may not unnaturally first desire to catch their hare. The gross earnings of the Company's fleet for the past half-year were Rs. 1,53,257, and the ordinary working expenses and repairs amounted to Rs. 1,30,106, leaving a gross profit of Rs. 23,151. The value of the Company's fleet is put down at Rs. 6,21,717, and the depreciation on this description of property is very great, repairs and renewals of engines, boilers, &c., in small craft of this description being exceedingly heavy items after the first few years, and should be annually provided for: at least $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum should be laid aside for this. Now if $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. be calculated on Rs. 6,21,717, it amounts to Rs. 20,313 and turns the gross profit of Rs. 23,151 into a loss

for the half-year of Rs. 162! From a perusal of the accounts it would seem that the charges of management might, with advantage, be reduced. Thus we have besides the wages account, which amounts to Rs. 32,314—

	Rs.
European out-door establishment	... 4,489
Head Office establishment	... 6,035
Managing Agency	... 600
Out Agency	... 2,452
Total	... <u>13,576</u>

In other words, the wages and management for the six months amount to Rs. 45,890, or nearly 30 per cent. of the receipts. Fuel and stores total up Rs. 43,970, or 28 per cent. Printing and stationery Rs. 2,660, or Rs. 445 per month, seems also high. It is early yet to say anything about this Company; the trade it is seeking to develop, and the experience necessary to make that trade a financial success, is not the growth of a day, and we can only advise the shareholders to watch and wait for the progressive development of the traffic, and for the return which that development, if the concern be practically and economically managed, should bring to them.

Banks.—The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal to the 17th March shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,78,09,145, while the cash and currency notes were Rs. 2,70,14,929; or 54.4 per cent. The Bank rate still remains at 7 per cent. The balance in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India has been reduced to Rs. 1,11,63,440; the Bombay balance having fallen to 9½ lakhs, while Calcutta has increased to 59 lakhs. The Calcutta Clearing House returns show a smart falling off, the amount passed through having been Rs. 96,50,197 only. There have been dealings in Bank of Bengal shares during the past week at fluctuating prices. Sales were recorded on Monday at Rs. 810, on Tuesday at Rs. 805, and on Wednesday at Rs. 800. On Thursday they firmed to Rs. 810, and on Friday to Rs. 815; business has been done to-day at Rs. 820 and Rs. 822½.

Government Paper, consequent upon the more peaceful news and the announcement that there would be no loan issue in India, has recovered a good deal of tone; on Monday it opened at 96 and declined to $95\frac{1}{2}$, but on Tuesday it opened at $95\frac{1}{2}$ and rose to $96\frac{3}{8}$, on Wednesday it opened at $97\frac{1}{4}$ and finally closed at 97; on Thursday opening at $96\frac{7}{8}$, it closed at 97; on Friday it declined again to $96\frac{7}{8}$. To-day the market closes steady at about $96\frac{1}{8}$ to $96\frac{3}{8}$.

Exchange improved on Monday to *1s. 6½d.*, and on Tuesday to *1s. 7d.*; on Thursday, however, it declined to *1s. 6½d.*, and on Friday to *1s. 6½d.* To-day it is steadier, and closes firm at *1s. 6½d.* for bank bills on demand.

Tea.—At the public sales on Thursday some 2,808 chests were offered, of which 2,709 found buyers, and 99 were withdrawn. Meetings are advertised of the Chandpore, Monacherra, Bengal, Kalacherra, Sungoo River, Majogram, Bishnauth, Grob, and Cocheela Companies to receive reports, and of the Selim and Burkhola to declare dividends. A dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. has been declared by the Durrung Company. The debentures of the Singbulli and Murmah Company are to be renewed at 7 per cent. There has been a sale of Jetinga Valley tea shares during the week at Rs. 50.

Mills.—The prospects of the Bombay Cotton Mills are said to be very gloomy, and a meeting has been convened to inaugurate a short-time movement, which has now been carried through. The *Englishman*, commenting on this, says that:—"Whatever may be in store for Bombay, it can look for little sympathy after having tolerated a discreditable system of agency, which is directly interested in promoting over-production." Are we to understand from this that the Jute Mills of Bengal are equally undeserving of sympathy? Why does the *Englishman* go to Bombay for a remark of this kind? Why does it not look at home? Why is it always attempting to pull the mote out of its neighbour's eye and ignoring the beam in its own? Does the *Englishman* know that the great majority of the Jute and Cotton Mills in Calcutta are managed on what it is pleased to call "a discreditable system of agency, which is direct-

ly interested in promoting overproduction?" Does it know that some of our most respected and esteemed firms, who hold the agencies of Jute Mills, are paid by a commission on the production, and cannot be removed from the agency without their consent? Does it know that this "discreditable system" obtains in the Asiatic, Barnagore, Champdany, Ganges, Gourepore, Hooghly, India, Kamarhatty, Kankuarrah, and Wellington Jute Mills—and in the Dunbar Cotton Mills? It may be presumed not. But be the system discreditable or not, it is only just and right to say that the majority of the firms, whose incomes would be affected by reduced production, were in favour of going on short-time, Mr. Keswick being one of the leaders of the movement; the only recalcitrant concern being the Gourepore, to which must, we fear, now be added the Barnagore Company. The following extract from the *Dundee Advertiser* of the 20th ultimo will be read with interest by those engaged in the jute manufacture here:—

PROPOSED SHORT-TIME IN DUNDEE JUTE WORKS.

"A Meeting of Jute Spinners and Manufacturers was held in the Royal Exchange, Dundee, yesterday afternoon, to consider the advisableness of limiting production by stopping machinery and running short time. Mr. J. H. Walker, President of the Chamber of Commerce, presided, and there was a large attendance, almost all the leading firms being represented. A number of gentlemen addressed the meeting, and expressed their conviction that a curtailment of production was necessary to check the downward tendency of prices and bring about an improvement of trade, which has been so long unremunerative. The names of those who were willing to support the movement were thereafter taken down, when it was found that the greater number of those present were in favour of the introduction of short time. A resolution to reduce the production of jute yarns and cloth, either by closing the work on Saturdays or by stopping machinery to a corresponding extent, was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously, and a Committee was appointed to confer

with the employers, who were unrepresented with the view of ascertaining whether they will adhere to this recommendation. The Committee were instructed to report as soon as possible, so that united action may be taken at an early date. It was mentioned at the meeting that at the present time there are about 20,000 spindles standing in the town.

“ In accordance with the resolution arrived at by the employers a week ago, notices were yesterday posted in all the Mills intimating a general reduction of five per cent. on the wages of Mill and Factory hands.”

In Jute Mill shares there have been sales of Fort Gloster at Rs. 27. Howrah Mills, Rs. 61. Gourepore, Rs. 66½. Budge-Budge, Rs. 67 (this is the lowest figure reached). Bowreah Cotton Mills, Rs. 32 and Rs. 37. Dunbar Rs. 28. Watson's Press, Rs. 96. Strand Bank, Rs. 79 ex-dividend. A meeting is advertised of the Bowreah Company. It is said that the profit made is Rs. 30,000.

Miscellaneous.—Baragunda A shares, Rs. 2. Imperial Ice, Rs. 35. R. Scott, Thompson & Co., Rs. 260. W. Newman & Co., 100. Shareholders in Ice Companies will be glad to learn that there is some probability of the various concerns combining and fixing the minimum rate at 1 anna per seer. At the present moment the suicidal policy of attempting to cut each other's throats is being followed with much vigour, to the keen amusement of the on-lookers, who are not interested therein; and to the advantage of the public, who are getting their daily supplies of ice at an extremely moderate figure.

CALCUTTA, 28th March 1885.

Port Trust.—A Resolution on the Administration Report of the Port Commissioners for the year 1883-84 appears in the last *Calcutta Gazette*. At the close of the year the debt of the Port Trust amounted to Rs. 97,33,787, while the assets of the Trust, exclusive of the foreshore and Strand Bank, which was made over to them free in 1870, amounted to Rs. 1,78,97,544; in this sum is, however, included Rs. 8,03,489 of investments under Reserve, Depreciation, and Sinking Funds, and Rs. 10,30,940 value of light-ships, buoys, &c., made over by the Government free of charge in 1882-83. The value, therefore, of the block of the Port Trust paid for by the Commissioners is Rs. 1,60,63,115, or Rs. 63,29,328 more than their debt. This means that during the fourteen years the Port Trust has been at work, it has on an average (exclusive of sinking funds, &c.), appropriated $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of revenue towards block, instead of to that extent reducing the charges of the Port! During the year the Public Debt of the Trust has been increased by a debenture loan of 20 lakhs, and large sums of money have been spent with a lavish hand on new works and improvements. The most noteworthy are: the extension of the jetty embankment, Rs. 71,756; the erection of jetty warehouses to compete against private enterprise, Rs. 2,94,712; a warehouse at Juggernath Ghât, Rs. 61,622; the Howrah foreshore road, Rs. 4,42,586; extension of moorings, Rs. 1,16,441; Tramway lines and sidings, Rs. 1,08,268; purchase of Calcutta Docking Company's premises, Rs. 5,25,000. The revenue of the Port Commissioners is stated to have been Rs. 29,26,120, and the expenditure, inclusive of contributions to sinking funds, *new works and port dues*, Rs. 24,47,719; so that a profit of Rs. 4,78,401 appears to have been made, yet nothing is said of any reduction in the charges upon goods. The income from the jetties during the year was Rs. 1,13,826 in excess of the previous year, and higher than has ever been reached before. We are not, however, informed what the net profit was under this head. We learn, however, that it was Rs. 2,93,162. The receipts, from inland wharves were Rs. 3,55,467, or a decrease of

Rs. 51,666 on the previous year; but the net revenue, notwithstanding, was Rs. 1,56,188. The receipts from Strand Bank lands amounted to Rs. 1,67,201, or Rs. 20,112 more than the previous year. The large gain in receipts arises from the increased rents received from the Howrah foreshore lands, &c. This is looked upon as a valuable property, the rentals of which are steadily on the increase. The receipts of the Harbour Master's Department fell from Rs. 5,97,873 in 1882-83 to Rs. 5,66,069 in the year under review; but as the expenditure was only Rs. 4,96,200 a profit was made in the branch also. The working of the Tramway brought in a net income of Rs. 39,994. "The Lieutenant-Governor is glad again to be in a position to tender his thanks to the Commissioners for their efficient administration of the Port during the year: and he also desires to specially recognise the valuable service of the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Duff-Bruce. Owing to bad harvests the year has not been one of great commercial prosperity, but nothing has been wanting on the Commissioners' part to advance the interests committed to their charge." Now if the Lieutenant-Governor was reviewing the working of a bank or public Company the above remarks would be intelligible; for there is no doubt that the Port Commissioners have made a handsome profit on the year's transactions;—they have taxed everything they could lay their hands on: they have managed to divert a considerable amount of trade to Bombay, they have applied the dues on goods to reducing the dues on ships; they have sacrificed the interests of shippers to those of the ship-owners, and they have expanded the rules regulating passenger traffic to suit the requirements of a new and useful line of passenger steamers! But what have they done for the trade of the Port; whose interests have they considered? "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus (Rivers Thompson) that all the world should be taxed." This text might fitly be written over the office of the Port Commissioners, and then people doing business in Calcutta would know what they might expect. The last phase of the mania of this Trust for taxation is as novel as it is to be condemned. In the *Pioneer* of the 24th February I pointed out the attempt of the Port Com-

missioners to induce the East Indian Railway Company to join them in what was little short of a fraud on the public in connection with the toll on the Howrah Bridge. The Howrah Bridge, as most people know, was built out of funds supplied by Government, it being the intention when the surplus receipts from tolls have paid for the construction to relieve it from taxation. The management of the Bridge is under the control of the Port Commissioners; and I now am informed that arrangements are in progress by which the toll of Re. 1 per 100 maunds equivalent to 4 annas per ton, shall be divided equally between the Port Commissioners and the Bridge Commissioners, the Port Commissioners to levy their share (2 annas per ton) permanently when the Bridge toll lapses under the Act; and I am told that it has already been arranged that until the debt of the Bridge is liquidated, the toll shall be divided between the Port and Bridge Commissioners. In this way apparently without the knowledge of the mercantile community, and notwithstanding the indignant protests of the Railway Company another nail has been knocked into the coffin of the trade of Calcutta.

Railways, &c.—The traffic returns of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 14th March show an extremely satisfactory increase under every head, more specially in the goods traffic; they are:—passengers, Rs. 6,620; goods, Rs. 604; sundries, Rs. 5—total Rs. 7,229. For the eleven weeks ended the 14th March the receipts are:—passengers, Rs. 59,214; goods, Rs. 2,953; miscellaneous, Rs. 63—total Rs. 62,230. There will be another festival very shortly, which should swell the returns. The Calcutta Tramway receipts this week show a serious falling off, having declined to Rs. 9,849. The traffic receipts of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 21st March were Rs. 10,57,690, as against Rs. 9,57,160 for last year. The increase is doubtless due to the Rawul Pindi assemblage. There have been sales of Calcutta Tramway shares at Rs. 89.

Banks, &c.—The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal up to 24th March shows that the public and other deposits amounted to Rs. 4,63,36,879, while the cash and currency notes totalled up Rs. 2,43,64,335 only, or 50·6 per cent. The rate for demand

loans still remains at 7 per cent. Bank shares have much improved during the week and transactions are recorded at 822½, 825, 827½, 830. The Calcutta Clearing House returns for the past week show the amount passed through to have been Rs. 90,87,923, which is the lowest figure reached this year. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries have decreased to Rs. 97,73,525 ; the amount at Madras being only 2¼ lakhs, Calcutta 50¼ lakhs, and Bombay 45¼ lakhs.

The Report of the Directors of the Agra Bank for the year 1884, all things considered, is a very satisfactory one. The profit made, after providing for bad and doubtful debts, amounts to £74,897, and after deducting £13,876 to provide for some doubtful outstandings, the amounts available stands at £61,021, to which must be added £12,298 brought forward from last year. An intermediate dividend of 2½ per cent., free of income tax, has already been declared, and the Directors recommend a final dividend of 3 per cent., free of income tax, making 5½ per cent. for the year, that £10,000 shall be taken to the Reserve Fund, and the balance of £8,319 carried forward. The Reserve Fund now stands at £220,000. The following is a synopsis of the balance sheet on 31st December :—

LIABILITIES.			£
Capital fully paid-up	...	...	1,000,000
Reserve Fund	...	...	220,000
Current Deposits	...	...	1,126,771
Fixed do.	...	...	2,279,081
Bills payable and Credits issued	...	...	731,581
Profit and Loss	...	...	63,319
		Total	5,421,652

ASSETS.			£
Cash in hand	...	...	430,074
Government Securities	...	...	815,881
House Property	...	...	168,500
Discounts, Loans, Credits and Advances	...	...	2,786,858
Bills receivable and Security for Credits issued, &c.	...	...	1,220,339
		Total	5,421,652

It will be observed that the current deposits amount to £1,126,771 and the cash and Government securities to £1,245,955 or more than sufficient to cover them. The Directors observe that the result of the year's operations is a somewhat smaller profit than that of 1883, "which is to be ascribed mainly to the depression which has characterised the condition of trade with the East during the greater portion of the year under review. Indian produce of almost every kind has, for some time, ranged at extremely low prices, and the natural consequence of this has been materially to restrict the extent of these important transactions and prejudicially to affect the profits realised by those engaged in carrying them on. The business of the Bank necessarily sympathises with that of its constituents, so far as regards the amount of its operations, and this, combined with the foresight and care requisite when times are unfavourable, will sufficiently explain why on this occasion the profits have not shown that improvement which under other circumstances might have been looked for." The balance sheet is an eminently satisfactory one, and as the "Agra" is a very popular and useful Bank here, conducting along with its exchange operations a large and valuable local business, it is very pleasing to notice its steady progress and continued prosperity.

Government Paper, owing to the immediate prospect of war, has steadily declined all through the week; opening on Monday at 96 $\frac{3}{4}$ it has steadily weakened every day, closing on Friday night at 95 to 95 $\frac{1}{2}$. To-day the market is quiet at 95 $\frac{1}{2}$ and very little business has been done in the absence of definite information regarding the political situation.

Exchange has been steady during the week at 1s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. It declined on Thursday to 1s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. but recovered on Friday to 1s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. at which it closes firm to-day for Bank bills on demand.

Tea.—At the London tea sales this week 18,000 chests were offered and 15,600 sold with a good demand for all descriptions. Meetings are advertised of the Chota Nagpore and Darjeeling Tea and Cinchona Companies to receive reports, and of the Jetinga Valley Company to declare a dividend. This last concern is really a Tea-seed Company and, I understand, has sold all

the tea-seed it can make for the next year to Ceylon gardens, which will soon be very formidable competitors with Assam and Cachar. Dividends have been declared by the Rajabaree Company of 5 per cent., Burkhola 3 per cent., and Mim Company 10 per cent. There have been sales of Dehing at 28 and 29. Singbulli and Murmah at 96.

Mills, &c.—The report of the Bengal (Cotton) Mills Company for the year 1884 shows only moderately satisfactory results. The net profit is Rs. 96,796, but as there is an appropriation of Rs. 41,020 for depreciation of buildings and machinery, the profit earned as contrasted with other concerns would be Rs. 1,37,816. It was generally reported that for the first six months of 1884 the profit made was Rs. 1,10,000; which, if true, shows that for the past six months the earnings were only about Rs. 28,000, which is a serious falling off and does not indicate such careful and able management as heretofore. There is one feature, however, in this concern which does credit to the judgment of the management, and which some of the other local Mills would do well to imitate, and that is the steady appropriation every year of a sum from the profits toward "depreciation." The result is that the block has been written down from £117,212 to £79,965, or, say, Rs. 23 per spindle; and besides this there is a sum of £17,852 at the credit of Reserve Funds. The position of this Mill is therefore thoroughly sound, and the share capital fully represented by a valuable property. An *ad-interim* dividend of 5 per cent. in sterling was declared in September last, and the Directors now propose to pay a final sterling dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and to carry the balance of Rs. 21,527 forward.

The Report of the Directors of the Bowreah Cotton Mills Company for the half-year ended 28th February discloses a gross manufacturing profit on the working of Rs. 47,834, or deducting interest on debentures, an available profit of Rs. 31,614, and adding Rs. 627 brought forward from last half-year, the balance at credit of profit and loss amounts to Rs. 32,241. The Directors recommend that Rs. 20,000 should be carried to Reserve Fund, which will then amount to 1 lakh, that Rs. 2,000 be written off to machinery account, and the balance carried forward.

Considering the depressed state of the trade these results cannot be called unsatisfactory, and the disposal of the profits made should commend itself to prudent shareholders. The Mill is stated to have worked well during the six months, and no artificial light has been used during the period; but the block stands at rather a heavy figure, and has increased during the six months under review some Rs. 30,000, being now $19\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs. This is very high for a Mill of its size. I should be inclined to value it at 12 lakhs. Still the concern has been well managed and shareholders should be content. In shares there have been transactions in Bowreah Cotton at 36. Muir Mills, 295. Fort Gloster, 27. Howrah Mills, 61. Barnagore, 62. Nasmyth Press, 70. Camperdown Press, 100.

Mines.—Bengal Coal have dealt in at 1,225. Alipore Coal at 145. Baragunda Copper A shares at $2\frac{1}{8}$, B shares at $2\frac{1}{4}$.

There has been a solitary sale of Bonded Warehouse shares at 274. Investors are "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" as to what effect the action of the Port Commissioners may have on this useful institution, and hence the fall in the shares.

CALCUTTA, 4th April 1885.

Port Trust.—There is a feeling of positive relief and satisfaction in the minds of the great majority of business men in Calcutta that the scheme for digging a big hole on the banks of the river at Kidderpore and calling it a Wet Dock has, for the present been suspended. The works are stopped and seem likely to be so for some time to come. For this the merchants and traders of Calcutta are indebted to the action of the Viceroy and his Council, who have declined to pass the Dock Bill which was carried by an official majority in the Bengal Legislative Council, and who have called upon the Port Commissioners “to consider whether their chances of floating a loan in Calcutta are sufficient to justify their continuation of the works, it being impossible to furnish them with other funds than those which they may be able themselves to raise in the open market.” This action of the Government of India is very satisfactory and ought to convince Mr. Reynolds and the Bengal Government that the important memorial signed by most of the principal mercantile and trading firms in Calcutta in opposition to this dock scheme is not to be easily set aside and disposed of, and it ought also to satisfy the community that if they only exert themselves and take an active and intelligent interest in their own affairs their wishes and interests will at all times have due weight and consideration with the Government of India. The action of the Government of India in this matter is of the greatest importance, and has saved the trading interests of the port from a permanent and crushing burden. The withdrawal of the guarantee by Government of interest at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum on the proposed issue of Dock Bonds is thoroughly justifiable. When it was authorised by the Secretary of State it was in the belief, and on the distinct understanding, that it was the unanimous wish of the Calcutta mercantile community that these docks should be constructed. Now when it is seen clearly that such is very far from being the case, the grounds on which the Secretary of State’s authority was granted no longer hold good. Moreover, even supposing there had been no opposition to the scheme,

there are, on grounds of public policy, the gravest objections to giving the guarantee of the State to any such undertaking. Having disposed of the guarantee, the Government of India, in face of the powerful and influential opposition to the construction of the docks at all, ought to veto the Bill altogether. At present they have declined to pass it. If, therefore, the opposition will make their wishes clearly known and have their memorial properly presented at the India Office, which, we understand, is now being done, this Dock Bill will certainly never become law. It is stated that telegrams have been sent to Mr. Bullen-Smith, on behalf of the Port Commissioners, to inquire if £400,000 could be raised for them in London, of course on their own credit. They might as well have telegraphed to the man in the moon so far as anything resulting from it is concerned. The Viceroy having refused to give his assent to the Bill, it is perfectly illegal for the Port Commissioners to attempt to raise money for any such purpose either in London or Calcutta, as it was equally illegal for them to spend a rupee at Kidderpore *in anticipation* of their Bill being passed. I would further remind them that in any such borrowings the trading community will not permit them, under the altered position in which the matter now stands, to hypothecate any portion of the general revenues of the port to secure the payment of interest on money raised for the construction of wet docks to which the great majority of them are opposed. Such an undertaking, if carried out now, must stand on its own merits, and if there are any people willing to subscribe money for such a purpose, they must clearly look for their interest and security to the dock property and its revenue and not to the ordinary income of the port at all. Dock property at home, where they combine along with it the business of warehousing goods and produce on a large scale, has not proved by any means a remunerative investment, the ordinary shares of the principal London docks being at a heavy discount. As regards foreign or colonial docks, these, with the exception of the Melbourne Harbour Loan at 5 per cent., are entirely confined, so far as the London market is concerned, to the Harbour Board Bonds of some of the seaport towns in New Zealand, which have

borrowed comparatively small amounts at rather high rates of interest, *viz.*, Auckland, 5 and 6 per cent. : Lyttelton, 6 per cent. ; Otago, 6 per cent. ; Oamaru, 6 per cent. ; Wanganni, 6 per cent. ; and Napier, 7 per cent.

It is satisfactory also to learn that the Lieutenant-Governor has refused to sanction the payment to Mr. Duff Bruce of the special *douceur* of Rs. 30,000 granted to him by the Port Commissioners for his services in preparing the dock plans and estimates. The Vice-Chairman is an official of the Port Trust in receipt of very handsome pay, and it is difficult therefore to understand on what grounds the Commissioners felt themselves justified in thus disposing of a large amount of public money. Such payments are at all times open to objection, and in this case any such proposal should have been deferred until the docks were completed and had proved a success. The Commissioners' action had the less justification when it is remembered that the original estimates provided for a dock of 110 acres at a cost of two crores and thirty lakhs, which after being subjected to examination by the Government engineers and some of the first dock engineers at home, had to be modified to a dock with an area of only 40 acres to cost two crores! A gentleman of long practical experience, whose opinions on matters affecting the navigation of the river always carried weight with the Government of Bengal, has sent me the following communication. "Now that the works at the contemplated wet docks at Kidderpore have been stopped, at all events for the present, it would be well if the Port Commissioners turned their attention to a matter of greater importance. It is whether the serious detention which large and expensive ships and steamers are constantly being subjected to by being neaped at Diamond Harbour and Calcutta for as long as ten and eleven days at a time cannot be overcome to some extent by dredging or stirring the sand, &c., from the bar of the eastern gut of the James and Mary, and at Moyapore, so that the silt would scour away into the deep water in close proximity to these bars, which are of small extent. By doing this they would facilitate a navigation of the river, and do the mercantile community a real service instead of attempting to burden and drive away the trade to other ports."

Mills.—The Report of the Goosery Jute Mills Co. for the last six months has at last made its appearance. The Mill has been silent during the period under review, so that the loss has been small, Rs. 22,355; the balance at debit of profit and loss account is now Rs. 1,02,017. The alterations and extensions have been pushed on steadily, the buildings are now completed, the bulk of the machinery placed in position, and the engine is in course of erection. The repairs and replacements necessary to put the old machinery in first-class condition were found to be much more extensive than anticipated, and in consequence the estimate for these items has been much exceeded. The shareholders were to be invited at the meeting to consider what means should be adopted to meet the increased expenditure. In Mill shares the only transaction reported has been in Fort Gloster at Rs. 27.

Banks.—The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal up to 31st March shows that the public and other deposits amounted on that date to Rs. 4,88,31,168, against Rs. 4,63,36,879 last week, while the cash and currency notes aggregated Rs. 2,63,29,911 against Rs. 2,43,64,335 the previous week, the percentage having improved from 50·6 to 51·8. The minimum rate remains at 7 per cent. for advances on Government securities. Bank shares have been dealt in at Rs. 830.

Bank Dividends.—The public telegrams have announced the following. The Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China pays a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for last half-year, being at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, places £20,000 to the Reserve Fund, which will now stand at £110,000 and carries forward £8,300 to the next account. The National Bank of India, Limited also pays a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the past half-year, puts £10,000 to the Reserve Fund increasing it to £40,000, and carries forward £12,000. The above results are considered very satisfactory, especially when the dull state of trade, during the period when these profits were earned, is taken into account.

The Bankers' Clearing House returns for the week ended 28th March give the amount passed through as Rs. 77,65,960, which is very small and shows the dull state of business.

The balances in the Reserve Treasuries on the evening of 31st March were Rs. 55,32,928, being a decrease of Rs. 42,40,597 during the week.

Railways, &c.—The earnings of the East Indian Railway for the week ending 28th March were Rs. 10,47,928 against Rs. 10,08,062 for the corresponding week last year, being an increase of Rs. 39,865-10-6. The earnings of the Darjeeling Railway for the week ending 21st March were Rs. 6,336 against Rs. 6,801 for the corresponding week of last year, showing a decrease of Rs. 465. The traffic earnings of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ending 21st March were:—passengers, Rs. 5,501; goods, Rs. 671; sundries, Rs. 4—total Rs. 6,176, against Rs. 7,229 last week, decrease Rs. 1,053. Total receipts from 1st January Rs. 68,406. The Calcutta Tramway receipts for last week were Rs. 9,918 against Rs. 9,849 the previous week, showing a small increase of Rs. 69.

Exchange.—Early in the week sterling rates were steady but the amount of Council drafts offered in London being greater than the market at present requires, rates were weak at the close. On Monday the rate for Bank drafts on demand was 1-6½, on Tuesday 1-6½, on Wednesday 1-6½, and on Thursday 1-6½. These quotations, of course apply only to merchants' transactions which are for good amounts, for remittances of small sums a slightly lower rate has to be paid.

Government Securities.—The fluctuations have been very considerable owing to the prospect of a peaceful settlement of the Boundary question. On Monday the price of 4 per cent. Paper moved from 95-0 to 94-14, on Tuesday from 94-12 to 95-0, on Wednesday from 95-6 to 95-12, and on Thursday from 95-14 to 96-8, and back again to 96-0, to which the market closed steady.

Tea.—At the London sales of Indian tea this week 11,000 chests were offered, of which 9,500 were sold; the market was firm and prices higher. The deliveries for March as wired are 8,700,000 lbs., against for same month last year 5,000,000 lbs., and the stock is 23,800,000 lbs. against 23,800,000 lbs. at same date last year. The deliveries since 1st January of this year amount to 20,900,000 lbs. against 15,700,000 lbs. or an increase

of 5,200,000 lbs. The talk of an increase in the tea duty may probably have something to do with this large increase in the deliveries. Whatever the cause is we trust it will result in those interested in tea property in this country getting a better price for their produce this year. Dividends have been declared by the Sapakati Tea Company of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for season 1884, payable on and after 1st April. Selim Tea Company, dividend of Rs. 4 on fully paid shares, and Rs. 2-8-8 on contributory, payable 7th April; Singbulli and Murmah, 8 per cent. payable 7th April; Mothola Company, Limited, 4 per cent. payable 10th April. The Ordinary General Meeting of the Pashok Tea Company is called for 13th April.

In shares there have been transactions in India General's at 115. Darjeeling Railways, 85. Great Eastern Hotel, 80. New Beerbhoom Coal, 65. Raneegunge Coal, 55. Strand Bank Press, 71, (forced sale.) Singell Tea, 57. Baragunda Copper, A shares at Rs. 2-2 each.

The Annual Report of the Directors of the Hingunghat Mill Company, Limited, states that out of the profits for the year, *vis.*, Rs. 61,247-8-4, the sum of Rs. 59,328-4-5 has been transferred to Reserve Fund, swelling that account to Rs. 1,29,328-4-5, and carried to Profit and Loss Account Rs. 1,919-13-11 which, with the balance of last year of this account, makes the Profit and Loss Account Rs. 2,842-11-2. From the Reserve Fund the Directors have transferred to Depreciation Account Rs. 1,11,828-4-5, leaving the Reserve Fund Rs. 17,500 to the good. The capital of the Company, Rs. 3,50,000, together with Depreciation Fund Rs. 1,11,828-4-5, balances with the cost of the Mill *vis.*, Rs. 4,61,828-4-5. The Directors do not think it advisable to recommend a dividend for the past year for four special reasons: (1) it is absolutely necessary to equalise the capital expenditure with the amount of the capital subscribed, (2) the annual instalment of Rs. 50,000 in reduction of the mortgage to Mr. Rekchand has to be provided for by 31st May, (3) the heavy interest of 12 per cent., and (4) the unremunerative state of manufacture for the present and the gloomy future of the industry cotton being dearest and yarn lowest in price. It is stated that the

law-suit between the old and new Directors has, by consent on both sides, been amicably compromised. Four frames of 324 spindles each have been added to the Mill to keep pace with the card-room which had to stop half a day in each week on account of over-production in that department. These spindles are now at work giving most satisfactory results. With this increase of production the cost of manufacture will be lessened. Important reductions in the working expenses have also been made without interfering with the efficiency of working.

The Directors of the Oriental Government Security Life Assurance Company, Limited, the only purely Indian Assurance Company, have issued their Report of the operations for the year ending 31st December 1884. As on previous occasions, the Directors are glad to report that substantial progress has been made, the result of the whole business being that the Funds of the Company, which at the beginning of the year amounted to Rs. 10,53,130-1-1, have been increased to the extent of Rs. 3,88,290-7-10, thus making a total of Rs. 14,41,420-8-11, being an amount of accumulated resources which the Directors consider affords to all members complete security. The above increase is chiefly in the Premia Department. During the year 1,982 Life Proposals were made to the Company for assuring the sum of Rs. 60,85,300. Of this number 1,642 have resulted in Policies, and the remainder have either been declined, withdrawn, or are awaiting completion. These figures show that the new business has considerably increased when compared with 1,670 Proposals for Rs. 53,72,450 received during last year. On the *new* Policies effected during the year, the Annual Premia, less debts under the new Plan, Under-Average Systems, &c., amount to Rs. 2,14,810-13-0; the sum assured being Rs. 48,06,000. Claims on death of assured members, amounting to Rs. 1,23,588-1-2, have been paid during the year. Of this sum Rs. 20,973-1-6 were re-assured, and consequently repaid to the Company. One Endowment Policy for Rs. 12,075-7-6 was paid on maturity, also a monthly Pension of Rs. 15. The total number of Claims since the commencement of the Company is

102, including two Endowments, amounting to Rs. 3,94,190-12-2, of which Rs. 99,973-1-6 re-assured. This is considerably under the Company's expectation. The total expenditure of the Company has been Rs. 2,86,527-7-6, which includes Rs. 60,156-4-8, for re-assurances, and Rs. 1,22,191-14-10 for payment of Claims, Pensions, and Surrenders, leaving a balance of Receipts over expenditure of Rs. 3,91,025-3-4.

CALCUTTA, 11th April 1885.

Port Trust.—The Port Commissioners have, it appears, been authorised by Government to raise on the credit of the Port a Debenture Loan of 30 lakhs for the purpose of enabling them “to meet the estimated cost of works and arrangements sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor.” This is, I presume, to repay the advance made by the Government of Bengal for expenditure incurred on the Wet Dock Scheme at Kidderpore entered upon in anticipation of the Dock Bill being passed. The commercial community entirely fail to understand what urgency there was for proceeding with these works at all before the necessary legal enactment had become law, except on the ground that there was evidently a determination in certain quarters to rush the Government, and commit them and the port to the scheme before the matter could be further considered. In this they have been unsuccessful, and although a memorial is now being circulated in support of the Docks by certain interested parties, or at their instigation, it is not, I understand, being received with much favour. Whatever the result, however, the Government of India and the Secretary of State, in face of the strong and influential opposition to the scheme, are not at all likely now to pass the Dock Bill without a further and searching investigation into the whole matter by an independent Commission of Inquiry, on which the merchants, traders, railways, and all others interested in the future prosperity of these provinces should be fully and thoroughly represented. What has to be considered in such a matter is not so much the vested interests of Calcutta, but what is best for furthering generally the trade and commerce of Bengal, &c., and in that respect the Kidderpore Docks, if ever constructed, instead of furthering our trade, will prove a heavy and permanent drag on the Port. The chances of the Port Commissioners being able to get the 30 lakhs in Calcutta at present are remote, and as the Government of Bengal are to blame, in having allowed the works to go on at all, they, and not the public, ought to find the money for the works and arrangements which they sanctioned without any legal authority whatever, and it will be unjust if the general

income of the Port is burdened with any such charge. It is reported, but requires confirmation, that the ordinary revenues of the Port to the extent of some lakhs have been diverted and applied to meeting expenditure at Kidderpore. If such is the case the Port Commissioners should be held personally responsible, such application of any portion of the general income of the Port being altogether beyond their powers. In continuation of my remarks last week as to the state of the river, I learn that the *S. S. Clan Macpherson* and some four or five large ships are at present neaped at Diamond Harbour and cannot get up to Calcutta for some days yet. This state of matters, which is of constant occurrence, ought to convince the Government and all interested in the trade of the place that it would be sheer waste of money constructing Wet Docks at Kidderpore. At present all action regarding Docks should be delayed, and in the meantime attention should be directed to improving the channels of the rivers, and, if necessary extending the jetty accommodation. In connection with this matter it must be said in justice to the Government of Bengal that the proposed Wet Dock at Kidderpore is not their scheme at all; they were in favour of Docks nearer the sea, and with the increasing size of ships and steamers that is what it must come to eventually.

Banks.—The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal up to 7th April shows that the public and other deposits on that date amounted to Rs. 4,88,23,766 against Rs. 4,88,31,168 last week, while the cash and currency notes were Rs. 2,61,12,095 as compared with Rs. 2,63,29,911 last week, the percentage of Reserve to Liabilities being 51·5 against 51·8. The Directors increased the rates of interest one per cent., making the official minimum 8 per cent. for advances on Government securities. This step, it is reported, was taken owing to withdrawals of money by the Government. Business has been done in Bank shares at Rs. 830. The Bankers' Clearing House return for the week ended 2nd April gives the amount passed through as Rs. 71,15,381, which is very small, but it must be remembered that it was a short business week, Friday and Saturday having been holidays. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the

Government of India on the evening of 7th April were Rs. 18,92,213 against Rs. 55,32,928 last week, or a decrease of Rs. 36,40,715.

Railways.—The earnings of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 4th April were Rs. 10,02,578, and the corresponding week last year Rs. 9,01,714, being an increase of Rs. 1,00,864.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The earnings for the week ending 21st March were Rs. 80,935 against Rs. 81,158 for the corresponding week last year.

Bengal Central Railway.—The earnings for the week ending 21st March were Rs. 9,862 against Rs. 6,759 for the corresponding week last year. I don't understand why the traffic returns of these lines are a fortnight behind those of the East Indian.

Tarkessur Railway.—The earnings for the week ending 28th March were:—passengers, Rs. 3,947; goods, Rs. 560; sundries Rs. 4—total Rs. 4,511 against Rs. 6,176, or a decrease of Rs. 1,665.

Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway.—The takings for the week ending 28th March were Rs. 8,891 against Rs. 9,410 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 519.

Exchange.—Early in the week the sterling exchanges were rather weak, but owing to the reduction in the Council drawings for next week to 35 lakhs and the increase in the Bank of Bengal's rate of interest, they have since improved and closed firm to-day at 1s. 6½d. for Bank demand drafts. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday the rate for Bank demand bills was 1s. 6½d., on Thursday 1s. 6½d., on Friday 1s. 6½d., and to-day 1s. 6½d.

Government Securities.—In consequence of the unsatisfactory political situation and the affair on the Afghan frontier, Government Paper has been subject to considerable fluctuations during the week. On Monday 4 per cent. moved from 95·14 to 95·12, on Tuesday from 95·4 to 95·6, on Wednesday from 95·5 to 95·4, on Thursday from 95·4 to 95·0, on Friday from 94·2 to 94·6, and to-day from 94·4 to 94·2 and back to 94·4 again, at which the market closed fairly steady.

Tea.—At the London sales this week 2,400 chests were offered, of which 2,300 were sold; the prices generally were firmer.

There has been more doing in tea shares in this market and

the following transactions have been quoted:—Central Cachar, 115. East India, 33. Bishnauth (full shares), 170. Durrung, 34. Holta, 55, 56 and 57½. Singell, 57 to 62. Tukvar, 150.

Mills.—In Jute Mill Scrip there has been nothing doing, but there is a slightly better feeling regarding Cotton Mill shares, Bowreah having improved from 32 to 35.

In other shares business has been done in Calcutta Steam, 85. Darjeeling Railway, 85 and 86. Tarkessur Railway, 100 and 101. India General, 113 and 114, and small lot 115. Bonded Warehouse, 270.

The prospectus is issued of the Punjab and Cashmere Carpet Company, Limited, which has been formed for the purpose of establishing carpet factories in the Northern Province and on the frontiers of its neighbour. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has announced his intention of holding a special Exhibition for Indian produce and manufactures next year, and to assist in furthering the views of His Royal Highness, the Company is desirous of commencing operations as soon as possible, so as to be able to contribute a complete collection of carpets of purely native manufacture and design. It is pointed out that there is an ever-increasing demand for Indian-made stuffs of the highest class, and that even jail produce, the work of casual inmates with no particular skill or experience, gives large profits, and are in such large request that orders sent from London to India in 1878 and 1879 were not executed till 1883. That being so, there is evidently plenty of room for a Company of this description. Arrangements are being made for the construction of six freehold factories at Lahore, Amritsur, and Pathankot, equipped with about three hundred looms, and it is proposed to finish one building without delay in order that operations may be commenced forthwith. The founder, who has agreed to erect these factories, has a large number of caste weavers under his control. It is satisfactory to note that the Company has obtained influential support, and of such a nature as to inspire confidence the Patrons and Directors, with but two or three exceptions having had experience of India. The Standing Counsel in this country is Mr. W. H. Rattigan, Barrister-at-Law, Lahore. The capital of the Company is £100,000 in 20,000 shares of £5 each.

CALCUTTA, 18th April 1885.

THREE is nothing further to report regarding the position of the Kidderpore Dock Scheme. The works are stopped, and it is to be hoped no attempt will be made to go on with them again pending the result of a further and much more thorough investigation than the scheme has yet received. The counter-memorial, got up principally at the instance of the Port Commissioners, in favour of the construction of the docks being proceeded with, has not, we understand, been received with much favour or obtained much support, although the officials of the Port Trust have been actively engaged in soliciting signatures to the memorial, assisted, it is said, by the President of the Chamber of Commerce, who is also a member of the Port Trust. Under the circumstances, however, and having regard to the serious misgivings entertained about these docks by a very large and influential section of the mercantile and trading community, we fail to understand why the Port Trust or their officials should attempt to stand in the way of further inquiry and consideration of this important question. It is beyond dispute that a large section of the business community are seriously opposed to the construction of the docks. Such being the case, the proper course for the Port Commissioners and Port Trust officials to adopt is to stand aside, and instead of urging on Government that the works should be proceeded with in the face of a strong and influential opposition, they ought to court the fullest inquiry, and should themselves have suggested to Government the necessity of appointing a thoroughly competent and comprehensive Commission of Inquiry to examine into the whole question. Whether they do so or not, we may rest assured that the Government of India will not pass the Dock Bill or allow the works to proceed, even if funds were available for the purpose, in the present state of public opinion in Calcutta regarding the scheme.

Banks.—The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal made up to Tuesday, 14th April, shows that the Government Balances at Head Office and Branches amounted on that date to Rs. 1,51,58,714, and the other deposits to Rs. 2,65,71,555—together Rs. 4,17,30,270 against Rs. 4,88,23,766 last week; while the

cash and currency notes were Rs. 1,90,69,544 as compared with Rs. 2,61,12,095, in the last return, or a reduction during the week of Rs. 70,42,551. The percentage of Reserve to the Liabilities had declined from 51·5 to 43·7. The Directors made no change in the rates of interest, however, and their not doing so exercised a beneficial influence on our market; the minimum remains, therefore, at 8 per cent. for advances on Government Securities. Bank shares have drooped a little, and business has been reported at Rs. 827½ to Rs. 815. The Bankers' Clearing House return for the week ended 11th April gives the amount of cheques passed through as Rs. 92,46,124.

The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 14th April were Rs. 8,80,094 against Rs. 18,92,213 last week, showing a reduction of Rs. 10,12,119. The Cash Balances of the Government of India in the Civil Treasuries, and at credit of Government in the Presidency Banks and their Branches, on the last day of March this year, as compared with the same date in 1884 and 1883, were:—31st March 1885, Rs. 12,50,34,000; 31st March 1884, Rs. 13,19,98,000; 31st March 1883, Rs. 14,82,16,000.

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic earnings for the week ended 11th April were Rs. 9,52,807, as compared with Rs. 8,97,082 for the corresponding week last year, being an increase of Rs. 55,725.

Eastern Bengal.—The earnings for the week ended 28th March were Rs. 1,42,360, against Rs. 89,102 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 53,258.

Bengal Central.—The takings for the week ended 28th March were Rs. 14,029, against Rs. 7,053 in the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 6,976.

Tarkessur Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended 4th April were:—passengers, Rs. 8,092; goods, Rs. 672; sundries, Rs. 5—total earnings, Rs. 8,769, against Rs. 4,511 the previous week. Although the large increase in the passenger receipts is owing principally to a native festival which attracted large numbers of people to the shrine at Tarkessur, still the traffic is an excellent one, and it is a great satisfaction to see the Company working so successfully.

Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway.—The receipts for the week ended 4th April were Rs. 9,018, against Rs. 10,086 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 1,068.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts for last week were Rs. 9,900, showing that the attempts of this Company to extract more money out of the pockets of the poorer classes of Calcutta by changing and increasing their fares have not been successful in bringing them in a larger revenue, and it is satisfactory that such is the case. The imposition of this Company on Calcutta was little better than a fraud on the town, and the concession and the price paid for it by the Company discreditable in the highest degree to all connected with it. We should like to know the names of the Municipal Commissioners who voted away this Tramway concession to a gang of London Company-mongers; their names ought to be published as benefactors of their poorer fellow-citizens. The gentlemen of high standing, also in London, who formed and still constitute the Board of Directors of the Tramway Company and who agreed to pay the enormous and unheard-of price of £9,000 per mile for the Tramways, cannot regard their work with much satisfaction. With the shareholders of the Company, however, we do not concern ourselves; if they were deluded into taking shares in a concern, which paid three times the actual cost of the property made over to them, they have only themselves to blame; but it is in the great wrong done to the town of Calcutta that we are principally interested. Our streets are generally in a shocking condition owing to the state in which the Tramway rails are kept, and if the Municipality or their engineer did their duty properly they would *insist* on the Tramway road and rails being kept in such a complete state of repair that the Company would eventually be glad to make over the Tramway to the town on reasonable terms.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 23,000 chests were offered, of which 21,400 were sold; common teas were $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. and fine teas 1d. per lb. higher. We trust the coming season will be a good one for all interested in tea property in this country; but we are afraid there will be the usual anxiety to rush the crop on the home market in excessive quantities within a limited time, and if so, prices will give way as

usual. The Secretary of the Indian Tea Association has kindly sent us their usual Monthly Return of tea shipments from Calcutta, which is as under :—

Exports of Indian Tea from Calcutta.

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain in March	1,436,618	1,200,720	2,158,441
Exports to Great Britain from 1st May to 31st March ...	61,423,583	57,947,052	53,233,929
Exports to Australia and New Zealand in March ...	272,109	23,138	20,397
Exports to Australia and New Zealand from 1st May to 31st March ...	1,533,106	337,853	2,693,847
Exports to America in March ...	14,727	22,060	53,340
Exports to America from 1st May to 31st March ...	120,373	198,544	681,732
Exports to other Places in March	59,076	102,307	18,665
Exports to other Places from 1st May to 31st March ...	359,459	375,907	467,403
Total Exports from 1st May to 31st March ...	63,436,521	58,858,856	57,076,914

Mills.—In Jute Mill Scrip there has been very little doing, and values are rather lower; because, although the price of manufactured goods has improved, it is more than counterbalanced by the increased cost of the raw material. The only transactions reported during the week have been Howrah, 59, Seebpore, 36 and 37, and Fort Gloster, 19 and 20 cash, and 20 and 21 for three months. Cotton Mill Shares are a shade easier; business has been done in Bowreah at 34, 34½, 35, and 33, and in Muir Mills at 300.

In other shares the following transactions have taken place :—Burrakur Coal, 145. Alipore Coal, 141. Raneegunge Coal, 50. India General, 113. Tarkessur Railway, 100 and 101. Darjeeling Railway, 85 and 86. Great Eastern Hotel, 83. Bengal Tea, 62. Durrung, 35. East Indra, 35. Gielle, 70, 74 and 70 cash, and 71 for one month.

Exchange.—The rates of exchange have been firm and steady throughout the week 1-7¼ per rupee having been the rate for Bank

bills on demand up to yesterday, when the rate improved to 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$, but to-day the market was weaker and 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$ was the closing rate for Bank drafts on demand.

Government Securities.—During the past week the market has been subject to rather violent fluctuations in keeping with the character of the political telegrams received. On Monday the price of 4 per cent Paper moved between 94-2 and 94-3; on Tuesday between 94-0 and 93-8; on Wednesday 93-2 to 92-6; on Thursday 92-8 to 93-0 and back to 92-12; on Friday 92-6 to 93-4 and back to 93; and to-day 93-8 to 93-12. The market has improved rapidly owing to the prospect of a peaceful settlement of the Afghan Boundary question.

Meetings.—*East India Tea.*—Extraordinary, on 25th April, to confirm special resolution passed 26th March.

Colonial Tea.—Ordinary, 22nd April, to receive report and pass accounts. Extraordinary Meeting on same date to pass special resolution authorising the Company to sell or lease all or any portion of their property.

Khobong Tea.—Ordinary General Meeting, on 20th instant, report, accounts and dividend.

Amicable Tea.—Ordinary General Meeting on 24th instant, to receive Managing Agents' report. Extraordinary Meeting on same date to pass special resolution to sell all or any of the landed property of the Company.

Bowreah Cotton Mill.—Adjourned Ordinary Meeting on 22nd instant.

The *Burrakur Coal Company* have declared an *ad-interim* dividend of 5 per cent. payable on 20th instant.

CALCUTTA, 25th April 1885.

I REGRET I am unable to give a more cheerful account of our local industries and of the markets for the scrip and shares by which they are represented. It is not that the industries in themselves were not all right, but the curse of the place is, and has been, over-production and excessive competition. Whenever any industry was doing well—let it be steam-tugs, tea, jute, cotton, or ice—there was immediately a rush to supply the place with more of these undertakings than were required, and the shareholders who were induced, to take shares in these new undertakings, not only did themselves great injury, but assisted to depreciate and destroy other people's property. Apparently also when once they had subscribed for the shares, their work was at an end, and any practical interest in their welfare on the part of Directors or Managing Agents ceased; so we have had the spectacle of Jute Mills driving away from daylight to dark, as hard as they could go, to produce goods in many cases at a loss, and all this because the Directors or Managing Agents of the Mills could not come to some practical arrangement to restrict production. We have seen the Ice Companies cutting each other's throats, selling ice at prices under cost, and now we have a great war of rates going on between the Inland Steam Companies, owing to competition or rivalry between the India General and the recently established Inland Flotilla Company. I do not pretend to say which Company is to blame, although the general report is that the object of the older and more powerful Company is to crush its new competitor. All I do know is that this war of rates has already depreciated India General stock from Rs. 145 to 100 per share, or equal to about 25 lakhs of rupees, and the tendency is still towards lower rates. What we wish to know, therefore, is, are the Managing Agents and Directors justified in entering on this war of rates and continuing it without the sanction of the shareholders, especially as many people are proprietors in both Companies. If the shareholders, or the majority of them, agree to go on with this war of rates, then of course there is nothing further to be

said, but in the absence of such authority I very much question if the Managing Agents or Directors are justified in making by their action such havoc of the shareholders' property. Need there be any surprise that money is not going into the share-market: the wonder is that people buy any shares at all: there is not a single new Company that has been floated that has not proved a disastrous investment for the holders, and the money lost in building new Jute Mills, and starting steam, ice, copper, cotton, oil and paper Companies, together with the depreciation in the value of existing Companies, would have made the direct railway to Bombay twice over. I now hear talk of flour mills as a promising new industry: I would recommend investors to have nothing to do with anything of the kind.

Banks.—The weekly return of the Bank of Bengal for the week ended Tuesday, 21st instant, gives the Government balances at head office and branches as Rs. 1,63,79,120, against Rs. 1,51,58,714 last week, and the other deposits as Rs. 2,59,57,374 as compared with Rs. 2,65,71,555. The public and private deposits together amount to Rs. 4,23,36,494 as compared with Rs. 4,17,30,270 last week, while the cash and currency notes are Rs. 1,92,00,500, against Rs. 1,90,69,544 in the last statement, or an increase during the week of Rs. 1,30,956. The percentage of the reserve to the liabilities was 43·4, showing little change from last week when it was 43·7. The Directors made no change in the rates of interest; the minimum remains therefore at 8 per cent. for loans and advances on Government securities. Bank shares have declined a little, business having been reported at 810 to 802½.

The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 21st April were Rs. 59,86,079, against Rs. 8,80,094 last week, being an increase of Rs. 51,05,985. The Bankers' Clearing House return for the week ended 18th instant gives the amount passed through as Rs. 78,92,550-12-8. The Report of the National Bank of India, Limited, for the year ended 31st December last has this week been circulated to the shareholders on the Calcutta register. The net profit for the year 1884 amounts to the handsome sum of £68,472-11-9, and to

this falls to be added £1,974-18-2 brought forward from last year, making a total of £70,447-9-11, which has thus been disposed of:—

	£	s.	d.
1—To <i>ad-interim</i> dividend at rate of 5 per cent. per annum for half-year ended 30th June last	11,631	5	0
2—To further dividend now declared at rate of 5 per cent. per annum	11,631	5	0
	<hr/>		
	23,262	10	0
3—Carried to Reserve Fund	35,000	0	0
4—Carried to next account	12,184	19	11
	<hr/>		
Total	70,447	9	11
	<hr/>		

The result of the Bank's working for last year is certainly very satisfactory, the net profits being at the rate of 14·71 per cent. per annum on the paid-up capital of the Bank. The policy pursued of paying a moderate dividend and adding to the strength of the Bank by placing in one year the large sum of £35,000 to the Reserve Fund thus increasing it to £40,000, is no doubt sound and prudent policy and meets with general approval. The profits of this Bank have improved, and will continue so owing in a measure to their having withdrawn altogether their branches in China, which were a heavy drag on the Bank. The Directors regret to have to record the death of their colleague, Mr. Seth A. Aparcar, whose place at the Board has been filled by the election of Mr. A. B. Inglis, late of Messrs. Begg, Dunlop & Co. I think the word election must have been used in error; properly speaking it should have been selected, or appointed by the Board, the shareholders having really nothing whatever to do with it, but of course that is the way such matters are generally managed in London. Mr. Inglis was well known here as a respectable safe man, and while, therefore, no exception can be taken to his appointment, it seems rather singular that, as regards Calcutta, which is already represented in a way by John

Borradaile, R. P. Harrison, Henry Berners, and Sir Stuart Hogg, it should be considered necessary to have another Director with only Calcutta experience, while Bombay, where the Bank occupies an important position and does a large business, is not represented *at all*. Even a little place like Madras has two representatives on the Board—R. O. Campbell and I. R. Boyson. In the city of London, however, the election of men who are able and competent to further the interests of such a Company is not generally the first consideration; the Boards, as a rule, appoint or select men who are likely to be agreeable to themselves personally, and then there is the usual farce of asking the shareholders to confirm their selection; in this case, however, the proprietors have not even that formality to perform until the time comes round for Mr. Inglis to offer himself for re-election. Bombay had undoubted claims to be represented on the Board of this Bank: it found half the capital of the Bank and it provides a very large proportion of its deposit money.

The following is the General Balance Sheet of the Bank as on 31st December last:—

LIABILITIES.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Capital, consisting of						
37,320 Shares of £25 each,						
with £12 s. 10 paid-up ...	466,500	0	0			
Less 100 Shares of £25						
each, originally subscrib-						
ed for but not taken up	1,250	0	0			
	<hr/>			465,250	0	0
To Reserve Fund ...				30,000	0	0
„ Amount due on current and fixed						
Deposit and other Accounts ...				2,793,724	17	6
„ Loans on Government Securities ...				129,000	0	0
„ Bills Payable ...				343,187	14	6
„ Profit and Loss Account ...				33,816	4	11
	<hr/>					
Total ...				3,794,978	16	11
	<hr/>					

ASSETS.

By Cash on hand and at					
Bankers	...	408,282	15	10	
„ Bullion on hand and in transit	...	£	s.	d.	£ s. d.
		60,426	17	7	
		<hr/>			468,709 13 5
„ Government Securities	...	276,254	4	0	
„ House property and Furniture	...	42,310	17	10	
„ Bills of Exchange	...	2,177,291	6	0	
„ Loans on Government Securities, Merchandise, and other Accounts	...	830,412	15	8	
		<hr/>			
Total	...	3,794,978	16	11	
		<hr/>			

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic earnings for the week ended 18th April were Rs. 10,74,164, against Rs. 9,43,612 for the corresponding week last year, being an increase of Rs. 1,30,552.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The earnings for the week ended 4th April were Rs. 1,36,045, against Rs. 80,142 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 55,903. For the week ended 11th April the earnings were Rs. 98,248, against Rs. 78,698 last year—increase Rs. 19,550.

Bengal Central Railway.—The takings for the week ended 4th April were Rs. 22,464, against Rs. 6,236 last year—increase Rs. 16,228; and for the week ended 11th April the earnings were Rs. 10,229, against Rs. 6,000 last year—increase Rs. 4,229.

I am glad to observe that the Eastern Bengal and Bengal Central have managed to issue their traffic a little earlier. I give the figures of the East Indian, however, for the week ended 18th April, and there is no reason known as to why the Eastern Bengal and Bengal Central should still be a week behind them, and the same remark applies to the Tarkessur Railway, the traffic of which line is in the hands of the members of the Tarkessur Railway Association a week before they are made public in the *Calcutta Gazette*. The earnings ought to be sent to the

newspapers for general information the moment they are ascertained, which is what the East Indian do in regard to their traffic. These Railway receipts are most important, as they give a good indication of the state of business.

Tarkessur Railway.—The traffic receipts of this line for the week ended 11th April were :—passengers, Rs. 5,987-13 ; goods, Rs. 719-13 ; and sundries, Rs. 8-8—total Rs. 6,716-2, against Rs. 8,769 last week—decrease Rs. 2,053. Last week, however, was exceptional owing to a native festival at the shrine ; the present is quite a satisfactory ordinary traffic. The total takings to date are Rs. 91,414-9-0.

Darjeeling Railway.—The receipts for the week ended 11th April were Rs. 10,600, against Rs. 10,762 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 162.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts for last week were Rs. 10,156-2-3, against Rs. 9,900 the previous week, showing a small increase of Rs. 256.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 16,000 chests were offered, of which 15,300 were sold. Fine qualities were rather higher, and Souchongs and Pekoe Souchongs $\frac{1}{2}d.$ higher. This rise in tea in the home market will benefit very little the growers of teas in this country so far as the past season is concerned, the bulk of their produce having been sold here. I trust, however, that in the coming season they will get some benefit from higher prices, although with the usual rush to get the teas forward, and in consequence the forcing of too much tea on the London market within a limited time, it is probable that existing values would not be long maintained. In Calcutta people interested in tea—and they are many—are generally anticipating some looked-for, expected, or wished-for rise in prices which seldom or ever comes, and having regard to the increasing quantity of tea produced, I confess I do not very well see how any considerable rise is likely to be maintained ; on the contrary we must be prepared to look for comparatively low values (apart from the present exceptional state of affairs owing to the complications in China), and if the tea industry is to live at all, it cannot any longer subsist on expect-

tations of a rise in the value of teas which are seldom realised ; the only hope, therefore, for the majority of tea concerns is in their being able to produce tea at a low cost, and that can only be done by a great scheme of amalgamation and by a general reduction in charges and expenses both at the gardens and in Calcutta. I see that the undertaker is already at work in several of the leading Tea Agency Houses in Calcutta, and unless decided steps are taken to effect the necessary reforms, I am very much afraid that the epidemic will ere long become general. The only transactions in tea shares reported during the week have been East India, 35 and Guelle Tea, 71, for one month.

Mills.—I have nothing of interest to report regarding the Jute and Cotton Mills. There is little or no improvement in the situation, because, although the price of manufactured goods has risen a little in price, it is more than counterbalanced by the rise in the material. The only transactions reported in Jute Mill Scrip during the week are :—Gourepore, 6½ and Fort Gloster, 20.

Our stock and share market generally has been very lifeless during the week and business restricted, except as regards Government securities.

In miscellaneous shares the following transactions have taken place :—Bonded Warehouse, 285. India General Steam, 105. Great Eastern Hotel, 83. Bengal Ice, 78. Imperial Ice. 39. New Beerbhoom Coal, 62 and 62½.

Meetings.—Central Terai Tea on 30th April, Imperial Ice on 29th April, ordinary, to receive report and pass accounts. Darjeeling Railway on 6th May to pass accounts. *Himalayan Bank* on 30th April, to pass accounts and confirm *ad-interim* dividends.

Dividends.—National Bank, 2½ per cent., for the six months, or 6s. 3d. per share, equal to 5 per cent. per annum payable in sterling. Delhi and London, 2½ per cent., for the six months, or at rate of 5 per cent. per annum. Bargany Tea, 2½ per cent. for season 1884.

Exchange.—The sterling value of the rupee has been improv-

ing a little during the week. On Monday and Tuesday Bank drafts on demand were quoted 1-7, on Wednesday 1-7 $\frac{1}{2}$, on Thursday 1-7 $\frac{1}{8}$, on Friday 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$, and to-day 1-7 $\frac{1}{8}$.

Government Securities.—The market has been fluctuating considerably in keeping with the political telegrams received. On Monday 4 per cent. Paper moved from 93-12 and 94-2 to 94-4; on Tuesday from 94-5 to 95 and back to 94-10; on Wednesday from 94-5 to 93-6 and up again to 93-12; on Thursday from 93-10 to 92-6 and up again to 92-12; on Friday from 92-9 to 92-14 and back to 92-12; and to-day the price has been rather steadier, about 92-13 to 92-11.

CALCUTTA, 2nd May 1885.

THE large amounts already expended on military preparations, together with the activity in the export of oil-seeds and wheat, combined with stagnation in the markets for imported goods, have already cause tightness and considerable pressure in the Indian Money Markets, and in Bombay especially has inconvenience and the want of monetary facilities been already experienced. This shows clearly, that if military operations on a large scale had to be undertaken, we should have to look to London principally for fresh supplies of money, and in consequence the imports of silver into this country would require to be on a very large scale. Not only would it be necessary to import silver sufficient to carry on the export trade of the country, but the Government of India, instead of being in a position to meet drawings, would require to have its treasuries strengthened and replenished by imports of silver bullion from home. Already this week we have seen the exchanges excited and the sterling value of the rupee rising about one-quarter per cent. every day, and if this is the case now it would be very much greater if large military operations had to be undertaken. It is to be hoped, however, in the interests of the trade and commerce of the world, that a satisfactory and honourable settlement of this Boundary question will be arrived at between Great Britain and Russia. If war can be averted, we trust a small portion of the money that would have been wasted in war will be applied to a vigorous prosecution of railways in all directions, the construction of light lines and feeder roads, the improvement of the ports and harbours of the country, and other much-needed public works.

Banks.—The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal for the week ended Tuesday, the 28th ultimo, gives the Government balances at the Head Office and Branches as Rs. 1,47,47,438, against Rs. 1,63,79,120 last week, and the private deposits as Rs. 2,63,31,145 as compared with Rs. 2,59,57,374. The public and private deposits together amount to Rs. 4,10,78,584, against Rs. 4,23,36,494 last week, while the cash and currency note

at the Head Office and Branches are Rs. 1,91,51,193 as compared with Rs. 1,92,00,500 last week, showing a reduction of Rs. 49,307. The percentage of reserve to liabilities is 43.9, showing little change from the previous return when it was 43.4. The Directors made no change in the rates of interest, the minimum remains therefore at 8 per cent. for advances on Government securities. Bank shares have been wanted, and business has been done from Rs. 805 to Rs. 810. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 28th ultimo were Rs. 56,65,843 against Rs. 59,86,079 on the 21st, showing a trifling reduction of Rs. 3,09,236.

The Bankers' Clearing House return for the week ended the 25th April gives the total amount of cheques passed through as Rs. 76,06,718-8-10, which is about 3 lakhs under last week, and is an indication of the dull state of business.

We have been favoured with a copy of the Report of the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China for the half-year ended 31st December last. The net profits for the half-year, after paying charges and providing for all bad and doubtful debts, amount to £31,431-14-10, to which has to be added £15,695-8-9 brought from last account, making together £47,127-3-7. This amount has been disposed of as follows:— (1) to dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, £18,750; (2) to Reserve Fund, £20,000; (3) to carried forward to new account, £8,377-3-7—total, £47,127-3-7.

The result of this Bank's working during 1884 is very satisfactory, the total earnings for the year are:—

	£	s.	d.
For half-year ended 30th June	67,684	2	7
For half-year ended 31st December	31,431	14	10
	<hr/>		
Total	99,116	1	5
	<hr/>		

or equal to 13.21 per cent. on the paid-up capital of the Bank. Out of this amount the shareholders have been paid a dividend of 5 per cent. for the year, and the large sum of £60,000 has

been added to the Reserve Fund (£20,000 now and £40,000 from the profits of the half-year ended 30th June), thus raising it to £110,000. The sum of £6,761-6-2 was brought into the 1884 accounts, and they now carry out £8,377-3-7 to the present half-year, after paying the dividend and making the above addition to the Reserve Fund.

The following is the general statement of the Bank as at 31st December last:—

LIABILITIES.		£.	s.	d.
Capital paid-up (<i>fixed abroad at par</i>)	...	750,000	0	0
Reserve Fund	...	110,000	0	0
Deposits—	£		s.	d.
Repayable on demand	... 1,047,426		8	10
For fixed periods	... 2,191,511		1	11
	—————	3,238,937	10	9
Bills payable—				
Drafts on London Bankers...	1,045,083		15	1
Drafts on Head Office and Branches	... 534,792		15	5
Draft on Continental Bank- ers and other Agents	... 90,278		7	6
	—————	1,670,154	18	0
Notes in circulation	... ..	457,280	4	6
Loans payable	... ..	391,000	0	0
Due to Agents and Correspondents	... ..	9,924	0	1
Sundry Creditors (<i>Rebates, Exchange Adjust- ments, &c.</i>)	... ..	123,795	0	7
Profit and Loss Account	... ..	27,127	3	7
	—————	6,778,218	17	6
Total	... ..	6,778,218	17	6

		ASSETS.		
		£.	s.	d.
Cash in hand	...	476,806	12	8
Cash at Bankers	...	257,789	12	9
Money at call	...	33,145	13	0
Bullion—		£	s.	d.
On hand	...	105,350	0	10
In transitu	...	174,288	11	8
		—————	279,648	12 6
Government and other Stocks—				
Indian Govt. Rupee Paper	...	248,119	17	8
„ „ Sterling Loans	...	80,000	0	0
Bombay Port Trust Bonds	...	10,500	0	0
		—————	338,619	17 8
Bills Receivable	...	3,143,743	5	7
Bills discounted	...	407,699	8	3
Loans Receivable and Advances	...	1,411,664	2	5
Freehold Banking Premises...	...	205,596	16	11
Due by Agents and Correspondents	...	53,770	11	11
Sundry Debtors (<i>Rebates, Exchange, Adjustments, &c.</i>)	...	169,734	3	10
Total	...	6,778,218	17	6

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic receipts for week ended 25th April were Rs. 10,44,888, against Rs. 9,97,692 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 47,216.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The earnings for week ended 18th April were Rs. 70,892, as compared with Rs. 76,587 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 5,695.

Bengal Central Railway.—The traffic receipts for week ended 18th April were Rs. 7,526, against Rs. 5,613 for corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 1,913.

Tarkessur Railway.—The earnings for week ended 18th April were:—passengers Rs. 8,964, goods Rs. 532, and sundries Rs. 5—total Rs. 9,501, against Rs. 6,716 last week—increase Rs. 2,785, which is very satisfactory. The total receipts to the above date are Rs. 1,00,915.

Darjeeling Railway.—The traffic earnings for week ended 18th April Rs. 9,284, corresponding week last year Rs. 6,768—increase Rs. 2,515.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts for last week were Rs. 9,712 against Rs. 10,156 the previous week, being a decrease of Rs. 444.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian Tea in London this week 11,000 chests were offered, of which 10,600 found buyers. There was a good demand and prices were firm. There is a rumour in town that the deliveries for last month were again very large, being as much as 8,000,000 lbs. This was, no doubt, owing to the expectation that the duty might be increased, which fortunately, however, is not the case. For the following interesting information regarding the actual outturn of the crop of 1884 and the estimated crop of 1885 we are indebted to the Secretary of the Indian Tea Association.

In their Circular, dated the 1st January last, the General Committee were able to give a revised estimate of the outturn of the Indian Tea Crop of 1884, amounting to 62,514,639 lbs. as against the original estimate of 66,664,359 lbs., and the following were the figures for the different districts:—

	Original estimate of crop of 1884. lbs.	Revised estimate of crop of 1884. lbs.
Assam	... 33,293,713	31,213,898
Cachar and Sylhet	... 18,473,540	17,121,234
Darjeeling and Dooars	... 10,609,200	10,146,169
Chittagong and Chota Nagpore	... 1,287,906	1,033,338
Dehra Doon, Kumaon, and Kangra	3,000,000	3,000,000
Total	... <u>66,664,359</u>	<u>62,514,639</u>

The Committee have now the pleasure to furnish you with particulars of the figures they have been able to collect, showing the actual outturn of the crop of 1884, and giving an estimate of the outturn of the crop of 1885.

	Actual outturn of crop of 1884. lbs.	Estimated outturn of crop of 1885. lbs.
Assam ...	31,227,172	33,168,091
Cachar and Sylhet ...	17,084,284	19,620,413
Darjeeling and Dooars ...	10,511,291	11,422,894
Chittagong and Chota Nag- pore ...	1,090,398	1,274,060
Dehra Doon, Kumaon, and Kangra ...	3,000,000	3,250,000
Total ...	62,913,145	68,735,458

With reference to the actual outturn of 1884 it is obvious, as the total exports from Calcutta from the 1st May 1884 have been about 63,500,000 lbs., that the crop was larger than would appear from the figures obtained by the Association. This is accounted for by the difficulty in getting returns from native gardens and from Managers in Dehra Doon, Kumaon, and Kangra, which renders it necessary for the Association to make an estimate of what the actual outturn of these gardens has been.

It is gratifying to note, that, out of the total exports of the past season, about 1,500,000 lbs. were despatched to Australia and New Zealand, or nearly five times the quantity that went forward in the previous year.

The following are the exports of Ceylon Tea from the 1st October to the 2nd April in each year :—

1884-85	...	...	1,105,929 lbs.
1883-84	...	...	615,107 "
1882-83	...	...	508,362 "
1881-82	...	...	249,311 "

There has been very little business doing in tea shares, or indeed in any shares during the week. The following are the only transactions reported in tea stocks: Singell, Rs. 62. Durrung, Rs. 36. Jokai, Rs. 60.

Mills.—In Jute and Cotton Mills there is no improvement to report and as regards Jute Mills, although the value of manu-

factured goods has improved considerably, the price of the raw material has risen to a greater extent, so that the position is not any better. The only transactions reported in Mill Scrip during the past week are Seebpore Jute at Rs. 36 and 37 and Bowreah Cotton at Rs. 33 for cash, and Rs. 34 for delivery in three months.

In other shares the following have changed hands :—Bank of Upper India, Rs. 130. India General, Rs. 110 to 113 for cash, Rs. 108 for delivery in 3 months ; Rs. 112 for 3 weeks and Rs. 113 for six weeks. Murree Brewery, Rs. 140 and Rs. 130. Crown Brewery, Rs. 125. Nasmyth Press, Rs. 75. Ranee-gunge Coal, Rs. 53 and Rs. 54 for cash, and Rs. 56 for three months. New Beerbhoom Coal at Rs. 62. Bengal Telephone Company at Rs. 54. Darjeeling Railway 5 per cent. Debentures, Rs. 99-8. Canal Press Debentures, Rs. 102.

Meetings.—Nasmyth Press, Extraordinary General Meeting on 11th May to alter No. 71 of the Articles of Association. Hotewar Tea Co., Ordinary, on 13th May at Ranchi, to pass accounts. Khobong Tea Co., adjourned Ordinary on 20th May, to receive report and pass accounts. Gowhatty Tea Co., Ordinary Meeting on 7th May report and accounts.

Exchange.—During the past week exchange has been very firm and the sterling value of the rupee has improved considerably. On Monday the rate for Bank Demand Drafts was 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$, Tuesday 1-7 $\frac{3}{4}$, Wednesday 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$, Thursday 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$, Friday 1-7 $\frac{3}{8}$, and to-day the rate was 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$.

Government Securities.—The market for Government Paper has been very unsettled during the week and prices have experienced heavy and rapid fluctuations, moving up and down according as the political telegrams from home were favourable to a peaceful settlement of the Boundary question or otherwise. On Monday 4 per cents. improved from Rs. 92-9 to 92-14; and on Tuesday declined from Rs. 92-13 to 92-10; on Wednesday from Rs. 92-10 to 92-8; on Thursday from Rs. 92-8 to 91-14; and on Friday improved again from Rs. 91-8 to 91-14. To-day the price moved between Rs. 92-2 and 92-10, and closed firm owing to the receipt of a more hopeful telegram.

Business has been done in Calcutta $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Port Trust Debentures at Rs. 96, and in Calcutta 5 per cent. Municipal Debentures at Rs. 100.

CALCUTTA, 9th May 1885.

THE war of rates between the India General Steam Company and the Inland Flotilla Company goes on, and if it continues for any length of time will prove disastrous for both Companies. The Directors of the India General, I understand, give it out that it is their policy to ruin the rival Company, but in doing so it must not be overlooked that even if they succeed in smashing the Flotilla (which, as I am informed, is not at all likely), they will inflict most serious injury on themselves in their efforts to do so. It cannot be to the advantage of existing shareholders in the India General Company to assist in wrecking the value of their shares. They have already dropped about 40 per cent., and if this war of rates continues there is nothing to prevent the shares falling another 30 or 40 per cent., when a few knowing ones who unloaded at high prices will, no doubt, be quite ready to go in again, as others after being half ruined are getting out—that is how it is done. I would recommend shareholders, however, not to give them the opportunity—they ought not to sacrifice their property, which is a very valuable one; but in giving them the advice not to throw their shares away, it is contingent on their exercising promptly their rights as shareholders by insisting on the Directors and Managing Agents of the India General putting a stop to the present suicidal policy by coming to a fair and equitable working arrangement with the Flotilla Company as regards rates. There ought to be work for both Companies at remunerative rates if a fair agreement can be arrived at. The effect and results of a war of rates are so disastrous as I have seen in the case of American Railways, that rather than allow it to continue, it would be better for the shareholders of both concerns that the India General Company should absorb the Inland Flotilla on fair terms. Shareholders in the India General must not be deluded with the explanation now being offered to them that the drop in their shares is principally due to the operations of bears; it is nothing of the kind, the danger is real, and the fall in the value of the shares is due to the actual position of affairs arising out of this war of rates, of

the effects of which, if not promptly put a stop to, they will very soon have practical experience when the accounts of the half-year are issued.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement of affairs for the week ended Tuesday, the 5th instant, gives the Treasury balances at the Head Office and Branches on that date as Rs. 1,42,38,151 against Rs. 1,47,47,438, and the private deposits as Rs. 2,58,12,182, as compared with Rs. 2,63,31,145 last week. The public and private deposits together amount to Rs. 4,00,50,334, against Rs. 4,10,78,584 last week, while the cash and currency notes at the Head Office and Branches are Rs. 1,73,59,788 against Rs. 1,91,51,193 last week, showing a reduction of Rs. 17,91,405, and the percentage of reserve to liabilities has declined from 43·9 to 40·33. On Monday, therefore, the Directors raised the rates of interest 1 per cent. all round, making the official minimum 9 per cent. for advances on Government securities. Bank shares have been done up to Rs. 820, and are wanted at that rate. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 5th instant were Rs. 50,41,482, against Rs. 56,65,843 on the 28th ultimo, showing a reduction of Rs. 6,24,361. The total cash balances in the Civil Treasuries of the Government of India, and at credit of Government in the Presidency Banks and their Branches on the last day of April, as compared with the same date in 1884 and 1883, were as under:—1885, Rs. 10,50,27,000; 1884, Rs. 11,44,50,000; 1883, Rs. 13,17,13,000. The cash balances so far, therefore, are only 94 lakhs under what they were at the corresponding date last year.

The Bankers' Clearing House return for the week ended the 2nd instant gives the total amount of cheques passed through as Rs. 83,51,688-10-6, which is about 7½ lakhs more than in the previous week.

The Report of the Delhi and London Bank for the half-year ended 31st December last has been received and issued to the Indian shareholders. The net profit realised during the six months amounts to £9,396-7-2, to which falls to be added the balance of £665-18-11 brought forward from the previous half-

year, making a total at credit of Profit and Loss Account of £10,062-6-1, which has been thus disposed of:—

		£	s.	d.
1.—To payment of dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum	...	8,440	12	6
2.—To credited to doubtful debt account	...	1,000	0	0
3.—To carried forward to next account	...	621	13	7
Total	...	10,062	6	1

The result of the Bank's working is satisfactory, the net profits being at the rate 5.56 per cent. per annum on the paid-up capital. There can be no doubt, however, that at the Calcutta Branch, where the great bulk of the Bank's business is carried on, the percentage of profit earned is very much greater, and that it is eaten into considerably by the cost of maintaining a somewhat expensive London Head Office. In the case of the other Banks the expense of the London Head Offices is also very heavy, but the justification can be put forward that they are principally engaged in exchange business, of which London may be said to be the head-centre, while as regards the Delhi Bank they chiefly carry on a sound and profitable local banking business, and are interested in exchange operations to a very moderate extent only. For them, therefore, a London Head Office must be rather a useless and expensive luxury. The Delhi Bank is a useful and popular institution here, which has made great progress in recent years under the present able and careful management, and it is satisfactory to observe that its business and resources are steadily increasing. There is one matter in connection with the payment of the dividend which requires to be pointed out, and which ought to be corrected. The dividend is paid to shareholders on the London register in sterling, whereas shareholders on the Indian register are paid in rupees; in other words, they suffer a loss at the present rate of exchange of about 25 per cent. The proper course to adopt is to pay Indian shareholders by sterling warrants on London, as is done by the National Bank of India

and the Barnagore Jute Mill Company. By doing this the Indian shareholders are put on the same footing as those on the London register. The following is the general balance sheet of the Bank as on the 31st December last :—

LIABILITIES.			£	s.	d.
To paid-up capital	...	...	337,625	0	0
„ amount due on customers' balances, deposits, and circular notes	...	...	706,345	18	1
„ amount on exchange accounts, credits, &c.	...	...	282,312	6	0
„ amount on account of acceptances	8,031	4	9
„ profit and loss	10,061	6	1
Total			1,344,376	14	11
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ASSETS.			£	s.	d.
By cash in hand and on call at Head Office and Branches	76,406	5	9
„ Government Securities	257,080	18	5
„ Discounts, Loans and Credits	...	...	852,289	19	6
„ Other Securities, including Bullion, Bills Purchased, &c.	...	...	116,929	9	10
„ Freehold Premises in Delhi, Calcutta, Luck- now, Mussoorie, &c.	41,670	1	5
Total			1,344,376	14	11
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Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic earnings for the week ended the 2nd May were Rs. 10,87,531, against Rs. 10,01,274 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 96,257.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 25th April were Rs. 78,621, against Rs. 83,005 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 4,384.

Bengal Central Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 25th April were Rs. 8,687, against Rs. 6,236 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 2,451.

Tarkessur Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 25th April were :—passengers, Rs. 4,489-2; goods and sundries, Rs. 478-11—total Rs. 4,967-13. For the week ended the 2nd May the takings were :—passengers, Rs. 4,228; goods and sundries, Rs. 409—total Rs. 4,637, which makes the approximate gross earnings to that date Rs. 1,10,887.

Darjeeling Railway.—The traffic for the week ended the 25th April is Rs. 8,855, and for the corresponding week last year, Rs. 8,169—increase Rs. 685.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts last week were Rs. 9,812, against Rs. 9,712 the previous week—increase Rs. 100.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 3,000 chests were offered, of which 2,800 were sold; prices for all descriptions were firm. The first sale of the new season's tea will be held here on the 14th instant. There is very little doing as yet in tea shares, but the feeling is better, and if this season's crop brings higher prices, we shall probably see an improvement, but not to any great extent, unless radical reforms are effected in the management and working of Tea Companies generally, the necessity for which is not apparently fully recognised by the vested interests of Calcutta. They will probably wake up to it, however, at no very distant date, when, perhaps, it will be too late. In the meantime I think the policy of the Banks in not advancing money on Tea Scrip is a very sound one. We have quite enough of tea as of everything else, and if people want to extend existing gardens or make new ones, let them do it with their own money, and not with the money of the public obtained through the medium of the Banks. Transactions have been reported in Jokai at 65, Durrung 36, and East India, 36.

Mills.—The position is unchanged, and I have nothing fresh to report, except that good rain has fallen in the jute districts; this is of great importance, as a good jute crop would help the Mills, the Pressing Companies and the Inland Steam Companies. Jute Mill Scrip is flat and prices are rather lower. The only business reported during the week has been Gourepore at 64 and Bowreah Cotton at 33.

In other shares the following have changed hands:—Darjeeling Railway, 87 to 90. India General, 111 to 108½. Inland Flotilla, 32½ discount. New Beerbhoom Coal, 62. Rancegunge Coal, 53 for cash and 53½ for three months' time. Murree Brewery, 135 and 130. Nasmyth Press, 80.

Meetings.—New Mutual Tea, 15th May, accounts. Second Mutual, 15th May, to pass accounts. Dhunseri Tea, 16th May, report and accounts. R. Scott, Thomson & Co., 26th May, accounts and declaring a dividend. Bengal Bonded Warehouse, 13th May, declaring a dividend and election of Directors.

Dividends.—Dehra Doon Tea, 3 per cent. for past season.

Calls.—Selim Tea—final call of Rs. 15 per share. Deoghur Mining Company—3rd call of Re. 1 per share, payable 20th May.

Exchange.—Owing to the prospect of a peaceful settlement of the Boundary question exchange has been weak and declining during the week. On Monday the rate for Bank Demand Bills was 1-7¼, on Tuesday 1-7¼, on Wednesday 1-7, on Thursday and Friday 1-7¼, and to-day 1-7¼.

Government Securities.—The reasons which have contributed to depress the sterling exchanges have caused an important advance in the value of Government Securities, the market for which has been firm and prices steadily rising; at the close to-day, however, there was a quieter feeling. On Monday 4 per cent. Paper moved from 96·2 to 93·0 and back to 92·14, on Tuesday it improved from 93 to 93·10, on Wednesday from 93·12 to 94·2 and back to 93·14, on Thursday from 94·0 to 94·7, on Friday from 94·8 to 94·12 and back to 94·10, and to-day 94·10 to 94·13 and back to 94·11.

Business has been done in 4½ per cent. of 1878-79 as high as 98, and in Calcutta 5 per cent. Municipal Debentures at par, at which they are considered an advantageous and desirable investment.

CALCUTTA, 16th May 1885.

THE war of rates between the Inland Steam Companies still continues, but an idea seems to be entertained that common sense will ere long prevail, and that some arrangement satisfactory to all parties will be arrived at by which the present scandalous contest will be put an end to. This will only be done, however, if shareholders will so express themselves, that their ideas and wishes in the matter cannot be misunderstood.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement for the week ended Tuesday, the 12th instant, shows that the Government balances on that date at the Head Office and Branches were Rs. 1,45,37,317, against Rs. 1,42,38,151; and the private deposits Rs. 2,58,51,195, as compared with Rs. 2,58,12,182 last week. The Government and private deposits together amounted to Rs. 4,03,88,513 against Rs. 4,00,50,334 last week; while the cash and currency notes at the Head Office and Branches were Rs. 1,81,66,606, as compared with Rs. 1,73,59,788 in the last statement, being an increase of Rs. 8,06,818, and the percentage of reserve to liabilities had improved from 40.33 to 42.9. No change was made in the rates of interest; the official minimum remains, therefore, at 9 per cent. for advances on Government securities. Bank shares have been in good demand and business has been done in them up to Rs. 840 each. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 12th instant were Rs. 78,56,308, as compared with Rs. 50,41,482 on the 5th instant, being an increase of Rs. 28,14,826.

The Bankers' Clearing House return for the week ended the 9th instant gives the total amount of cheques passed through as Rs. 88,37,850, which shows an increase of about 5 lakhs over the amount cleared in the previous week.

We have received a copy of the Report of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China for the year ended the 31st December last.

The gross profits earned during 1884 amount-	£	s.	d.
ed to	184,681	6	1
From which has to be deducted for expenses			
of management and general charges at Head			
Office and Branches	102,492	13	3
	<hr/>		
Net profit for the year	82,188	12	10
Add—			
Balance brought from last account	7,168	1	4
Amount transferred from Reserve Funds	50,000	0	0
	<hr/>		
Total	139,356	14	2
	<hr/>		

This amount has been
thus disposed of:—

1.— <i>Interim</i> dividend for half-	£	s.	d.
year to 30th June 1884,			
at rate of 7 per cent. per			
annum	28,000	0	0
2.—Dividend for half-year to			
31st December 1884, at rate			
of 7 per cent. per annum...	28,000	0	0
3.—Amount written off to			
meet bad debts	75,416	13	4
4.—Amount carried forward			
to new Profit and Loss			
Account	7,940	0	10
	<hr/>		
	139,356	14	2
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The net profit earned for the year £82,188-12-10, being at the rate of 10-27 per cent. on the Bank's paid-up capital of £800,000, cannot be considered as otherwise than very satisfactory. The provision of £75,416-13-4 to meet bad debts written off has necessitated the transfer of £50,000 from the Reserve Fund. These losses have resulted principally from the great depression in trade in Burma and Java, were for many years this Bank has carried on a large and successful business, and as the losses were to some considerable extent exceptional, and not likely to occur again the Directors were well justified in dealing with the matter as they have done, and in paying their usual

dividend. It is to meet such contingencies that Reserve Funds are accumulated; in this case, after the transfer of the £50,000 above referred to, the Reserve Fund of this Bank stands at the large amount of £2,000,000, equal to 25 per cent. on the Bank's paid-up capital: and with anything like ordinary prosperity in Eastern trade, the amount now taken away from the Reserve will, no doubt, be rapidly restored. The amount brought into the 1884 accounts was £7,168-1-4, and they carry out the sum of £7,940-0-10 to credit of the current year's Profit and Loss Account. The Directors announce that the Bank's charter of incorporation has been renewed for a further period of 10 years from the 29th November last. They regret the death of their esteemed colleague, Mr. Frederick William Heilgers, who, for many years, gave unremitting attention to the interests of the Bank, and they intimate that the Bank has lost the valuable services of Mr. Bullen-Smith, c. s. i., as a Director, owing to his appointment to the India Council. The following is the general statement of liabilities and assets as at 31st December last:—

LIABILITIES.	£	s.	d.
To Capital paid-up in full	800,000	0	0
„ Reserve Fund	200,000	0	0
„ Notes in Circulation	361,380	0	0
„ Current Accounts	1,437,401	11	2
„ Fixed Deposits	3,482,103	16	10
„ Bills payable, and other sums due by the			
Bank	3,351,860	16	3
• „ Due to Agents and Correspondents	40,085	17	7
„ Profit and Loss	35,940	0	10
„ Liability on Bills Receivable, re-discounted .			
£3,372,963 16s. 4d., of which up to this	_____	_____	_____
date £2,219,596 15s. 2d. have run off	708,772	2	8

ASSETS.	£	s.	d.
By Cash in hand and at Banker's	1,537,337	8	2
„ Bullion	175,732	7	2
„ Government Securities	333,885	2	8
„ Advances and Loans	2,206,476	12	8
„ Bills Receivable and other sums due to the Bank	4,080,342	10	8
„ Due by Agents and Correspondents	407,795	6	9
„ Balances between the Head Office and Branches	893,073	17	2
„ Bank Premises and Furniture at the Head Office and Branches	74,128	17	5
Total	9,708,772	2	8

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended the 9th May were Rs. 11,19,341, against Rs. 9,84,731 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 1,34,610.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 2nd May were Rs. 82,989, against Rs. 80,097 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 2,892.

Bengal Central Railway.—The takings for the week ended the 2nd May were Rs. 9,181, against Rs. 7,820 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 1,361.

Darjeeling Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended the 2nd May were Rs. 8,145, against Rs. 8,684 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 539. The total earnings of this Company from 1st January to 2nd May of this year are Rs. 1,22,642, as compared with Rs. 1,23,825 from 1st January to 3rd May last year, which shows very steady receipts. With the great improvements which have been made on this line, however, the traffic ought to increase considerably, and I look forward with interest to their growth and development. I think a great deal more might be done to encourage traffic to Kurseong or Darjeeling by the issue of return tickets at cheap rates,

more especially as regards second and third-class passengers, so that people of small means, European and native, might be enabled to take more frequent advantage of a change to these hills which many of them so urgently require. But if this policy is to be carried out successfully, it is not only cheap travelling that is necessary, but cheap and suitable accommodation on the hills as well. At present, with the exception of the Eden Sanitarium, which is only available to invalids or people who are convalescent, there is no suitable accommodation for the class of people I refer to. I beg leave, therefore, to bring the matter to the notice of the Directors of the Darjeeling Railway Company, and especially of Mr. Franklin Prestage and Mr. William Lloyd, both of whom have already done so much for dwellers in the plains in making these beautiful hill sanitariums so easily accessible. At present, however, they are practically only available for the rich and well-to-do, and I would urge them, therefore, to complete their good work by granting cheap tickets and providing suitable accommodation for people of small means; and this latter, I think, can best be done through the medium or with the assistance and support of the Darjeeling Railway Company. Apart from the good it would do, I believe it would, if energetically and successfully carried out, largely contribute to the prosperity of the Railway Company.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts for last week were Rs. 9,783, against Rs. 9,812 the previous week—decrease Rs. 29.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 6,800 chests were offered, of which 6,300 found buyers. There was a good demand for all descriptions at firm prices. The opening sale of the season was held here on Thursday, the 14th instant, when about 2,700 chests were offered, all of which found buyers at prices from 1 to 2 annas per lb. above the opening rates of last season. The quality, in most instances, also showed an improvement on last season's tea.

The following is the monthly return of shipments of tea from Calcutta as published by the General Committee of the Indian Tea Association:—

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain in April	154,067	113,388	619,160
Exports to Great Britain from 1st May to 30th April ...	61,577,650	58,060,440	58,883,089
Exports to Australia and New Zealand in April ...	2,876	8,260	29,421
Exports to Australia and New Zealand from 1st May to 30th April ...	1,535,982	340,613	2,723,268
Exports to America in April ...	6,805	53,451	1,080
Exports to America from 1st May to 30th April ...	127,178	351,995	682,812
Exports to other places in April	18,428	11,385	4,534
Exports to other places from 1st May to 30th April ...	317,887	387,292	471,937
Total Exports from 1st May to 30th April ...	68,618,697	59,040,340	57,761,106

The offices of the Indian Tea Association and Calcutta Tea Syndicate have been removed to the Chamber of Commerce, with which they will in future be associated and connected, while retaining their individuality and separate organisation. I think the arrangement an excellent one, and convenient alike for the Chamber and the Tea Associations, whose excellent and courteous Secretary, Mr. G. M. Barton, will now, I understand, apart from his special tea duties, assist the Secretary in the general work of the Chamber, when necessary.

There has been a better feeling in tea shares, but so far the inquiry is confined to a few low-priced stocks such as Durrung, East India, Dehing, Bengal, &c. The following transactions have been reported:—Durrung, 36. East India, 35. Majagram, 20. Jetinga Valley, 60. Singell, 62 and 62½. Bengal Contributory, 25 and 26. Dehing, 26. Longview, 68.

Mills.—There is nothing of a more satisfactory character to report. The Mills are not doing at all well, and there is again a talk of short-time and a reduction of wages, but whether it will come to anything is doubtful; if Managing Agents were paid by a proper office allowance, and a commission on the net profits, instead of, as in many cases at present, on the gross

outturn of the Mills, matters would probably be different and arrangements less difficult to carry out. Jute and Cotton Mill Scrip is steadier, perhaps, but there is very little doing. The only transactions reported have been:—Howrah Jute, 57 and 58; and Bowreah Cotton, 33 and 34. In other shares the following transactions have taken place during the week:—India General, 105 and 106. Inland Flotilla, 22 discount. Darjeeling Railway, 95. Murree Brewery, 135 and 140. Great Eastern Hotel, 85. Bengal Telephone, 54. Titaghur Paper, 52. Raneegunge Coal, 55. Crystal Ice, 102.

Meetings.—Tarkessur Railway on the 28th May, second ordinary, to transact business of the Company and fix the remuneration of the Managing Agents. Strand Bank Press on the 25th May, extraordinary meeting to sanction lease of land and the building of godowns. Nasmyth Press on the 27th May, to confirm Special Resolution.

Dividends.—Bengal Bonded Warehouse, dividend of Rs. 7 per share, payable on and after the 19th instant.

Exchange.—The market has been weak and the sterling value of the rupee is again rather lower. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the rate for Bank drafts on demand was 1-7 $\frac{1}{4}$, and on Friday and to-day 1-7.

Government Securities.—The market has again been subject to rather violent fluctuations. On Monday 4 per cent. Paper was 95-1 to 95-2; on Tuesday the price moved from 95-4 to 95-12; on Wednesday from 96-0 to 96-6 and back to 96-4; on Thursday the price touched 97, but declined again and closed at 96-10; on Friday it declined from 96-12 to about 96-6; and to-day, owing to the receipt of an unfavourable political telegram, the price declined to 95, but closed firmer at about 95-4. In 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of 1878-79 business has been done from 98 to 99-8 and back to 98-8.

Calcutta Municipal Debentures.—5 per cent. loan of 1884-85 at 101 and 101 $\frac{1}{2}$ for small loss.

CALCUTTA, 23rd May 1885.

I HAVE nothing further to report regarding the war of rates now going on between the Inland Steamer Companies, except that an impression seems to be gaining ground in certain well-informed quarters that some arrangement will probably be arrived at before long, which will put an end to the present suicidal contest, and it seems to be thought that if the Inland Flotilla Company can be absorbed on fair and equitable terms, it will be the best thing that could be done in the interests of all concerned. The India General and the Inland Flotilla represent a very large amount of Calcutta money, and there is a great and general anxiety on the part of all who have the real welfare and prosperity of the place at heart, that the property should not be jeopardized and further depreciated by a continuance of the present contest, which is now doing serious injury to the interests involved.

The Report of the Raneegeunge Coal Association for the year ended 31st March has been issued to the shareholders. The profit for the year amounts to Rs. 51,216-6-11, to which has to be added amount brought forward, Rs. 7,696-6-11, making a total of Rs. 58,912-13-10, which the Managing Agents propose dealing with as under:—(1) to dividend of 5 per cent., Rs. 41,250-0-0; (2) depreciation of old block, Rs. 10,000; (3) to carry forward to new account, Rs. 7,662-13-10—total Rs. 58,912-13-10. The result is not satisfactory, the net profit earned being at the rate of 6·20 per cent. on the Company's capital of Rs. 8,25,000, but it would have been very much better but for the following items:—Agents' allowance, Rs. 24,000-0-0; law charges, Rs. 4,210-15-2; general charges, Rs. 3,018-14-3; interest account, Rs. 11,608-10-2—total Rs. 42,838-7-7. The Agents' allowance of Rs. 24,000 is equal to about 47 per cent. on the net profits of the Company, and altogether is a most outrageous charge for managing a small Coal Company; the law charges are also heavy, and I do not understand from the accounts why such a sum as Rs. 11,608 was required for interest; the item of Rs. 3,018-14-3 for general charges is also

a considerable item, being in addition to the Rs. 24,000 above referred to. With these items before them to work upon, it is almost ludicrous to read the Managing Agents' wail about the action of the Government. They say: "So long as the coal industry, instead of being treated impartially, is so seriously misunderstood and crippled by the direct action of Government through the East Indian State Railway and its prohibitive rates of transport, but little towards a healthier development of the trade can be expected." The Agents regret to say that the Burrakur property, which has been referred to in previous Reports, has not yielded coal of good quality, and that they may find it desirable to throw it up. It would have been more interesting to shareholders if the Agents, instead of making such a cackle in their Report over the action of the Government, had told them what this precious Burrakur property had already cost the Company. It will be remembered that this property was acquired by the Managing Agents without the previous sanction of the shareholders having been obtained, and this is the result. I cannot congratulate the Company on the wisdom of their Managing Agents, and would suggest the advisability of reducing their allowance and appointing Directors, so that shareholders might have some little confidence that their affairs would be properly administered.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement of affairs for week ended Tuesday, 19th May, shows that on that date the Government balances at Head Office and Branches amounted to Rs. 1,61,95,183, against Rs. 1,45,37,317, and the private deposits to Rs. 2,57,51,958, as compared with Rs. 2,58,51,195 last week. The Treasury balances and the private deposits together aggregated Rs. 4,19,47,142 as compared with Rs. 4,03,88,513, while the cash and currency notes at Head Office and Branches were Rs. 1,87,73,079, against Rs. 1,81,66,606 last week. The percentage of the reserve to the liabilities showed very little change, being 42.5 against 42.9 last week, but as the money market both here and in Bombay was decidedly easier, the Directors reduced the rates of interest one per cent. all round, making the official minimum 8 per cent. for advances on Government securities. There has

not been much doing in Bank shares during the week, and the price is rather easier, business having been done at Rs. 835 and Rs. 830. National Banks were done at Rs. 97.

The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 19th instant were Rs. 82,91,261, as compared with Rs. 78,56,308 on the 12th instant, showing an increase of Rs. 4,34,953.

The Bankers' Clearing House return for the week ended 16th instant gives the total amount of cheques passed through as Rs. 73,21,451, or close on 15 lakhs less than the previous week. This is a good indication of the dull state of business generally.

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic earnings for week ended 16th May were Rs. 11,01,945, corresponding week last year Rs. 9,54,801—increase Rs. 1,47,143. The total receipts from 1st January to 16th May amount to Rs. 1,89,21,824 as compared with Rs. 1,92,93,163 from 1st January to 17th May last year, which shows that they are now only Rs. 3,71,383 behind with one day's less traffic in this half-year's account.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended the 9th May were Rs. 73,917, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 87,402—decrease Rs. 13,485. The total receipts on this line from 1st April to 9th May of this year are Rs. 4,82,207, as compared with Rs. 4,63,034 from 1st April to 10th May last year, so that they are still about 2 lakhs ahead.

Bengal Central Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 9th May are Rs. 9,465, against Rs. 7,907 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 1,558.

Darjeeling Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 9th May are Rs. 8,773, against Rs. 8,368 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 404.

Tarkessur Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended the 9th May were :—passengers, Rs. 4,783-10 ; goods, Rs. 292-6 ; sundries, Rs. 5—total Rs. 5,081, against Rs. 4,637 the previous week.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts for last week were Rs. 9,554 against Rs. 9,783 the previous week—decrease Rs. 229 ; so that the general increase in their fares is not bringing them in any more money.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 4,000 chests were offered, all of which found buyers; prices were firm. It is to be hoped that growers of tea in this country will this season get better prices for their produce, and if an average advance of two annas per lb. can be got over last year for the bulk of the crop it will do good. I confess, however, that with ever-increasing production, I have no faith in high prices for tea being maintained; on the contrary I believe low prices to be inevitable, and that those concerns which cannot carry on to advantage with tea selling at an average of eight annas per lb. will not long survive. Already a good many Companies, such as the Amicable, Colonial, Jellalpure, Natwanpore, Subtiguri, &c., have succumbed, and there are many others in a similar hopeless condition, the carrying on of which can be of no practical benefit to any one except, perhaps, the Garden Managers and the Calcutta Agents. One remedy has been suggested, and that is amalgamations on a large scale, by which great economy would be effected both at the gardens and in Calcutta, and the teas could therefore be produced at a lower cost. Amalgamation, however, does not find favour with Calcutta Agents, and as shareholders are apathetic and generally disgusted matters will, no doubt, be allowed to take their course. The real cause of the present state of matters is the old evil of over-production, brought about by excessive and too rapid extensions which has resulted in a heavy fall in prices of tea, which now renders the numerous petty Companies and small concerns unable to meet the heavy charges to which they are at present subjected. These petty Companies—tea as well as other concerns—are a great mistake from a market point of view, as shares in them can neither be bought nor sold; in fact they are only Companies in name, and it would be better if the great bulk of them were struck out of the Stock Lists altogether. On every consideration, therefore, amalgamation of small Tea Companies and small private gardens is desirable, but if carried out it must be done on a basis very different from Rs. 1,000 per acre or over, at which the bulk of the existing Companies were floated, the actual cost being more like Rs. 300 to Rs. 350 per

acre. Apart from Tea Agents, it is the opinion of men of great practical experience in tea that, unless amalgamations on a large scale are carried out and the expenditure in every way very much reduced, any temporary improvement of one or two annas in the price will be of no avail to avert disaster. Tea shares have ceased to be regarded by the banks as good cover for advances, and it is well that this policy should be adhered to until the position of the tea industry and the market for tea stock is altogether different from what has been the case for a long time back. We believe also that it will be to the advantage of all those who have at present any interest in tea to refuse under any circumstances whatever to advance or contribute further money for the purpose of making new tea gardens or extending old ones. There has been more doing in tea shares during the week, but so far it has been chiefly confined to certain low-priced stocks. There are a large number of people waiting for a rise in tea shares in order that they may get out; to many it must have been a weary wait. If the rise does come, therefore, and they can get out, they will have good reason to be grateful to those who come in. Transactions have been reported in the following shares:—Bengal full shares Rs. 37 to 40; contributory, Rs. 27 and 30. Durrung, Rs. 37 to 38 cash, and 40 for three months. Phoenix, Rs. 45. Singell, Rs. 68 to 71. Selim Rs. 75. Majagram, Rs. 28. Holta, Rs. 60. Singbulli and Murmah, Rs. 88.

Mills.—There is no improvement in the position of the Jute Mill industry. There are very few orders for goods in the market, and it seems to be the general opinion that we may see lower prices. At the meeting on Thursday of the representatives of the Jute Mills for the purpose, if possible, of coming to an understanding to restrict production by working short time, no agreement could be arrived at, and any combination on the part of the Mills for this object may therefore be considered as almost hopeless. The Mills which stood out were the India, Gourepore and Fort Gloster, but on what grounds I did not hear. The India is practically under private control, and to some extent the Gourepore also, so that any action on the part

of the shareholders would not probably be successful, so far as these Companies are concerned; but it is altogether different with the Fort Gloster, and I should think in their case the sense of the shareholders should be taken on this question forthwith. It is not a time for shareholders to stand aside and allow Managing Agents and Directors, with no practical experience as manufacturers, to air their importance in refusing to be parties to a combination, which commends itself to nearly all the other Mills, and which seems clearly to be urgently called for. We certainly require in this place a thorough-going shareholders' association, and the sooner it is organized the better. If vigorously and properly worked it would be a real benefit to all interested in our local joint stock undertakings. No transactions have been reported in Jute Mill Scrip. Some business was done in Bowreah Cotton at Rs. 33 for cash and Rs. 34 and 35 for three months. In other shares there has been little or nothing done during the week; the only transactions reported were Darjeeling Railway at Rs. 95. Great Eastern Hotel, Rs. 85. Bengal Coal, Rs. 1,235. Kangra Valley Slate Company, Rs. 100.

Exchange.—The market was weak up to Wednesday, but has been firmer since then. Bank demand drafts on Monday were quoted at Rs. 1-6½; on Tuesday and Wednesday 1-6½; Thursday 1-6½; Friday 1-6½; and to-day 1-7.

Government Securities.—The market for Government Paper has again been fluctuating considerably. On Monday 4 per cents. moved from Rs. 95-8 to 95-14 and back to 95-8; on Tuesday from Rs. 95-10 to 95-14 and back to 95-10; on Wednesday from 95-12 to 95-14; on Thursday from Rs. 96-4 to 95-10; on Friday from Rs. 95-12 to 95, and to-day from Rs. 94-12 to 95.

CALCUTTA, 30th May 1885.

THE Report of the Budge-Budge Jute Mills Company for the half-year ended 30th April last states that the result of the working for that period has resulted in a loss of Rs. 9,635-5-11, and the Directors recommend that this amount (less Rs. 2, received for scrip fees) should be carried to the debit of the Reserve Fund Account, which will then stand at Rs. 42,726-8-5. The Directors much regret having again to report a loss on the Company's operations. They say that the depressed state of trade referred to in their last Report continued throughout the half-year, and has now become so severe that a short-time movement for lessening the production of jute fabrics is being seriously discussed by the various Mills. They add, as regards their own Mill, that in consequence of the greatly enhanced cost of jute, and the *heavy loss* on manufacturing at the present low prices of gunny-bags, it has been deemed advisable to work the Mill only four days in each week. The jute and stores have been valued at cost prices, and the cloth and bags at contract rates. The result of the Company's working is certainly very unsatisfactory, but considering the state of trade the general expectation was that the loss would have been considerably more. As they were manufacturing at a heavy loss it would have been advisable instead of working four days a week, to have stopped the Mill altogether until trade improved. From the balance sheet it appears that the Company on the 30th April was due Rs. 4,98,379 on loans and for stores against which they held cloth and bags Rs. 1,49,302; jute, oil, stores, &c., Rs. 1,96,889; together Rs. 3,46,192; to which has to be added sundry debtors considered good, Rs. 3,530, and cash balances Rs. 6,480—total Rs. 3,56,202. This is not by any means a satisfactory financial position, and is a sad contrast to the circumstances of the Company before the extensions were entered upon. The following is the balance sheet of the Company as at 30th April 1885:—

		Rs.	As. P.
CAPITAL AND LIABILITIES.			
To CAPITAL ACCOUNT—			
Amount paid up on 18,000 Shares at Rs. 80 each	...	14,40,000	0 0
New Mill Extension Fund	...	5,00,000	0 0
Reserve Fund for equalisation of dividends	...	90,000	0 0
Reserve Fund	...	52,869	14 4
Dividends unclaimed	...	100	0 0
Sundry Creditors, for Stores, &c.	...	68,989	8 11
Loans Account	...	8,40,830	4 4
Bank of Bengal	...	84,559	4 0
Total	...	25,80,848	15 7
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PROPERTY AND ASSETS.		Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
By BLOCK ACCOUNT	15,97,839 3 1
„ New Mill Extension	5,66,505 10 11
„ New Press House	...	15,255 2 10	
„ New Sack-sewing Shed	...	19,523 11 8	
„ New Jetty	...	14,125 3 0	
			48,904 1 6
„ Boats	...	.....	7,640 0 0
„ STOCK OF—			
Cloth and Bags	...	1,40,802 14 9	
Jute, Oil, Stores, &c.	...	1,96,889 10 0	
			3,46,192 8 9
Fire Insurance premia, paid in advance	...	.....	4,128 8 0
Sundry Debtors considered good	...	.....	3,530 2 0
„ CASH BALANCES—			
In Chartered Mercantile Bank	...	523 9 1	
At Office	...	4,182 9 10	
At Mills	...	1,774 4 6	
			6,480 7 5
By PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT—			
For Balance at Dr.	...	.....	9,633 5 11
Total	...	.....	25,80,848 15 7

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement for the week ended the 26th May gives the Government balances on that date at Head Office and Branches as Rs. 1,55,24,767, against Rs. 1,61,95,183,

and the private deposits as Rs. 2,64,13,199, against Rs. 2,57,51,968 last week. The Government balances and private deposits together amount to Rs. 4,19,37,966 as compared with Rs. 4,19,47,142 in the last statement, while the cash and currency notes at Head Office and Branches total Rs. 2,14,79,850 against Rs. 1,87,73,079 last week, or an increase of Rs. 27,06,771. The percentage of the reserve to the liabilities had increased from 42·5 to 48·5, and the trade demand for money being restricted the Directors reduced the rates of interest one per cent. all round, making the official minimum 7 per cent. for demand loans on Government Paper. There has been very little doing in Bank shares during the week; the price is steady at Rs. 820, at which a few small transactions have taken place. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 26th May were Rs. 1,09,91,267, against Rs. 82,91,261 on the 19th May, being an increase of Rs. 27,00,006.

The amount passed through the Bankers' Clearing House for the week ended the 23rd May is given as Rs. 75,13,197, which is perhaps the best indication of the dull and inactive state of business generally.

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended the 23rd May were Rs. 10,63,197, against Rs. 9,44,699 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 1,18,501.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 16th May were Rs. 66,646, against Rs. 78,662 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 12,016.

Bengal Central Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 16th May were Rs. 8,469, against Rs. 8,069 for the corresponding week last year—increase Rs. 400.

Darjeeling Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 16th May were Rs. 6,646 against Rs. 8,125 for the corresponding week last year—decrease Rs. 1,479.

Tarkessur Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 16th May were :—passengers, Rs. 4,379-13; goods, Rs. 400-9—total Rs. 4,780-6-0.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts of this Company for last week amounted to Rs. 9,578, which is a poor traffic having re-

gard to the amount of their capital and the percentage of working expenses.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 5,000 chests were offered, of which 4,600 found buyers. There was a good demand at fully previous rates. It is very much to be desired for the benefit of all who are interested in tea property in this country that the higher prices now ruling may be got for the bulk of the crop, but there is the fear that there will be the usual anxiety to rush the crop forward, resulting in excessive quantities being pressed on the London market within a limited time, with the inevitable result of lower prices. This is another argument in favour of large and strong Companies, because they would be able to put forward their produce more gradually, and spread their sales more equally throughout the year. While very ready to admit that the higher prices expected this year will, if realised, do much good, it does not, in the slightest degree detract from the argument in favour of amalgamation and large Companies. It has been said that my remarks last week regarding Tea Companies were rather too sweeping; that there are Tea Companies and Tea Companies. In reply I wish to say that my strictures do not apply to Companies or private concerns which are prosperous and are giving steady and satisfactory returns to shareholders and proprietors; it is as regards the innumerable languishing petty Companies and small private concerns which are not doing any good, and have no prospect of doing any good, that I urge reform, and it is quite well known to all who are thoroughly conversant with the subject that the only remedy in their case is amalgamation on a large scale, and a great reduction in expenditure both at the gardens and in Calcutta. It is said also that the Calcutta Agents will not consent to amalgamations, and that they pronounce the proposal as altogether impracticable. It may be so, but it might be well worth while to make the attempt, otherwise a very large number of petty Companies and small concerns will certainly go to the wall during the next year or two, whereas they might be preserved if proper measures were adopted in time. In Calcutta, Managing Agents and their interests

are apparently the first consideration, while the shareholders—the men who have found the money for all these industries which for years have proved such a source of wealth and income to agency firms—are sacrificed without any real effort being made to save their property. The end of it all and the plan of procedure are very simple. When the balance against the Company reaches a certain point, and it is no longer considered advisable to carry on, a meeting is called to pass the now familiar Resolution “that the Company by reason of its liabilities, &c., must be wound up.” The Resolution is passed, the property is sold for an old song, and the Company disappears.

I have something to say on the subject of the Tea Syndicate, its operations, and its want of success, but must reserve my remarks for another opportunity. There has been very little business doing in tea shares during the week; the sales reported were:—Gielle, 75. Holta, 60. Durrung, 37 for cash, and 40 for three months. Singbulli and Murmah, 88.

Mills.—The position of the Jute Mill industry is, if anything, rather worse, the price of manufactured goods having declined. Matters have come to such a pass that the Howrah Mill Company have called a special meeting of their shareholders for the 15th June, to consider the advisability of stopping the Mill altogether during the continuance of the present depression. This is a step in the right direction which ought to be followed at once by the other Mills, as Managing Agents and Directors are not justified in working the Mills at a loss without the authority or sanction of the shareholders. It seems to be the general opinion of those thoroughly acquainted with the trade that it will be a benefit to the Mill Companies generally if the production can be reduced. In Mill Scrip the following trifling business was done during the week. Budge-Budge, 58. Seebpore, 36. Fort Gloster, 22. Bowraah Cotton, 32 cash, and 34½ for three months.

In other Companies very little has been done. Business was reported in Darjeeling Rails, 95; India General, 106 and 107; Camperdown Press, 105 *cum-dividend*; Riverside Press, 53;

Titaghar Paper, 55½ for three months; and R. Scott, Thomson & Co. at 262½.

Exchange.—The sterling exchanges have been weak and rates have declined. On Tuesday Bank demand drafts were quoted 1-7, on Wednesday and Thursday 1-6½, and on Friday and today 1-6¼.

Government Securities.—The market has been steady during the week, and 4 per cent. Paper improved from 95-4 to 96-4, but closed rather easier at about 96-1, and 4½ per cent. of 1878-79 at 99.

Meetings.—*Baneesunge Coal Association.*—Annual General Meeting on 9th June, to pass accounts, &c., also an extraordinary meeting on the same date, when the following Special Resolution will be proposed:—"That the Managing Agents be authorised to take lease or purchase on behalf of the Company zemindari, villages, or waste lands not exceeding on the whole the value of one lakh." Having regard to the history and past management of this Company, and the result of the purchase of the Burrakar property by the Agents, the general opinion of independent shareholders is very much opposed to any such proposal, but that goes for very little with these people. The matter will be decided by the proxies of their friends and relations held by them, and by the votes of those whose views on such matters harmonise with those of the Managing Agents.

Dividends.—R. Scott, Thomson & Co. Rs. 12-8 per share. Iringmara Tea Company—final dividend of 4½ per cent., making 15½ per cent. on last season's working. Bishnauth Tea Company—dividend of 5 per cent. for season 1884. Camperdown Pressing Company—further dividend of 5 per cent., making 25 per cent. for the year so far.

CALCUTTA, 6th June 1885.

I HAVE given considerable attention to the subject of the finances of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, and I regret to say that a study of the whole matter reflects very little credit on the rather noisy patriots and Municipal Commissioners of Calcutta. What strikes one as very extraordinary is the action of the Municipal Commissioners and other wealthy men of Calcutta. They make a great parade of their views on local self-government; they make long and, no doubt, excellent speeches on drainage, water-supply, structural and other much-needed city improvements, but they do nothing more. We all know, of course, that drainage and water-works, however useful, cannot be carried out without a large expenditure of money, and it has never, apparently, occurred to these gentlemen that they, having their permanent home and all their interests in this city, ought to have been first in assisting to provide the necessary funds. As a matter of fact, however, they have taken little or no interest in the Calcutta Municipal Debenture Loans; three-fourths of the money, if not more, has been provided by European investors. If the class to whom I refer were poor there would be excuse for them, but such is far from being the case; they are very rich, and are steady and heavy purchasers of Government securities and landed property, and I believe they have hoarded in their own houses cash and money far exceeding the whole debt of the city. Yet these are the gentlemen, who, in Municipal conclave, gravely deliberate whether it is possible for this great city to get ten lakhs at five per cent. for the purpose of carrying on the works for giving to the poor of the town and to themselves a proper supply of pure water, and they determine, in the event of their being unsuccessful in getting the money from anybody except themselves, to appeal as usual to Government, while the place is full of rich men owning land, houses, Government securities, and money, not to speak of millionaires such as Doorgachurn Law, the Ezras and Gubboys who are possessed of princely fortunes, and all made from trade and business in Calcutta. Similar securities at home are held in

the highest estimation and stand next to Consols. On referring to a recent investor's manual, I find the following are about the present prices of some of the principal Corporation Bonds there :—

	Interest.	Price.
		Rs.
London Metropolitan Board of Works ...	3½ per cent.	105
Ditto ditto ..	3 " "	97
Liverpool Corporation Bonds ...	3½ " "	99½
Leeds ditto ...	3½ " "	100
Ditto Debenture Stock ...	4 " "	111
Glasgow Corporation Stock ...	3½ " "	99
Hull Corporation Debenture Stock ...	3½ " "	99½
Manchester Corporation Consolidated Stock ...	4 " "	115
Newcastle Corporation Stock ...	3½ " "	99½
Portsmouth Corporation Stock ...	3½ " "	100
Swansea Corporation Stock ...	3½ " "	97¼

These are a few of the principal Municipal Corporations at home, and the quotations for their stocks show that these towns get their money at an average of about 3½ per cent., while the Corporation of Calcutta, a city with a trade and commerce second only to that of London and Liverpool, has to pay 5 per cent., and even at this rate the wealthy native citizens of the place have not provided the money which has given the town a system of drainage and a supply of pure water, of which latter an increased supply is urgently needed, and for which the works are now in progress. I have tried to ascertain the reason why these wealthy native gentlemen of Calcutta do not take a proper interest in their own Municipal Bonds, which are an excellent and undoubted security, being specially secured on the rates, taxes, and revenues of the town. It is rather difficult to get at the exact cause, but it seems that the principal objection is the fact that the bonds are not so readily and quickly saleable as Government Paper is. This is to a certain extent true; they are at present purely an investor's stock and are not dealt in freely in the market; it would be very desirable, therefore, in the interests of the Corporation if this difficulty could

be, to some extent, removed. What stands in the way of the debentures becoming a favourite market security, however, readily and easily bought and sold at close prices, is the number and variety of the loans of different dates and different rates of interest. What I should recommend is the consolidation of the whole of the Municipal Debt into an open $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan at about 93, re-payable only by annual drawings at par; a sinking fund of at least 2 per cent. being applied for this purpose. This would help to make the stock attractive in the market, and it would altogether relieve the Municipality of the anxiety and embarrassment of having to provide for those terminable loans when they mature, as also the trouble and bother connected with the investment of the then sinking fund money. I have another and very important recommendation to make, and that is that the management and service of the debt should at once be transferred to the Bank of Bengal. The way business connected with the debt is carried on at the Municipal Office is simply disgraceful, and in the interests of their own credit the Corporation ought at once to hand the business over to the Bank, which thoroughly understands it, and can manage the service of the debt to the satisfaction of those who hold it.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement for the week ended 2nd June gives the amount of the Government balances on that date at the Head Office and Branches as Rs. 1,33,89,514, against Rs. 1,55,24,767 and the private deposits as Rs. 2,63,80,475 against Rs. 2,64,13,199 last week. The Government balances and private deposits together amount to Rs. 3,97,69,989, as compared with Rs. 4,19,37,966 on 26th May, while the cash and currency notes at the Head Office and Branches aggregate Rs. 2,03,58,958, against Rs. 2,14,79,850 last week. The percentage of the reserve to the liabilities is 48·9 against 48·5 on 26th May, so that there is very little change in the actual position; but as the ordinary trade demand for money again showed a considerable falling off, the Directors, at their meeting on Thursday, reduced the rates of interest 1 per cent., making the official minimum 6 per cent. for demand loans on Government Paper. Bank shares have improved to

Rs. 825, at which business has been done. It will be seen from a study of the Bank returns that the Financial Department have again been at their old game of hoarding up money in their Reserve Treasuries, while allowing their balances with the Bank to decline to a low point.

	Treasury Balances with Bank of Bengal.	Balances in the Reserve Treasuries.
	Rs.	Rs.
19th May	... 1,61,95,183	82,91,261
26th "	... 1,55,24,767	1,09,91,267
2nd June	... 1,33,89,514	1,18,49,899

The artificial manipulation of the money market in this country by means of the public balance is most objectionable and altogether unsound, and if it is done with the object of stimulating the sale of the Council drafts in London experience has proved that for this purpose it has very little effect. These Reserve Treasuries do no good ; on the contrary they do much harm, and are often the means of inflicting on the community much higher rates of interest than would otherwise be the case. It is difficult to understand on what grounds these Treasury officials can justify such action ; the money is the money of the public, and they have no right whatever therefore to hoard it up in Reserve Treasuries : it ought certainly to go at once into circulation through the medium of the Presidency Banks. One would think from the policy adopted, that the Government of India were interested in maintaining high rates of interest, whereas cheap money and low rates of interest are most essential to the progress and prosperity of the country. These Reserve Treasuries should be done away with altogether and the money paid to the credit of the Government accounts with the Presidency Banks. If this policy were adopted the result would be satisfactory alike to the Government and the public.

The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 2nd June were Rs. 1,18,49,899, as compared with Rs. 1,09,91,267 on the 26th May, being an increase of Rs. 8,58,632.

The amount passed through the Bankers' Clearing House for

the week ended the 30th May was Rs. 70,90,111—a very small total.

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended the 30th May were Rs. 9,85,847, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 8,43,113—increase Rs. 1,42,734.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 23rd May were Rs. 71,389, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 73,922—decrease Rs. 2,533.

Bengal Central Railway.—For the week ended the 23rd May the receipts were Rs. 9,348, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 8,776—increase Rs. 572.

Darjeeling Railway.—The traffic earnings for the week ended the 23rd May were Rs. 9,044, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 12,397—decrease Rs. 3,353.

Tarkessur Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 23rd May were:—passengers, Rs. 4,796; goods and sundries, Rs. 188—total Rs. 4,984.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts for last week were Rs. 8,631 against Rs. 9,578 for the previous week.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 4,000 chests were offered, of which 3,600 were sold. Prices generally were very firm and new season's tea fetched full prices. The quality is considered not so good as last season.

In tea shares the business done during the week has been limited. The following transactions were reported:—East India, 38. Singtom, 102 and 105. Durrung, 38. Gielle 73 and 74. Hoolungorie, 50 and 51. Dehing, 26 and 27 cash, and 30 for three months. Holta, 64.

Mills.—The position remains unchanged, and another short time circular is, I understand, going round; but after what has already taken place one has very little expectation of any joint arrangement being arrived at. At the meeting of the Budge-Budge Company this week it was decided to stop the Mill altogether while the present depression continued. It was stated at the meeting that if the Mill continued to work the loss would be about Rs. 16,000 per month, taking as a basis for such calculation the present price of raw jute and the current

prices for manufactured goods. By stopping the Mill altogether the loss will be about Rs. 7,000 per mensem.

It is expected that the Howrah will follow the example of the Budge-Budge; the Directors recommend the step, and the meeting called for the 15th instant will, no doubt, adopt their view of the matter. It is matter for regret, however, that these Companies did not take this step sooner. Most of the Jute Mill Companies have been going on working at a loss, and it is only after they have exhausted all their available resources, and find it difficult to increase their overdrafts and discounts with the Banks, that they have arrived at the determination to stop the Mills. It would be well if this Jute Mill Companies issued to shareholders regularly at the end of each month an approximate estimate of the result of the month's working, as the railways do every week with their traffic.

In Mill shares there has been very little doing during the week, the only business reported has been—Howrah, 57 and 56. Fort Gloster, 21. Gourepore, 63.

Exchange.—The rates for sterling exchange have slightly improved during the week. On Monday and Tuesday Bank demand drafts were 1-6½, on Wednesday and Thursday 1-6½, and on Friday and Saturday 1-6¼.

Government Securities.—The market during the week has been fairly firm, and the price of 4 per cent. Paper improved from 96-8 to 97, but gave way again to 96-10. It has since improved to 96-13 and 96-14, which were the closing rates to-day.

CALCUTTA, 13th June 1885.

WITH the exception of the good prices at which tea is selling, which, if they are maintained, will do much good, there is nothing of a cheerful character to report. Business generally continues very dull, and the Jute Mill industry which represents a large amount of invested money is extremely depressed. Some of the principal Mills are stopping work altogether, while others are talking of following their example or of working short-time; this is, no doubt, the proper remedy to apply to over-production, and it will, in time, effect an improvement in the position of the industry. The suicidal struggle between the Inland Steam Companies continues, and it is a subject of general regret that some satisfactory arrangement cannot be arrived at.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement for the week ended 9th June gives the Treasury balances on that date at Head Office and Branches as Rs. 1,45,02,410. Last week they were Rs. 1,33,89,514; the private deposits amount to Rs. 2,61,45,976 as compared with Rs. 2,63,80,475 on the 2nd instant. The Government balances and private deposits together amount to Rs. 4,06,48,387, against Rs. 3,97,69,989 last week, while the cash and currency notes at Head Office and Branches total Rs. 2,07,08,757, as compared with Rs. 2,03,58,958 on the 2nd instant. The reserve is 49·2 of the liabilities: last week it was 48·9, so that there is very little change in the position. The Directors, at their weekly meeting on Thursday, made no alteration in the rates of interest; the official minimum remains therefore at 6 per cent. for demand loans on Government securities. Bank shares have been done at 825 and 827½. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 9th June were Rs. 1,29,61,157 against Rs. 1,18,49,899 on the 2nd June, showing an increase of Rs. 11,11,258 during the week. This special hoarding of money at the great centres, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, is altogether without justification, and is one of the principal causes in maintaining in this country a much higher average rate of interest than would otherwise be the case. Apart from

These Reserve Treasury balances the Government have quite enough money lying idle in their district Treasuries; the Reserve Treasuries at the Presidency towns ought therefore to be done away with altogether, and the money paid to credit of the Government accounts with the Presidency Banks. This is a much needed reform, and ought to receive the attention of the Government of India, as cheap money and a continuance of moderate rates of interest will prove most important factors in breaking down the high charges for accommodation under which, along with their other burdens, our industries are at present suffering. Their great cash balances, the amount of rupee exchange they have to sell in London, together with the control and working of the Paper Currency Department, give to the Government in this country a most overshadowing position, and these great powers are not always exercised for the benefit and in the interests of the community. As a rule, the permanent Treasury officials have very little knowledge or touch of outside commercial and financial requirements and ideas, and of this we have many and frequent examples, both as regards the selling of Council drafts and the manipulation of the cash balances in this country. There was in this respect, however, one notable exception—Mr. James Westland, who enjoyed, and deservedly so, the complete confidence of the Banking and commercial community; he thoroughly understood their wishes and requirements; and it was mainly due to him that the country has been relieved for a time from the pressure of rupee loans. It seems difficult to understand why such a man should be given to Egypt, and taken away from India, where his services were so highly appreciated, and where he was doing very important work in bringing the Treasury into greater harmony with outside interests and ideas; it is to be hoped, therefore, that his services are not permanently lost to this country. The question of these Reserve Treasuries is most important during the busy shipping months, generally from about January to June, when the crops are being moved and shipped, and when the volume of business very much expands, and the resources of the Exchange Banks are taxed to the utmost to provide money to pay for the bills drawn against the

produce shipped. The Government are indirectly largely interested in the crops being advantageously disposed of and shipped, and as their Treasuries are full of money during the first six months of the year, owing to land revenue collections, they can at such times, by increasing their balances with the Presidency Banks, instead of hoarding their surplus money in Reserve Treasuries, do much to facilitate the business of the country and keep down the rates of interest. This is the more incumbent on them, from the fact that the issue of paper money is a monopoly in the hands of the Government Paper Currency Department. It is, no doubt, an admirable system of Paper Currency, and the circulation might be largely increased if the department exerted themselves a little more to make the notes more readily payable in coin throughout the country. The only objection that can be brought against the system of Paper Currency in this country is its want of elasticity, and in this respect it is doubtless open to attack. The President of the Bank of Java, in a pamphlet published about a year ago, attributes to the present system of Paper Currency in India, and its want of elasticity, the excessive rates of interest to which we have been subjected for some years back in the early months of the year, when business expands. This is, no doubt, to a great extent perfectly true; had the Paper Currency here been in the hands of the Presidency Banks they would have been able, when money was in demand, to expand their fiduciary circulation, as the Java Bank President is pleased to call it, that is to say, upon an addition of, say, 30 lakhs to their bullion reserve, they would have been able to issue 60 lakhs or more in notes. In the Colonies the Banks are required by law to hold in bullion only one-third of the amount of their actual note circulation, and the system so far has worked very well. Perhaps the best example of all in this respect, however, is the Bank of France, which enjoys the monopoly of issuing paper money in France, and which manages it so admirably that very moderate rates of interest prevail in that country; a change in the Bank rate there does not take place sometimes for upwards of a year; the frequent and sudden changes to which people are subjected in England and in India

are altogether unknown in France. It is a subject of the greatest importance which deeply concerns the interests and welfare of English and Indian trade; and while it is admitted that the system of Government Paper Currency in this country is an excellent one, so far as convertibility and absolute safety are concerned, its want of elasticity is clearly a drawback, and it is the duty of the Government therefore to overcome this as far as possible, by increasing its balances with the Presidency Banks, especially during the months when the volume of business expands. There are the strongest reasons therefore why the Government of India should re-consider the whole question of these Reserve Treasury balances. The balances held in cash in the Civil Treasuries of the Government of India and at credit of Government in the Presidency Banks and their branches on the last day of May, as compared with the same date in 1884 and 1883, were as under:—1885, Rs. 10,97,28,000; 1884, Rs. 11,53,64,000 1883, Rs. 12,89,29,000. The amount passed through the Bankers' Clearing House for week ended Saturday, 6th June, was Rs. 65,21,009—a very small total.

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic receipts for week ended 6th June were Rs. 9,77,632, corresponding week last year Rs. 8,53,914—increase, Rs. 1,23,718.

Eastern Bengal.—Week ended 30th May, receipts, Rs. 75,160; corresponding week last year, Rs. 84,078: decrease, Rs. 8,918.

Bengal Central.—Week ended 30th May, receipts, Rs. 8,361; corresponding week last year, Rs. 9,137, decrease, Rs. 776.

Tarkessur Railway.—Week ended 30th May, passengers Rs. 4,341; goods and sundries, Rs. 226—total Rs. 4,567.

Darjeeling Railway.—Week ended 30th May, earnings Rs. 9,554; corresponding week last year, Rs. 13,874—decrease, Rs. 4,320.

Calcutta Tramway.—The receipts for last week were Rs. 9,433.

Tea.—At the public sales here on Thursday about 7,600 chests were sold; there was good competition and prices ruled very firm. At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 6,000 chests were offered, of which 5,400 changed hands. There was

a good demand for all descriptions at firm prices. The following figures regarding the export of tea from China up to 11th instant, as compared with previous years, show a great falling, off so far, and if it continues will, no doubt, have a good effect on the prices of Indian tea.

Exports of tea from China to Great Britain:—

		lbs.
To 11th June 1885	...	11,000,000
" " " 1884	..	27,000,000
" " " 1883	...	26,000,000
" " " 1882	...	32,000,000

I have received from the Secretary of the Indian Tea Association the usual monthly return showing the shipments of tea from Calcutta for May, viz. :—

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain ...	1,275,316	718,627	277,266
Exports to Australia and New Zealand...	22,689	5,120	9,918
Exports to America...	40	3,980	3,925
Exports to other places .	8,561	8,893	14,515
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total exports ...	<u>1,306,606</u>	<u>736,620</u>	<u>305,624</u>

There has been very little business done in tea shares during the week; the only transactions reported have been—Soom 85, Holta 64 and 65, and Singtom 196.

Mills.—There is nothing further to report, and the situation practically remains unchanged. The Directors of the Howrah Mill Company, in anticipation of their meeting on Monday, have issued a circular to their shareholders in which they say:—

“The time having now arrived when the running of our Mill, either fully or partially, will entail a loss much heavier than the ‘fixed charges,’ we have come to the conclusion that it will be best to stop work altogether until the state of trade improves, and have accordingly advertised an Extraordinary

General Meeting of the Company, as per annexed Notice, for the 15th instant to sanction the measure.

“ From careful calculations made by our Agents, based on the prices of jute and bags for the 30th ultimo, the loss *per month* approximately will be as follows :—

	Rs.
Working full power from 1st July	23,000
Running half the machinery	18,000
Stopping work altogether	10,000

“ The actual ‘ fixed charges ’ amount to Rs. 12,300 *per month*, but if the Mill be closed, our Agents have offered to forego half of their guaranteed minimum allowance,—further by giving up our fees as Directors, and by reductions in insurance, &c., the inevitable outlay will be brought down to the sum last named. Details of the above figures will be laid before you at the meeting.

“ With the contingency in view of the Mill having to stop, we have for some time past curtailed our purchases of jute to what was needful to carry us on till the end of June, and have also restricted our forward sales of bags to what could be manufactured before that time.”

In shares the following have changed hands during the week :—Howrah, 53; Budge-Budge, 56 to 55; Seebpore. 35; Fort Gloster, 20; Bowreah Cotton, 32; and Dunbar Cotton, 30. In other Companies the following have changed hands :—Tarkessur Railway, 104, and 106. India General, 100. Inland Flotilla, 30 discount, Bengal Coal, 1,175. Murree Brewery, 125. Howrah Docking, 110. Bowreah Mill, 7 per cent. Debentures 101. Fort Gloster Mill Debentures, 100.

Exchange.—The rates for sterling bills early in the week were firm but have since been weaker at lower rates. On Monday Bank demand drafts were 1-6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., on Tuesday 1-7d., on Wednesday 1-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., on Thursday and Friday 1-6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., and to-day 1-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., showing a slight improvement.

Government Securities.—On Monday and Tuesday the market was steady and the price of 4 per cent. Paper ranged about 96-12 and 96-13. On Wednesday rates declined to 96-4 and 96-5, and

on Thursday they touched 96. On Friday the price improved to 96-5 and 96-6, and to-day to 96-9, and 96-10. The $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan of 1878-79 has been done at 100.

CALCUTTA, 20th June 1885.

THE Calcutta Municipal Corporation having decided to raise a debenture loan of 25 lakhs, bearing interest at 5 per cent., the usual notification has appeared inviting tenders for the same, which will be received up to 2 o'clock P. M. on the 21st July. The loan will have a currency of 30 years, and the interest will be payable half-yearly on 1st September and 1st March of each year. The conditions of tendering are that the amount of accepted tenders must be paid into the Bank of Bengal in the following instalments:—

50 per cent. of the tendered amount	on 31st July 1885
25 ditto	ditto on 31st Oct. 1885
25 ditto	ditto on 31st Jan. 1886

but parties have the option of paying up in full, receiving in that case anticipation interest up to 1st September. Anticipation interest will also be paid on all instalments paid in accordance with the dates of payments specified in the loan notification. This loan is required (1) to liquidate a 6 per cent. loan for Rs. 6,37,000 falling due on 31st July, the holders of which have been offered the option of exchanging into the new loan at par, provided they announce their intention to do so before 15th July; (2) to repay to Government a sum of five lakhs lent to the Corporation last year, and which should be paid back on the 1st August; (3) to provide for the expenditure, on the water-works which would be proceeding at the rate of about 12 lakhs a year. These debenture bonds, being specially secured on the property, taxes, and revenue of the town, are an undoubted security, and as such will no doubt commend themselves to those seeking a high class investment carrying a good rate of interest. I trust also, that the Municipal Commissioners themselves and the wealthy native citizens of Calcutta generally will take a little more interest in this loan than they have hitherto done. These gentlemen affect an interest in Municipal affairs, and their talk is unceasing of the wisdom and advantages of local self-government; but it ends there, and these men of large resources and ever-increasing wealth, arising from the trade and property of the city and from

the rich provinces of which the port of Calcutta is the outlet, have hitherto left to comparatively poor European investors, the duty of providing the money necessary to make this system of drainage and the works which give to the town a supply of pure water, both of which have been of incalculable value in improving the sanitary condition of Calcutta. Instead of assisting to provide funds for this most necessary expenditure, their efforts hitherto have been directed to keeping down the house-rate as much as possible; but while doing this, they have ever been eager supporters of any other method of raising funds, as for example the proposed octroi duties, which simply means taxing the food of the poor, and attempting to throw on their shoulders a burden which they, the rich and wealthy, ought to carry. I observe that the remarks I made on this subject in my letter of 6th June have been called in question in a certain quarter, on the ground that it cannot be expected that the native capitalist will lend his money at 4 or 5 per cent., while the ordinary rates of interest in the country are from 9 to 12 per cent. This was not the point of my argument: what I did say was, that as a matter of fact, these rich native citizens of Calcutta, having their permanent home and all their interests in the city, had taken little or no interest in the Municipal Debenture Loans, while they are steady and large purchasers of Government securities yielding them only 4 per cent. interest; and I further added, that they have actual money hoarded in their houses far exceeding the whole debt of the city, on which they get *no interest at all*. These are plain and simple facts well known to every banker and man of business in Calcutta. We know of no city in the world which has done more to enrich its permanent resident capitalists and with less trouble to themselves than Calcutta, and of none where they have done so little for the town in return. Compare the state of matters here with what has been done for Bombay by many of her wealthy citizens; in Calcutta and its neighbourhood their utmost efforts hitherto have not gone beyond the digging of a tank or the establishment of a dispensary or two, and in doing even that, care is generally taken to have such good works duly reported to

Government, with the view of obtaining some paltry social distinction or letter of thanks. Truly, wealthy gentlemen of Bengal, you have great riches, but as yet little or no appreciation of the responsibilities which attach to their possession.

Reverting to the matter of the Municipal Debenture Loan I think it is a mistake opening another of these terminable loans having a currency of 30 years. It would have been, far better to have made it an open $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan, having no fixed due date, with a minimum issue price of 90 ; the sinking fund (not less than 2 per cent.) to be applied to annual drawings of the Bonds at par. This would altogether relieve the corporation of having to provide for these terminable loans as they mature, which may happen at a time of severe monetary pressure. They would also be saved the bother and trouble of disposing of their sinking fund money, which must be invested either in their own debentures or in Government securities. It would also assist to make the debentures a more favourite security in the market, easily and readily dealt in at close prices. I took the trouble personally to point this out to Mr. Harrison, the Chairman of the Corporation. He fully admitted its great advantages and was anxious to give effect to it. The only objections that occurred to him were that "our very virtuous Government" might take exception to the system of drawings, and that it might require legislative sanction to deal with the sinking fund and the modified form of debenture; but that duty he was quite prepared to undertake, if it was thought more advantageous to raise their loans in the manner suggested, instead of by debenture loans for a fixed term of years. Of course some people hold different views on such matters; but I think the greater advantages are altogether on the side of open loans, and, besides, if successful, the whole debt of the Corporation could then be consolidated into one open $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement for the week ended the 16th June gives the Treasury balances at Head Office and Branches on that date as Rs. 1,86,75,209 against Rs. 1,45,02,410 last week, and the private deposits amounted to Rs. 2,58,82,866 as compared with Rs. 2,61,45,976. The

Government balances and the other deposits together aggregate Rs. 4,45,58,076, against Rs. 4,06,48,387 last week, while the cash and currency notes at Head Office and Branches amount to Rs. 2,51,79,733, as compared with Rs. 2,07,08,757 on 9th June, being an increase during the week of Rs. 44,70,976, the percentage of the reserve to the liabilities having risen from 49.2 to 54.2. Under these circumstances the Directors found it necessary to reduce their rates of interest one per cent., making the official minimum 5 per cent. for demand loans on Government securities. Bank shares have been done at Rs. 825. The balance in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 16th June amounted to Rs. 1,32,82,560, being an increase during the week of Rs. 3,21,403.

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic earnings for the week ended the 13th June were Rs. 8,77,364, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 8,52,423—increase Rs. 24,940.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 6th June were Rs. 71,617 and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 1,10,918—decrease Rs. 39,301.

Bengal Central Railway.—For the week ended the 6th June the receipts were Rs. 9,512, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 41,996. This large decrease is due to the *Doshahara* bathing festival which took place in the corresponding week of last year.

Darjeeling Railway.—The estimated earnings for the week ended the 6th June were Rs. 9,981, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 11,210—decrease Rs. 1,229.

Tarkessur Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 6th June were:—passengers, Rs. 3,816; goods and sundries, Rs. 294—total Rs. 4,110.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 4,000 chests were offered, of which 3,800 were sold. There was a good demand generally at fully previous rates. At the public sale here on Thursday last about 4,200 chests changed hands. There was good competition for all desirable qualities and prices were very firm.

There has been more business doing in Tea shares during the past week, and the following transactions were reported:—Gielle, 74. Singbulli and Murmah, 88 and 89, and 92 for three months. Kurseong and Darjeeling, 100. Singell 70. Hoolungoorie, 49 to 51. Longview, 67. Jokai, 75. Holta, 70. Central Cachar, 125. East India, 37.

Mills.—At the meeting of the Howrah Mills Company on Monday it was unanimously resolved to stop the Mill until trade improved, or until such time as the working did not show a loss greater than the amount of the fixed charges. I hear that the Champdany and Wellington Mills have decided to go on short-time working four days a week only. In Mill shares the following have changed hands during the week:—Seebpore, 35. Fort Gloster, 20. Gourepore, 60 and 61. Dunbar Cotton, 30.

In other shares the following transactions have been reported:—Tarkessur Railway, 105 and 106: Strand Bank Press, 74: Riverside, 65 and 66; and 68 for two months; New Beerbhoom Coal, 62 to 65; Burrakur Coal, 135, and a small lot at 137; Great Eastern Hotel, 86; India General, 97, Inland Flotilla, 32 discount; and Calcutta Steam, 70.

Exchange.—The market was steady in the early part of the week but weakness set in on Wednesday, and rates declined about $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per rupee all round. Since then exchanges have been steadier again and the decline has been recovered. On Monday and Tuesday the rate for Bank demand drafts was 1-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., on Wednesday 1-6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., on Thursday 1-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and on Friday and to-day 1-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per rupee.

Government Securities.—We have had a steady market on the whole during the past week, and the fluctuations have been confined to narrower limits than has been the case for some time back. On Monday the price of 4 per cent. Paper moved from 96-9 to 96-7, on Tuesday from 96-13 to 96-10, and back to 96-12; on Wednesday the rate was 96-10 to 96-11; on Thursday 96-12 and 96-13, to 96-11; on Friday 96-10 to 96-13, and to-day 96-12 to 96-11.

CALCUTTA, 27th June 1885.

THE Report of the New Beerbhoom Coal Company has been issued to the shareholders, and cannot be said to be of a very satisfactory character, although the results shown are somewhat better than was expected. The net profit for the half-year amounts to Rs. 31,204-2-10, which, with the balance of Rs. 1,523-13-2 from last account, makes a total of Rs. 32,733, which the Directors recommend should be appropriated as under:—

To Dividend of Rs. 3 per share, or at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum	Rs.	21,600
„ Managing Agents' commission at 10 per cent.	2,160	
„ Manager's commission at 5 per cent.	1,080	
„ Reserve Fund	5,000	
„ Balance to next account	2,893	
	<hr/>	
Total	32,733	

In consequence, however, of so much of the working capital being absorbed in laying down trams and in payment of freight on coal in course of delivery, there is at present no ready cash available for the payment of the dividend; the Managing Agents will intimate, therefore, during the next two months when the dividend will be paid.

The stocks on hand on 30th April as ascertained were Steam Coal 7,74,100 maunds; Rubble 2,61,898; Coke 40,989; and the value is put down at Rs. 1,39,713-8-9. Is it not possible to carry on the business of the Company with a smaller stock of coal? It would seem to be advisable to do so, having regard to the position of the Company's finances. From the profit and loss account it appears that the Calcutta charges for the half-year amounted to Rs. 2,02,701-8-2, and the charges at the Collieries to Rs. 1,18,571-13-0, or a total of Rs. 3,21,273-5-2—a very large sum when compared with the small amount of profit earned Rs. 31,204-2-10. This is a matter to which attention should be directed, as it is difficult to understand why a

Company like the Burrakur Coal Company is able to pay such handsome dividends, while concerns like the Raneegunge and New Beerbhoom do so little for their shareholders. There must be some explanation for it, as the Burrakur Company when in the hands of the late firm of Macalister & Co. did no good, but from the time it was transferred to Messrs. Bird & Co. its prosperity has been altogether exceptional, and the dividends paid equally so. I believe as regards these Coal Companies that dividends to a great extent are lost or absorbed in charges and working expenses. The accounts of this Company as given with the Report are not presented in a very approved form, and might be very much condensed and improved. The abstract cash account is altogether useless, if the Auditor's signature is of any value.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal statement for this week shows that the Treasury balances at Head Office and Branches amounted on the 23rd instant to Rs. 1,63,92,538, against Rs. 1,86,75,209 last week, or a reduction of Rs. 22,82,671; the private deposits were Rs. 2,60,85,587 as compared with Rs. 2,58,82,866. The Treasury balances and private deposits together aggregate Rs. 4,24,78,125, against Rs. 4,45,58,076 last week, while the cash and currency notes at Head Office and Branches amount to Rs. 2,39,71,098, as compared with Rs. 2,51,79,733 on the 16th June, showing a reduction of Rs. 12,08,640. The percentage, of the reserve to the liabilities, which was 54·2 last week, is 53·7 in this return, so that the general position is practically unchanged, although there is a considerable falling off in the ordinary mercantile demand for money. The reduction in the Bank's cash balance was entirely due to the action of the Treasury, which allowed their balance at Head Office to decline during the week from Rs. 74,37,382 to Rs. 59,48,834, while during the same period the amount of money in the Reserve Treasury at Calcutta increased from Rs. 35,94,708 to Rs. 55,81,765. Nothing, therefore, but the action of the Treasury officials prevented the public from getting the benefit of a reduction in the Bank rate of interest to 4 per cent.

The balance in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of

India on the evening of 24th June amounted to Rs. 1,76,64,877 as compared with Rs. 1,32,82,560 last week, or an increase during the week of Rs. 43,82,317. And so the system of hoarding goes on, which has already been the means of doing incalculable mischief to the community, being mainly responsible for the high rates of interest with which the public have been taxed and harassed during the first six months of the year for some years back. How can we expect, even to a very small extent, to wean the native capitalists from their present system of hoarding money, while the Government of India are themselves the greatest offenders in this respect. With the resources and financial power in the hands of the Government here, we very seldom ought to have the Bank rate of interest in this country higher than 5 or 6 per cent. Of course the Presidency Banks do not object to high rates of interest, and generally are not slow in putting up the rates the moment there is the slightest expansion in the trade demand for money; to a reasonable advance up to, say, 5 or 6 per cent. there can be no objection, but rates of 8, 9 or 10 per cent., which so frequently prevail here in the early months of the year, are most injurious. It is at such times that the Government of India, as representing the public, can to a very great extent prevent such pressure and keep down the rates of interest by increasing their balances with the Presidency Banks instead of hoarding the money in Reserve Treasuries. I cannot too strongly condemn the feeble, miserable policy of the permanent Treasury officials in this country, who will, in times of pressure, when the commercial and trading community are struggling with a ten per cent. Bank rate, complacently run down the Government balances with the Banks, while their Reserve Treasuries are bursting with money. Their action in this respect is in marked contrast with the action and policy of the Treasury of the United States of America, the only other Government in the world with similar cash resources at their disposal. When pressure for money arises in New York, the Treasury at Washington at once comes to the relief of the public, and they have never yet failed in upsetting the Corners in money there and reliev-

ing the pressure; whereas in this country we have again and again seen a large reduction take place in the Treasury balances with the Presidency Banks at a time when, owing to pressure for money and excessive rates of interest, the state of matters was critical, almost amounting to panic, while all the time the Government Reserve Treasuries were full of money, 40 or 50 lakhs of which paid to credit of the Government account with the Bank would have changed the whole aspect of affairs and relieved the pressure.

Railways.—East Indian Railway.—The traffic receipts for the week ended the 20th instant were Rs. 8,48,162; and for the corresponding week last year, Rs. 7,86,251—increase Rs. 61,911.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 13th June were Rs. 67,314, and for the corresponding week last year, Rs. 80,597—decrease Rs. 13,283.

Bengal Central Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 13th June were Rs. 8,533, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 10,331—decrease Rs. 1,798.

Tea.—At the sales of Indian tea in London this week 11,000 chests were put up, of which 10,400 chests were sold. Prices were firm but rather irregular. At the public sale here on Thursday about 7,400 chests were sold. The demand was not so brisk as at last sale; and prices of fine teas ruled more in favour of buyers, while for common and medium qualities there was good competition. A moderate business continues to be transacted in tea shares, and the following have changed hands during the week. Phoenix, 42. Tukvar, 155 to 165. Singbulli and Marmah, 88. Singtom, 110. Holta, 73. Longview, 71 and 72. Gielle, 74 and 73. Majagram, 30. East India, 37. Ring Tong, 85.

Mills.—There is very little change in the position of the Jute Mill industry, which continues very depressed. There is a little improvement in the value of manufactured goods, but on the other hand the price of the raw material is higher. The only transactions reported in Mill Scrip during the week have been Budge-Budge, 54 and Howrah, 51. In other shares the following have changed hands:—India General, 97 to 100. Inland Flotilla,

31 to 27 discount. New Beerbhoom Coal, 65 to 70. Lyell & Co., 90. Baragunda Copper B shares Re. 1 each. Bengal Coal, 1,125. Great Eastern Hotel, 86. Calcutta Hydraulic Press, 120.

Exchange.—The market for sterling exchange has been weak and rates have declined considerably. On Tuesday Bank demand drafts were quoted 1-6½ to 1-6¼, Wednesday and Thursday 1-6½, Friday 1-6½ to 1-6¼, and to-day 1-6½.

Government Securities.—The market has been firm and advancing throughout the week. On Tuesday 4 per cent. Paper improved from 96-11 to 96-14, on Wednesday from 96-15 to 97-3, Thursday 97-6 to 97-12, Friday 97-12 to 98-1, and to-day 98 to 98-3.

CALCUTTA, 4th July 1885.

WITH reference to the loan for 25 lakhs for which tenders have been invited by the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, I observe at the last meeting of the Commissioners the following extraordinary resolution was passed :—"That with a view of meeting the expenditure on the water-works and other sanctioned projects, and with the consent of Government, an endeavour be made to raise a *Rupee* Loan in England, and that for this purpose the Chairman be requested to ascertain the result of the *Rupee* Loan advertised by the Madras Municipal Commissioners in the English papers and to telegraph the result, and that if his opinion be favourable, and if as much of the loan advertised for the 21st July be not taken up, a sum of 10 lakhs of rupees be offered to investors in England with interest at five per cent." The resolution was moved in the name of Mr. Atkinson, and it was stated at the meeting that, coming from a man in his position, it ought to carry weight. The resolution certainly required all the weight which Mr. Atkinson's name could attach to it, for a more absurd and ridiculous proposal it would have been difficult to bring forward. Had the resolution been to offer, with the consent of Government, the Debenture Loan in London in Sterling, in the event of its not being taken up here at par, I could have understood it, but to propose to offer in London 10 lakhs of a Municipal Loan in *Rupees* carrying interest at 5 per cent., shows such an utter want of knowledge and exact information regarding the position of the market in London for *Rupee* Securities, that the resolution is scarcely deserving of notice or serious consideration. Owing to the uncertainty which has so long prevailed regarding silver and exchange, the *Rupee* Securities of the Indian Government have ceased to be dealt in, and their sterling value in London entirely depends now on the Indian price and the rate of exchange; in other words, they are only taken as a medium of remittance to this country. Holders and investors at home for some years back have been clearing out of Indian *Rupee* Paper at almost any sacrifice, and in the face of all that, this high Government Treasury official actually

proposes to offer in London 10 lakhs of Calcutta Municipal Rupee Bonds, while the London market will have nothing to say to the Rupee Securities of the Indian Government. The home market would not look at such a loan, unless on the condition that the principal and interest were payable in sterling. Supposing, however, that it had been resolved to borrow in gold even, there would be no advantage whatever in doing so, as the rates of interest paid by the New Zealand and Canadian towns for their *sterling* loans are higher than the average rate which the Corporation pays here in rupees. The following are the principal Colonial City Loans in London and the rates of interest they carry—*principal and interest being payable in gold*:—Auckland, 6 per cent.; Christchurch (New Zealand), 6 per cent.; Cape Town, 5 per cent.; Dunedin, 6 per cent.; Hobart Town, 5 per cent.; Melbourne, 5 and $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; Montreal, 5 per cent.; Napier, 6 per cent.; New York, 6 per cent.; Ottawa, 6 per cent.; Quebec, 6 per cent.; Sydney, 6 per cent.; Timaru (New Zealand), 7 per cent.; Toronto, 6 per cent.; Wellington, 6 per cent.; and Winnipeg, 6 per cent. This ought to convince Mr. Atkinson, and those who are influenced by the weight of his name, of the absurdity of their resolution, and I leave Mr. Atkinson therefore and his famous resolution with the Government of India, whose authority fortunately they require to enable them to give effect to their proposed financial fiasco of offering Calcutta Municipal Rupee Bonds in the London market, an authority, moreover, which I may confidently assure them they will not obtain. Instead of putting forward such a resolution, Mr. Atkinson, seeing his name apparently carries such weight, would have done good service to the town if he had gone down to the meeting and plainly told the elected representatives of local self-government, who are also, generally speaking, the representatives of large local resources and hoarded money, that it was *their* duty to assist in finding the money to complete the urgently needed water-works, and that they ought to do something for themselves, especially in such a matter as providing for the cost of works to give to the poor people of their own town a plentiful supply of pure water. Amongst those present at the meeting

were:—E. S. Gubboy, representing the great houses of Ezra and Gubboy, Joygobind Law, of Prankissen Law & Co., Shama Churn Lahoree, Sreenauth Dutt, Dayal Chand Dutt, and many other wealthy men. With the slightest support from such men and the class they represent, there ought to be no difficulty whatever in providing the necessary funds. Apart altogether from the considerations I have urged, however, there can be no doubt that the Government of India and the Secretary of State are perfectly right in restricting the borrowing of these local Municipalities to this country, and they ought to have no difficulty in finding locally the money they require at moderate rates of interest. I don't understand this proceeding of the Madras Municipality in offering their Rupee Bonds in London. I presume it has been done without the authority of the Government of India. I am aware that Madras was in the market for a loan of three lakhs, but did not know that in a financial transaction of such magnitude it had been deemed advisable to seek the co-operation of the home market! Who pays for advertising it in London, pray? The financial genius to whom our Municipalities are indebted for this brilliant idea of offering their Rupee Bonds in London at 5 per cent. interest is certainly deserving of honourable mention.

I have carefully perused the letter of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce to the Government of Bombay on the subject of the money required to complete the dock extension works now in progress there, and the position which has been taken up by the Secretary of State and the Government of India with reference to the Port Trustee's proposed alternative modes of raising the necessary loan. In my opinion the arguments of the Chamber are not altogether well-directed; they urge on the Government their claims for a guarantee of interest, and for authority to borrow a guarantee. On the subject of the proposed guarantee they say:—"The guarantee would cost the Government, and therefore the general public, *nothing*, while it would enable the Trust to obtain the necessary funds at a low rate of interest." To a Government guarantee to a Port Trust Loan, or any similar undertaking, there are the gravest possible

objections, and no consideration whatever should induce the Government to grant it. For its own credit and in the interest of the holders of its Sterling and Rupee Loans any such guarantee ought to be absolutely refused. As regards London, a Dock Loan there in Sterling with a Government guarantee is entirely out of the question. Nothing must be done in any way to interfere with the splendid credit of the Government of India in London as regards its Sterling Loans, which will continue to rise in public estimation if the credit of Government is carefully guarded. Some years ago there was a Company in London—the Madras Canal and Irrigation Company—which had a guarantee of 5 per cent. from the Government of India, or rather the Secretary of State, and it was a great market anomaly as long as it was in existence; it was eventually taken over by the Government and the money paid to the shareholders. There are equally strong objections to Port Trust or any other loans in Rupees in this country with the guarantee of the Government. Supposing the Government of India agreed to give the Bombay Port Trust their guarantee of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest in rupees, it is perfectly certain that such a loan would not be taken up over par, while ordinary Government 4 per cent. securities command that price, and are likely to be considerably higher if the market is not disturbed by some mongrel Dock Loan, half Port Trust and half Government of India—neither the one thing nor the other. It is clear, therefore, that on public grounds the Government of India must refuse to give their guarantee to the Port Trust Loans either here or in Bombay, as the doing so would be a direct injury to the public credit, which it is so important to maintain, and if possible improve. Having disposed of the guarantee, the probability of those Port Trusts being able to raise the necessary funds on their own credit, either in this country in rupees or in London in sterling, falls to be considered. Although agreeing with the Secretary of State that it is advisable, if possible to restrict such borrowers to the Indian market, I do not see that there are any serious objections to the Port Trust being permitted to borrow *on their own credit* in London, if they can

do so on advantageous terms. This, however, is the difficulty, as there is every reason to believe that they would be unable to raise the money there on their own credit at a more favourable rate of interest than 5 per cent., principal and interest payable in gold; while in this country it is very doubtful if they could, on their own credit, raise the money required at even 5 per cent. interest. Such being the actual position, the question arises, what is the proper course for the Government of India to adopt under the circumstances? If these Docks, then, are a real necessity in the interests of the trade and commerce of the country—and as regards the Bombay extension at all events there can be little doubt that such is the case—the Government ought to advance the money as required to the Port Trust at a reasonable rate of interest, making the amounts re-payable in, say, 30 years by half-yearly payments, calculated at such a rate as will extinguish both principal and interest during the currency of the loan. As regards the Calcutta Docks the situation is altogether different. Public opinion here is seriously divided on the subject; and a large section, if not the majority, of the mercantile and trading community are strongly opposed to the construction of the docks at all; and such being the case, and as they want either the guarantee or the money of the public to enable them to carry out the works, I would strongly urge the Government of India in the meantime to do nothing at all. Let matters at Kidderpore remain as they are at present for another year or so; during that time perhaps greater unanimity may be arrived at amongst those directly interested, while we shall be able in the interval to observe if the shipments of wheat and seeds from Calcutta continue to decline as compared with Bombay and Kurrachee, which show a steady and important increase.

Banks.—The Bank statement for this week gives the Treasury balances at the Head Office and Branches as on the 29th June as Rs. 1,91,72,341, against Rs. 1,63,92,538 on the 23rd idem, or an increase of Rs. 27,79,603, while the private deposits were Rs. 2,79,87,898, as compared with Rs. 2,60,85,587 last week. The Treasury balance and private deposits together

amount to Rs. 4,71,60,040, against Rs. 4,24,78,125 last week, while the cash and currency notes at the Head Office and Branches total Rs. 2,83,88,636, as compared with Rs. 2,39,71,093 on the 23rd June, or an increase during the week of Rs. 44,17,543. The percentage of the reserve to the liabilities, which was 53·7 last week, has improved to 56·9, so that the position is considerably stronger. Under these circumstances, and money being easy in the outside market, the Directors reduced the rates of interest one per cent., making the Bank's official minimum 4 per cent. for advances on Government Securities. The balance in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the evening of the 30th June amounted to Rs. 1,94,51,656, as compared with Rs. 1,76,64,877 the previous week, being an increase during the week of Rs. 17,86,779.

The Directors of the Bank of Bengal, at their meeting on Monday, declared a dividend for the half-year ended the 30th of June, at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum. The profits available, including Rs. 1,35,495, brought forward from the previous half-year, amounted to Rs. 13,21,932, which amount was disposed of as follows:—(1) In payment of a dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, Rs. 10,00,000; (2) Transferred to Bad and Doubtful Debt Fund, Rs. 32,000; (3) Gratuity and Pension Fund, Rs. 37,000; (4) Carried forward to current half-year, Rs. 2,52,932.

The amount passed through the Bankers' Clearing House for the week ended the 27th June aggregated Rs. 78,74,445.

The Directors' Report of the working of the Allahabad Bank, Limited, for the half-year ended the 30th June 1885, shows that the amount available for dividend, &c., is again in advance of that of any previous six months. The gross profits reached the sum of Rs. 1,20,866. The usual dividend and bonus at the rate of 15 per cent. per annum are recommended for declaration, and the Reserve Fund is to be increased from Rs. 1,51,000 to Rs. 1,60,000. The working capital of the Bank, which stood at Rs. 32,00,000 on 31st December last, is now Rs. 33,36,000.

Railways.—The traffic receipts of the East Indian Railway

for the week ended the 27th June do not appear as yet to have been published.

Eastern Bengal Railway.—The receipts for the week ended the 28th June were Rs. 65,388, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 88,410—decrease Rs. 23,022.

Bengal Central Railway.—The earnings for the week ended the 20th June were Rs. 13,144, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 9,113—increase Rs. 4,031.

Darjeeling Railway.—Traffic for the week ended the 20th June Rs. 8,343, and for the corresponding week last year Rs. 6,981—increase Rs. 1,362.

Tarkessur Railway.—For the week ended the 20th June the receipts were:—passengers, Rs. 3,882; goods and sundries, Rs. 278—total Rs. 4,160.

Madras Railway.—According to the Report of the Madras Railway Company for the half-year ended December 31st last, the gross revenue was £316,664 against £299,384, being an increase of £17,280. The expenditure was £192,419 as compared with £182,384, an increase of £10,035, leaving the net revenue £124,245, against £117,000, showing an increase of £7,245. There has been an increase in the coaching traffic for the six months of £9,213, in the goods traffic of £8,956, and in the grain carried of £11,161, while in cotton there has been a decrease of £7,745 in the receipts. During the six months the Company's lines conveyed 2,531,274 passengers, including troops and police, an average distance of 45·45 miles against 2,198,584 carried an average distance of 46·27 miles in 1883, the passenger mileage being 115,057,847 against 101,737,014, or an increase of 13·09 per cent. There were carried 492,869 tons of goods and railway materials 99·58 miles, against 326,056 tons carried 127·72 miles in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Tea.—At the public sale here on Thursday 5,230 chests were offered, of which 5,100 were sold. Prices were not quite so firm as at the last sale, but there was good competition for all teas of fine quality, and for these, which were principally from the Darjeeling and Terai districts, high prices were paid.

Mills.—There is little change to report, except that manufactured goods are in better demand at higher prices. The accounts of the new jute crop continue very favourable. No transactions in Jute Mill shares have been reported during the week, save Bowreah.

Exchange.—The market has been rather firmer and rates have slightly improved. On Monday Bank demand drafts were quoted *ls. 6½d.*, on Tuesday and Wednesday *ls. 6¼d.*, on Thursday and Friday *ls. 6½d.*, and to-day *ls. 6½d.*

Government Securities.—The market has been active and advancing. On Monday 4 per cent. Paper moved from 98-2 to 98-4 and 98-3, on Tuesday 98-2 to 97-14, on Wednesday 97-14 to 98, on Thursday 98 to 98-4, on Friday 99 to 98-12 and 99-6 to 99-4, and to-day 99-4 to 99-6.

Shares.—Bank of Bengal, 825 to 827½. *Tea Companies.*—Singell, 72. Longview, 72. Holta, 74 to 77. Tukvar, 167 to 168. Kalacherra, 42 for three months. East India, 38 to 42 and 44 for one month. Phoenix, 41 and 42. Hoolungooroe, 50. Central Cachar, 125. Durrung, 40. Ting Liug, 100. Soom, 85. *Other Companies.*—Tarkessur Railway, 108 to 110. Darjeeling Railway, 96. India General, 105 to 108 and 106. Inland Flotilla, 25 to 21 discount. Watson's Press, 95. Bengal Coal, 1,150. Strand Bank Press, 72 and 73. E. Morrison & Co., 125. Riverside Press, 69. Calcutta Hydraulic, 121.

The annual report has just been issued of the Positive Government Security Life Assurance Company, Limited, and as it shows a large increase of business, a low rate of mortality, and a considerable reduction in expenditure, it cannot be regarded as otherwise than highly satisfactory. It appears that during the year 369 proposals were received for assuring a sum of £222,365, of which 304 for £181,165 were accepted and completed, with a new annual premium income of £9,009-17-11, showing an increase in sums assured of £38,398 6s. 8d., and in premium income of £2,186-19-4 over the new business of the previous year. Re-assurances with other Companies were effected to the amount of £11,000 in sums assured and £772-5-10, in premiums. The large increase in new business has been

accompanied by a reduction in the expenses of management of over £1,300. The mortality has been exceptionally favourable, the death claims being considerably under expectation. The Life Assurance Fund at 31st December 1884 stood at £274,663-19-8, showing an increase of £36,962-10-7, the largest increase made in one year in the history of the Company. The total assets of the Company on 31st December 1884 were £354,772-7-11, or after deduction of all outstanding liabilities £349,400-0-2. The Directors regret to announce that the death of Mr. Charles Deacon, one of their colleagues, has taken place since the last annual meeting. Mr. A. J. C. Gwatkin, Solicitor, of the firm of Messrs. Hunters, Gwatkin and Haynes, 9, New Square, Lincoln's Inn, has been elected as his successor on the Board, subject to confirmation by the shareholders at the annual meeting. Major the Hon'ble E. R. Bourke retires in rotation from the Board, but being eligible, offers himself for re-election. The shareholders' Auditor, Mr. F. Whinney, also retires, *pro forma*, but is eligible for re-election. The Directors recommend the payment of a dividend of 2½ per cent. upon the share capital of the Company. This, it is noted, is the current annual dividend, and is a payment over and above and quite independent of the bonus dividend declared every five years. The next bonus year will be in 1886.

The fifty-ninth Report of the Directors of the Bombay-Baroda and Central India Railway Company states that the amount of guaranteed capital was reduced during the half-year by £286,500, debentures to the amount of £375,000 bearing 4 per cent. interest having been paid off with advances drawn from the Secretary of State, while £88,500 new debentures, bearing only 3½ per cent. interest for seven years were issued at par. Including this net advance the debt due to Government increased during the half-year from £155,133 15s. 1d. to £500,643 17s. 3d. The capital expended during the half-year amounted to £69,334 6s. 7d., of which £14,378 14s. 6d. was spent on the large bridges, £29,535 9s. 11d. on new additional rolling-stock and plant, £3,970 11s. 5d. on ballast and permanent way, and the balance (£21,440 10s. 10d.) chiefly on works at stations. The total expenditure on capital account was thereby raised at December

31st last to £8,019,753 10s. 6d., exclusive of stores and materials on hand or in transit in India, which represented a further sum of £283,517 6s. 3d. The net earnings of the period, calculated at 1s. 10d. per rupee, amounted to £189,007 7s. 2d., or £2 8s. 10d. per cent. on the interest-bearing capital of the Company, comparing with £213,490 16s. 8d., or £2 13s. 2d. per cent. in the corresponding period of 1883. The amount required to cover the guaranteed interest paid by Government for the half-year was £198,007 10s. being £9,000 2s. 10d. in excess of the net earnings of the line. Colonel Patrick Theodore French, who has been Chairman of the Company for nearly 32 years, has resigned his seat on the direction. The Board have felt it would be the general wish of the proprietors to mark in an appropriate and liberal manner their sense of the great value of Colonel French's services to the Company. They therefore propose to ask the Proprietors to join with the Secretary of State in presenting Colonel French with the sum of £5,000 from the surplus profits of the current half-year.

An elaborate report of the results of the working of the East Indian Railway for the first five years under the new contract between the Secretary of State and the Company has been issued in London. The average net receipts for five years are returned as £2,712,500, while the charge for annuities and guaranteed interest has averaged £1,644,424. The Company's one-fifth share of net balance of profit has been £146,445, and the total interest and dividend per cent. yielded has been £6 5s. $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

At the meeting of the Oudh and Rohilkund Railway Company in London Mr. Pender, M. P., the Chairman, stated that owing to the disturbed condition of political affairs and the general depression of trade, business on the railway had not been good. Considerable progress, he said, has been made with the bridge at Benares, and the works on the northern extension have also progressed in a satisfactory manner. Through running is designed shortly after the rains. As to the current half-year's working the prospect is not encouraging; but of late the traffic has been more satisfactory. With reference to the purchase by the Scinde, Punjab and Delhi Railway, this Company

stands in a better position. The Government has the option to purchase the undertaking in 1888 for a sum payable actually in cash or in Indian Government 5 per cent. stock redeemable at par; and supposing the mean price of the stock for the previous years has been 125, the Proprietors will receive £125 either in cash or in 5 per cent. stock.

The Report of the Directors of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company, adopted by the Proprietors at the meeting in London on June 19th, states that the revenue results of the half-year from the 1,446 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles worked were:—Gross receipts £1,200,750 16s. 2d.; working expenditure £762,957 14s. 3d.; payments to Government on account of leased lines £10,120 12s. 6d., leaving a net profit of £427,672 9s. 5d. The working expenditure was equal to 64·38 per cent. on the gross receipts, against 63·52 per cent. in the corresponding period of 1883. The increase in receipts was £24,850 19s. 6d. in passenger traffic and £10,766 13s. 6d. in goods traffic and sundries. The total of the passenger traffic carried (excluding troops, police, and season tickets) exceeds that of 1883 by 440,955 in number and £29,111 in earnings. The Agent in his report to the Board remarks:—“I mentioned in my last report that official advices of the condition of the cotton crop, and the decreased area sown in the Central Provinces, pointed to a considerable diminution in our earnings from this source for the season of 1884 and 1885, and compared with last half-year of 1883 there is a falling off in the quantity carried of 6,750 tons, and in receipts of £16,084. The auditor's Report shows a decrease in the imports into Bombay of 13,550 tons as compared with the last six months of 1883, but the crop in some districts is a late one, and part of this falling off will probably be made up in the current half-year. In ordinary food-grains of the country there has been but little movement, and this may be looked forward to whenever the harvesting is generally good all round. Owing to a continuance of low freights and exchange, a larger export trade was done in wheat up to December than at the close of the monsoon was anticipated. In teel-seed there is a falling off in the supply which has curtailed the exports.

The Report of the Directors of the South Indian Railway Company states that the total earnings for the year amounted to £401,450, and the working expenses to £258,420, or 64·37 per cent., as compared with 65·83 per cent. for 1883, leaving a net profit of £143,030, equal to a return of £3 9s. per cent. on the total capital expended, *viz.*, £4,149,973. The working expenses of 1884 were swelled by an unusual debit of £7,724 1s. 9d. (equal to 2 per cent. on the earnings), the estimated amount due to Government in settlement of account for rental and maintenance of telegraph lines in past years. The earnings and net profits for the June half-year were the largest since the formation of the Company, a satisfactory development being shown under all heads of revenue, and the percentage of working expenses showed a considerable decrease. The net receipts for that half-year would have given a return at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum on the capital expenditure, and the Directors hoped that equally satisfactory results would have been realized in the latter half of the year, the gross earnings up to the end of October showing an increase over those of the corresponding period of 1883 of £11,835. Early in November, however, incessant rain for days set in, and in the latter part of December still heavier floods occurred, occasioning breaches on the line of considerable extent. The interruptions to the traffic had the two-fold effect of greatly diminishing the comparative increase which, up to the date of their occurrence, had taken place in the receipts, as alluded to above, and of increasing in a sensible degree the percentage of the working expenses. In regard to the Travancore extension line, the Maharajah has been asked whether he was disposed to adopt the southern route, and if so, whether and to what extent he would be prepared to guarantee the capital required for the construction of the line. To this reference no reply has yet been received.

CALCUTTA, 11th July 1885.

THE Report of the Directors of the Calcutta Tramways Company for the year 1884 may be a thing of beauty, but it certainly will not be a joy for ever to the confiding shareholders who invested their money therein. The result of the working for the past year is a profit of £2,916, or something under 1 per cent. per annum; and adding £238 brought forward from last year, and £179 for interest, less exchange, the available balance at credit of Revenue Account becomes £3,333. The general balance sheet is not presented to the shareholders in the form prescribed by the Indian Companies' Act, but the following statement represents the position of the Company:—

LIABILITIES.		£	s.	d.
Capital paid-up	... ..	344,400	0	0
Sundry creditors	... ..	10,036	14	6
Reserve and Maintenance Funds	... ..	3,247	11	0
Revenue Account	... ..	3,333	6	5
		<hr/>		
Total	... ..	361,017	11	11
		<hr/>		

ASSETS.		£	s.	d.
Purchase, construction and equip- ment of Tramways	... ..	341,458	0	0
Sundry debtors	... ..	1,056	16	7
Stocks in hand	... ..	8,096	8	4
Investments Rs. 1,00,000, 4½ per cent.				
Paper	... ..	8,250	0	0
Cash at bankers and in hand	... ..	2,156	7	0
		<hr/>		
Total	... ..	3,61,017	11	11
		<hr/>		

The traffic receipts for the year amounted to the miserable sum of £51,296, which is somewhat less than the estimate of £104,000 in the prospectus. At the meeting of the shareholders at the Cannon Street Hotel, considerable dissatisfaction was

expressed and some unparliamentary language used regarding the contractors and promoters, resulting in the formation of an influential committee of shareholders to investigate the affairs of the Company. The report of the committee will be out shortly, when I shall have something more to say on the subject.

The Directors of the East India Tramways Company, Limited, are at present inviting the public to subscribe for 3,500 shares of £10 each, part of the share capital applied to the construction of the Kurrachi Tramway (*viz.*, £74,000) on behalf of the contractor, Mr. Edward D. Mathews, c. s., who is good enough to guarantee a minimum dividend of 7 per cent. for three years. As the Tramway is only nine miles in length, and the capital is £74,000, besides a debenture debt bearing interest to the tune of £600 per annum, the cost of the line to the Company cannot be less than £9,000 per mile. This would seem to be about double as much as it ought to be, and therefore we may judge of the value of the guarantee of the contractor. We are told that the Kurrachi Tramway was publicly opened on the 20th April by *His Excellency* the Commissioner of Sind; also that Mr. W. M. Coghlan, late Commissioner of Sind, writes: I "take a great interest in Sind, and from what I know of Kurrachi I think your Company likely to be a great success. The Bombay Tramway must have paid its way over and over again," &c. that Sir Bartle Frere "knew of few towns which offer a better field for such enterprises than Kurrachi," and that the *Sind Gazette* predicts "the most favorable results for the Company." This is very pretty, and would suit a patent medicine, but if it fetohes the pockets of the investing public they will have more faith in the concern than I have. Calcutta Tramway shares of £10 each can now be bought in London for about £4-10-0.

Ad uno disce omnes.

Railways.—The receipts of the East Indian Railway for the first half of 1885 amounted to Rs. 2,48,66,193 as against Rs. 2,45,09,528 for the same period of 1884. The other Companies have published no returns this week, and are probably making up their accounts for the half-year. The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the week ended July 4th were Rs. 9,658. There have been sales of Tarkessur Railway at 110.

The last *Calcutta Gazette* publishes for the first time Act II of 1885 of the Bengal Council, which received the assent of His Excellency the Governor-General on the 23rd June, "An Act to enable the Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta to construct Docks." As the Government has apparently made up its mind that the docks shall be *un fait accompli*, nothing more remains to be said than that apparently the interests of shippers are being subordinated to those of ship-owners. It will be remembered that in the first memorial of the merchants of Calcutta it was distinctly asked that, should the Government determine to proceed with the docks, there might be an authoritative ruling—(1) That no pressure shall be put on vessels to use the new docks; and (2) that cargo-boats shall be allowed free ingress and egress to and from the docks for the purpose of loading and unloading vessels therein, and that no dues will be charged on goods conveyed to or from vessels in cargo-boats. To this very reasonable and proper demand the Government has made no reply; yet if it be the case, as alleged, that when the docks are completed cargo-boats will soon become one of the memories of the past, there can be no reason on earth why such an assurance should not be given. That memorial, whatever may be said against it, was most influentially signed by nearly all the leading shippers; it was moreover signed voluntarily, and because it commended itself to the signatories. A counter-memorial, signed chiefly by the ship-owning interest, it is true, has since been presented; and as the Government are apparently determined to accede to the wishes of the ship-owners, it is clearly their duty to give the desired undertaking to the shippers of goods, and not leave them entirely at the mercy of the Port Trust.

The *Calcutta Englishman* occasionally has lucid intervals; thus in its money article on February 12th, I find the following on the Trade and Navigation Accounts:—"The power of Bombay and Kurrachi to compete under circumstances which almost close the trade to Calcutta, is of course explained by their greater proximity to wheat-growing districts, of importance, by their lower port charges, and by the advantage they enjoy of a considerably shorter voyage to Europe. The superiority of Bombay

in the two latter respects is certain to be more and more felt, and wheat will be directed there in preference to Calcutta, not only from districts at about the same distance from the two ports, but also from districts which we have been accustomed to look upon as lying well within our commercial territory. This movement to the western port will be assisted by the tendency of trade to gravitate towards the largest market, a tendency we have recently seen exemplified in the case of Agra and Delhi cotton, the greater part of which now finds its way to Bombay. Under these circumstances serious misgivings are being expressed about the wisdom of proceeding with the construction of the new docks at Kidderpore, or at any rate of going on with them at once. The scheme was the outcome of the expansion of the trade in wheat a few years ago, an expansion in which Calcutta had at first her full share, and which was so sudden and extraordinary that it naturally excited a great deal of enthusiasm and gave rise to sanguine pamphlets and gigantic projects for developing the resources of the country. We have now had time to cool down, and find that while there is reason to believe in the further growth of the Indian wheat trade, the increase is far more likely in western India than at this port. Docks at Kidderpore, with warehouses and good shed accommodation, would, it is admitted, be a great convenience in the shipment of wheat and oil-seeds, but they would not diminish the natural disadvantages with which we have to contend with the wheat-trade in comparison with Bombay, and this being the case, it is, to say the very least, difficult to see how they could be of any benefit at all commensurate to their great expense—an expense which has been estimated at Rs. 3,00,00,000, but which, judging from experience of such estimates, would in all probability be considerably exceeded. The dock dues which would have to be levied would be an additional burthen upon the shipping visiting this port, whose high charges are already so much complained of, and a serious additional burthen, should the expectations about the great expansion of our exports of wheat, as will probably be the case, fail to be realised. We have, it is true, other bulky produce, such as oil-seeds and jute, which employ a large

quantity of tonnage, but the increase of exports of oil-seeds will be checked to some extent, though in a less degree than those of wheat by the competition of Bombay in some of the up-country districts, while the jute trade, though a progressive enhancement may be looked for in its value, will probably not augment sufficiently in ordinary years, when the existing glut of shipping has passed by, to require much more tonnage for its transport than at present, owing to the great extension of the Calcutta Mills and the conversion of the spot of so large a quantity of the raw material into the manufactured article. In the case of this fibre an increase of the charges on shipping would also probably lead to the larger exports being made from Chittagong to the prejudice of Calcutta. The above considerations, and the difficulty which it is understood is likely to be experienced in raising the large sum required for the construction of the docks, point clearly, it is argued, to the desirability of the greatest caution and deliberation being exercised, and it is consequently a matter of surprise and regret that the Port Trust should have acted with so much precipitation in acquiring and clearing land for the works, and should have been granted a loan by the Local Government to enable them to defray the expenses so prematurely incurred." The above article is in complete accord with the views I have consistently endeavoured to advocate in the columns of the *Pioneer*, I was therefore much amused—I cannot say surprised—to read the following remarks in an editorial of the *Englishman* yesterday:—

"It is no longer even possible to disguise the fact that the opposition on the subject of the Kidderpore Docks has been from the first but the crackling of thorns . . . The opposition case—if it may be dignified by that name—was thoroughly exposed and discredited long ago, and it would be ridiculous to waste more words upon the subject." Perhaps it would be ridiculous to waste more words on the *Englishman*, for a newspaper that can gravely announce on the 9th December the establishment of a Bankers' Clearing House in Bombay, and remark that "it is common matter of wonder why a similar institution has not been established in Calcutta,"—such an institution having then

existed for nearly six months,—can hardly hope to pose as a commercial authority, and had better confine itself to incorrect answers to correspondents regarding the yacht *Osborne* and other germane matters of no importance to the public.

The Report of the Directors of the Indian Portland Cement Company for the 13 months ended the 31st December is certainly not very cheerful reading, and the balance sheet discloses a state of things which hardly augurs favourably for the future. There appears to be owing for rent, repairs, stores, &c., Rs. 34,987; while all the available assets seem to total up Rs. 29,588. There is a balance at debit of profit and loss account of Rs. 63,565. The Directors regret to say that the Company has not overcome its financial difficulties, and that more money is required for the satisfactory carrying on of the works. They have memorialised the Government of India for an order for a definite quantity of cement to be delivered in a given time, *and an advance thereon* but they have been informed (as might have been reasonably expected) that while Government is prepared to encourage the industry by instructing its officers to use, as far as possible, the cement made by the Company in all works for which it is proved to be suitable and economical, it cannot advance money in anticipation of delivery, nor guarantee any definite consumption. This "private enterprise" business is but a sickly plant at best. Start a manufactory, call it "private enterprise," and Government is not only expected to give a monopoly of its business, but to finance the concern as well; under such a state of things it is difficult to see where the "enterprise" comes in.

Banks.—The Bank of Bengal has published no statement this week, consequent upon the closure of the books. Shares have been dealt in at 827½ *cum*-dividend and 802½ *ex*-dividend. The amount passed through the Calcutta Bankers' Clearing House last week was Rs. 71,60,880. The Bank rate remains unchanged at 4 per cent. The balances held in cash in the Civil Treasuries of the Government of India and at credit of Government in the Presidency Banks and their branches on the last day of June 1885, were as under:—1883, Rs. 14,08,62,000; 1884, Rs.

13,11,11,000; and 1885, Rs. 12,63,06,000. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the 7th July amounted to Rs. 1,86,37,688, as against Rs. 1,94,51,656 on the 30th June. The amount in the Reserve Treasury in Calcutta has been increased by nearly 29½ lakhs of rupees.

Exchange opened on Monday at *ls. 6¼d.* and closed at *ls. 6¼d.* at which figure it remained until Wednesday, when it improved to *ls. 6¼d.* On Friday it declined to *ls. 6¼d.*, and to-day to *ls. 6¼d.* for on demand drafts.

Government 4 per cent. Paper rose on Monday to 99¼ but closed at 99½. On Tuesday it opened at 99¼, rose to 99½ and closed at 99¾. On Wednesday it slowly receded to 98¾, on Thursday improved to 98½, but on Friday was weaker again, closing at 98½. To-day it opened at 98½ and drooped to 98¾.

Mills.—There is no new feature to report; the accounts will soon be out, when we hope to review them. There have been sales of Bowreah Cotton at 30, 31½, 32, 33 and 34. Fort Gloster, 20. Riverside Press, 70. Strand Bank, 80. Watson's Press, 95. Camperdown, 105.

Miscellaneous.—Sales are reported of Inland Flotilla, 20 discount. India General, 104. Alipore Coal, 125. Great Eastern, 85. Baragunda A shares, Re. 1

Tea.—At the London tea sales some 2,000 chests were offered and 1,700 sold; there was a good demand. At the Calcutta tea sales on Thursday 6,145 chests were sold and 226 withdrawn; prices were somewhat lower. There has been somewhat more inquiry for tea shares during the past week, and transactions are reported in Balasun at 78. Bengal, 35. Dehing, 28 and 27. East India, 44. Holta, 79 and 80. Hoolungoorie, 55. Jetinga Valley, 60. Jokai, 8, 4. Longview, 75 and 76. Gielle, 75 and 76. Monacherra contributory, 15 and 12. Majagram, 28 and 30½. Singbulli and Murmah, 91, 92, 93 and 92. Singell, 72. Ting Ling, 100. Tukvar, 172. Darrung, 44 and 45. Iringmara, 100. There may be some grounds for this improvement in the value of tea stock, based principally on the higher prices now being realised for tea; but as only a very small portion of the crop has yet been disposed of, it seems early to discount the result. The present

good prices may not continue, and regarded from an investor's point of view, there is no class of security so unsatisfactory as tea shares; for it will probably be discovered, if desired to realise, that there is absolutely no market for these shares. Until the tea industry in Calcutta is put on a totally different basis, and worked more with a desire to put money in the shareholders' rather than the agents' pockets, we would advise cautious investors to exercise great caution in dealing with tea shares. The following figures have been placed at my disposal by the Secretary of the Tea Association:—

Exports of Indian Tea from Calcutta.

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain in June ...	3,096,894	1,582,572	2,239,768
Exports to Great Britain from 1st May to 30th June ...	4,372,210	2,251,199	2,517,029
Exports to Australia and New Zealand in June ...	9,009	1,631	6,158
Exports to Australia and New Zealand from 1st May to 30th June ...	31,698	6,751	16,076
Exports to America in June ...	16,665	12,744	6,324
Exports to America from 1st May to 30th June ...	16,705	16,724	10,249
Exports to other places in June ...	6,400	12,308	4,592
Exports to other places from 1st May to 30th June ...	14,961	21,196	19,107
Total Exports from 1st May to 30th June ...	4,435,574	2,295,870	2,562,461

Export of Tea from Ceylon.

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lb.	lb.	lb.
Exports from 1st October to 18th June ...	2,231,695	1,176,787	892,247

CALCUTTA, 18th July 1885.

ALTHOUGH the Government of India have sanctioned the Act to enable the Port Commissioners to construct docks, it is by no means clear that they intend to lend the Port Trust the money, or to guarantee such loan as the Commissioners may endeavour to place on the market. There is, no doubt, that if Government is determined that there shall be docks, they ought to advance the money themselves; but before they do this, they ought at least to satisfy themselves that the venture will pay its expenses. Now when Mr. Reynolds introduced the Act into the Bengal Council, after observing that it would "involve no increase of taxation, and enable the Port Commissioners to lighten the burthens on trade," he proceeded to refer to the exhaustive Report issued by the Dock Committee in the autumn of 1883, and to the estimates of probable receipts and expenditure. Those receipts, he said, would amount to 18½ lakhs, and the expenditure to 17¼ lakhs, leaving a surplus of about three-quarters of a lakh. Turning to the Report of the Dock Committee, pages 18 and 19, we find the receipts are estimated thus:—

IMPORT DUES.		Rs.
Dock dues on 173 vessels discharging cargo averaging		
1,375 tons each at 4½ annas per ton ...	...	66,912
Landing 72,617 tons of iron at Re. 1 ...	...	72,617
Do. 45,513 „ coal at As. 10 ...	...	28,445
Do. 200,000 „ salt at Re. 1 ...	...	2,00,000
EXPORT DUES.		
Dock dues on 403 vessels=486,482 tons at As. 3 ...	...	91,215
Export dues on 1,191,734 tons cargo at Re. 1 ...	...	11,91,734
Rent of lands (estimated) ...	...	1,20,000
Wharfage from boat dock ...	...	75,000
Total estimated receipts	...	18,45,922

(To show how slipshod the estimates are I may mention that there is a mistake of Rs. 10 in the addition of the five items of imports on page 18.) Now I have always been of opinion that these estimates of probable export receipts were unduly favourable; they were based upon the figures of 1882-83. Thus virtually the whole of the exports to the United Kingdom, America, Europe, Africa, and Australia for that year were totalled up, amounting to 1,324,148 tons, and deducting 10 per cent. to meet the case of vessels loading in the river, it was gravely estimated that 1,191,734 tons of export cargo would be available for the new docks. But in this estimate some 70,000 tons of hides, tea, indigo, lac dye, and castor-oil are included, which probably go *via* the jetties at present; and as no allowance is made from the estimated receipts from the jetties on this account, it would seem that the Committee estimate that the jetties and the docks will secure the whole of the export trade, based on the figures of 1882-83. The three largest items of export are jute, wheat, and seeds, and the following table shows the figures for the last three years; those for 1882-83 are from the Dock Committee's Report, and those for the two last years from the Trade and Navigation Accounts, which include the whole of Bengal and not Calcutta only:—

	1882-83.	1883-84.	1884-85.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Jute ...	459,419	350,899	418,434
Wheat ...	222,011	385,576	128,160
Oil-seeds ...	281,975	306,105	319,505
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total ...	963,405	1,042,580	866,099
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Now the figures for the last two years for jute include Chittagong shipments, but notwithstanding this, the total for last year is 100,000 tons below the estimates, which would fall to be reduced in consequence by nearly one lakh of rupees. However, though I am strongly of opinion that these estimates are far too sanguine, I will not at present further cavil at them, but will turn to the expenditure (page 20 of the Report):—

	Rs.
The <i>approximate</i> working expenses of the dock are there put down at	7,38,397
Interest on Rs. 2,30,74,105 capital debt of the proposed docks at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.	10,38,335
	17,76,732
Total expenditure	17,76,732

The estimated receipts thus being Rs. 18,45,923, and the approximate expenditure Rs. 17,96,732, there is an apparent surplus of Rs. 69,191. But if we turn to page 216 of the proceedings of the Port Commissioners for June 1884, we shall find a revised estimate of the cost of these docks signed by Mr. Duff Bruce, c. s., which, excluding the Graving Dock, raises the total cost of this undertaking to Rs. 2,92,84,208, and this sum will probably be considerably increased, if the sanitary arrangements recommended by the late Committee are to be carried out. Now let us see what the financial aspect of the case will be under these altered circumstances:—

	Rs.
Estimated receipts from the dock according to the Committee's Report (pages 18 and 19)	18,45,923
Less actual working expenses (page 20)	Rs. 7,38,397
$4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on capital debt of Rs. 2,92,84,208	„ 13,17,789
	20,56,186
Deficit on working	2,10,263

So that we have the extraordinary spectacle of a body of gentlemen, like the Port Commissioners, deliberately recommending for the sanction of the Government a dock scheme which, upon their own figures, shows an annual deficit of Rs. 2,10,263, and expecting the Government and the public to lend them the money to enable them to give effect to this extravagant proposal. But if the Government are really convinced that these new

docks (which, according to the estimates of the Committee as subsequently revised, show a serious deficit on the working) will be a great financial success, there can be no reason why they should not be treated as entirely distinct from the Port Trust, in such sort that no portion of the surplus receipts from jetties, strand bank lands, inland wharves, &c., may be applied to make good the deficit. If this be done, and if it be ruled either that vessels have the option of using the docks or not, or that cargo-boats entering into the docks to discharge or receive goods to or from any ship lying therein shall be exempt from the payment of any dues, as well as the goods so discharged or received, the shippers of goods will make no further objection to the docks, and would probably withdraw all opposition.

The Port Trust may rest assured that if this matter is once represented to the House of Commons the required assurance will be given; and the Government here, if they sanction the imposition of taxes on cargo-boats or goods conveyed therein, will probably find their action disallowed by the home authorities. It is perhaps not generally known that under the (London) West India Dock Act of 1831 it is provided that all lighters and craft entering into the said docks, basins, locks or cuts to discharge or receive ballast or goods to or from on board of any ship or vessel lying therein, shall be exempt from the payment of any rates so long as such lighter or craft shall be *bond fide* engaged in discharging or receiving such ballast or goods as aforesaid, and also all such ballast or goods so discharged or received shall be exempt from any rate or charge whatever. In 1855 the Dock Company introduced a bill into Parliament to abolish the exemption, *but it was thrown out by a large majority*, and the exemption from charges continues, the Dock Company admitting annually more than 60,000 barges without payment. It will thus be seen that the question of the exemption of cargo-boats entering docks, and the cargo conveyed therein from dock dues, has been considered and decided by the British Parliament, to whom I would advise an appeal, should no authoritative ruling be obtainable from the Government here. It will be observed that in the

Note which the Port Commissioners drew up upon the memorial against these docks, they studiously refrained from any allusion to the prayer of that memorial for an authoritative ruling (1) that no pressure shall be put on vessels to use the new docks, and (2) that cargo-boats shall be allowed free ingress and egress to and from the docks for the purpose of loading and unloading vessels therein, and that no dues will be charged on goods conveyed to or from vessels in cargo-boats; though the ship-owners and agents in their memorial state that they have inquired of the Port Commissioners and are informed that no such charge will be levied. Let the Port Trust or the Government come forward and honestly state exactly what they intend to do on this subject. Their studious silence is, to say the least of it, liable to misconstruction. In a subsequent letter I will proceed to show that the effect of these docks, viewed in the light of the Committee's own estimates, must be to increase the dues on the shipping.

The monthly returns published by the Collector of Sea Customs, Calcutta, show that there was during June a satisfactory increase in the value of both imports and exports. In imports there was an increase in the value of almost every item but cotton, twist, machinery, railway plant, and umbrellas. The net result as contrasted with June 1884, being an increase of Rs. 31,35,742. In exports the chief decreases were in jute and gunnies, opium, rapeseed, and silk; the net result as contrasted with 1884 being an increase of Rs. 39,859.

Banks, &c.—There has been no statement published by the Bank of Bengal this week. Shares have been dealt in at 802½, 805, 810, 812½, 815, 817½, and 820 ex-dividend. The balance in the Reserve Treasuries on the 14th July was Rs. 1,69,45,909, of which nearly 85 lakhs are in Calcutta. The Bank rate remains at 4 per cent. There has been a sale of Delhi Bank shares at 170.

The first Report of the New Oriental Bank Corporation, with accounts to the 31st March, has just been issued; the net profit amounts to £5,803, and this after payment of all the preliminary expenses, advertisements, &c., incurred to that date, and

full provision for bad and doubtful debts. The Directors recommend a dividend of 3 shillings per share, being at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, free of income tax, and that the balance of £652 be carried forward.

The following figures show the steady increase in the Bank's business here and abroad since the commencement of the Bank :—

	ASSETS.		£
30th September 1884	102,000
31st October "	742,000
30th November "	1,086,000
31st December "	1,480,000
1st January 1885	1,796,000
28th February "	1,992,000
31st March "	2,383,000

The Directors think it right to state that this satisfactory result is almost entirely due to the energy and ability of the trained staff they have had the good fortune to obtain from the establishment of the old Bank, and that the business brought together gives hopes of continued progress. A matter of very great importance and of some difficulty occupied the attention of the Directors from the commencement of their labours: this was the question of office premises. Having decided to begin work with the old Bank's staff, most of whom were employed by the official liquidator, they found it advantageous to make an arrangement with him for the joint use of the then existing establishment and office accommodation. As this arrangement drew towards a close, and finding that the acquisition of suitable new offices was no easy matter, the Directors decided to tender for all the unsold Banking premises of the old Bank, on terms which they considered would be equal to a reasonable rent. This tender, as is publicly known, has been accepted with the consent of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice and the Directors are arranging a debenture loan to cover the cost. Some of the offices being larger than the new Bank at present requires, the Directors intend to sublet such portions as can be spared.

The following is the balance sheet.—

LIABILITIES.			
			31st March 1885.
			£ s. d.
Capital paid-up	...	...	331,346 0 0
Notes or Bills	...	...	260,104 15 10
Fixed Deposits, current and other accounts	...	...	1,786,212 12 8
The rest	...	...	5,803 8 5
Total			2,383,466 16 11
ASSETS.			
			£ s. d.
Coin and Bullion on hand, at call and bankers			256,958 8 1
Bills of Exchange	...	...	408,453 9 7
Bills discounted, current and other accounts	...	...	1,718,054 19 3
Total			2,383,466 16 11

The Clearing House receipts increased last week to Rs. 1,09,79,900.

Government Paper has fluctuated a good deal this past week owing to certain "bear" operations at Bombay and the receipt of somewhat disquieting telegrams from Europe regarding Russia's movements. Four per cents. opened on Monday at 98 $\frac{1}{2}$, and after advancing to 98 $\frac{7}{8}$ closed at 98 $\frac{1}{2}$. On Tuesday they opened at 98 $\frac{1}{2}$, but improved to 98 $\frac{1}{2}$. On Wednesday they advanced to 98 $\frac{3}{8}$, and then declined to 98 $\frac{1}{2}$. On Thursday rumours of Russia's advance tumbled the market down to 96 $\frac{1}{2}$; rates, however, improved to 97. On Friday an upward tendency set in and the rate advanced to 97 $\frac{1}{2}$. To-day it has again declined to about 97.

Exchange was pretty steady during the early part of the week at ls. 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., which was $\frac{1}{4}$ better than the close of last week. The advance was only temporary, and on Thursday there was a relapse to ls. 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., at which figure it has remained since.

The Report of the Directors of the Inland Flotilla Company, Limited, for the half-year ended 30th April, shows a gross profit on the working of the steamers of Rs. 7,589; but law

expenses, rent, debenture and other interest amount to Rs. 37,124, so that the loss really works out Rs. 29,535. There appears, however, to have been a sum of Rs. 34,695 at credit of profit and loss for interest prior to 31st October, and some Rs. 32,635 have been received as fines from the contractors and forfeited deposits: so that amount at credit of profit and loss at the closure of the books was Rs. 37,795, which the Directors recommend should be devoted to writing off the preliminary expenses, leaving Rs. 2,097 to be carried forward.

The balance sheet of the Company shows it to be in a very precarious financial position, and entirely at the mercy of its creditors. The following is a synopsis of it:—

LIABILITIES.

	Rs.
Capital paid-up	16,13,400
Debentures issued	2,15,000
Amount due to Banks, Agents, and on bills ...	6,20,981
Profit and Loss	2,097
	24,51,478
Total ...	24,51,478

ASSETS.

	Rs.
Block of 4 steamers, 2 launches, 12 flats, plant and machinery	23,42,463
Leasehold godown at Nimtolla ..	25,497
Debenture charges	4,412
Stock of stores and coal	52,031
Debts due by agents and for freight	22,643
Cash in hand	4,432
	24,51,478
Total ...	24,51,478

It will be seen from the above that the Company have no tangible assets to meet the large sum of Rs. 6,20,981 due to the Bank, their Agents and the builders; and the best thing they could do would be to call up the balance of their capital, Rs. 13,25,000, if it were not unfortunately pledged to the

debenture-holders. It is gratifying to learn that liberal support has been accorded to the Company by shippers on the Assam line as well as in the jute districts, and that there is good hope of this support continuing and extending, the service being now in thorough working order. As might of course have been expected, severe competition and opposition have been met with from the previously existing Companies. Every endeavour consistent with the welfare of the Company is said to have been used to bring about an amicable understanding with these Companies for the maintenance of minimum rates of freight, resulting, however, so far only in repeated reductions and concessions, which the Company has been compelled to follow, and at the moment of writing the Report there appears to be little prospect of an amicable settlement being soon arranged, though the Directors trust and believe that, vigorously and economically managed as the fleet is, the termination of the struggle will not prove unfavourable. The Directors add that they have always been willing and ready to come to any reasonable arrangement with the competing Companies, and they recommend that this policy be continued.

A large shareholder writes to me as follows:—"It is deplorable that capital is no longer profitable in this country, and that such a fine fleet cannot earn enough to pay its way. But what can we expect when the Eastern Bengal State Railway is allowed to carry jute and seeds in competition with us at less than two-thirds of actual cost for the work, and to draw on the resources of Government for their losses?" This is a serious charge against the management of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, and I should be glad to hear what is to be said in defence before making any observations on the subject. The serious mistake made by the Inland Flotilla appears to have been this, that they have started their fleet without properly satisfying themselves that there was room for them. This is an unfortunate failing in Limited Liability Companies. Capital is profitable enough in this country if it is employed in the right direction, but to embark it in the purchase of a line of steamers to run in competition with two existing lines and a railway seems hardly to be the right direction.

The Report of the Gourepore (Jute) Company for the half-year just ended, in view of the extreme depression prevailing in this industry, is fairly satisfactory. The net profit on the Jute Mill amounts to Rs. 17,964, and on the Oil Mill to Rs. 7,146, together Rs. 25,110, which, with the balance of Rs. 9,473 from last half-year, the Directors recommend should be carried forward. It will be remembered that when it was proposed that the Jute Mills should all go on short-time, the Gourepore was one of the recalcitrant concerns, with this result that "it is with regret that the Directors have to record that values of jute fabrics have declined to a level hitherto unknown." I feel satisfied that had the proposed short-time movement been put through, prices of jute fabrics would have shown a very substantial rise, which would have more than compensated for the decreased production of the Mill. Without in any way wishing to disparage the Directors and Agents of the Gourepore Company, who are all good men and true, I think that in setting themselves against the almost unanimous opinion of the trade they have shown a sad want of discretion, and I fear have allowed jealousy of a neighbouring Mill to over-ride their better judgment. At the present moment, consequent on the stoppage of a number of Mills, prices of gunnies for immediate delivery are somewhat firmer; but no real improvement can be looked for until some definite agreement is come to for the curtailment of the production for a fixed period. With so many Mills standing silent, yet ready to recommence at the shortest notice, there is no guarantee that the market will not be flooded with gunnies at any moment, and consequently there is an entire absence of speculation, sales being merely from hand to mouth.

The Fort Gloster Report, which has come into my hands at the last moment, appears to be the reverse of satisfactory, the working for the half-year showing a loss of Rs. 77,884.

In shares there have been transactions in Bowreah at 33 and 34. Fort Gloster, 22. Carew & Co., 100. Strand Bank Press, 85. Riverside Press, 74. Watson's Press, 97. Titaghur Paper Mills, 53. India General Steam Company, 104. Baragunda Copper Company, A shares, Re. 1. Great Eastern Hotel, 85½.

Tea.—At the Calcutta tea sales on Friday about 12,000 chests were sold. Prices were generally lower, the decline being more noticeable in the finer qualities. In shares there have been transactions in Durrung at 43 and 44. Holta, 80. Loobah, 120. Singell, 72. Gielle, 74. Teesta, 110. East India, 42.

Railways, &c.—The traffic receipts of the East Indian Railway for the first 11 days of July amounted to Rs. 12,89,228, as against Rs. 11,88,829 for the first 12 days of the same month last year. This is a very satisfactory increase.

The traffic receipts of the Tarkessur Railway for the last 10 days of June amounted to Rs. 8,033, and the total receipts for the half-year were:—

			Rs.
Coaching traffic	...	...	1,40,735
Goods traffic	...	...	10,298
Sandries	...	...	156
		Total	1,51,189

When the half-yearly report comes out I will review this little railway at more length; but it will be observed that my predictions regarding the smallness of the goods traffic were perfectly correct.

The traffic returns of the Eastern Bengal State Railway for the first half of this year as against last year are as under:—

		1884.	1885.
		Rs.	Rs.
Coaching traffic	...	10,39,233	11,28,937
Goods traffic	...	10,31,605	9,79,417
Other earnings, including steamboats		2,20,693	4,85,330
	Total	22,91,531	25,93,684

Although the goods receipts are considerably less, the weight carried this year was 74,68,045 maunds as against 68,23,188 for last year; in other words, the average rate per maund this year was 2'1 annas per maund, against 2'4 annas per maund last year.

I should like to see the expenditure side of this account before remarking further, especially under the head of steamers.

The Tramway receipts last week amounted to Rs. 9,596.

In shares there have been sales of Tarkessur Railway at 110. In Joint Stock Companies' debentures there have been sales of Hooghly Mills at 100, and Canal Press at 102. Municipal 6 per cent. bonds have changed hands at 105.

Meetings are advertised of Fort Gloster Mills for 28th July ; Watson's Press, 3rd August ; Gourepore Company, 10th August.

CALCUTTA, 25th July 1885.

AN advertisement in the daily papers invites tenders for a loan of 75 lakhs of rupees at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to be issued under the provisions of Act II (B. C.) of 1885 for the construction of docks at Kidderpore. The payment of *interest* is guaranteed by the Secretary of State and made a charge upon the revenues of Bengal; Debentures will be for sums of Rs. 100 each, interest being payable on the 1st January and 1st July. Tenders will be received up to the 12th August, and should be forwarded in sealed covers, superscribed "Tender for Port Trust Loan of 1885," addressed to the Secretary to the Port Commissioners; they must be accompanied by a receipt from the Bank of Bengal for 2 per cent. of the amount tendered for, and the balance will be payable thus—25 per cent. on the 1st September, 25 per cent. on the 1st October, and 48 per cent. on the 1st November. The loan will run for not less than 40 years, and if investors are satisfied with the security and the rate of interest, they had better tender—but perhaps they had better not.

It is much to be regretted that the Government of India has not seen its way to lending the Port Trust the money; there is considerable diversity of opinion regarding the wisdom of constructing these docks, and the Government has come out in quite a new character in proceeding with this work in spite of the influential memorial against it; but there is no diversity of opinion as to how the money should be raised; there is an absolute consensus of opinion in mercantile circles that Government should have borrowed the money at home at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in sterling and lent it to the Port Trust in sterling at 4. When it is borne in mind that this difference of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would reduce the charge for interest some 3 lakhs annually, which would to this extent have lightened the burthens on the Port, the action of the Government in this matter becomes incomprehensible, *if they really wish to proceed with the docks*. Unless, however, the leading Banks here subscribe for the loan, it is extremely doubtful if it will be taken up. It is true that the interest is $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and that it is guaranteed by the Secretary of State

to this extent, that if the Port Commissioners are unable to pay it, it is to be made a charge on the provincial revenues of Bengal; but what about the principal sum lent? This is not guaranteed at all, and it is consequently not nearly so good a security as Calcutta Municipal Debentures, which are secured on the rates and taxes of this city. Yet when the tenders for the 5 per cent. loan of 25 lakhs of rupees of the Calcutta Municipality were opened on Tuesday, it was found that they did not amount to one-eighth of the total sum required. Investors should not forget that the market for these Port Trust Debentures is a limited one, and very different from that for Government Paper. The new docks to be built, on the Port Commissioners' own showing, will exhibit an annual deficit of over two lakhs of rupees. The public are therefore invited to lend their money to carry out a scheme which, on the prospectus of the promoters, shows a large annual deficit and to which a large section of the community looked for to make the scheme a success, are totally opposed.

Banks, &c.—The weekly statement issued by the Bank of Bengal to the 21st July shows that the public and other deposits amounted to Rs. 4,84,24,157, and the cash and currency notes to Rs. 2,94,68,110, or 58·7 per cent. No alteration has been made in the rate for on-demand loans, which remains at 4 per cent. Bank shares have been dealt in at 820 and 817½. There have been sales also of National Bank at 106. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the 21st July amounted to Rs. 1,75,58,190, of which Rs. 93,64,265 are at Calcutta.

The Clearing House returns show a considerable decrease on last week having been reduced to Rs. 75,87,975.

Government Paper has shown a sensible improvement this week; opening on Monday at 97¼ it improved to 97½, and on Tuesday to 167½, closing at 97½. On Wednesday it further improved to 97¾, and on Thursday declined to 97½, closing at 97¼. On Friday it dropped to 97½, and closes firm to-day at 97½ to 97½.

Exchange was steady on Monday at 1-6½, but on Tuesday it improved to 1-6¼, declining on Wednesday to 1-6¼, it im-

proved on Thursday to 1-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ %, and dropped again on Friday to 1-6 $\frac{1}{4}$ %, at which figure it closes to-day.

Railways, &c.—The traffic returns of the Tarkessur Railway for the first 11 days of July show coaching traffic, Rs. 6,373; goods, Rs. 282; sundries Rs. 6—total Rs. 6,661.

For the same period the receipts of the Eastern Bengal Railway were:—coaching Rs. 51,451 as against Rs. 50,156 for 1884; goods Rs. 48,873, as against Rs. 56,716 for last year; and other earnings, including steam-boat, Rs. 7,397, as against Rs. 10,493.

The receipts of the Bengal Central Railway for the first 11 days of July amounted to Rs. 15,906 as against Rs. 14,286 for the same period of last year.

The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the past week amounted to Rs. 9,468.

The traffic receipts of the Darjeeling Railway Company for the first 11 days of July amounted to Rs. 5,998, as against Rs. 6,713 for the same period of 1884.

At the half-yearly meeting of the Inland Flotilla Company the following extraordinary resolution was passed:—"That a memorial be forthwith sent to the Government of India praying for their interference against the action of the Eastern Bengal State Railway in reducing freights on jute and seeds from Naraingunge and Serajgunge below the actual cost of carriage, thereby using the revenues of the State to compete with private enterprise." We all know that the ways of the "Heathen Chinese" are remarkable, but they are guileless compared to this precious resolution. Only a few years ago there was a universal howl by all the jute shippers against the "unconscionable greed" of the Eastern Bengal Railway, who took advantage of the anxiety of dealers to bring their crops to market to raise their rates of carriage; and Government was earnestly called upon to take the railway under their own management in order that the extortionate charges of the railway might be reduced. Accordingly Government did take over the railway and placed it under the management of one of their ablest officers, Colonel Conway-Gordon, a man who was spontaneously invited to become an honorary member of the Chambers of Commerce of Bengal and

Bombay. Under his direction sweeping reforms have been inaugurated; there has been a reduction in the third-class passenger fares from 3 pies to $2\frac{1}{2}$ pies per mile, and a steady reduction in all goods rates. As one consequence the carriage on jute from Naraingunge and Sernjunge to Calcutta is lower now than it ever was before, and the Steamer Companies, which formerly made 20 and 25 per cent. profits, now have to submit to a terrible reduction in their rates. But surely this is a great public gain; so long as the State Railways pay a dividend of 5 per cent. it is sufficient, and it may very well happen that certain traffic barely pays cost. The Inland Flotilla, if they are so ill-advised as to petition Government against "cheap railway carriage," for this is what their resolution amounts to, may find it rather difficult to prove their averment that the railway is carrying jute and seeds below the actual cost of carriage. It will be found that it is almost impossible for any railway to tell what is the actual cost of carriage for any particular class of staple. We, of course, know the average cost of carriage of a ton of goods a mile; but it is the average cost of *all* goods, no matter what class or in what quantities consigned. It is unnecessary to say that goods consigned in large quantities cost considerably less to work than small consignments; in other words, a Railway Company can afford to carry large consignments cheaper than the average cost of working a ton of goods a mile. Another difficulty which has to be met at the outset is on what principle is the cost of the station staff, maintenance, agency, audit and account, &c., &c., to be divided between coaching and goods traffic. Railways have been arguing this matter for years, and have got no nearer to any principle than they were at first. The division now accepted is purely empirical. The only practical way, therefore, is to work on broad grounds. For the latter half of 1884 the gross earnings of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company were Rs. 30,75,227, and the expenditure Rs. 12,35,267, or 40·16 per cent., leaving the net earnings at Rs. 18,39,960, or equivalent to a dividend at the rate of 8 per cent. There is here no evidence of the railway carrying at less than cost; on the contrary, the accounts *prima*

facie call for a reduction in the rates. On this railway, too, the best results are generally attained in the second half of each year, which embraces the greater part of the jute season, and consequently, in judging of the working, the transactions of the year should be taken. It is the business of the Railway Company to carry as much goods as it possibly can, and at the lowest possible price. For the Inland Flotilla Company to complain is too ridiculous, for it will probably be found that the Railway Company has been driven to reduce its rates to a minimum, consequent on the reckless reductions of the Flotilla in its struggle with the India General Steam Company. It would surely be a curious position for the jute trade to take up, when things are so dull and depressed, to object to a State Railway lowering its rates. Colonel Conway-Gordon deserves the thanks of all interested in jute, and can laugh to scorn the puny memorial of the Flotilla Company. The broad principle on which State Railways should be conducted is this, that they should earn a little over the current rate of interest on Government Paper, everything above this is a direct tax on trade.

At the same half-yearly meeting of the Inland Flotilla Company on Wednesday, it was stated by Mr. Skinner that he was prepared to submit a proposal from the India General and Rivers Steam Companies for the purchase of their fleet, and that he would either lay the offer before the meeting or the Directors of the Company, whichever course was considered most advisable. Upon the Directors pledging themselves, should any *reasonable* offer be made, to call an extraordinary meeting of the Company forthwith, it was resolved that Mr. Skinner be asked to negotiate with the Directors in the first instance. I am in a position to state that the offer which has been made by the India General and Rivers Steam Companies for the purchase of the Inland Flotilla is no less than 21 lakhs, which may be said to be equivalent to Rs. 10 discount on their shares, a price they have not touched for months, and one which they will certainly not reach for many a long day if this very liberal offer is refused and the competition continued, as it, no doubt, will be, even more keenly than before. It is no secret, for the recorded transactions very

plainly show, that many shareholders have been glad to sell their shares at from 15 to 30 discount. Present holders ought, therefore, to consider themselves fortunate that such a liberal offer affords them a ready means of escape from further loss. The Directors also should carefully consider the responsibility now devolving upon them in wording any recommendation upon the subject, as they must, of course, be perfectly aware of the result of the working of the fleet since May 1st, and what probability there is of continuing the present struggle with any chance of ultimate success. They will, no doubt, be able to distinguish between their responsibility and that of the Directors of the two other Companies, who are running at unremunerative rates to protect a long-established and carefully-fostered trade, and not to endeavour to wrest it from others. The Directors of the Flotilla Company, by undertaking to submit any reasonable offer, have considerably increased their difficulties. They will surely never dare to withhold this offer from the shareholders; while, on the other hand, the moment they lay it before them, they stamp it as reasonable; and if it is reasonable, it ought to be accepted. The position of these Inland Steam Companies is attracting a great deal of attention in financial circles here; and as a stage has now been reached when those concerned have an opportunity of completely altering the present aspect of affairs, it may not be out of place to refer to the circumstances out of which the present crisis has arisen. For many years past the Assam and Cachar carrying trade has virtually been in the hands of the India General and Rivers Steam Companies, who, very largely out of revenue, have increased and improved their fleet to an extent fully meeting the requirements of the trade. During the recent craze for the extension of any private enterprise which would put money in Agents' pockets, when speculation was rife and scrip had a facility for disposing of itself in a profitable way, which is now but a memory of the past, the Flotilla Company was floated, not ostensibly in direct competition with the two existing Companies, but for the carriage of jute—a traffic which at that time, no doubt, those Companies may not have been fully in a position

to absorb, consistently with the efficient service of the Assam and Cachar lines. Had things remained thus, there, no doubt, would have been a good opening for the Flotilla for, say, six months in the year; but by the time their boats were in working order, each of the other two Companies had equipped a fleet, equal to the Flotilla one, to meet the increased jute traffic in conjunction with their existing lines, not to mention the establishment of a daily mail service on the Brahmaputra, so that the ground was completely cut from under the feet of the Flotilla Company. For a time, no doubt, there appears to have been a good business in jute; but this, like all other good things, came to an end, and the Flotilla Company then turned its attention to Assam. But this was the peculiar preserve of the other two Companies, who, taking time by the forelock, had only recently arranged a five years' agreement with the Assam planters for the entire conveyance of their tea and stores. They therefore determined to resist the new comers, although the only unsecured cargo of importance was that of native shippers, for which the competition has been very keen. The Flotilla Company has thus been heavily handicapped; it has had to compete with two powerful Companies, who had previously agreed to a satisfactory working arrangement, and possessed other sources of income than the line or lines on which the competition was maintained; and the ultimate result of such a struggle can only be a question of time and money. It must also be borne in mind that the Inland Flotilla are making no provision for depreciation or accidents, and that six months hence, when they will probably have succeeded in losing a good deal more money, the present offer will probably be in excess of the value of the fleet. The Directors of the Flotilla Company say that they have done all in their power to bring about an amicable arrangement; the offer of the two rival Companies is a proof of their desire to bring matters to a settlement; and such being the case, there should be no difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory understanding advantageous to the Flotilla shareholders though in the interests of the jute trade a continuance of this suicidal struggle is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

The Report of the Directors of the Calcutta Landing and Shipping Company for the half-year ended 30th April is rather a sad affair. As the Directors observe, the period was one of marked and general depression in trade, and, as a result, the revenue is less by some Rs. 9,298 than that for the previous half-year, while the expenditure has increased by some Rs. 1,600, no less than Rs. 5,000 having been expended on crews' wages in excess of the previous half-year. The net loss for the half-year amounts to Rs. 1,152, but fortunately the balance brought forward will provide for this loss and leave a credit balance of Rs. 782 to be carried forward. A curious feature in the balance sheet is an item under "liabilities" of the Agra Bank, Limited, Dividend Account—Rs. 11,934. That the Company should have borrowed money to pay a dividend, when they have some Rs. 37,000 of Government Paper, is, to say the least of it, a somewhat singular proceeding.

Mills, &c.—The Report of the Directors of the Fort Gloster Jute Mills for the half-year ended 31st May is a very deplorable affair. The net loss on the working, after setting aside some Rs. 19,485 for depreciation, amounts to Rs. 77,884, and raises the debit balance at profit and loss to Rs. 1,82,517. The Directors propose to write off the sum of Rs. 1,36,677 at credit of Reserve Fund, and to carry forward a debit balance of Rs. 45,840. There was a serious accident to the engine on the 10th March, and the Mill has been stopped ever since. Under these circumstances, with a Bank interest bearing overdraft of Rs. 1,44,179, any reasonable management would have promptly disposed of the jute and gunny-bags in stock, which total up Rs. 1,57,947 in the balance sheet. We observe that 10 per cent. is stated to be deducted from value of the steam-launch, Rs. 4,500, for depreciation, but the sum of Rs. 45, which is the actual amount subtracted looks more like 1 than 10 per cent. This may seem a small matter, but straws show how the wind blows, and such mistakes in public accounts are not creditable either to the Managers or Auditors who certify that the balance sheet is a correct statement. As the Mill is now in a position to begin again on a full scale, the Directors hope that work will be very shortly resumed.

There have been sales of Fort Gloster shares at 22 and 23. Seebpore, 40. Bowreah, 33. Strand Bank Press, 85. Nasmyth Press, 86, 82, 83, 86, and 87 cash; 88, 85 and 89 for time. Watson's Press, 97, 98, 97 and 96 cash, 101 for time. Carew & Co., 100.

Bengal Telephone shares have been sold at 53. Great Eastern Hotel, 87.

Tea.—At the Calcutta tea sales some 6,178 chests were offered, of which 300 were withdrawn; prices were generally lower. The inquiry for tea shares has at present subsided, and very few transactions are recorded. They are :—Darjeeling Tea at 115. Durrung, 43. Tukvar, 168. The Assam Tea Company has declared a final dividend of 9 per cent., making 14 per cent. for 1884.

Meetings are advertised of the Landing and Shipping Company for the 30th July; Nasmyth Press, 3rd August; Burrakur and Alipore Coal Companies, 4th August; Calcutta Hydraulic Press, 7th August; Great Eastern Hotel Company, 21st August.

The fourth Annual Report of the Directors of the West of India Portuguese Guaranteed Railway Co., Limited, state that the works connected with both the harbour and the railway have progressed satisfactorily. The estimates for the further amount of capital required for the completion and equipment of the line have been approved by the Portuguese Government, and the sanction to the guarantee of 6 per cent., which, as provided for in the contract of the Company, is to be ratified by the Cortes, has been formally applied for. Meanwhile the Directors propose to submit a resolution to the shareholders enabling them to raise the necessary capital.

The Annual Report of the Directors of the Jorehaut Tea Company states that the quantity of tea manufactured in 1884 was 1,206,677 lbs., being 106,864 lbs. in excess of the quantity made in 1883, and only 9,323 lbs. below the estimate. These teas realised an average price of 1*s.* 2*89d.* per lb., being about a half penny below the average price for the previous year's crop. The quality of the teas was of good average standard, but the great depression in the values of tea and colonial products generally operated

against the realisation of higher prices. The cost of production amounted to £61,942-18-8, being only £250-16-2 above the expenditure in 1883 for a much smaller quantity of tea, and the average cost per lb. on the account sales weight of 1,200,538 lbs., after allowing for the difference in the rates of exchange between Calcutta and London, *vis.*, £8,208-13-11 was 10·74*d.* The total cost per lb. including the charges of commissions, Directors' extra fees, present to the Superintendent, and income tax, was 11·58*d.*, or 1·10*d.* per lb. below the cost in 1883. The dividend of 15 per cent. absorbs £15,000; and £1,940-4-3 is carried to reserve.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Assam Company in London, Mr. Walter Prideaux in moving the adoption of the report (which showed a dividend of 9 per cent. making 14 per cent. for the year) expressed regret that their teas had not realised better prices in the past year. He feared this was to be attributed in some measure to inferiority on the quality of the crop. The reduction in the working expenses was exceedingly satisfactory, because they had been going down from year to year, and there was every reason to believe that they would be still further reduced. They anticipated an increased crop for the current year, and the Acting Superintendent expected to make 175,000 lbs. of tea more than last year.

CALCUTTA, 1st August 1885.

THE Port Trust have somewhat amended their notification regarding their loan for 75 lakhs, it is now distinctly stated that the interest is guaranteed by the Secretary of State until the loan is repaid. If this be so, it is, of course, tantamount to a guarantee of the principal, because as long as the interest is paid the lenders will not require their principal sum; it is, however, by no means a perpetual annuity, for the Secretary of State may, at any time, not less than 10 years after the loan has been raised, declare that the principal of such loan shall be repaid on a date not being less than 30 years from such declaration. It is, therefore, a loan payable on 30 years' notice any time after it has run 10 years. It seems to be extremely doubtful if this loan will be subscribed for here. The Bank of Bengal has just arranged to take up the Calcutta Municipal 5 per cent. loan of some 25 lakhs, and is therefore not likely to subscribe for this $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. investment; while the other Banks are understood to be averse to burthening themselves with a security for which they will have to find a market. I hear that should the loan fall flat here, it is the intention to endeavour to float it on the London market. It is extremely doubtful if any good-will result thereby, as the market for Rupee Paper in London is a very limited one, consequent upon the uncertain outlook of the silver question; so that if these docks are to be constructed, I am afraid the Government will have to find the money.

I find I was mistaken in stating that the Port Commissioners would have no power to compel vessels to use these docks. I inadvertently overlooked a section which enacts that this Act shall be read with and taken as part of Act V of 1870 (the Port Commissioners' Act). Now section 62 of Act V (B. C.) of 1870 clearly gives the Port Commissioners power to compel ships to load and unload at their wharves; while section 10 of the Dock Act gives them a like power to charge tolls on sea-going or other vessels using the docks; so that when these docks are completed there will be apparently nothing to prevent the Commissioners from compelling vessels to use them; the Port

Trust will be entitled to charge tolls on cargo-boats using the docks, and, may be, dues on the goods conveyed therein.

It is true that in the Dock Committee's Report a deduction of 10 per cent. is made to meet the case of vessels continuing to load in the river, and of vessels loading in dock but taking in part of their cargoes from boats (para. 44); and this clearly shows that the Committee did not intend to levy dues on water-borne goods; but can it seriously be contended that 132,414 tons will be the extent of that traffic? Yet this is the total amount under both heads. Will it require "never less than 500 or 600 cargo-boats to be in the dock" for this traffic? Mr. Duff Bruce on the 30th April 1884 wrote:—"There are over 5,000 cargo-boats in the Port of Calcutta licensed to take cargo to or from vessels in the stream. The dock will, to a large extent, do away with the necessity for these boats, but it is *still perfectly certain that a large amount of business will still be conducted in cargo-boats*. It is impossible to estimate the number that will enter the docks, but it is *quite certain it will be very large*. In addition to these boats, which ply regularly within port for hire, hundreds of native boats arrive and depart daily by the canals, bringing in jute, seeds and grains, and taking back salt and piece-goods to the eastern districts of Bengal. It is for the accommodation of this trade that the boat dock in connection with the canals has been provided, but numbers of these boats will require to go alongside of vessels in dock." Now, if this be so, if it be true that a *very large number* of cargo-boats will enter the docks with water-borne goods, one of two things will happen: either the estimated receipts of the docks will be woefully decreased, or a *tax* must be levied on these goods. But such a tax is opposed to the views of the British Parliament. On the 19th February 1885, on the motion that the East and West India Dock Bill be read a second time, Sir James Duke said, that the measure, though a private Bill, very materially affected the public interest. The original Act, authorising the formation of the dock, contained clauses providing that all lighters and craft entering the docks should be exempted from the payment of any rate. It was a very suspicious circumstance

to see three Dock Companies now coming forward at the same time to attempt to repeal those clauses, and thus to violate the original Docks' Acts. No doubt they came together to intimidate and to prevent opposition by a formidable array of power. This was not a mere question between the Dock Companies and the wharfingers; it was an attempt to attack the trade of the port of London, and of every constituency that was represented in that House. It was, in fact, a most iniquitous attempt to interfere with the free trade of the port of London, and he really hoped that the House would not attempt, by indirect means, to put a tax upon the trade of the country. He moved that the Bill be read this day six months. Mr. Mitchell, in the course of his remarks against the Bill, observed that "the interest of the ship-owner was totally distinct from that of the merchant." It was the interest of the former to place his ship where she would be safe at all times; but it was not the interest of the merchant that his goods should be taken into the docks. He protested against a tax upon the general commerce of the country, and hoped the House would reject the Bill. Mr. Cardwell said it was not generally the practice for Government to take part in discussions on second reading of Bills, and after going into the facts, concluded by saying that having carefully considered the question in all its aspects, the result of this consideration was a determination to vote against the second reading of the Bill. Mr. Muntz said, that there was another question to be decided besides the interests of the Dock Companies, and that was the general interest of the country. He could assure the promoters of the measure that the greatest kindness they could do the country would be to withdraw the Bill. He knew, of his own experience, that goods were ordered to Hull in consequence of the oppressive charges of London, and in the interest of the general trade of the country he felt bound to oppose the Bill. On a division, 249 voted against the Bill, and only 26 in favour of it.

Now, in weighing the memorials for and against the docks, the Government have apparently overlooked the fact, as pointed out by Mr. Mitchell, M. P., that the *interest of the ship-owner is*

totally distinct from that of the merchant. The memorial to which the Government appear to have listened is the one professing to be signed by the representatives of 64 per cent. of the tonnage of the port,—in other words of the ship-owners; while the interests of shippers have been quite uncared for. It is a remarkable fact that no intelligible estimate of receipts and expenditure has yet been placed before the public, other than one which shows an annual deficit of over 2 lakhs of rupees. The Government, in allowing a Port Trust Loan like the present to be put on the market at this juncture, have been singularly ill-advised; for if, as seems generally to be supposed, it is not taken up, it is a blow at the credit of the Government. An engineer of considerable experience and standing writes:—"I am glad to see that the *Pioneer* is against the heavy outlay on docks at Kidderpore, but the total cost is not yet before the public, and is being kept back in a most unwarrantable manner. From official records we have the cost, exclusive of Graving Dock—

	Rs.
Mr. Bruce's estimate	2,39,00,000
Mr. A. M. Rendel's additions	59,00,000
Colonel de Bourbel's estimate of cost of connecting railways and duplicate railway establishments at Kidderpore	2,87,00,000
Canalising Tolly's Nullah; water-supply, &c. ...	35,00,000
Drainage works now discovered to be necessary ...	20,00,000
Total ...	<u>5,40,00,000</u>

Here we have a total of nearly $5\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees to be spent on wet docks which the trade of the port does not require." The writer of the *Englishman's* Freight Market Report makes the following pithy remarks:—"Whilst the demand for tonnage has fallen off, the supply has greatly increased, and is still on the increase, each new steamer put on the line being larger than its predecessor; and as the demand for tonnage is, by no means, keeping pace with the supply, it is no wonder that freights have gradually arrived at a very low average. The tendency of the times is to overdo everything; we have an instance of this here."

Banks.—The usual weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal, made up to the 23th ultimo, shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,80,94,632, and the cash and currency notes Rs. 2,97,10,231, or 59·4 per cent. The rate for demand loans still remains at 4 per cent. The Report of the Directors for the half-year has been duly published during the past week; the results have been quoted some time back in these columns. During the half-year trade has continued much depressed, and any considerable demand for money was experienced only in April and May. The average of the Bank's rate for the whole period was $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. The net profits do not amount to so much as for the same period last year, but the circumstances are very different, and considering the general dulness of trade the results shown are distinctly satisfactory. Shares have been dealt in at $817\frac{1}{2}$ and 815. Alliance Bank, 138. The amount passed through the Clearing House last week was only Rs. 67,29,062.

Government Paper has steadily improved during the week; it opened on Monday at $97\frac{1}{4}$ and closed at $97\frac{1}{4}$; on Tuesday it closed at $97\frac{1}{4}$, on Wednesday touched $98\frac{1}{4}$, on Thursday declined to $98\frac{1}{4}$, at which figure it closed on Friday. To-day the market closes firm at $98\frac{1}{4}$.

Exchange opened on Monday at 1s. $6\frac{1}{4}d.$; on Tuesday it improved to 1s. $6\frac{1}{4}d.$, at which it has remained ever since. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries have increased to Rs. 1,82,26,497.

Railways, &c.—The traffic receipts of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 18th July were:—coaching, Rs. 4,248; goods, Rs. 160; sundries, Rs. 3—total Rs. 4,411.

For the same period the Eastern Bengal Railway receipts were:—coaching, Rs. 27,947; goods, Rs. 26,621; other earnings, Rs. 3,421—total Rs. 57,989, as against Rs. 60,566 for the same period of last year. At the same time 4,589 passengers and 12,495 maunds of goods were carried in excess of last year.

The traffic returns of the Central Bengal Railway for the same period show an increase of Rs. 678 over last year.

The traffic receipts of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 25th July amounted to Rs. 8,65,090, or an increase of Rs. 1,86,040 on the same period of last year.

The traffic returns of the Darjeeling Railway to the 18th July 1885 were Rs. 11,092, as against Rs. 9,721 for the same period of 1884.

The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the past week amounted to Rs. 9,364.

The Directors of the Inland Flotilla Company have convened a meeting of shareholders for the 21st instant, to consider the proposal of the other Companies for the purchase of their fleet. I hear that their steamer the *Indra*, with two flats in tow, ran ashore at Hooghly Point, and had to jettison about 1,000 maunds of salt, valued at Rs. 4,000, before she got off. (Freight on same about 1 anna a maund.) The steamer is said to be badly strained and has returned to Calcutta.

There have been sales of Tarkessur Railway shares at 110, of India General at 109, 110, 108, 111 and 112, and Calcutta Steam Company at 80 and 81. Inland Flotilla at 20 discount.

Mills, &c.—The Report of the Directors of the Howrah Jute Mills Company, Limited, is not a cheery document; it discloses a loss on the working for the half-year just ended of Rs. 25,198. The loss made during 1884 was Rs. 53,158, so that, during the past eighteen months the Company has lost in hard cash Rs. 78,356, quite apart from the depreciation of building, wear and tear of machinery, &c. The concern has been stopped since the 23rd June last, and is therefore adding some Rs. 12,000 monthly to the loss already incurred. This is the industry which was at its zenith a little more than two years ago, this very Company for the year 1883 having declared a dividend of 15 per cent., besides taking Rs. 1,52,000 to reserve and other funds. The Directors add, that since they closed the Mill on the 23rd June, the market for bags has improved somewhat and jute is cheaper, so that the apparent loss by working the Mill full time would be reduced to little more than the "fixed charges;" but this calculation includes no provision for wear and tear of machinery, and the bag market does not yet show such signs

of stability, or of a tendency in an upward direction, as would justify them in deciding to resume work at once. Later on, however, a continued decline in jute and more firmness in the bag market may alter the situation. It is gratifying to find the Directors of a Jute Mill Company in Calcutta acknowledging the existence of such items as "wear and tear." In their report, for the last half of 1884, the Directors intimated that they "had joined the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association and hoped that the institution would do much to promote their interests." As this Association has now been in existence for some time, it would be as well if the Committee gave some account of their stewardship; as far as outsiders can judge, it has done no good whatever, as the minority decline to be bound by the majority in questions affecting the interests of the Mills. Thus when it was attempted to bring about a general short-time agreement, although it was considered that such a moment would be highly beneficial in the end to the trade at large, two or three Mills refused to join, with the result that the whole thing fell through. Now that curtailment of expenditure is the order of the day, the Mills had better discontinue their subscription to the Association and wait for better times, for under present circumstances, and in view of the small result shown, the Association can only be considered an expensive luxury.

At the meeting of shareholders of the Fort Gloster Jute Mills on Tuesday, the Chairman announced that the Mill had commenced work again on Monday; so we have another 250 looms hard at work flooding the market with gunnies that are not wanted. The representative of a large shareholder not unnaturally asked if the Directors were satisfied, that it would be more beneficial to work the Mill than to let it stand silent, and received a somewhat meaningless answer; upon, however, his pressing the point, he at last elicited an assurance that the Directors would work the Mill as a tentative measure for six weeks, and if the results were not satisfactory would immediately convene a meeting of shareholders. Warming to work, he next inquired why, when the Mill stopped on the 14th March, the

jute and gunnies in stock were not sold, so as to reduce the 8 per cent. overdraft at the Agra Bank. It was explained that the jute would have to be brought to Calcutta to be sold, and would require to be replaced when the Mill resumed work; as the price of jute then was higher than now, and the Fort Gloster Mills have a fleet of idle cargo-boats, this reply betokened the possession of reasoning powers of a very high order by the responsible management. As to the gunny bags, it was explained that they had been sold to a buyer who had gone to Bombay, and that the management were waiting for him to come back, when it was fondly hoped he might be induced to take delivery. It was felt after this that nothing remained but to pass the formal resolutions, which the shareholders promptly did—and fled.

The Report of the Managing Agents of the Union Jute Company for the half-year has just made its appearance. The manufacturing profit is put down at Rs. 19,755, but from this must be deducted some Rs. 10,111 for interest, renewals, &c., so that the apparent net profit works out Rs. 9,644 only. When depreciation on the Mill and machinery is taken into account, it is difficult to see where the profit comes in, but in these hard times to work without actual monetary loss is distinctly satisfactory; so let the shareholders rest and be thankful. The Agents cynically observe that their Mill workers have never been overpaid, but as great difficulty is now experienced in working at a profit they have thought it necessary to meet the times by a reduction in the wages, and are glad to say that the attempt has been so far successful, that after a week's stoppage the hands, with a few exceptions, resumed work, and the Mill is now running with its full complement. The Reserve and Depreciation Funds amount to Rs. 3,00,000, and the balance at credit of profit and loss to Rs. 63,447, while the cash in the Bank totals up Rs. 35,769.

There have been sales of Fort Gloster at 22, 22½, 23, 24, 23 and 24. Gourepore, 76. Seebpore, 40. Howrah Mills, 68. Goosery Cotton, 170. Watson's Press, 99 and 101 for time. Camperdown Press, 110. Calcutta Hydraulic, 120. Strand Bank Press, 85. Titaghur Mills, 55. Cawnpore Woollen Mills, 400.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday some 14,400 chests were offered and about 14,000 sold. There was no improvement in prices, and the tendency was generally lower. There have been sales of tea shares as under:—Phoenix, 35. Gielle, 75 and 72. Springside, 90.

A call of 2s. 6d., or say Re. 1-8 per share has been made on the shareholders of A shares in the Bengal Baragunda Copper Company, payable on the 5th November; meantime the shares cannot be transferred unless the call is paid. There has been a sale of these shares at Re. 1. We shall probably now see them lower. There have been sales of Great Eastern Hotel shares at 87, and of Selim Tea Co.'s Debentures at 102.

Meetings are advertised of Union Mills and Balasun Tea Co., 11th August; Bengal Ice Co., 12th August; Seebpore Jute Co., 14th August.

The Report of the Directors of the Eastern Telegraph Company, Limited, for the half-year ended March 31st, states that the revenue for the period amounted to £271,682 19s. 11d., from which are deducted £91,599 14s. 2d., for the ordinary expenses, and £44,815 4s. 7d., for expenditure relating to repairs and renewals of cables, &c., during the half-year. After providing £2,775 16s., 2d. for income tax, there remains a balance of £232,492 5s., to which is added £30,364 5s. 6d. brought from the preceding half-year, making a total available balance or £262,856 10s. 6d. From this balance there has been paid interest on debentures and debenture stock, £27,370 13s. 9d.; dividend on preference shares, £20,384 13s. 7d.; an *interim* dividend of 1½ per cent. on the ordinary shares, £47,500; leaving a balance of £167,601 3s. 2d., from which £100,000 has been carried to general reserve. The Directors now recommend the declaration of a final dividend for the year of 2s. 6d. per share, and a bonus of 1s. per share, amounting to £66,500, making with the three previous payments on account a total distribution of 2s. per share, or 6 per cent. for the year on the ordinary shares. The balance, £1,101 3s. 2d., goes forward.

CALCUTTA, 8th August 1885.

THE time within which tenders for the Port Trust Loan may be submitted has been extended to the 16th September, ostensibly to permit of their being received from London, but doubtless because it was felt that the loan had little chance of being taken up here. We are gravely assured that the interest on this loan is guaranteed by the Secretary of State until it is repaid, and thus lenders have the security of the Port Trust with that of the Government of India superadded, so that it ought to be better than Government Paper; and if this be so there was no necessity, for paying more than the rate on Government securities, namely, 4 per cent. The Government of India will be singularly ill-advised if they allow this $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan with their guarantee to be hawked about the London market. It is trailing their credit through the dust with a vengeance, because it may happen that, consequent on the uncertainty regarding exchange, the home market may refuse to have anything to do with the loan, save at a ruinous discount. As pointed out in my letter of the 4th July, Rupee securities of the Government of India have ceased to be dealt with in London to any extent, and their sterling value there now entirely depends on the Indian price and the rate of exchange; they have almost ceased to be regarded as a desirable investment for people in England, and will not come into favour until the silver question is finally settled. The Government of India has distinctly recognised this by borrowing in sterling in London; and if the Port Trust hope to be successful, they must follow their example. But if they are to be allowed to borrow either in sterling or rupees the Port Trust should do so on its own credit, without any adventitious aid in the shape of a Government guarantee. It is argued that such a guarantee would cost the Government *nothing*; but if it tends to reduce the price of Government securities, it surely will cost the Government eventually a great deal. I understand that the Calcutta Municipal 5 per cent. loan was taken up by the Bank of Bengal, either for self or undisclosed principals, at Rs. 94 $\frac{1}{2}$. It remains to be seen what the Port Trust $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan will go at. But

the reckless way in which this loan has been launched on the Indian market, and the numerous subsequent alterations in the Port Trust notification, may well make the Government and the public dubious of the foresight and business capacity of the Port Commissioners. The smallest inquiry should have shown them that there was but little chance of the loan being subscribed for in India, and by extending the time for submission of tenders, instead of fixing it once and for all before issuing the notification, betokens a want of appreciation of their responsibilities as public functionaries, and an absence of ordinary business prudence and foresight, which is much to be regretted. And yet it is on these gentlemen and their estimates, which show a large annual deficit, that the Government seem disposed to rely, to the exclusion of the great bulk of importers and exporters, whose opinions were entitled to the most respectful attention.

The Trade and Navigation Accounts of British India for the three months, April to June, show, as compared with the same period of last year a decrease on the imports and exports of Rs. 3,39,48,849. The following summary will doubtless interest your readers:—

Imports into British India from Foreign Countries.

	Three months, 1st April to 30th June.	
	1884. Rs.	1885. Rs.
I.—Animals, living	2,88,331	1,14,036
II.—Articles of food and drink ...	1,47,86,788	1,21,95,486
III.—Raw materials and unmanufactured articles	73,34,996	82,33,274
IV.—Articles manufactured and partly manufactured—		
A.—Yarns and textile fabrics ...	6,47,54,186	5,59,92,586
B.—Metals and manufactures of ...	1,56,15,035	1,33,69,672
C.—Machinery and mill-work ...	50,43,547	28,08,576
D.—Railway plant and rolling-stock (other than Government stores)...	47,33,088	57,18,192
E.—Apparel	21,52,446	20,03,268
F.—Chemicals, drugs, medicines and narcotics, and dyeing and tanning materials ...	21,07,087	19,23,011
G.—Other articles manufactured ...	1,07,46,012	1,01,00,928
V.—Oils	27,54,414	27,52,456
Total ...	13,03,15,980	11,52,11,485

Exports of Indian Produce and Manufactures from British India to Foreign Countries.

	Rs.	Rs.
I.—Animals, living	3,24,632	2,98,500
II.—Articles of food and drink ..	5,00,12,381	5,66,36,835
III.—Raw materials and unmanufactured articles	12,98,18,678	10,53,22,166
IV.—Articles manufactured and partly manufactured—		
A.—Yarns and textile fabrics ...	1,33,02,124	1,24,66,295
B.—Metals and manufactures of	1,00,320	1,19,161
C.—Machinery and mill-work ...	1,180	740
D.—Apparel	1,74,598	1,76,394
E.—Chemicals, drugs and narcotics, and dyeing and tanning materials	3,29,13,639	3,16,84,289
F.—Other articles manufactured	75,89,974	89,95,460
V.—Oils	16,25,225	13,18,557
Total	23,58,62,751	21,70,18,397

In the imports there is a decrease in every head save raw materials and railway plant and rolling-stock. The increase under raw materials is almost entirely under the head of Coal. In exports it will be observed, that the increase is almost confined to articles of food and drink, namely, rice and wheat. The following table shows the export of wheat and seeds for the last three years under the heads of Bombay, Kurrachee, and Bengal, in tons :—

	April to June.		
	1883.	1884.	1885.
WHEAT—			
Bengal	141,353	55,983	73,833
Bombay	196,246	114,617	161,243
Kurrachee	46,475	24,967	45,884
OIL-SEEDS—			
Bengal	86,396	123,630	125,467
Bombay	181,451	162,856	211,556
Kurrachee	30,844	26,499	15,857

Banks.—The amount passed through the Bankers' Clearing House last week was Rs. 77,38,910. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government amount to Rs. 1,81,59,488, of which Rs. 1,07,66,312 are at Calcutta. The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal to the 4th August shows the public and other deposits to have been Rs. 5,11,91,571 and cash and currency notes Rs. 3,18,43,538, or 60·2 per cent. The Bank rate remains unchanged at 4 per cent. Shares in the Bank during the past week have declined in value, transactions having been recorded at 817½, 815, 812½, and 810.

Government Paper has fluctuated a good deal this week with a lower tendency. It opened on Monday somewhat higher at 98½, but declined to 98¼, on Tuesday it dropped to 98½, and on Wednesday improved to 98¾, on Thursday it declined to 98¾, on Friday opening at 98¾, it dropped to 98¼, but recovered and closed at 98¾. To-day it closes steady at 98¼ to 98¾. There have also been transactions in the 4½ per cent. loan of 1878-79 at 100½, and in that of 1870 at 98¾. Port Trust 4½ per cent. debentures of 1881 have been dealt in at 97.

Exchange improved on Monday ¼, and has been steady at 1s. 6¼d., for demand drafts until Friday, when it improved to 1s. 6½d., at which figure it closes to-day.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday some 13,000 chests were offered and 567 withdrawn; there was a decidedly lower tendency for broken qualities, but prices were otherwise unchanged. There is little or nothing doing in tea shares. Sales are recorded of Gielle, 69 and 73. Singbulli and Murmah, 90. Holta, 76. Dehing, 28. Bengal Tea, 35. Phoenix, 37. Lackatoora, 40.

Meetings are advertised of the New Mutual and second New Mutual Companies on the 18th instant, and the Pankabari on the 7th September.

Railways, &c.—The traffic receipts of the East Indian Railway for the week ended the 1st August amounted to Rs. 8,52,199, against Rs. 6,69,180 for the same period of last year.

The receipts of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended the 25th July were :—coaching, Rs. 5,647; goods, Rs. 168;

sundries, Rs. 2—total Rs. 5,817. The steady progress made by this little railway in passenger traffic is very gratifying.

The receipts of the Eastern Bengal Railway for the same period were Rs. 74,299 against Rs. 61,665 for last year.

The Calcutta Tramway receipts last week amounted to Rs. 9,521.

The receipts of the Deoghur Railway for the first half of this year were Rs. 13,982 as against Rs. 10,807 for the same period of 1884, and from 1st July to 1st August 1885, they totalled up Rs. 2,139 against Rs. 1,382 to the 2nd August 1884. These increases are extremely satisfactory, and the line is one of the cheapest in India.

An extraordinary general meeting of the shareholders of the India General Steam Navigation Company has been convened for the 24th instant to pass the necessary resolutions, should the shareholders think fit, raising the capital of the Company to 70 lakhs, and sanctioning the issue of 5 lakhs of debentures. This presumably is to provide for the purchase-money of the Inland Flotilla Company's fleet, should the offer, to which I shall refer, be accepted. Shares in the India General Company have changed hands at 112 and 113 for cash, 116 for six months' time. Inland Flotilla shares have been sold at 19 and 20 discount.

A meeting of the Calcutta Steam Company is convened for the 18th instant to receive the half-yearly report, which is satisfactory, and which I hope to review next week.

The Directors of the Inland Flotilla Company have issued a circular to the shareholders, in which they inform them, as already stated in these columns, that the India General and Rivers Steam Navigation Companies have offered to purchase the fleet and property of that Company, and intimate that a special meeting has been convened for the 21st instant to consider the matter. The terms of the offer are:—

1. Rs. 21,00,000 for the block account, represented in the balance sheet of 30th April last as standing at Rs. 23,42,463-7-6.
2. Stores and coals to be taken at cost price or at valuation.
3. The completion of existing forward contracts for carrying produce.

4. Payment in cash, one-fourth on delivery and the balance in three months thereafter.

On the basis of the balance sheet as on the 30th April this offer would work out Rs. 55 for every share on which Rs. 65 has been paid up. The Directors, however, state that "this offer it is calculated, will yield a return of about Rs. 50 on each share on which Rs. 65 has been paid up;" so that it would appear that the Company has lost some Rs. 1,20,000, or are to this extent worse off, since the date of their last balance sheet. Under these circumstances, what becomes of the statement in the last Report that "vigorously and economically managed as the fleet is, the termination of the struggle will not prove unfavourable?" However, whether this offer works out Rs. 50 or not, which is equal to a discount of 15 per share, the shareholders in the Inland Flotilla concern will do well to carefully consider it. At the present moment shares in this concern cannot be sold in any quantity at even Rs. 20 per share discount; and, judging from the Directors' letter above referred to, the Company appear to be dropping money fast.

Mills, &c.—Considerable comment has been made by the shareholders of an old-established Jute Mill here at one of their Directors accepting office on another Mill and endeavouring to retain both positions, and at the annual meeting something will probably be said on the subject. There is extreme difficulty in Calcutta in getting strong boards of Direction; some Companies are especially fortunate, while others are the reverse. Shareholders are very apathetic, and seldom interfere, so they generally deserve all they get.

The Report of the Titaghur Paper Mill for the half-year discloses a profit on the working of Rs. 34,708, and the balance at credit of profit and loss amounts to Rs. 36,140. The Board, after careful consideration, are of opinion that these profits should be applied in reduction of the furniture, plant, building, and preliminary expenses account, off which they have written Rs. 22,885, and that the nucleus of a Reserve fund should be formed before any dividend is paid. They, therefore, propose to carry to such a fund Rs. 10,000, and the balance of Rs. 3,255 to the credit

of next half-year. The Report is a satisfactory one, and it looks now as if the Company had fairly turned the corner. Rs. 100 shares have improved to Rs. 58, and would seem to be well worth the money. The Board asked sanction to an increase of their borrowing powers from one lakh to two lakhs to meet the exigencies of the business. The average monthly outturn has been 70 tons during the half-year, but with the additional boilers is now expected to reach 100 tons.

The Watson's Patent Press has declared a dividend of 4 per cent.; the Calcutta Hydraulic Press of 2 per cent. making 23 per cent. for the half-year; while the Nasmyth Press has carried its small balance of Rs. 3,469 forward. There have been sales of Nasmyth at 92 for time, and Watson's at 93 ex-dividend.

Meetings are convened of Carew & Co. to declare a dividend (said to be 5 per cent.) on the 17th instant; of the Dunbar Cotton Mills on the 19th instant, and of the Kanknarrah and Kamarhatty Mills on the 20th instant.

The Report of the Hooghly Jute Mills for the half-year will, I understand, contrast very favourably with its contemporaries. Had it not been for the debentures and large bank overdraft, the Mill would have worked to a profit of nearly Rs. 16,000.

There have been sales of Seebpore Mill shares at 40 and Dunbar Cotton at 25; Budge-Budge at 59.

The Report of the Dunbar Cotton Mills Company is not calculated to add to the happiness of the shareholders. The loss on the working for the first half of this year amounts to no less than Rs. 77,491, and the balance at debit of profit and loss now totals up Rs. 1,38,127. The Mill has been at work for over 8½ years, and during this period the shareholders have received in dividends 28 per cent. in all, or an average, considering that the Mill was about eighteen months' building, of something under 3 per cent. per annum; while for the last three years they have been paid no dividend at all, and as things look, it seems doubtful if they will ever get any again. During the past 10 years they have seen their property fluctuate considerably in the shares market, and at the present time Rs. 100

shares are virtually unsaleable, the last recorded transaction being at Rs. 25. The balance sheet of this concern is shortly as under :—

LIABILITIES.			
			Rs.
Capital paid-up	...	...	13,28,500
Debentures	...	...	8,00,000
Wear and tear fund	...	Rs. 1,54,000	
Less loss on working	...	,, 1,38,127	
			15,873
Debts due on acceptances here and in London for cotton, stores, &c., and to Agents	...		4,32,981
		Total	25,77,354
ASSETS.			
			Rs.
Block of Mill	...	...	19,74,676
Cotton and yarn in stock	...	...	3,97,956
Stores and furniture	...	...	48,915
Sale bills outstanding	...	...	94,646
Sundry-balances	...	...	12,995
Cash in Bank and at Mill	...	...	48,166
		Total	25,77,354

It will be observed that, notwithstanding the enormous sum of eight lakhs outstanding on debentures, there are some Rs. 4,32,981 also outstanding on bills, London acceptances and the like. The block of this Mill after many years' hard wear stands at almost its original sum, and the monetary loss on the working for the last eighteen months is Rs. 1,38,127, quite apart from depreciation of the machinery, &c., I am told that during the past six months the Secretaries have voluntarily surrendered Rs. 12,000 out of their princely commission; but it is not stated what their total commission amounted to, or what they have drawn out of the concern, while the shareholders

have been starving. I understand that their remuneration is $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the sales which, as they amounted to Rs. 8,12,087 for the half-year, would work out Rs. 28,420—so that the Secretaries after foregoing Rs. 12,000 would still receive the extremely handsome sum of Rs. 16,420, or, say, Rs. 2,736 per month for, to put it mildly, their extremely unsatisfactory management of this Cotton Mill. As far as I can see, the concern seems hopelessly burthened with the payment of interest and Secretaries' commission; so that, unless some radical change is effected in the management of the Mill, I fear that the present state of affairs is more likely to be intensified than improved. It is a melancholy satisfaction to the shareholders to be told that economy is being strictly enforced; that the Mills and machinery are kept in very good condition; that a reduction of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in wages was to have taken effect in July; and that every exertion is being made to reduce expenditure and to meet the difficulties of the position; but as their interest in the Mill is now of a very doubtful nature, they may sceptically reply, *Qui bono?*

The Report of the Directors of the Bengal Ice Manufacturing Company for the past half-year is somewhat more satisfactory than its predecessor. The manufacturing profit for the period is Rs. 28,035, and deducting the interest on the debentures Rs. 10,500 there is a balance of Rs. 17,535, which has been applied in certain proportions to reducing the block and removal account, leaving nothing for division among the shareholders, who have now been without dividends for the past year. "The Directors, regretting there is no dividend available, would draw to the notice of the shareholders that it must not be forgotten the result of the six months' working has been realised in a time when *most manufacturing industries have been worked to a decided loss*, and keen competition has had to be met. It is satisfactory to note that the *working expenses have been materially reduced and the quantity of ice sold increased.*" Now what has all this "high falutin" about manufacturing depression to do with the manufacture of ice? It is admitted that the quantity sold has increased and that the working expenses have been materi-

ally reduced ; so that it is clear that if this Company had not embarked on a suicidal opposition to the other two concerns there would have been a profit for all three. The present policy of this Company is open to some misgiving ; they have reduced the retail price of their ice during the last six months some 25 per cent. without the least demand from the public for such a concession ; and now we have the Bengal Company selling at 1 anna per seer less 25 per cent. discount ; the Crystal Company at 3 pice a seer less $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. discount ; and the Imperial at $1\frac{1}{2}$ pice per seer. Surely all this is midsummer madness, and is melting away the substance of the shareholders with a vengeance. It will be found that the amount earned by the Bengal Company during the past year has barely covered its wear and tear. And what shall be said of the wisdom of a management that, on the eve of a great depression in manufacturing industries, could buy up the right of the vendors to participate in any profit in excess of 10 per cent. for the sum of Rs. 1,76,000, thus burthening the Company with an annual payment of Rs. 12,320, or a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on their shares ! I observe that the block and removal account aggregate Rs. 8,17,545 ; that the stores in stock and outstanding bills have much increased ; and that the live-stock and ice-vans have not deteriorated in value. If the shareholders are wise they will at once request their Directors to make some definite statement of their policy, or the result will be that some fine day all three Companies will be reduced to the position of the Kilkenny cats, nothing but their tails remaining. The Bengal Ice Company is doubtless righteously aggrieved that two rival concerns should spring up to compete with them, just as they had successfully ousted the Tudor Company from the field ; but they have really no one to blame but themselves. Had they contented themselves with the declaration of modest dividends, carefully making the most ample provision for wear and tear, they would have disarmed opposition ; but many persons in Calcutta bitterly remember that when this Company ran short of ice, they raised the price on the public who were then at their mercy. These things are not easily forgiven or forgotten. However, it is not

in the true interests of the public that this suicidal struggle should be continued,—it is not in their ultimate interest that these concerns should be supplying ice at less than its cost, because there can only be one ending to such a state of things; the Bengal Company evidently imagine that they can drive their rivals out of the place, and then have the field to themselves. But this view is utterly erroneous; it is true that the competition may be carried on until one or other of the Companies succumb; but the *factories will still remain*, and will probably fall into the hands of smart business men at, perhaps, one-half of their value. The Companies, it is true, may fail, but the manufactories will stand fast. It is much to be regretted that the three Companies cannot agree upon some combined action; no one in Calcutta would grumble at paying one anna per seer for ice; and it seems generally to be admitted that if this sum could be received for all the ice consumed in Calcutta, and divided in proper proportions among the Companies, there would be a handsome profit for all. Nothing would be simpler than for a central depôt to be established in Calcutta, to which all three Companies would send in their ice in certain agreed proportions; and from this depôt all the ice required at the different subsidiary depôts would be supplied. By this arrangement a considerable saving would be effected in rents and wages, and a uniform rate of one anna could be maintained throughout Calcutta without any deduction whatever. It is stated that the demand for ice in Calcutta is 30 tons per day in the hot weather and 8 tons in the cold weather. Assuming for the sake of argument that the demand during the six months was 10 tons a day all round, this would be about 1,800 tons in the half-year, which at one pice per seer would work out Rs. 17 a ton, or Rs. 29,600 for the half-year, and would have increased the profit of the Bengal Company to Rs. 47,135, which would have admitted of a substantial deduction from block and removal accounts, as well as a dividend of at least 5 per cent. for the half-year. So that I may fairly assume that in needlessly reducing their retail price from 1 anna to 3 pice, the management of the Bengal Company have sacrificed the shareholders' dividend, without, in any degree, benefitting the concern.

The Report of the Great Eastern Hotel Company for the year ended 30th April last discloses a gross profit on the working of Rs. 1,63,887. This amount is, however, reduced by sundry charges for interest, &c., to Rs. 1,40,587, to which must be added Rs. 4,666 brought forward from last half-year, making the net sum at credit of profit and loss Rs. 1,45,253. The Directors have disposed, and propose to dispose, of this sum as follows:—

	Rs.
Allowance for bad and doubtful debts ...	35,907
Written off hotel and sanitary improvement account	10,000
Written off premises at Allahabad	10,000
Written off good-will	10,000
<i>Ad-interim</i> dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.	30,000
Final dividend of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.	42,000
Bonuses to assistants	2,000
To be carried forward	5,346
Total ...	1,45,253

There have been sales of Murree Brewery shares at 125 and R. Scott, Thomson & Co. at 265. There are buyers of Great Eastern shares at 89, but sellers hold for higher rates. Bengal Coal at 1,175.

CALCUTTA, 15th August 1885.

Port Trust.—The audited accounts of the Port Commissioners for the half-year ended 31st March last have been duly published in the local papers, and taking into consideration the last audit, the following appear to be the principal figures for the year 1884-85, contrasted with the two previous years:—

	1882-83.	1883-84.	1884-85.
RECEIPTS—	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Jetties ...	7,74,230	8,88,056	8,96,039
Inland vessels' wharves ...	4,07,133	3,55,467	3,55,081
Strand Bank lands ...	1,47,089	1,67,201	1,84,153
Harbour Master's Dept. ...	5,97,873	5,66,069	5,57,905
Tramway ...	1,60,549	1,40,882	1,53,681
Port approaches... ..	1,16,069	91,805	1,38,393
Total ...	22,02,943	22,09,480	22,85,252
EXPENDITURE—	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Jetties ...	5,24,532	5,94,894	7,23,692
Inland vessels' wharves ...	2,05,750	1,99,279	2,52,960
Strand Bank lands ...	1,21,897	1,24,615	1,51,821
Harbour Master's Dept. ...	4,89,812	4,96,200	5,51,070
Tramway ...	1,16,091	1,00,888	1,34,081
Port approaches ...	4,36,369	3,62,967	4,09,932
Total ...	18,94,451	18,78,843	22,23,556
Surplus ...	3,08,492	3,30,637	61,926

The figures for the past year are taken from the Auditors' Reports in the *Englishman* of 23rd January and 10th August, and those for the preceding years from the Port Commissioners' Reports. It will be observed that the expenditure under every head has largely increased, and that the surplus has dwindled down to Rs. 61,926. Before criticising these figures at length, I should like to see the Port Commissioners' Report. It will

be observed that under the head of Port approaches there is a serious deficit, which, during the past year, has been made good by transferring Rs. 1,95,000 from Jetties; Rs. 10,000 from Inland vessels' wharves, and Rs. 50,000 from Tramway. In other words the goods are taxed to enable the dues on ships to be remitted. Peter is robbed that Paul may be paid. This is called "lightening the burthens on the Port." It is lightening the pockets of the merchants for the benefit of the ship-owners, whose nominees in the shape of Steamer Agents occupy nearly all the seats on the Port Trust.

Banks, &c.—At their weekly meeting the Directors of the Bank of Bengal made no alteration in the rate of discount which remains at 4 per cent. The weekly statement published to the 11th instant shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 5,24,64,621, while the cash and currency notes aggregated Rs. 3,19,91,814, or 59·07 per cent. Shares in the Bank, which had dropped to 810, improved on Monday to 815, but fell again to 812½ and 810; they have firmed since to 812½, at which figure there were sales on Tuesday and Wednesday, and to-day they have again receded to 810.

The Calcutta Clearing House returns for last week only totalled up Rs. 65,36,254. The balances held in Cash in the Civil Treasuries of the Government of India on the 31st July were 1,236 lakhs against 1,228 and 1,351 lakhs for the same dates of 1884 and 1883. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries on the 11th August only totalled up 161½ lakhs, as against 181½ lakhs the previous week.

Exchange, which had remained at *ls. 6¼d.*, showed signs of weakness in the early part of the week, and declined to *ls. 6½d.* on Tuesday; on Thursday it drooped to *ls. 6¾d.*, and on Friday to *ls. 6¾d.*; to-day it closes quiet at this rate for on-demand drafts.

Government Paper improved to 98½ on Monday; but on Tuesday dropped to 98½, and on Wednesday to 98½. On Thursday it improved again to 98½, at which figure it closed on Friday, and to-day business has been done at 98½ and 98½. There has been a sale of 4½ per cent. of 1878-79 at par.

Calcutta Municipal 5 per cent. Debentures have been sold at 99.

Railways, &c.—The traffic receipts of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 1st August were:—coaching, Rs. 4,240; goods, Rs. 140; sundries, Rs. 3—total Rs. 4,383. The total earnings for the five weeks ended that date were Rs. 21,272. The receipts of the Eastern Bengal State Railway for the week ended 1st August were Rs. 81,521, as against Rs. 72,494 for the same period of last year, and the weight carried during the month of July was 13,38,017 maunds as against 9,85,503 maunds for the same month in 1884. The receipts of the Darjeeling Railway for the month of July 1885 were Rs. 32,131, against Rs. 36,520 for the same time last year. The receipts of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 8th August were Rs. 6,89,205, against Rs. 6,93,362 for the same period last year. The Calcutta Tramway receipts last week were Rs. 9,645. A paragraph in an English daily paper of July 18th states that Messrs. Mathers and Crawford have received the following telegram regarding the Kurrachi Tramways:—“Great success with coaching, Rs. 3,000, equal to a rupee per mile. Highest day Rs. 3,200; strongly think it will go higher. Goods universally offering. Commenced goods traffic on the 10th instant.” If the receipts indicated in this telegram are sustained, the Kurrachi Tramway should be one of the most successful in India; for while it is less than one-fourth the length of the Calcutta Tramway, its receipts will work out double, or eight times as much per mile. Receipts of this nature must be viewed with caution, however, at the outset; and we should like to have more definite news. There have been sales of Tarkessur Railway at 112. India General Steam at 111, 110. Inland Flotilla at 19 and 20 discount.

The Report of the Managing Agents of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company for the half-year ended 30th June is most satisfactory in two respects. In the first place there is a very substantial increase in the receipts, and in the second place a decrease in the expenditure—a decrease which has not been occasioned by the practice of any false economy, for I observe that the amount spent on repairs is somewhat in excess of the previous half-year. The great increase is, however, in the passenger

traffic, which has risen from Rs. 1,41,378 to Rs. 1,56,358 ; there is a falling off in the freight account of nearly Rs. 1,000, but the total receipts amount to Rs. 1,75,837 as against Rs. 1,53,257 for the second half of 1884, or an increase of Rs. 22,580. The expenditure on the other hand has been decreased from Rs. 1,30,106 to Rs. 1,26,832, and the result is a balance of profit of Rs. 49,005 on the Revenue Account, and at credit of profit and loss of Rs. 48,772. The Managing Agents say that the past is the first half-year during which the Company's fleet has been working at its full strength, and the earnings, after providing for depreciation and insurance, show a profit for the half-year of 4 per cent. on the called up capital of the Company. The number of passengers carried during the half-year was 558,669 as against 451,455 and 368,327 for the two preceding half-years. The workshop at Seebpore has been enlarged and rendered competent to effect almost every portion of the repairs to the Flotilla ; six passenger and cargo barges have been added to the fleet, which is said to have been kept in thorough repair and excellent working order ; and to meet the increased demand, the Managing Agents have arranged, subject to the sanction of the shareholders, to purchase a powerful steamer suitable for the heavier lines of traffic. To meet all these additions to Block, it appears now to be desirable to call up the remainder of the capital, Rs. 15 per share, amounting to Rs. 1,05,000, or to provide the additional capital required in some other way.

A crisis in the affairs of the Inland Flotilla Company will have to be dealt with by the shareholders on the 21st instant, when they decide once and for all whether they will accept the offer of the India General and Rivers Steam Navigation Companies to purchase their fleet for 21 lakhs, or whether they will persist in a struggle for supremacy to the bitter end. The subject still attracts considerable attention here, affecting as it does, not only the shareholders of the three Steam Companies directly interested, but the shippers of cargo as well in an indirect manner. It is, of course, always difficult to foretell what the result of a poll will be at a public meeting ; and in this case some large shareholders will not be eligible

to vote, while many small shareholders deeply interested in the abnormally cheap carriage of jute and tea may be as clamorous and as noisy as Burke's grasshoppers in their opposition to the terms of settlement. Whatever may be the decision arrived at, the Flotilla shareholders can hardly expect the present offer to be renewed, and if rejected they must make up their minds for the keenest opposition. The opinion of disinterested men of business is that the present offer is a liberal one, nor are there wanting Flotilla, as also India General shareholders to admit that the offer is too liberal. It is not in the long run good, either for shareholders or the country at large, that there should be this war of rates, this keen competition, and this ruinous struggle for supremacy; it is in the highest degree desirable that private enterprise, cautiously and properly conducted, should be remunerative, and it generally is so. A shareholder, dating from a well-known tea agency, has issued a very tedious manifesto to the shareholders in the shape of a letter to Messrs. Andrew, Yule & Co, in which he asks them no fewer than fourteen questions, the document looking like an examination paper of a local school board. But the real questions for the shareholders to consider are:—(1) Has the Company worked at profit hitherto? (2) Is it working at a profit now? (3) Is it likely to work at profit in the future in view of the serious opposition to it? Then it must not be forgotten that the financial position of the Company is most embarrassing, if not critical, and that the shares are at a ruinous discount. The matter is one for the shareholders to decide; jute and tea shippers would, of course, be glad to see the present competition continue.

The Monthly Commercial Guide, published by the Collector of Customs, shows that the value of the imports into Calcutta from foreign countries during July last was Rs. 1,52,36,084 as against Rs. 2,25,77,310 in July 1884. There is a general decrease all down the line, but the main heads are cotton goods, 41½ lakhs; machinery, 3½ lakhs; metals 3 lakhs; railway plant 2½ lakhs; woollen goods, 2 lakhs; umbrellas, 1½ lakh; bullion and specie, 10½ lakhs.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday some 10,302 chests were offered and 412 withdrawn; there was no change in the prices, but there was a good competition. There has been a solitary sale of Phoenix Tea shares at 35, and of Kornafuli Tea Company's debentures at 100.

The following figures were kindly furnished by the Secretary to the Indian Tea Association :—

EXPORTS OF INDIAN TEA FROM CALCUTTA.

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports to Great Britain			
in July	5,359,547	5,180,664	3,739,459
Exports to Great Britain			
from 1st May to 31st			
July	9,731,757	7,431,863	6,256,488
Exports to Australia and			
New Zealand in July	131,437	24,157	5,780
Exports to Australia and			
New Zealand from 1st			
May to 31st July ...	163,135	30,908	21,856
Exports to America in			
July	15,923	3,710	27,274
Exports to America from			
1st May to 31st July	32,628	20,434	37,523
Exports to other places			
in July	19,712	12,087	12,818
Exports to other places			
from 1st May to 31st			
July	34,673	33,283	31,925
Total Exports from 1st			
May to 31st July ...	9,962,193	7,516,488	6,347,792

EXPORTS OF TEA FROM CRYLON.

	1885.	1884.	1883.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Exports from 1st Octo-			
ber to 31st July ...	2,934,531	1,745,442	1,174,202

The Balasun Tea Company has declared a dividend of 5 per cent.

Mills.—The Report of the Directors of the Seebpore Jute Manufacturing Company, Limited, is not quite so dismal as that of the Dunbar Cotton Mills, but is none the less a very sad affair. Taking credit of part of Agents' commission, Rs. 10,800, refunded during the half-year (the total amount is, however, not stated), and after paying manufacturing charges, working expenses, general repairs, and all renewals of machinery, interest, loss on shipments, fire insurance, &c., the accounts show a loss of Rs. 30,116, which is stated to be due to the extremely depressed condition of the bag market and losses sustained on previous shipments. One is tempted to ask if these are the sole reasons for these unsatisfactory results, and if the item of "management" might not be added. In view of the fact that this concern has no debenture debts, and that, but for this, the Hooghly Mills would have worked at a profit, while as we know the Gourepore and Union Mills have made profits, it seems hardly fair to lay everything at the door of bad trade. The amount now at debit of profit and loss aggregates no less than Rs. 1,10,569, and we need scarcely add that there has been nothing laid aside for depreciation for some time past. The balance sheet, however, shows the concern to be in a sound condition, and at the present price of Rs. 40 per share, the Block Account works out at the low figure of Rs. 1,500 per loom.

The meeting of shareholders of the Gourepore Company was more numerously attended, and the proceedings of a more lively character than has been the case for some time past. The greatest good humour, however, prevailed throughout, and the Directors received the advice and suggestions of the shareholders in a most friendly spirit. As mentioned in my last letter, there has been considerable dissatisfaction at the conduct of one of the Directors in joining the Board of the Fort Gloster Jute Company, while still a member of the Gourepore Directorate, and the following resolution was brought forward:—
"That this Meeting desires to place on record its disapproval of the action of Mr. John Martin in accepting a seat on the Board of the Fort Gloster Jute Manufacturing Company while

still a Director of the Gourepore Mill; and tenders its thanks to the other members of the Board and to Messrs. Barry & Co. for so promptly taking exception to the false position in which he had placed himself." The mover of the resolution said that it was with the extreme regret that he felt himself called upon to bring it forward; but that in his opinion it was highly undesirable that a Director of one Jute Mill should sit on the Board of another. It might very well happen that matters might be discussed at a Board meeting of one Company which it was essential should not be known to the other Company: and he had been informed that Mr. Martin, after being appointed a Director of the Fort Gloster Mill, had applied to one of the assistants of Messrs. Barry & Co. for the list of the wages paid by the Gourepore Company—an application which, he was glad to say, Messrs. Barry & Co. had promptly declined to comply with. Mr. Martin explained that he had joined the Board of the Fort Gloster to act as "warming pan" for one of his friends who had gone on leave; and that the moment the impropriety of his conduct was pointed out to him he had resigned his seat thereon: he therefore thought the resolution was uncalled for. Two other shareholders and the Chairman having expressed themselves strongly that it was highly undesirable that a Director of one Company should accept office on another, the resolution was not put to the meeting, and the matter dropped. But Mr. Martin will probably so order his conduct in the future as to be above reproach. He will doubtless resign his seat on the Board of either the Bowreah or Dunbar Cotton Mills, both of which non-dividend paying concerns claim him as a Director, so as to avoid a similar resolution being moved against him again. Another shareholder cynically asked if the Company intended to continue subscribing to the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, seeing that it refused to be bound by the resolutions of that body, and inquired what benefit the Company had derived from its membership. The Chairman, amid much merriment, announced that he understood that it was in contemplation to send a mission to the land of the celestials to explain to the "Heathen Chinese" the great advantages possessed by gunny over mat bags.

The Report of the Managing Agents of the Hooghly Mills, as indicated in my last letter, discloses a profit on the revenue account of Rs. 15,890; but interest on the working capital and debentures amounts to Rs. 35,131, and the net result is, therefore, a loss on the six months of Rs. 19,241. The Managing Agents say that it seems superfluous under existing circumstances to write off anything for depreciation, but they propose to deal with this question as soon as a distribution of profits comes before them for consideration. Of course, if when in the distant future this agreeable question falls to be considered, a proper amount is set aside for wear and tear, it is not material that it should be adjusted now, but we would observe that there is a very strong tendency to wholly ignore depreciation, when it comes in the way of a dividend; and we think that it would be altogether more prudent if the depreciation account were made up regularly every half-year. The Managing Agents say that the present position and visible prospects of the market do not, they regret, point to a possibility of profits during the current half-year, although there is a prospect of covering all expenses including interest; and so long as this is probable, it is better to continue than stop working, for it retains the labour, difficult to collect when once scattered, and generally keeps the Mill in a position to avail itself immediately of any improvement, which it is to be hoped the setting in of a new year may inaugurate. The Mill machinery they add, has worked satisfactorily during the six months; the production has been good, considering the labour is hardly yet wholly trained; and advantage has been taken of stoppage of neighbouring Mills to reduce wages, which are as low as in any other Mill. The Report, on the whole, is a satisfactory one, and it is to be hoped that the prognostications of the Managing Agents may prove correct. The Company has a balance of Rs. 1,86,674 as well as the amount to be fixed for depreciation to provide for before any dividend is declared, so the shareholders must be patient, and wait and hope.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the shareholders of the Goosery Jute Mills Company has been convened for the 20th instant to take into consideration the Company's position and

to decide what steps should be adopted to wind up the Company ; and the Directors have issued the following pithy circular to the shareholders :—“ With reference to our circular of 10th April 1885, and the proceedings of the Extraordinary General Meeting of shareholders of 29th April 1885, when power was taken to raise money by the issue of two lakhs of second debentures, your Directors having found that neither the shareholders nor the public would support the scheme to a sufficient extent to warrant their making the issue, there is now no other course left than to liquidate the Company. A proposal is on foot to form a new Company to acquire the concern subject to the debentures, when existing shareholders will be given a prior right to a *pro rata* holding in the new Company. Full particulars of the scheme will be forwarded you later on.” The Goosery Jute Mills Company has had a short life and a merry one. The Mill was bought in the year 1880 by the present Company, and for the year 1880-81 declared a dividend of 12 per cent., for the year 1881-82 a dividend of 25 per cent., and for the year 1882-83 one of 20 per cent., making a total return of 57 per cent. to the shareholders, besides setting aside a lakh of rupees towards Depreciation and Reserve Funds. Since July 1883, it has worked steadily at a loss, and since the 2nd June 1884, the Mill has been silent ; the loss to that period having been Rs. 79,662. The original capital of the concern was Rs. 2,50,000 and the Mill contained 125 looms ; the capital was subsequently somewhat unwisely increased to Rs. 4,00,000 and the Mill extended to 200 looms. Unfortunately the responsible management omitted the necessary precaution of first counting the cost, and the consequence has been that they are burthened with debts, for which they are unable to make satisfactory provision. The last published balance sheet of the Company was as follows :—

			LIABILITIES.	Rs.
Capital	...	...	...	3,98,500
Debentures	...	...	...	52,000
Overdrawn at Bank	...	...	...	87,488
Sundry debts	...	...	...	56,552
			Total	5,94,540

ASSETS.				Rs.
Block of Mill	...	...	...	5,66,299
Stock of stores and jute	...	...	...	14,929
Sundry assets	...	...	...	944
Cash	...	...	...	351
Deficiency	...	...	...	12,017
Total				5,94,540

It will be seen from the above that all the money has gone into buildings and machinery, and that there are no tangible assets to pay the current debts. Rupees 100 shares were offered the other day at Rs. 19 but found no buyers, as their value must be almost *nil*.

The Report of the Directors of the Cawnpore Woollen Mills for six months ended 30th June last, discloses a profit on the working of Rs. 18,634, and adding Rs. 4,505 brought forward from 1884, the balance at credit of profit and loss amounts to Rs. 23,139. The Directors recommend that a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum be paid on the capital other than good-will shares, that some Rs. 18,555 be written off Block Account (the sum of Rs. 1,269 at credit of Reserve and Depreciation Fund being transferred to profit and loss), and that the balance after payment of the Managing Agents' commission be carried forward. The Directors are exercising a sound discretion in recognizing the existence of depreciation, and I would advise them, as soon as they are in a position to do so, to write off the assets of good-will and preliminary expenses by periodical instalments. The concern seems rather in need of working capital, no less than Rs. 14,781 having been paid for interest during the six months.

The Report of the Managing Agents of Carew & Co., Limited, for the half-year ended 30th June is, perhaps, in view of the depressed state of trade a fairly satisfactory one.

	Rs.
The value of rum manufactured was ...	1,72,503
The cost of manufacture ...	1,47,763
	<hr/>
Profit ...	24,740
	<hr/> <hr/>
The value of sugar manufactured was ...	4,51,690
The cost of manufacture ...	3,61,683
	<hr/>
Profit ...	90,007
	<hr/> <hr/>

making a total gross profit of Rs. 1,14,747. Deducting from this sundry petty charges (including Managing Agents' Office allowance of Rs. 1,500,) and some Rs. 216 for rent of lands, the profits for the half-year amount to Rs. 1,08,300. From this must be deducted Rs. 12,929 for wear and tear of machinery, and 7 per cent. commission on the net sum of Rs. 95,371, leaving a net available profit of Rs. 88,696, to which must be added Rs. 5,515 brought forward from last half-year, making an available surplus of Rs. 94,210. The Managing Agents recommend that a dividend of 5 per cent. be declared, making 7 per cent. for the year, that Rs. 5,000 be taken to Fire Insurance Fund, and the balance carried forward. They add that the sugar trade throughout the world is recovering from the extremely depressed state it has been in for some time, and that they see reasons for hoping that the recovery is based on sound grounds. They are glad to say that they have had no further complaints regarding the quality of the raw material. There is, no doubt, that the recent enormous importations of sugar especially from Mauritius, must have had an effect on the trade of the country in this staple. The following table shows the imports into Bombay and Bengal for the last three official years, and three months ended June :—

Year	BOMBAY.		BENGAL.	
	Tons.	Rs.	Tons.	Rs.
1882-83	31,575	1,02,45,087	72	19,073
„ 1883-84	35,410	1,10,31,856	91	24,723
„ 1884-85	74,290	1,98,51,970	3,423	7,41,606
April to June 1883	9,974	32,53,633	...	...
„ 1884	19,671	60,92,163	3	1,012
„ 1885	9,393	21,43,538	806	1,92,440

It is impossible but that this enormous increase of imports of sugar into Bengal must have made itself felt; and, therefore, the wonder is that this Company has done so well. Subjoined is a synopsis of the balance sheet:—

LIABILITIES.

		Rs.
Capital fully paid-up	...	16,00,000
Debts and liabilities	...	7,471
Reserve and Insurance Funds	...	2,44,000
Dividend to be declared	...	80,000
Profit and Loss	...	15,886
		<hr/>
Total	...	19,47,357
		<hr/> <hr/>

ASSETS.

Freehold land, Tramway, block, &c.	...	5,74,081
Good-will	...	3,37,000
Stock-in-trade, &c.	...	6,23,269
Debts owing to the Company...	...	1,15,596
Sundry Assets	...	2,551
Cash and investments	...	2,94,857
		<hr/>
Total	...	19,47,857
		<hr/> <hr/>

We think the shareholders would do well to write down the item of good-will; otherwise the Company seems in sound and substantial position, with what one rarely sees—an ample working capital.

An advertisement in the public prints convenes an Extraordinary General Meeting of the New Indian Portland Cement Company for the 24th instant, for the purpose of passing a resolution "that it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Company that it cannot by reason of its liabilities continue its business, and that it is advisable to wind up the same, and that the same be wound up accordingly, and to appoint a liquidator, and also for the purpose of considering any scheme which may be submitted for the sale of the property of the Company." It is really wonderful that a vote of censure on the Government for not advancing them funds to carry on their business has not been superadded. Here is another "private enterprise" gone wrong, all owing to the action of the Government in not ordering a definite quantity of cement to be delivered in a given time, and advancing the money thereon.

There have been sales of Goosery Cotton shares at 170. Dunbar Cotton Mills at 20. Carew & Co. at 105. Chitpore Hydraulic Press at 85. Naini Tal Brewery, 100. New Beerbhoom Coal at 70. Baragunda Copper A shares at As. 12 and Re. 1. Meetings are advertised of the Camperdown Press and Goosery Cotton Mills on the 24th. Equitable Coal 26th. Strand Bank Press, 3rd September.

CALCUTTA, 22nd August 1885.

THE Chamber of Commerce here are, I am informed, now considering the Draft Indian Bankruptcy Bill as well as a letter from Messrs. Ullmann, Hirschorn & Co. on the subject. Messrs. Ullmann & Co.'s experiences of Indian trade do not altogether appear to have been happy, for they "have no hesitation in saying that by far the greatest part of the failures occurring here in the bazar are nothing but fraudulent bankruptcies, and these numerous failures are occasioned to a large extent by the knowledge, which the natives have by this time acquired that it is an easy matter for them to go through the Court with impunity and get cleared in an easy way of an amount of debts which otherwise they will be liable to pay. In fact they make a business out of it, and this in the firm's opinion is only the fault of the present law, which is far too lenient, at least in dealing with the bazar dealers, the average of whom have no conscience, and whose morality, indeed, is of a very low standard. Experience has shown that it is very difficult with the present law to bring an insolvent-debtor to book, and it is almost as much as left to the good-will of debtors whether they will pay creditors their due or not."

Messrs. Ullmann therefore advocate that—1. Imprisonment for debt be maintained. 2. That the Official Assignee be done away with as much as possible, and that creditors should have the right of appointing an Assignee either from amongst themselves or any professional accountant. 3. That the property of the wives or children of insolvents should be subject to attachment on the part of the creditors, unless it can be proved that such property has been inherited or come as a present otherwise than from the part of insolvent; or, if this be considered too severe, it may be so far restricted that property made over to his wife or children by the insolvent within the last three years before his failing, shall be subject to being attached and sold for the benefit of his creditors.

As regards Messrs. Ullmann & Company's second proposal, that creditors should have the power to appoint their Assignee,

it may perhaps be pointed out to these gentlemen, that section 17 of the present Insolvent Act gives them that power already, yet I do not remember a single instance in which it has been exercised. Messrs. Ullmann & Company are greatly mistaken if they think that insolvent estates would turn out better by their administration being transferred from the Official Assignee to non-official hands. The experiment of using non-official agency did not give very favourable results at home, where the conditions are much more suited for it than they are here, and the last Bankruptcy Act, that of 1883, practically admits its failure. The main thing wanted is, not to abolish the official Assignee, but to greatly strengthen his hands, so as to enable him to deal more effectively with fraudulent insolvents, unfortunately a very large class in this country. At present he is in no better position than any other individual, and every step that he takes must be at his own risk. The result is, that in many cases where he may be morally certain that there is concealment of property he is helpless, because, either for want of funds or of absolute legal proof, he cannot move without subjecting himself to grave personal responsibility. If, however, he were armed with greater powers and protected from personal liability, save for the misuse of his powers, insolvents would probably not be able to carry out frauds with the same success as at present. The establishment in India of a system of compulsory registration of bills of sale and mortgages of chattels, such as prevails in England, would also be a step in the right direction. A considerable number of bankrupt estates in this country are found to be mortgaged to one or two creditors to their full value, and when the property consists entirely of personalty, it often happens that the fact of its being so mortgaged is concealed, and that the insolvent has been for years enjoying the credit, which would never have been given to him had the real state of his affairs been known. A good instance in point is the failure, the other day, of the well-known carriage building firm of Stenart & Co. Most people believed them to be a thriving firm, yet it transpired that their whole business was mortgaged to two creditors, whose claims will probably

sweep away everything, so that the general body of creditors will receive nothing. But on the principle that "prevention is better than cure," would it not be as well if Messrs. Ullmann, Hirschorn & Co., and those engaged in similar business, were to formulate some common action for their mutual protection. If, as Messrs. Ullmann & Co. allege, bazar dealers have no conscience, if their morality is of such a low standard, why have any dealings with them save on a cash basis? This would seem to be an almost effectual safeguard. But the truth is, that there is such a keen competition, such a desire to sell goods now-a-days, that unconscionable rascals obtain long credits, and the merchants who have been unwise enough to be duped by them find themselves face to face with a heavy loss. There have been one or two smart failures among the woollen dealers in the bazar, and several well-known German houses have been severely bitten. If the examination of an insolvent is too lenient, it is because the creditors do not choose to oppose; the insolvent's books are always open to their investigation at the Official Assignee's Office. As a rule, when a man fails, creditors accept the loss, and do not feel inclined to throw good money after bad. A fraudulent insolvent during the past week was successfully opposed and sentenced by Mr. Justice Norris to fifteen months' imprisonment. No laws can be so framed as to protect persons from the consequences of their own folly, and if people choose systematically to deal with, and give long credit to, unconscionable rascals, they have only themselves to blame if they suffer for their foolishness. Nearly all the safeguards upon which Messrs. Ullmann & Co. lay so much stress exist in the present Act, of which and of the proposed new law they seem to be singularly ignorant.

Banks.—The amount passed through the Calcutta Clearing House during the past week was Rs. 64,93,871. The balances in the Reserve Treasuries of the Government of India on the 18th August have increased to 194½ lakhs, of which 135½ lakhs are at Calcutta. The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal to the 18th instant shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,86,26,548, and the cash and currency notes Rs.

2,83,58,228, or 56½ per cent. The rate for on-demand loans still remains at 4 per cent. During the week the Bank's shares have submitted to a further decline; they were dealt in on Monday and Tuesday at 810, but declined on Thursday to 807½ and 805.

Government Paper has fluctuated somewhat during the week; on Monday transactions varied from 98¾ to 98; on Tuesday from 98½ to 98½, on Wednesday it declined from 98½ to 98½; on Thursday, opening at 98½, it advanced to 98½; on Friday it remained the same; and to-day declined, in sympathy with the fall in sterling exchange, to 98½ @ 98½, 4½ per cent. Paper of 1878-79 has been dealt in at 99½ and 100; 4½ per cent. Municipal Debentures have also changed hands at Rs. 93, and 6 per cent. Debentures of 1885-86 at 99 and 99½.

Exchange has experienced a smart decline this week. It closed on Monday at *ls. 6¼d.*, on Tuesday at *ls. 6¼d.*, but on Wednesday it declined to *1-6¼d.*, on Thursday to *1-6¼d.*, and on Friday to *ls. 6¼d.*, at which figure it closes to-day, with a slightly firmer feeling. The cause of the decline is a fall in the price of silver at home, owing to the cessation of demand for China and the consequent diversion to India.

Tea.—At the Calcutta Tea Sales on Thursday some 15,090 chests were offered, of which 87 were withdrawn, and the balance sold at previous rates. There is no change to report. At the London Tea Sales some 14,000 chests were offered and 12,400 sold: prices ruled higher for the finest sorts. There have been sales of Singell shares at 72 and Gielle at 69. A dividend of 10 per cent. is payable to shareholders of the Indian Terai Company. Meetings are advertised of the Teendarea and Singell Companies on the 28th, Dehra Doon on the 29th, and Kurseong and Darjeeling Company on the 31st instant. Messrs. Wm. James and Henry Thompson write thus under date London, July 30th:—"Upwards of 22,000 packages have been catalogued for sale during the fortnight, including 11,300 new season's: 6,500 from Ceylon, 4,000 of old season's tea. There has not yet been sufficient recovery in demand from the country to give life to the market, and the sales have passed with a dull

tone. During last week quotations were very weak and irregular, showing in most cases a decline of *1d.* to *2d.* upon Pekoes and broken Pekoes and $\frac{1}{2}d.$ upon Souchongs and broken. This week the market has been steadier, with rather firmer rates for low-priced teas. The large supplies from Ceylon have sold freely, but the previous range of price has not been maintained, except for the finest qualities."

Mills.—The Reports of the Kamarhatty and Kanknarrah Jute Mill Companies have simultaneously made their appearance, and the results are about equally disappointing—the one showing a loss on the working for the half-year of Rs. 37,063 and the other of Rs. 43,254. Of the two, the Kanknarrah Report is the less unsatisfactory, because the Company has to pay interest on debentures to the tune of £65,900 as against £30,000 in the case of the Kamarhatty. Both these Companies were formed on a somewhat novel plan, the capital paid up being small with a large debenture loan. The result in good times is a very large profit on the subscribed capital; in bad times a very heavy loss. On the 31st December 1883, the Kamarhatty Company had a balance of undivided profit of Rs. 7,62,306. It has steadily lost money since, and, quite independent of depreciation of machinery, has, during the last eighteen months, dropped Rs. 1,16,814 and reduced this large balance to Rs. 6,45,492. During the twelve months the Kanknarrah Company has been at work it has dropped Rs. 77,767. The Managing Agents, write thus regarding the Kamarhatty:—"The loss has been considerably greater than in the previous half-year, though still less than the loss which would have accrued had the Mill been closed, and the Managing Agents are much disappointed with the results. These would have been rather better had the Company not had to stand out for nearly a month against a strike amongst the weavers, who objected to accept reduced wages. The reduction, however, was necessary, and has been accomplished, and important reductions have been made in the wages of other native hands also. The pay they still receive is good and much above what they could earn at any other work open to them. The bag market is worse than ever before

known, and notwithstanding that several Mills have stopped work, it cannot be expected to improve, while others are ready to sell six to nine months forward at very low prices in the expectation of an important fall in jute. Many buyers are afraid to pay even present low prices for bags, in the belief that Mills in their competitive anxiety to do business will later accept lower. The jute crop is a good one; very moderate prices are likely to prevail, and if the various Mill Companies would support each other a little in the matter of sales of bags, there can be no doubt that there would be a steadier market to the advantage of both buyers and sellers." But what, may we ask, is the use of a Jute Mill Association? The Agents of the Kanknarrah Company say:—"While the depression in the bag trade continues, however, and there is no general movement towards working short time, or steadying prices in any way, a profitable business is not to be expected. The jute crop is a good one and prices are likely to be low; but prices of bags for forward delivery have already been lowered in anticipation of this. The choice, then, lies between continuing work at a loss or closing the Mill for a time. The latter the Managing Agents would advocate, if by closing the average loss would be less; but with the European establishment under agreement, and debenture interest and other expenses running, whether the Mill work or not, it is calculated that by standing the average loss at present would be more. Messrs. Jardine, Skinner & Co., who are the Agents of both these Mills, have had a very long experience in jute manufactures in this country, and their remarks on the present prospects of the industry are entitled to great weight. The result of the working of the Jute Mills of Bengal for the last eighteen months has indeed been most deplorable, as the following table will show; only two Mills have worked at a profit, namely, the Gourepore and the Union:—

		Year 1884.	First-half 1885.	Total loss, 18 months.
Asiatic	...	39,086	In liquidation.	
Budge-Budge	...	1,11,723	9,635	1,21,358
Fort Gloster	...	89,684	77,884	1,67,568
Goosery	...	86,175	To be liquidated.	
Kamarhatty	...	79,752	37,063	1,16,815
Kanknarrah	...	34,513	43,254	77,767
Howrah	...	53,158	25,198	78,356
Hooghly	...	1,67,234	19,241	1,86,475
Seebpore	...	81,088	30,116	1,11,204

On the other hand, during the same period, the Gourepore Company has made a profit of Rs. 69,520 and the Union of Rs. 1,57,673.

At a meeting of the shareholders of the Goosery Jute Mills Company a resolution was unanimously passed that it was desirable that the existing shareholders should raise two lakhs of capital *pro rata* among themselves. The idea, no doubt, is good : the difficulty will arise in the execution of it.

The Report of the Directors of the Goosery Cotton Mills, in view of the depressed condition of the industry, is a most satisfactory one ; it is, however, to be hoped that there are no " errors in carrying forward the cotton stocks and liabilities." The gross profit for the half-year amounts to Rs. 45,105, and the Directors recommend that it be carried forward to the end of the year. The stock of yarn is exceptionally heavy, but the Directors state that the greater portion is sold and has been valued at contract rates, the remainder being taken at last sale prices. In accordance with a wish expressed at the last general meeting, the Directors have had the machinery in the old Mill examined and reported on by a professional man. His report will be laid on the table, but for the information of shareholders who may be unable to attend, they cannot resist quoting the following concluding paragraph from Mr. Ashley's report, *viz.* "The condition of the machinery is remarkably good, *considering the number of years it has worked*, and shows that great attention has been paid to renewals as they have been required ; the mules I consider to be working exceed-

ingly well when I saw them." It would be interesting to know if Mr. Ashley (whoever he may be) considers that the block account of Rs. 15,35,495 is adequately represented by land, buildings, and machinery, that is, we imagine, what the shareholders desire to know, and unless there is something more in the report than has been published, they are likely to remain in ignorance on the subject. The outturn appears to have been considerably less in weight than for the corresponding half of 1884. And the following paragraph in the report is not altogether ingenious:— "The outturn from 1st January to 30th June was 19,74,822 lbs., against 1,820,447 lbs. produced the previous half-year, and the average count spun was 16·38." But the outturn for the first half of 1884 was 2,163,229 lbs., and this is the proper period to compare the results under review with, for the low outturn during the second half of 1884 was due to an unusual demand for the higher counts Nos. 30 and 40 in September, October and November. The Directors report a reduction of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in native wages, effected without the loss of a single hand, that Mr. S. H. Robinson, under whose management the Mill has been so successful, sailed for England on the 5th April, and that Mr. Morrison has resumed his position as Managing Director. Shares in this concern, which some three years ago were at Rs. 300, can now be bought at Rs. 170.

The Jute Manufactures' Association has been displaying signs of activity this week: a secret meeting of members was held on Wednesday, and there are to be weekly meetings in future. It is understood that the business discussed was the desirability of concerting some common action among the Mills with a view to steadying and maintaining the prices of gunnies; but this will never be successful so long as the present system of brokers prevails.

I hear that the Budge-Budge Mills are making arrangements to start work again on the 1st September; this will mean, if true, another 460 looms on the market. There have been sales of Bowraah Cotton Mill Shares at Rs. 30, but there is a strong disinclination to invest in Mill scrip at present. The prospects of the jute manufacturing industry are most dreary, and Cotton

Mills are mostly working at a loss. There have been sales of Watson's Press at 93.

I quote the following from the *Englishman's* editorial columns; perhaps they indicate the beginning of a change of views regarding the administration of the Port Trust here:—"The method of managing the affairs of the Port of Pondicherry is certainly an economical one, and any one who has visited the port will admit that the officers perform their duties efficiently and to the satisfaction of the public. The total cost, including the pier, lighthouse, and flagstaff is only Rs. 9,341 per annum, whilst the officers include a capitaine de port with a lieutenant and sous chef for the pier and twenty other minor officials." (We are afraid the Port Trust Lieutenant here would want more than all this for himself). "The Government of India might pick up a few hints in retrenchment from the French, who seem to have solved the problem of how to manage a colony on next to nothing a year." As I have several times said, what is wanted is an independent commission to examine into the charges of this port.

Railways, &c.—The traffic returns of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 15th August were Rs. 6,77,831, as against Rs. 6,09,716 for the same period last year. Those of the Darjeeling Railway for the week ended 8th August were Rs. 6,252 against Rs. 9,562 for the same period last year; and from 1st July to 8th August only totalled up Rs. 38,383, as against Rs. 46,083 for the same time last year. This is a very serious decline, and I observe that shares in this concern have been dealt in at 94 on Tuesday and on Thursday at 90 ex-dividend. The receipts of the Tarkessur Railway for the week ended 8th August only totalled up Rs. 3,179: this is lower than for some time past. The receipts of the Eastern Bengal Railway for the same period were Rs. 67,667, as against Rs. 86,200 for the corresponding week in 1884. The Calcutta Tramway receipts for the past week were Rs. 9,359. The new Midland Railway will bring Bombay into direct communication with the most prolific grainfields in India, and the bulk of the produce hitherto gone to Calcutta will inevitably be diverted to Bombay. This is good news for the Kidderpore Docks.

The meeting of shareholders of the Inland Flotilla Company yesterday to consider the proposal of the other two Companies to purchase their fleet for 21 lakhs of rupees resulted in a perfect *fiasco*, and those shareholders who are largely interested in the cheap carriage of tea and jute scored a complete triumph. On the notice convening the meeting having been read, a series of edifying questions were put to the Company's Solicitor, and a resolution was then proposed by a Tea man and seconded by a Jute man that the meeting do stand adjourned for a twelve-month. This was really a masterstroke, for on a question of adjournment a poll cannot be taken, it must be decided by a show of hands, and the resolution, after some hesitation on the part of the Chairman, for which he was promptly brought to book by a shareholder, was declared carried by a majority of 33 to 20. The meeting must, therefore, have been an unusually large one, though the 20 dissentients were the real backbone of the Company. I understand that the offer of 21 lakhs for the flotilla has since been withdrawn, and we shall probably now have a continuance of competition between these Companies at unremunerative rates, until either the weakest goes to the wall or they have the good sense to come to some mutual arrangement. But the position of the Inland Flotilla Company in a financial point of view is somewhat critical. They have enormous current liabilities, and their debentures have not been subscribed for to any amount. Yet the debenture-holders have the flotilla pledged to them as well as the uncalled capital. It would seem, that unless the Company can get the debenture-holders to consent, they cannot call up the balance of capital, and the debenture-holders are not likely to consent to a proceeding, which would virtually cause one of their securities to disappear. The concern, therefore, is about as heavily handicapped as one can conceive, and the management can hardly be congratulated upon the way in which they have administered the finances of the Company. Shares in the Flotilla Company have experienced a smart decline. There were sales on Thursday at 21, 21½, 22, 22½, and 25 discount, on Friday at 25, 23, and 24 discount, and to-day at 30 discount. I understand that the Chairman of the Company has resigned, and alto-

gether things are far from gay. From the first I have characterized the offer as a liberal one, and now that it has slipped through their fingers, the shareholders will perhaps think so too. I understand that the Chairman of the meeting in his opening remarks stated in effect that during the last two months the Company had worked at a loss of about half a lakh of rupees, that it was practically in bankrupt condition, and that there was no better way out of their difficulties than the acceptance of the proposal. The Tea and Jute men, however, carried the day, and investors in this Company have a dreary outlook before them.

There have been sales of India General Steam at 110.

The Report of the Equitable Coal Company for the half-year ended 30th June shows that during that period 11,96,721 maunds of coal were raised and 11,08,998 maunds delivered. The raisings show a decrease of 2,94,669 maunds and the deliveries of 52,838 maunds. After providing a sum of Rs. 11,180 for extensions and new works undertaken, there has been a profit on the working of the half-year of Rs. 18,421, to which must be added Rs. 21,372 brought forward from last half-year, making a total of Rs. 39,793, which the Directors recommend should be carried forward. The Directors regret that the profit earned is so small, but this is entirely owing to the depressed state of the market; competition among the Coal Companies has been very severe, and prices have been considerably reduced in consequence. The Directors have been giving particular attention and doing all in their power to reduce the cost of raising coal, and economies have been put in force, which will, they hope, shew to the benefit of the Company in the current half-year. The work on the Bengal-Nagpore Railway has been suspended, and so the Company's claim for land taken up is therefore at present in abeyance. The Government have introduced a Bill into the Legislative Council with the object of facilitating the acquisition of mineral lands, and as they are advised that this measure would unduly prejudice coal owners, the Directors have, in combination with other Coal Companies, memorialized the Government on the subject, and they hope that by this means the law will be confined within reasonable limits. There has been a sale

of New Beerhoom shares at 69. A dividend of 2 per cent. has been declared by the New Beerhoom Coal Company; and of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by the Great Eastern Hotel, payable at once. A meeting of the Arakan Oil Company is convened for the 25th instant to sanction the purchase of some additional land.

CALCUTTA, 29th August 1885.

THE Report of the Managing Agents of the Crystal Ice Company has just been issued; the concern only got to work during the last half-year, and the business done appears to have been small,—the value of ice sold to the 30th June having apparently been only Rs. 14,853. The loss on the working is Rs. 3,330, to which has been added Rs. 2,634 for preliminary expenses, making the total amount at debit of Profit and Loss Rs. 5,964. The first machine commenced work in the latter half of February, the second on the 23rd March, whilst the third could not be got ready till the 13th July. Several difficulties had to be overcome, but they have been successfully surmounted; and the Agents state that the engines are now capable of producing more ice than was estimated for. At the present moment, working easy, ten tons of ice daily are produced, and the Manager now sees his way with the three machines to a continuous monthly outturn of from 540 to 600 tons. The Agents further report that they have just concluded a contract with the Great Eastern Hotel for all the ice required by them (about 300 tons per annum) for the next five years; also for the supply of all the ice required by the B. I. S. N. Company's steamers, and that they have received promises of support from the other principal steamer lines. The Bengal Ice Company are stated to be able at a push to turn out 60 tons of ice per diem, and the block of their concern stands in the books at Rs. 8,17,545. The Crystal Ice Company which can turn out one-third of the Bengal Company value their block at Rs. 2,01,907. The three Ice Companies now in Calcutta can apparently turn out between 90 and 100 tons of ice per day, a quantity very largely in excess of the demand, so that unless some satisfactory working arrangement is arrived at the matter must eventuate in the survival of the fittest, which will probably be the Company whose working expenses are the smallest. The Bengal Ice Company are burthened with debentures for three lakhs bearing interest at 7 per cent., which means a sum of Rs. 21,000 annually. The Imperial Ice Company have also interest-bearing debts of probably nearly one and-a-half

lakhs. The Crystal Company at present is almost free from debt. I see it stated that the Bombay Ice Company declared a final dividend of 7 per cent., making 12 per cent. for the year; and that the price of ice is one anna per seer. If the Companies here only received half this sum, they would work at a profit, but a very large proportion of their production is sold to contractors, at prices ranging from Rs. 14 per ton upwards, or less than one pice a seer. It is indeed unfortunate that these Companies can come to no satisfactory arrangement; the public are deriving no real benefit from their suicidal competition, and some $9\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of shareholders' capital are being slowly melted away in consequence. If, as appears to be the case, the sales of the Crystal Company only amounted to Rs. 14,853, the Bengal Ice Company can as yet have met with no really serious opposition, for their gross profit amounted to Rs. 28,035. The position, however, will be altered now, and we look forward to the next half-year's accounts with some curiosity, unless the Companies have the good sense to come to some mutually satisfactory arrangement in the meantime.

Banks.—A telegram has been received that the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation has declared a dividend of £2 per share for the half-year ended 30th June; that \$100,000 have been taken to the Reserve Fund which now stands at \$4,500,000, and \$100,000, to the Reserve Fund for equalization of dividends, which now amounts to \$500,000. These are very satisfactory results.

The weekly statement of the Bank of Bengal made up to the 25th August shows that the public and other deposits were Rs. 4,86,97,914, and the cash and currency notes Rs. 2,85,50,939 or 56.6 per cent. The rate for demand loans still remains at $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

The amount passed through the Bankers' Clearing House last week was Rs. 81,77,904.

The balances in the Reserve Treasuries total up nearly 188 lakhs, as against $194\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs for the previous week: the decrease is at Bombay. There have been sales of Bank of Bengal shares at $812\frac{1}{2}$ and 815.

Government Paper steadily advanced during the week from 98 on Monday morning to $98\frac{1}{2}$ on Thursday; it, however, steadily declined on Friday to $98\frac{1}{4}$, but to-day it has improved to $98\frac{1}{2}$ to $98\frac{1}{4}$.

Four and half per cent. Paper of 1878-79 has changed hands at $99\frac{1}{2}$ and $99\frac{1}{4}$.

Municipal 5 per cent. debentures (Calcutta) of 1885-86 were sold on Monday at 99 and $99\frac{1}{4}$, and Tuesday at 99. Five per cent. debentures of 1878 changed hands at $98\frac{1}{2}$.

Exchange improved on Monday to *ls. 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.*, and on Tuesday to *ls. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.*, for on demand drafts, at which rate it has remained ever since, and closes quiet to-day.

Railway.—The traffic returns of the East Indian Railway for the week ended 22nd August show the receipts to have been Rs. 6,29,301, as against Rs. 6,21,753 for the same period of 1884. The returns of the Darjeeling Railway for the week ended 15th August give the receipts as Rs. 6,600 as against Rs. 7,972 last year. From the 1st July to the 15th August 1885, the receipts have only been Rs. 45,487 as against Rs. 54,056 to the 16th August last year. I look forward to the accounts of this line with some curiosity. The receipts of the Tar-kessur Railway for the week ended 15th August are somewhat low: passengers, Rs. 3,340; goods, Rs. 129; sundries, Rs. 4—total Rs. 3,473. The receipts for the 7 weeks ended 15th August were—passengers, Rs. 26,890; goods, Rs. 1,013; sundries, Rs. 20—total Rs. 27,923, or an average of Rs. 3,989 per week, which denotes a falling off in traffic, consequent, no doubt, upon the rainy weather. There have been sales of shares at Rs. 110. The traffic returns of the Eastern Bengal Railway for the week ended 15th August are: coaching, Rs. 28,254; goods, Rs. 37,350; other earnings, Rs. 2,532—total Rs. 68,136, as against Rs. 91,155, for last year. The weight carried was, however, from the 1st July to 15th August 18,15,717 maunds for Rs. 2,16,171, as against 15,06,299 maunds for Rs. 2,66,389 for the same period of last year.

The following manifesto issued by Mr. Skinner to the shareholders of the Inland Flotilla Company deals with an industry

of such importance and so correctly describes the situation, that I give it *in extenso*, merely observing that it reminds me of shutting the stable door when the steed has gone. There have been sales of Flotilla shares at 25 discount:—

“DEAR SIR,—The Meeting of the Inland Flotilla Company, held on the 21st, was brought to an abrupt conclusion on a question of procedure, and I was thereby prevented from exposing the arguments—sound, no doubt, if viewed from the standpoint of the jute and tea interests—used by the two speakers, who obtained from the Meeting a snap vote, which continues a ruinous competition to the detriment of the Shareholders of the Company. As some circulars have been sent round to you obscuring the real issue; and as I was prohibited from stating this at the meeting, I am obliged to adopt the same means of reaching you, and will state in as few words as possible—1st, the reason that induced me, in the interest of all who hold shares in either of the three Companies, to endeavour to put a stop to a competition which affects capital to the extent of Rs. 1,20,00,000; 2nd, the negotiations which preceded the offer I made, the arrangement regarding the resolution which I had to bring forward at the meeting, and the reasons which, as I became more acquainted with the constitution and working of the Flotilla Company, compelled in my view irresistible arguments for its extinction.

“1st.—I found that the India General Steam Navigation and River Steam Companies were absolutely determined, for very cogent reasons, not to enter into a running agreement with a Company in the following position:—

“(a). Unwilling or unable as regards the greater number of its Shareholders to raise any fresh capital.

“(b). Tied hand and foot by a Debenture Bond, which, by its terms, is fatal to your interests, and even against which only so small a sum as Rs. 2,15,000 was able to be raised last year:—*Please note regarding this*—No independent advice was obtained for the shareholders in the arrangement of the terms of this Bond. It binds you hand and foot to the Debenture-holders, it has a prior claim over your ships, your property in land, godowns

and stores of every kind; it even seizes on your revenue for interest and for the paltry sum of Rs. 8,75,000, which has not yet been filled up, you have, if its provisions can be maintained, parted with the right without consent of the Debenture-holders of selling your fleet or buying other vessels in their place; and, lastly, if this was not ample enough, you cannot even pay up the Rs. 35 uncalled on your present issue of 25,000 shares as this money is secured to Rs. 2,15,000 of Debenture Bonds. Mr. Alston at the Meeting urged as an argument for going on that you were in the power of the Debenture-holders. If this is true, your position is 25 lakhs in bondage to about 2 lakhs.

“(c). At the mercy of the Agents, or any one else who will give funds over Rs. 8,75,000 on any security that remains, which as far as I see, is *nil*. “Running rates being impossible, some arrangement for amalgamation or sale was therefore necessary.

“2nd.—After many weeks of negotiation, I was thankful to obtain from the two Companies an offer, of which the bare outline has been given to you, and of which the Chairman would have furnished further details if the Meeting had not closed in disorder, and regarding which I will only say every independent person in Calcutta that has spoken of it to me has pronounced it a magnificent one. I have said all along, and would urge you as Shareholders with money sunk in the Company, to ask yourselves if it is not a good offer, why will not the tea and jute interests, whose representatives appealed so feelingly to you at the Meeting, make even the same offer in the market for your shares, and enable myself and others to quit a Company, whose present object appears to me to be the charitable and philanthropic one of advantaging the produce of Eastern Bengal at the expense of the shareholders, and at the same time assisting in destroying the interest-bearing power of Rs. 1,20,00,000.

“If it is again urged, why not agree to equal rates? I say, after much consideration and consultation, this would be a mistake: for this Company was conceived in error, being never wanted, especially with the increased steam-power now on the river and extension of railway communication, and is being now

maintained without reasonable chance of profit, and, if the Shareholders do not take some steps to reverse the Meeting of 21st, will end in insolvency. Amalgamation is therefore better for you, and for every Steam Company Shareholder. On the ground of self-interest alone, I have urged amalgamation; and to point this, I would appeal to the results of the Ice Company competition now existing, and its instructive lesson.

“ A very important body of Shareholders having satisfied themselves that the offer before them was the best that could be got, that it was desirable to amalgamate on the terms stated, and the Directors, as a body, having agreed to this course, I was enabled, on the very day of the meeting after consultation to arrange with the Directors the terms of a resolution, which I, for the Companies I represented, and they for you, could agree to lay before you.

“ The resolution was as follows:—‘That the Directors are hereby directed to conclude an agreement with the India General Steam Navigation Company, Limited, and the River Steam Navigation Company, Limited, for the immediate sale to them of the fleet and property of this Company on the basis of the terms proposed on behalf of those Companies, but subject to the debenture debt, and mortgage subsisting thereon (that is to say, upon the terms of paying or securing the outstanding debentures to the Debenture-holders, and paying the balance to this Company), and the Directors are hereby requested and authorised to give notice of such sale to the Trustees for the Debenture-holders of this Company, and to make it a part of the arrangement with the purchasing Companies that they shall, if desired by the Trustees, pay off the debentures forthwith.’

“ It was supported by Shareholders holding about 14,700 shares, out of some 21,750 shares represented at the Meeting.

“ This is without counting sundry other Shareholders, who, I understand, would have voted, and who, I am assured, voted for the adjournment without any idea that it was more than a joke, had no chance of being carried, and even if carried was subject to the test of voting power by means of a poll.

“ *Regarding the offer.*—As made by me, it was equivalent to a discount of under Rs. 10 per share according to the accounts issued to 30th April, and was contained in a long letter, stating that favourable arrangements would be made as soon as details were furnished for taking over the other credit items of account. Your agents, however, represent it as Rs. 15 per share, and the difference, it is understood, is explained by them as follows :—

“ Re. 1 per share—Rs. 25,000, “Loss on godown.” I never wrote that the Company would consider the godown valueless, so this must be their own valuation of what has cost you Rs. 25,000.

“ Re. 1 per share=Rs. 25,000, “Loss on agreement” with chief captain and chief engineer, although it was part of the scheme submitted by me that berths were to be provided for them. I ask were any of you aware of this at the Meeting, and, if not, please consider this agreement with the debenture bond in calculating your chances as a shareholder.

“ Rs. 3 per share=Rs. 75,000, “Loss on stores, &c., &c., generally.” I offered cost price or fair value for stores, so I think you will find the loss is Rs. 5 in the etceteras (*viz.*, interest and loss on working).

“ And to state my opinion shortly, I think the whole extra depreciation of Rs. 5 since last report, will be found in Revenue Account, even if the other Companies had agreed to take over every credit in the balance sheet at book values.

“ If this is so now, what will be your position in December? Jute freights for the current half-year will be maintained by the larger Companies at rates which cannot pay.

“ By the action of those who carried the adjournment and prevented you from even considering the proposition you had come to talk over, you have lost the offer I made as I had to withdraw it publicly in the tumult and confirm same by letter; but before finally throwing in your lot with those whose action would devote your resources merely to the maintenance of cheap carriage on the Brahmaputra and other rivers, I would ask you to consider—

“ *1st.*—The inability of the Company to raise fresh funds to provide fleet additions.

" 2nd.—Its financial unsoundness and present heavy indebtedness which can only be relieved by fresh capital.

" 3rd.—The enormous risk you run from ordinary river perils, and the total absence of insurance and or depreciation funds, or any present probability of being able to provide same.

" 4th.—The absolute ascertainable fact that you are now running and will continue to run at a loss.

" 5th.—The growth of outlay by the rapid accumulation of necessary repairs to your fleet—a most costly item in all Steam Companies' account.

" 6th.—Whether it is not better to consider your own interest rather than those of the agents who are also at present the mortgagees of the Company; of the tea garden owners, Mill proprietors, and produce traders, who will also benefit by this competition, while you are engaged at your personal cost in the destruction of a hitherto profitable trade.

"I might bring forward many other arguments to sustain my proposition, but consider I have sufficiently explained the question at issue from the Shareholders' standpoint. If the tea garden and the jute mills of Bengal require a Company working solely in their interests, I think it is only fair they should provide the capital from their own resources, and not waste our money in the venture. I will be glad to communicate with any Shareholders who desires to reverse the decision of the Meeting of the 21st, and would suggest the signature of a requisition asking for a Meeting to discuss the position and prospects of the Company in a business-like manner.

" J. SKINNER."

The Calcutta Tramway receipts last week were Rs. 8,677 only.

Mills.—The following is a copy of the resolution unanimously carried at the meeting of shareholders of the Goosery Jute Mills Company the 20th August:—"That this meeting is of opinion that it is impossible to carry on the business of the Company, and that it should be wound up, and this meeting is further of opinion that the best mode of realising the property as providing sufficient funds to pay the debts of the Company and affording the shareholders an opportunity of recovering a portion of

their capital, which is not likely to be attained by an auction sale, will be for a new Company to be formed with a capital of two lakhs of rupees to be subscribed by the present shareholders, or such as shall be willing to subscribe *pro rata* to take over the property of the Company, subject to the debenture debt, on payment and satisfaction of all debts due by the Company other than the debenture debts, which will still remain as a charge on the property; and this meeting is of opinion that the necessary steps should be taken to put the Company into voluntary liquidation and to give the liquidator power to carry the said arrangement into effect." In accordance with the above resolution an Extraordinary Meeting of the Company is called for the 7th September, at which it will be proposed, that as it has been proved to the satisfaction of the meeting that the Company cannot by reason of its liabilities continue its business, it be wound up and that a liquidator be appointed. It would be as well if in the *interim* the Directors circulated among the shareholders a statement of the liabilities and assets of the Company; for the last balance sheet made up to the 31st December 1884, by no means discloses the true position of the concern.

For the benefit of your readers I have been at the pains to work out the cost per loom at present market price of the six jute mills, the shares of which are most often dealt with in the market; the Barnagore report is not yet out, so I have not taken it into account.

Name of Mill.	Market price per share.	Present value per loom at market price.	Value of block in the accounts per loom.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Budge-Budge ...	60	2,632	4,789
Fort Gloster ...	22	1,813	5,997
Gourepore ...	75	2,060	4,341
Howrah ...	59	2,624	5,443
Seebpore ...	38	1,400	5,371
Union ...	105	1,906	2,119

In making the calculation of present value, I have deducted from the block account the amounts at credit of Reserve and allowed for the discount on the shares. It will be seen from

the above, that the cheapest investment is the Seebpore Mills, and if it were not that by some fatality they never do as well as their neighbours, it would be a desirable stock for people who can wait. Fort Gloster comes next at Rs. 1,813 per loom, but it is burthened with two lakhs of debentures, and has not been managed very satisfactorily. The Howrah Mills is one of the dearest at Rs. 2,624 and it has a heavy debenture debt. The Gourepore Mill at Rs. 2,060 per loom, excellently managed as it appears to be, with no debenture debts, seems to be the most desirable. The Union Mill works out at Rs. 1,906 but, mill for mill, is not equal to the Gourepore. The Budge-Budge works out at Rs. 2,632; it has held a deservedly high place in the public esteem in the past, but does not seem to enjoy the same confidence in the present.

I have not the accounts of the Goosery Jute Mills later than December last, but if as I am informed, the debentures amount to four lakhs, the issue of two lakhs of fresh capital would make the cost of the mill nearly Rs. 3,000 per loom. These debentures, it must be borne in mind, bear interest at 8 per cent., which as things look at present, is much higher than the rate of dividend likely to be declared for some time to come. I cannot, therefore, recommend the proposed new issue of Goosery redivivus to the attention of investors.

As will be seen from an advertisement in your columns the Egerton Woollen Mills are increasing their subscribed capital by the issue of 4,000 B shares of Rs. 100 each. The object is to increase the existing Woollen Mills and erect a worsted Mill. These shares will bear interest at 5 per cent. per annum until the 1st July 1887, or the extension is in working order, when they will participate equally with the existing issue. The advertisement gives full details of the working of the Company which appears to have been very successful.

The Calcutta *Statesman* having extracted the paragraph from my last letter regarding the losses made by the different Jute Mills during the past eighteen months, and desiring to complete the record, has added statistics regarding two Jute Mills, one of which I have never heard of before. It gravely announces that

during the last eighteen months the Goosery Mills having made a profit of Rs. 1,31,281 and the Alliance of Rs. 39,066, are now in liquidation in spite of these apparent profits. I am afraid the *Statesman* has got a little mixed and is referring to the Goosery Cotton Mills; the Goosery Jute Mills during the past eighteen, for twelve of which it has been silent, dropped no less than Rs. 86,175 in 1884; the accounts for the first half of 1885 are not out, but the total loss will not be less than one lakh. The Alliance Jute Mill I have never heard of, but perhaps the Asiatic is referred to; that concern during 1884 worked at a loss of Rs. 39,085, and is now in liquidation, and the Goosery Mills are about to follow their procedure. The *Statesman* considers that some joint action should be taken to curtail production, and has some very sensible and apposite remarks upon the subject but which, we fear, will not be listened to. There have been sales of Bowreah Mills at 29 and 30. Seebpore, Rs. 35. Carew & Co., 105. Naini Tal Brewery, 100. Nasmyth Press, 78.

I commend the following extracts from the *Dundee Advertiser* to those persons interested in jute mills and the wheat trade:— A despatch, dated Portland, July 6th, says:—The wheat harvest in the Inland Empire begins in earnest to-day, about two weeks earlier than usual. Philip Ritz, Walla Walla, who within two weeks past has visited every grain-growing district east of the Cascade Mountains, said to-day—‘The grain crop of the entire Inland Empire this year is by far the largest and best that has ever been grown, and this applies not only to Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington, and Northern Idaho, but also to all small valleys along the Snake River, such as Eagle Creek, Pine Creek and Willows. I think the average of the entire country will be over 30 bushels per acre. A great many fields will average 40 and some over 60 per acre. The grain will also be of the very best quality—plump and heavy? These figures may seem extravagant but a poor field of wheat is unknown this season.

“A report, dated San Francisco, July 9th, says:—The market for Calcutta standard grain sacks is exceedingly inactive; demand light. Calcutta standard wheat sacks are quoted at 4½ to 5c. wool bags 32c., 33c., and 35c. for the

three sizes. The *Oceanic*, from Hong-Kong, brought 426 bales Calcutta gunnies. Thus far during the month of July we have had a dearth of charters, with a little inquiry for tonnage for any voyage. Grain freights are therefore entirely nominal. There seems to be more movement in lumber vessels judging from the printed reports from Puget Sound, exports foreign being free and liberal while shipments to San Francisco appear to be of considerable magnitude. There is now on the berth 20,500 tons; same date last year, 23,000 tons. Disengaged fleet here and at neighbouring ports 100,000: same date last year, 134,000 tons. Fleet to arrive in 1885, 187,000 tons; same date in 1884, 232,000 tons; same date in 1883, 260,000 tons; same date in 1882, 300,000 tons."

Tea.—At the Calcutta tea sales on Thursday some 11,232 chests were catalogued, of which 518 were withdrawn or arrived too late. The prices were unchanged and qualities mostly low. Dividends of 5 per cent. have been declared by the Balasun, Mim, Springside, and Teesta Companies. Sales are reported of Balasun at 80. East India Tea 33. Singell 60. Phoenix 33 and 35. Holta 78. Gielle 67. Hoolungoorie 50. Singbulli and Murmah 86. Cocheela 11.



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