

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PORT AND HARBOUR
OF TABLE BAY
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PERIOD
1825 - 1860

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of the M.A. degree of
the University of Cape Town.
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FOREWORD

Cape harbour and port developments have, until recently, been a largely neglected field of study.

In Die Nederlandse Kommissarisse en die 18-de Eeuwe Samelwing aan die Kaap, Dr. A. Botseken referred only briefly to harbour developments under the Dutch East India Company, while Professor Marcus Artin's work on the English East India Company, John Company at the Cape: a history of the agency under Pringle (1794-1815) based on a study of the Cape of Good Hope Factory Records, gave no attention to the development of Table Bay, and C.J. de Villier's study of Die Britse Vloot aan die Kaap, 1795-1803, did not advert to the subject.

In spite of the presentation of A.W.O. Bock's Foreign Trade of South Africa since 1807: a historical and critical analysis, in 1930, no immediate attempt was made to correlate the expansion of trade with the need for port development and harbour construction. In 1955, C. Verburgh studied the Havens en Scheervaart van Zuid-Afrika, but gave little attention to Table Bay. In 1959, B.J.T. Leverton did, however, mention harbour developments, albeit peripherally, in his study of Government Finance and Political Development in the Cape, 1806 - 1834, and made an attempt to relate port development to the public works policy of the Cape government. Specific works on Table Bay and Cape Town regarded them from the viewpoints of history and geography, little attempt being made to investigate even the relationship between urban development and port construction.

J.A. Coetzee's Die Beteekenis van Kaapstad as Hawe, gesien in die lig van 'n breë Suid-Afrikaanse verkeersgeografie, was more interested in the "breë verkeersgeografie" than in Table Bay, while Margaret Marshall's specific study of The Growth and Development of Cape Town, failed to consider the numerous plans for reclaiming the Cape Town foreshore.

Although in 1972, David Rush in his Aspects of the Growth of Trade and the Development of Ports in the Cape Colony, 1795-1882, explored the relationship between port developments and trade, the very scope of his comprehensive survey precluded concentration on Table Bay in particular.

This thesis, therefore, aims to study port and harbour developments at Table Bay from 1825 until 1860 within the context of both economics and politics. It investigates the demands of commerce and shipping for a port and links the growth of trade to the need for constructing a port and harbour.

An endeavour will also be made to study port and harbour developments within the framework of economic and public works policies in general, and in the light of the financial policies pursued by the Cape and the Imperial Governments in particular. The rôle of private capital in port development will also be reviewed.

It is important to link transport and internal communication policies to port development. Initially, the lack of roads hampered port development, but the subsequent road development programme favoured port extension, as the Cape colony became welded together and new highways gathered the produce of the interior and facilitated its conveyance to the coast, where there was, as yet, still no adequate port at Cape Town.

It will also be necessary to look at the desire of commerce and shipping for the construction of a port, and to a lesser extent, that of a harbour, and to review how subsequent municipal interest in city planning and the development of the foreshore promoted the improvement of the port itself.

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Acknowledgements:

- (1) Algemeen Rijksarchief (The Hague) Loupe Collectie No. 821 (Copy in Cape Archives as M 1/27); Cape Archives (Cape Town)
- (3) CO 145 No. 72 (5) Accession 263 No. 136 (11) M 1/345 (12) M 1/3263; Parliamentary Library (Cape Town) (8) Mendelssohn Collection No. 164 (xxx) Lt. P. Knyvett's Sketchbook Plate 30 (13) Mendelssohn Collection No. 272 W.J. Anderson "View of Cape Town"; Public Record Office (London) (6) S/P 50 CO 48/258 Sheet No. 24 (Copy in Cape Archives as M 1/2460 (9) MPG 558 CO [48/149] S/M 1836 Sheet No. 1 (Copy in Cape Archives as M 1/1753); Rust en Vreugd Gallery (Cape Town) (2)
- A. & Henry de Leth Nieuwe Kaart van de Zuyd Zee opgesteld door order van de Bewint-hebberen.../ Carte Nouvelle de la Mer du Sud dressée par ordre des principaux Directeurs..... (Amsterdam, undated); South African Library (Cape Town) (10) Henry Dempster "Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet" 1841 (14) Trustees of the S.A. Library; Books (4) W.W. Bird State of the Cape in 1822 (London, 1823) frontpiece, map (7) S. Smiles Lives of the Engineers... (London, 1862), II, p. 253.

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CHAPTER I

HARBOUR DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE 1825

"Harbours were required for two purposes: to shelter ships...and to provide ports for the landing and embarkation of cargo ...Such harbours might also be ports, but not necessarily so; some were needed in localities where there was little or no trade."

C. Singer et al. The History of Technology, IV, p. 464.

In order to understand the history of Table Bay from the formulation of the first comprehensive harbour and port construction plan of 1825 until the building of the harbour in 1860, it might perhaps be useful to give a short review of developments before 1825.

Regarding Table Bay as merely a convenient provision depot, the Dutch East India Company did not aspire to establish a commercial port at its Cape settlement. The initial development of the roadstead undertaken by the Company, that is, the construction of a wooden jetty near the rivulet bringing down fresh water from Table Mountain, resulted from a scheme which had been advanced as the blueprint for the settlement in 1649. Its purpose was to ensure the health of the sailors, who were obliged to wade through the surf in winter to replenish ships' water supplies¹.

1 C 409 I, p. 3: Remonstrantie...Janssen & Proot — Chamber Amsterdam, 26.7.1649
C 493 I, p.17: Van Riebeeck — Batavia, 13.5.1652.

After the completion of the wharf had ensured the health of crews and the Company's predominantly victualling concern had been satisfied by leading water on to the wharf in 1670, the Directors no longer found it necessary to consider building additional jetties at Table Bay. The small volume of trade conducted there would not have justified the expense of developing the facilities for the landing and loading of cargo ².

Despite its excellence as a provision depot, however, Table Bay was a dangerous anchorage, especially in winter, when storms and gales endangered the ships taking in water and supplies there. The open roadstead offered little shelter from the fury of the north-westerly storms for which the Cape was notorious. Strong gusts of wind broke the anchor cables, driving ships upon the Salt River beach, where they were pounded to pieces by the surf.

In June 1692, the Company lost two ships in this way. Five years later, the loss of the "Oosterlandt" and the "Weddinveen" prompted the Council of the East Indies to devise an effective way of ensuring the safety of the Eastern return flotillas ³.

One solution would have been to abandon Table Bay in winter and to divert return squadrons to the safer anchorage in False Bay. The Council of the East Indies advanced the proposal, but it failed to be carried out because the authorities at the Cape were strongly opposed to it. For its adoption would have entailed the abandonment of Table Bay, where improvements had begun in the previous year. The Cape government, therefore, discouraged the scheme by pretending that False Bay was very shallow, too rocky and by far too small to accommodate the entire return fleet. But False Bay had not even been completely surveyed, as only its westernmost bight had been charted. Accordingly, the report submitted to the Governor-General and the Council of the East Indies was based on partial information. It must be conceded, however, that the Cape government had some justification in discrediting False Bay. But the ostensible reason given by the Cape authorities for their opposition to the plan — that it would be difficult to grow sufficient vegetables there — was somewhat unduly magnified ⁴.

2 S.A. Argiefstukke (Knap) Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1670-80. (Cape Town, 1959), II, pp. 18-19; Minutes, 25.2.1670.

3 VO 12, pp. 811-15; journal (Dagregister), 5.6.1692; C 596, p. 142; journal, 24.5.1697.

4 C 423 IV, pp. 1125-26; copy, Batavia — Adm. & Commissioner Richon, 30.10.1697; S.A. Argiefstukke (Knap) Resolusies...1681-1707. (Cape Town, 1961), III, p. 536; Minutes, 10.3.1699.

The improvements, which the Cape government had effected at Table Bay in 1696 and 1697 were not very extensive. The attempt, which had been made in December 1696 to shield the anchorage by a rudimentary "breakwater", failed to shelter boats and small craft from the winter storms. The hull of an old frigate had been filled with stones and sunk off the jetty to constitute a primitive type of "breakwater". It perished in the winter storm of 1697, along with the skiffs and small craft, which it had been designed to shelter⁵. Subsequently, Simon van der Stel hoped that a safer anchorage would be found in the Salt River estuary, on the eastern shores of Table Bay. But this expectation was just as unrealistic as his former hope that large East Indianmen would find a secure winter haven behind an elementary "breakwater". The mouth of the river was too shallow and exposed to serve as a suitable harbour.

Despite these misfortunes, however, the Cape government remained interested in the prospect of sheltering shipping by means of a breakwater. While he was still the Director of Fortifications, Pieter Hoedt, the eminent military engineer and subsequently governor of the Cape, studied the possibility of forming some sort of breakwater at Table Bay. He calculated the probable cost of the work and was led to conclude that even were the project to be feasible in terms of engineering, the astronomical sum involved — estimated at approximately 7,000,000 louis d'or — would effectively prohibit its commencement.

Initially, the Dutch East India Company had not even thought of building a harbour at the Cape. But the high incidence of shipwreck at the unprotected anchorage ultimately convinced the Seventeen that a breakwater should be constructed. The Company had suffered serious disasters at Table Bay. In the winter of 1722, five ships had gone down, along with the 657 souls aboard them; six years later, another six vessels had gone to the bottom with 79 souls on board⁶.

5 Resolusies...1681-1707, III, p. 309; Minutes, 21.12.1696; C 596, pp. 140-51. I am thankful to Mr. David Rush for this information.

6 C 506, p. 87; W. van der Stel — Chamber Amsterdam, 18.3.1699; C 518 II, pp. 606-8; Hoedt — Chamber Middelburg, 11.5.1728; C 605, pp. 615-28; journal; 6-21.6.1722; C 607, pp. 128-56; journal, 7.6.-3.7.1728.

Accordingly, from 1725 to 1729, the Seventeen kept contemplating the advisability of constructing a breakwater at the Cape. But their ideas never materialised, since the Cape government was not instructed to undertake the work, but merely to signify their views on the possibility of adopting the project. The plan would not have been feasible because there was not sufficient capital and labour available at the settlement. The Cape authorities, therefore, persistently opposed the Seventeen's breakwater scheme, even after they had sent a diagram of the proposed work, which had recently been designed by ex-Admiral Michel Iantsheer, the Assistant Quartermaster to the Chamber of Zealand in Middelburg.

In his memorandum to the Directors, Iantsheer pointed out that a breakwater might be extended from a reef projecting from the Idon's Tail on the western shores of Table Bay. Built in a north-westerly direction, the breakwater would convert the anchorage into an artificial harbour and shelter the return fleets on which the Company's prosperity depended.

The exact location of the breakwater is not known because a map showing the spot is no longer extant. Iantsheer was, however, very well acquainted with the Cape because he had visited Table Bay as the Admiral of the return fleet⁷.

According to his plan, the breakwater should be formed of stone and run out from ten to twelve fathoms. Building material could be found on Idon's Hill. Blocks of stone might be carted down to the shore, loaded into old ships and taken to form a hulk breakwater in the middle of the Bay. A number of convicts were stationed on Robben Island; they might be used to construct the marine work. Additional convicts might be imported from the Company's possessions in the East Indies.

But Iantsheer's project failed to appeal to the Cape government. Even were the labour problem to be resolved by the mass importation of Asian convicts, the vast project would require considerable funds and take many years to complete. In addition, Iantsheer's intention to form the breakwater from old hulks failed to commend itself to the Cape authorities, who remembered the fate of Simon van der Stel's hulk breakwater of 1696.

7 C 440, pp. 577-78; Chamber Amsterdam — De Lafontaine, 28.9.1725; C 441, pp. 600-1; Chamber Amsterdam — Hooft, 28.8.1728; C 442, p. 308; Chamber Middelburg — Hooft, 21.5.1729; C 130, p. 411; copy, Iantsheer — Chamber Middelburg, [1729]; C 122, pp. 81-82; Instructie... — Iantsheer, Nov. 1719.

What guarantee was there that Lantsheer's hulk breakwater would not be washed away by the next winter storm?

The Cape government preferred the idea of building a breakwater, not on the hulk principle, but on the ' pierre perdu ' one. Instead of sinking old ships and hulks laden with stones and rubble to the bottom of the anchorage, would it not be wiser to begin a breakwater from the shore instead? Large stone blocks could be interspersed with small stone chips and the action of the waves would solidify the mass into a compact structure ⁸.

As the Cape government did not consider it advisable to state their objections to a scheme favoured by the Seventeen, a pretext was offered instead. Governor Jan De Lafontaine pretended that he could not locate the site of the proposed work on the Lantsheer map, which the Directors had despatched to the Cape. Yet only fourteen years later, a breakwater was actually built on the very reef, which the ex-Admiral had denoted on his map of 1729 ⁹.

In the meanwhile, however, shipping still remained without shelter in Table Bay, for the other methods, which the Seventeen had devised in 1729 to avert shipwreck, were practically useless.

Ships were instructed to bypass the Cape in winter and to sail to the East Indies direct. Only in cases of dire necessity were they to risk putting in at Table Bay during the season of winter storms. Even cargo for the Cape had to be despatched to reach Table Bay in summer.

But since some ships would still be compelled to touch at the Cape during the stormy season, in March 1729, the Directors devised a new anchoring instruction for this purpose.

The prospect of finding a safer winter anchorage occurred once more to the Company's Directors, especially since the possibility had just been outlined to them by Lantsheer, along with his Table Bay breakwater scheme. Accordingly, in 1729 the Cape authorities were instructed to study the practicability of establishing a permanent winter anchorage at either False Bay or at Saldanha Bay ¹⁰.

- 8 C 130, pp. 411-13; Chamber Middelburg — Noedt, 21.3.1729, Enclosure No. 1 & Enclosure "C"; C 800 No. 4, pp. 53-55; Swallengrebel — Commissioner Valckenier's questionnaire n.d. [c. January 1742]
- 9 C 519 II, pp. 46-47; De Lafontaine — Chamber Amsterdam, 24.1.1730; C 618, pp. 42-43; Journal, 4.2.1743.
- 10 C 442, pp. 309-11; C 130, pp. 437-38; Chamber Middelburg — Noedt, 21.3.1729, Enclosure "B"; C 130, pp. 413-14; Chamber Middelburg — Noedt, Enclosure No. 1.

It subsequently transpired, however, that bypassing the Cape in winter was particularly detrimental to the Company, since the unbroken voyages to the East Indies decimated the crews. The Seventeen were compelled to revoke the bypass order only two years after its introduction.

Wintering the return squadrons at a safer anchorage would not have been practicable. There was no fresh water at Saldanha Bay, while the ample supplies at False Bay could not have compensated for the difficulty of accommodating more than a part of the return fleet there.

Since bypassing the Cape and obtaining shelter from winter storms at an alternate anchorage had both proved impracticable, East Indiamen had no safety except the revised anchoring instruction issued by the Seventeen in 1731 ¹¹.

In May 1737, the worst winter storm in living memory struck Table Bay. Mountainous waves — whose extraordinary fury was subsequently ascribed to a submarine earthquake — destroyed almost the entire return fleet and cost the Company 208 employees ¹².

Alarmed by the destruction of eight ships and those aboard them, the Council of the East Indies revived the idea of sheltering the return squadrons at Saldanha Bay, a land-locked harbour. In October 1737, Governor-General Adriaen Valckenier directed the Cape to consider a plan devised by Jan Helmissen van Bergh, an enterprising mariner well acquainted with Saldanha Bay. The proposed construction of stone moorings at Saldanha Bay would, no doubt, have enhanced its value as a natural anchorage and facilitated both the entry and departure of ships, but the Cape government had doubts about the plan. For the Council of Policy knew that there was not sufficient water to supply the needs of return fleets at Saldanha Bay and it dismissed Van Bergh's somewhat visionary ideas for overcoming the shortage of water. Water could not have been obtained from mountains in the vicinity, as Van Bergh had assured them. Nor would it have been practicable to set up a number of rain-water tanks on top of the buildings, which Van Bergh proposed to build there because fleets could not have been expected to rely on rain-water alone.

11 C 443, pp. 282-84; Chamber Amsterdam — De Lafontaine, 9.4.1731; C 24, pp. 306-7, 318 & 320; Minutes, 27.12.1729 citing Müller & De Heere Report — De Lafontaine, 18.12.1729; C 334, pp. 341-42; copy, Chamber Amsterdam — De Lafontaine, 31.3.1731.

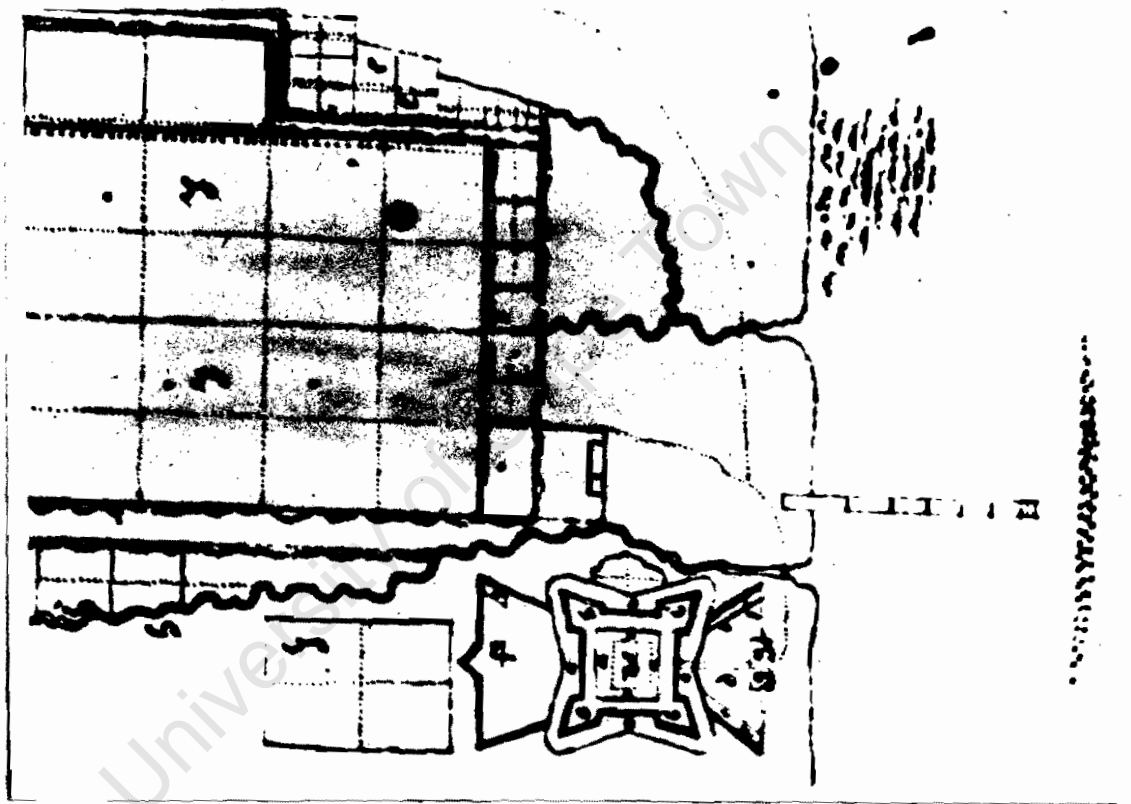
12 C 609, pp. 699 & 715; journal, 21.5.-1.6.1737; J.P.I. Du Bois Vies des Gouverneurs Généraux... (The Hague, 1763, 1st. ed.), p. 308.

Growing vegetables under irrigation would also have been costly, as this would have necessitated building numerous water-pipes and a good highway to facilitate the transport of stores and equipment to the projected establishment and anchorage at Saldanha Bay ¹³.

The 1737 shipwrecks caused the Directors grave concern. Cargo valued at 2,000,000 florijn had sunk to the bottom of Table Bay. Even the salvaged Eastern textiles failed to offset the loss, since their ruinous state had fetched a low price on the European market. This reduced the profits of a Company, which was already losing its monopoly of the Eastern trade to English and French competition, especially in the South-East Asian carrying trade. The Company's prosperity declined and its dividends fell sharply — from an average of 37% in the decade 1722;1732 to just 25% after 1732. Economy became ^{in C} the main preoccupation of the Dutch East India Company, particularly after yet another potentially profitable return fleet — that of 1739 — had been lost at sea with all its cargo aboard. Stringent saving and radical reform became necessary; in March 1741, a programme was inaugurated to save ships, profits and consignments. Governor-General Valkenier and the Council of the East Indies were approached for practical suggestions in this regard ¹⁴.

In November 1741, the Seventeen eagerly adopted the suggestions of Governor-General Van Imhoff and the Council of the East Indies for saving the homeward squadrons, with their valuable cargoes, from wreck and damage on route to Europe. Baron van Imhoff's plan was simple. Return flotillas should leave earlier for Europe, thereby avoiding the summer monsoons in the Indian Ocean. The Directors also adopted Van Imhoff's plan to make Table Bay a safe harbour by means of a breakwater. This would promote the security already given to ships arriving in winter by using the third anchor advocated by Gustaaf van Imhoff ¹⁵. The Directors had long been considering the advantages of a harbour of refuge at the Cape. After the 1737 calamity, the Chamber of Enckhuijsen had again reviewed the possibility of wintering the return fleets at some safe inlet along the South African coast. What impressed the Directors most, however, were Baron van Imhoff's assurances that the entire programme could be carried.

- 13 C 446, p. 27: Valkenier — De Lafontaine & Van Kerval, 31.10.1737; C 355, pp.10-13: Van Bergh — Van Hengel, 23.1.1738; C 30 II, pp. 577: Minutes, 29.4.1738.
- 14 O.P. Mentzel The Cape in the Mid-Eighteenth Century... (Cape Town, 1920 2nd. ed VRS No. 2), p. 104; O. Hintrager Geschichte von Südafrika (Münich, 1952, 1st. ed.) p. 71; C 447, pp. 595 & 601-2: Chamber Amsterdam — Batavia, 15.3.1741
- 15 C 710, p. 155: Van Imhoff — Chamber Amsterdam, 25.2.1743; Du Bois Vies...Appd pp. 8-10: Van Imhoff — Chamber Amsterdam, 24.11.1741.



THE WOODEN JETTY NEAR THE VERSERIVIER 1656

out cheaply, quickly and easily¹⁶.

The second attempt made by the Dutch East India Company to construct a breakwater, or rudimentary harbour, at Table Bay was, unfortunately, no more successful than the first venture of 1725 to 1729. For the prospective breakwater, which was to project 2160 feet into the sea and built by slaves and convicts — the entire undertaking being financed by a special levy, the so-called 'Mouljegeld' — failed to reach completion. It had to be abandoned after reaching 351 feet — a mere fraction of the intended length¹⁷.

It became increasingly clear that the Cape government had been justified in fearing that there would not be sufficient labour to complete the project. When work started on the breakwater in February 1743, there was, moreover, even less labour than usual because the slave population had been reduced by the jaundice epidemic, which had been raging for years. Governor-General Van Imhoff strove to augment the dwindling supply of labour by sending a large number of convicts from the Dutch East Indies; they were to take the place of the Cape slaves and to replace those whom the Cape authorities had failed to obtain from the island of Madagascar. The arrival of the Batavian convicts, however, did not resolve the labour problem, but merely alleviated it. Most of the Asian convicts, who had been exiled to build the breakwater at the Cape, did not labour there for long; they soon succumbed to the epidemic ravaging among the local slaves¹⁸.

There were other difficulties besides the lack of labour. Although the Directors had permitted the Quartermaster, Jacobus Müller, to construct the simpler type of breakwater which he preferred to the archaic one advocated by ex-Admiral Iantcheer in 1729, it soon transpired that Müller was not very proficient in directing the enterprise. For he had not built such a structure before, nor had he even seen a breakwater on which to model the Cape one¹⁹.

16 C 446, pp. 302-3: Chamber Broekhuijsen — Van Karvel, 18.12.1737; VC 95 No. 2 p. 3: copy, W. Cloppenburg Generale Saamervoeging... [Diary] (from original in Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, Kol. Aanw. No. 242).

17 C 710 Appendix No. 2: Report... — Van Imhoff, 31.1.1743; C 35, pp. 127-28: Minutes, 14.2.1743; C 618, p. 42: journal, 4.2.1743; C 364, pp. 61-62: Breakwater Supervisors — Swallengrebel, 6.2.1747. Mouljegeld = Breakwater tax.

18 C 616, p. 469: journal, 31.11.1740; C 449, pp. 6-7: Van Imhoff — Swallengrebel, 15. 10.1743; C 36, p. 367: Minutes, 15.9.1744.

19 C 720, p. 16: summary, Chamber Amsterdam — Swallengrebel, 21.4.1742 (original lost); C 800, p. 34; VC 156 A No. 1, p.2: Swallengrebel — Rademacher, 9.3.1746 (original in Alg. Rijksarchief, Kol. Aanw. No. 111.)

It was no wonder, therefore, that the structure, which he had commenced in February 1743 (during Baron van Imhoff's stay at the Cape), failed to withstand the onslaught of the north-westerly storms. Lacking adequate skill, Miller had failed to build a strong breakwater; he had made it a mere 100 feet wide at its base and 24 feet across the top.

After the next winter storms had conclusively demonstrated Miller's lamentable lack of technical skill, when a large portion of the breakwater had been washed away, the Cape burghers became convinced of the folly of continuing the work, for which they were, moreover, compelled to pay the detested 'Moulijegeld'. Why should they continue to pay breakwater taxes if the entire work would, in all probability, be further reduced by the next winter storms? The dwindling labour supply would soon make the project futile in any event. In March 1745, the burghers asked the Seventeen to abolish the breakwater tax and, tacitly of course, to abandon the entire breakwater venture as well ²⁰.

Even prior to the adoption of Governor-General Van Imhoff's 'pet moulijeproject', governor Hendrik Swallengrebel had gloomy pronouncements about the outcome. He foresaw that should the breakwater not be built sturdily enough to withstand the winter seas, its resultant displacement would ruin the value of the anchorage.

Without a good roadstead, the Cape settlement would lose its reason for existence. Or as the governor put it: "... want de Rhede bedorven Zijnde, is 't niet deese plaats gedaen" ²¹.

The displacement of the breakwater in 1744 confirmed Swallengrebel's prediction and he consequently resolved to transfer the remains of the labour force from the breakwater to the fortification works instead. Very little progress was being made at the breakwater anyway, and in view of the recent Dutch involvement in the War of the Austrian Succession, the governor considered it advisable to fortify the Cape against any potential attack ²².

Pending the arrival of additional convicts from the East, the Cape authorities nevertheless persevered with the breakwater project. The structure was almost doubled in width — from 24 to 40 feet across the top — but the effort to make it enduring was not successful.

20 BRD 12, p. 221: copy, Burgher petition — Chamber Middelburg [23.3.1745]; C 37, p. 133: Minutes, 23.3.1745.

21 VC 156 A No. 1, p.5

22 VC 156 A No. 1, pp. 2-3; C 800, p. 35, p. 367.

By 1747 there was very little labour left to sustain the herculean task. The majority of Cape slaves had succumbed to the epidemic, which had also killed the Asian convicts who had not yet died from overwork on the breakwater. The arduous haulage of stores and heavy equipment over primitive roads to the False Bay establishment had so reduced the number of transport-oxen that it was no longer possible to cart building material to the work site. On 5th September, 1747, therefore, construction was suspended on the orders of the governor and the Council of Policy ²³.

Governor-General Van Dohoff, however, persisted in his favourite project for sheltering Table Bay. Undaunted, he sent Commissioner Daniel Nolthenius to report on the state of affairs at the Cape. Nolthenius did not endorse the suspension of the work officially, but he tacitly approved of the Cape decision because he realized the almost insuperable difficulties of resuming the scheme. The construction of an additional 1810 feet would not only have increased the expenditure, but would, moreover, have taken years to finish, in view of the four years which it had taken to complete a mere 351 feet. Food, materials and equipment alone had amounted to 11,904-18-8 florijn and upon its eventual completion, the breakwater would have cost the Company a fortune, for the insufficiency of local labour could only have been remedied by the importation of expensive, free labour from the Netherlands. Obtaining additional slaves from Madagascar was out of the question because the Cape government did not possess a suitable vessel to fetch them from the island ²⁴.

In view of these conditions, Commissioner Nolthenius advised the conversion of the incomplete breakwater into a battery, so that some benefit could at least be derived from the many years of labour. The Directors accepted his proposal, but nothing came of it. The War of the Austrian Succession ended in 1748 and the crumbling breakwater could not have been expected to bear the weight of heavy ^S cannonry ²⁵.

- 23 C 529, p. 576: Swellengrebel — Batavia, 13.5.1744; C 449, p. 705: Batavia — Swellengrebel, 31.12.1744; C 363, p. 75: Breakwater Supervisors — Swellengrebel, 25.2.1746; C 364, pp. 623-24: Breakwater Supervisors — Swellengrebel / 1.9.1747 7; C 39, pp. 229-30: Minutes, 5.9.1747.
- 24 VC 36, pp. 729-30: copy, Nolthenius — Swellengrebel, 2.4.1748 & pp. 734, citing pp. 791-93: copy, Report of marine experts — Nolthenius, 10.2.1748; C 454, pp. 573-74: Batavia — Tulbagh, 15.10.1754.
- 25 VC 36, pp. 757-59: copy, Nolthenius — Swellengrebel, 2.4.1748; C 453, pp. 34-35: Chamber Amsterdam — Tulbagh, 8.10.1751; C 53: Tulbagh — Chamber Middelburg, 19.2.1752.

The Company, however, was not happy about wintering its ships at the False Bay establishment, where the advantages of a safer anchorage were outweighed by the high cost of maintaining the naval stores, hospital and fortifications. The cost induced the Directors to reconsider the advantages of resuming the construction of the breakwater at Table Bay. It had deteriorated to such an extent that, by 1757, ships were again being lost there ²⁶. In 1762, the Seventeen sent their agent, Willem Cloppenburg, the newly-appointed Independent Fiscal, to study its possible resumption.

But he evinced no more enthusiasm about reviving the now practically defunct work than Commissioner Moltethius had done in 1748. Indeed, Cloppenburg regarded the breakwater venture as having been folly from the very outset. He maintained that it would be highly inadvisable to resume building a structure, which would, in all probability, silt up the anchorage and thus "... binnen korte Jaaren de Baaij onbruikbaar soude maken" ²⁷.

It was on the grounds of this gloomy report that the Seventeen ultimately acquiesced in abandoning the hope of harbouring their ships by a breakwater at the Cape.

The British occupation might have resulted in the improvement of Table Bay, for Major-General Sir James Craig immediately realized the urgency of improving the strategically vital half-way station to the East.

Accordingly, in December 1795, Sir James Craig was already contemplating the considerable benefits of constructing a larger and more durable quay. The only landing-place in existence was an old, rickety wharf, the bequest of the Dutch East India Company. It was in so ruinous a state that substantial sums were required annually for its upkeep. The construction of a new landing-place would undoubtedly have promoted economy, besides providing vastly improved facilities for the needs of the Royal Navy.

As an alternative to the contemplated stone pier, Sir James Craig considered the possibility of replacing the old jetty by a new timber wharf. It must be admitted that £2,000 would not have been an excessive outlay, but Craig recommended postponing the plan.

²⁶ Anonymous Blagve Algemene Beschryving van de Kaap (Amsterdam, 1777, 1st ed.), I, p. 40; C 720, p. 69; copy, Minutes, 10.7.1757.

²⁷ VC 95, pp. 1, 3 & 4.

for His Majesty's Government had certain reservations about the advisability of investing in public works at the Cape. The political future of the captured possession was still uncertain and it was highly likely that the Cape might soon revert to the Dutch. The old jetty was patched up in consequence and made to last a few years longer, pending clarification about the British retention or cession of the Cape of Good Hope ²⁸.

Similarly, in 1796, a proposal had been advanced for establishing a first class port on the shores of Cape Town, where men-o'-war and East Indianmen might be repaired and refitted for their long voyages. But the high estimate of the cost involved induced the Cabinet to defer the proposal until the end of the war ²⁹.

In December 1799, the arrival of the new governor, Sir George Yonge, a former Treasury official, led to a relaxation of the policy of strict economy which had been rigorously enforced in the early part of the European war. Conscious of the need for improved port facilities, Sir George Yonge planned to have a larger landing-place built for the Bay. To pay for the work, he devised the expedient of applying the British public works policy to the Cape. For just as travellers paid tolls to maintain the British highways in repair, so shipping using Table Bay, Sir George realized, should contribute towards the upkeep of the present jetty and the eventual construction of a new and larger wharf. In February 1800, a tonnage duty was imposed on ships using the anchorage at Table Bay.

But by September 1809, the greater part of the tonnage revenues had been expended in maintaining the old jetty, so that inadequate funds remained to pay for the new, enlarged landing-place planned by Governor Yonge ³⁰. As the old wharf continued to decay, Lord Caledon, new governor of the Cape, had the precise state of deterioration investigated. Louis Tribault, who was then Inspector of Civil Buildings, reported that the jetty was "... in so ruinous a state, that it is to be feared, a storm will destroy the same entirely, or at least partly, because all the Piles thereof are worm-eaten" ³¹.

- 28 BO 48, pp. 80-81: copy, Craig — Dundas (later Lord Melville), 27.12.1795; BO 34, p. 266: Inspector of Public Buildings — Macartney, 25.9.1798.
- 29 BO 85 (unnumbered pages): copy, Sketches of the Political and Commercial History of the Cape... (original MSS No. 1472, Foreign & Commonwealth Office Library, London); J. Barrow An Account of Travels... in... 1797 and 1798 (London, 1801, 1st ed.), II, p. 254.
- 30 Lady Anne Barnard Papers No. 24: Lady Anne — Dundas, 5.1.1800, pp. 8-9; Barrow, Travels II, pp. 256; BO 62, pp. 289-90: Proclamation (Yonge), 14.2.1800; PC 10/1 gives tonnage dues collected, 1806-Sept. 1809 as Rls. 14535.
- 31 CO 19 (unnumbered pages): Inspector of Civil Buildings — Caledon, 20.5.1809, pp. 1-2.

Resolving that something would have to be done, but conscious, on the other hand, of the lack of funds for financing such indispensable public works as a new wharf and water leadings for Cape Town, Earl Caledon could see no other way of financing these projects except by inflationary paper finance. In October 1809, he issued half a million Rixdollars and established the special Public Works Fund. As a result, he sent the Deputy Government Secretary, Major Christopher Bird to London, where he was instructed to have a new plan for the timber pier and the Cape Town waterworks prepared by a competent civil engineer. Major Bird contacted the doyen of British engineering, John Rennie, who had been building and preparing harbour plans for the ports and harbours of Britain since 1793³². John Rennie was a precise and methodical craftsman, who "... considered it his duty himself to go into the minutest details of every business on which he was consulted", and since Major Bird did not stay long in London and had little time at his disposal for negotiating with a detail-loving engineer, he failed to provide Rennie with sufficient information about the nature of Table Bay to enable the great engineer to compile a plan for a new timber wharf³³.

With the collapse of the new wooden wharf scheme in 1810, Lord Caledon contemplated the alternative of filling the interstices of the old jetty with stones and thereby make it last a little while longer. The Civil Engineer, however, discounted this proposal just as he had previously dismissed the possibilities of building a stone pier and enclosing Rogge Bay for a fishing harbour. For Thibault realized that these ventures would entail enormous expenditure; filling the old jetty with stones between the rotten pile-work would have involved quarrying 11,830 blocks of stone and transporting them to the site. Consequently, Thibault advised the Earl of Caledon to refer the proposal to specialists in marine engineering³⁴.

- 32 GH 23/2, pp. 79, 81-83 & 87: Caledon — Castlereagh, unnumbered despatch, 12.10.1809; GH 34/3, p. 155: Caledon — Deputy Government Secretary, 11.11.1809; C.T.G. Boucher John Rennie 1761-1821: the Life and Work of a Great Engineer (Manchester, 1963, 1st ed.), p. 17.
- 33 S. Smiles Lives of the Great Engineers... (London, 1862, 1st ed.), II, p. 280; G.M. Theal (ed.) Records of the Cape Colony from May, 1809 to March, 1811... (London, 1900, 1st ed.), VII, p. 427; copy, Deputy Government Secretary — Rennie, 20.11.1810; CO 4362 (unnumbered pages); Rennie — Barrow, 25.6.1810.
- 34 CO 4828, p. 1: Government Secretary — Inspector of Government Buildings, 24.2.1810; CO 27, pp. 3-5: Inspector of Public Buildings — Government Secretary, 28.2.1810.

The growth of trade made it increasingly difficult to handle cargo at the sole landing-place found at the main "port" of the Cape colony. By 1815, the annual trade tonnage of shipping had almost doubled to 15,291 tons, in comparison with 8,892 tons in 1813.

This made it imperative to improve port facilities. The cramped and tottering old wharf was inconveniencing cargo operations to such an extent that the Deputy Port Captain, William Bridekirk, suggested that at least some official, or wharfinger, should be stationed at the jetty. He could supervise trading activities, expedite landing and loading, as well as collect the small levies, which Captain Bridekirk wanted to impose on cargo and the water casks filled from the pipes, which had recently been installed on the jetty ³⁵.

Although financial stringency precluded the adoption of the plan in 1815, by 1818, however, the doubling of the annual trade tonnage figure to 30,775 tons, made it necessary to repair the old wharf and to "... provide for building a new pier ... on a larger scale and more durable than the present...", as James Callendar, an ex-forestry official, pointed out to the Cape government in advancing a proposal for a new stone pier in March 1818 ³⁶. He intended to tax cargoes, ships and lighters as a means for repairing the old jetty and accumulating funds for building a new stone pier.

As Callendar's scheme was almost identical to the one suggested by the Deputy Port Captain three years ago, Lord Somerset relented and in April 1819, wharfage dues were imposed on shipping using Table Bay and Henry Rivers was appointed wharfinger. Although Lord Somerset directed the old jetty to be repaired, a new stone pier was not constructed because of the high cost of such a work ³⁷.

- 35 PC 10/1: Trade Tonnage abstracts, Table Bay, 1813 & 1815; CO 72 No. 11: Deputy Port Captain — Government Secretary, 22.4.1815, pp. 1-2.
- 36 CO 5716 Schedule 136 No. 12: Government resolution, 25.4.1815; PC 10/1: trade tonnage abstract, Table Bay, 1818; CO 92 No. 6; Callendar — Government Secretary, 10.3.1818, p. 1; Kimberley Public Library: Lord Macartney's Letterbook No. 56; H. Ross — Lord Glenburnie, n.d., p. 7.
- 37 CO 92 No. 6, p. 2 & Enclosure, p. 1; CO 5818: Proclamation & Public Advertisement, 1.4.1819; CO 4841, p. 200; Government Secretary — Comptroller of Customs, 1.4.1819; CO 92 No. 40 & Enclosure: Christola — Government Secretary, 11.11.1818.

In February, 1821, the Cape government observed that due to the lack of funds and "... the improbability of a more permanent wharf being erected here for some time to come...", it would be better to defer the stone pier project and to keep on repairing the old wharf instead; since the financial position failed to improve, by 1823, the authorities had abandoned all intentions of constructing a stone pier for commerce and shipping, which were compelled to manage as best as they could, without the prospect of obtaining a larger landing-place, not to speak of more elaborate facilities at the main "port" of the Cape ³⁸.

Despite postponements, however, the needs of shipping, particularly those of the English East India Company, for the provision of some rudimentary facilities for repairing ships at Table Bay, made it necessary to establish such facilities as soon as possible.

In December 1821, one of the ex-Commanders of the English East India Company's ships, John Marshall, hoped that the Cape government would eagerly welcome his invention of a floating-dock and immediately adopt the scheme. But despite his assurances that a pontoon, or floating, dock would be considerably cheaper to build than the expensive dry-dock generally in use, his proposal had to be dismissed on the grounds of expense.

In the same year, a similar proposal was put forward by John Osmond, who was well acquainted with ship-repair business, since under the Batavian Republic he had established the first private ship-repair yard in Simonstown. Although he consequently presented a cheaper modification of Marshall's plan, the Cape government considered the less expensive expedient as being beyond its means ³⁹.

In August 1822, perturbed by the lack of ship-repair facilities that had made Cape Town notorious in the international shipping world, Messrs. Nisbet & Dickson, Lloyds' agents and representatives of British shipping interests to the East, asked the Cape government for permission to build a ship-repair yard at Rogge Bay ⁴⁰.

38 CO 5720 Schedule 54 No. 2: Government resolution, 6.2.1821; GH 23/7, p. 75: Somerset — Bathurst, 17.6.1823.

39 J. Marshall Description of a machine denominated the Lifting Dock... (Cape Town, 1821, 1st ed.), pp. 4, 6 & 13-14; J. Holman A Voyage Round the World... (London, 1834, 1st ed.), II, p. 107; CO 145 No. 74: Osmond — Government Secretary, 5.12.1821.

40 BRD 59 No. 774: Messrs. Nisbet & Dickson — Burgher Senate, 2.8.1822.

TABLE BAY BREAKWATER 1743-47

University of Cape Town

Although their request was refused for fear that the site of the proposed ship-repair yard, almost next to the jetty, would interfere with the landing and loading of cargo, the Cape government had by this time considered the merits of establishing ship-repair facilities at Table Bay as a consequence of the great ship-wreck, which had occurred in the winter of 1822. On 20th July, an unusually severe storm hit Table Bay and wreaked havoc throughout the colony; it sunk the "Royal George", "Adriatic" and a coaster. On the second day, the continuing storm stranded three brigs — "Olive Branch", "Sun" and the "Lavinia" — and drove the "Leander" upon the rocks ⁴¹. Thus, when the firm of Alton & Montearth, specially founded after the 1822 storms, asked for permission to extend the scope of their operations by establishing regular ship-repair works, their petition was readily granted. The firm had agreed to site their marine yard away from the wharf and to build it on the foreshore between Rogge Bay and Muntingh's Whalefishery at the end of Bree Street ⁴².

The great winter gales of 1822 also prompted the Comptroller of Customs, William Wilberforce Bird, to advance a design for affording some security to the anchorage, where there was no shelter from the violence of north-westerly gales. Bird thought of running out a long breakwater — 1½ miles in extent — to protect shipping. The 1,000,000 Rixdollar project, Bird believed, could be financed from local revenue, or alternatively by doubling the wharfage dues and imposing port fees. Work would be carried out by convict labour, using a miniature railway for conveying stones from the Lion's Hill quarries to the site near the Chavonnes Battery on the western shores of Table Bay; the area thus excavated, could be turned into the site for the future Green Point reservoir ⁴³.

- 41 CO 171 No. 29: Deputy Port Captain — Government Secretary, 21.7.1822, p. 5 & Deputy Port Captain — Government Secretary 22.7.1822, p. 1.
- 42 CO 178A No. 36: Burgher Senate — Government Secretary, 20.11.1822, pp. 1-2; CO 166 No. 76: Messrs. Alton & Montearth — Government Secretary, 30.9.1822, pp. 1-2; CO 4847, p. 413: Government Secretary — Messrs. Alton & Montearth, 23.1.1823.
- 43 W.W. Bird State of the Cape in 1822 (London, 1823, 1st ed.), pp. 132-33; "S.A. Commercial Advertiser", 5.5.1824.

Although the projected breakwater would undoubtedly have improved the safety of shipping, it could not have been used as a quay and hence failed to appeal to mercantile interests in Cape Town, who were calling for additional wharfage accommodation ⁴⁴.

Nor did Bird's plan endear itself to the Cape government. After the 1822 storms, the authorities had embarked upon a policy of promoting the safety of the roadstead by improving navigational aids leading to the construction of the first South African lighthouse at Green Point. As might have been expected, the lighthouse did not prevent vessels from running aground. During the comparatively mild north-westerley storm in the winter of 1824, ships again ran aground, the new lighthouse notwithstanding. The danger of his own trading-schooner, the "Laura", becoming beached on Woodstock beach, convinced Captain Robert Knox that the safety of Table Bay should really be improved; for it was, in his own words "... the most dangerous loading and delivery Port, and anchorage in the World" ⁴⁵.

Traders like Captain Knox had long despaired of the government ever undertaking the construction of the new stone landing-place, which it had been considering and postponing for years. Convinced, besides, that the Cape government would forever continue to patch up the old wharf after having abandoned the stone pier proposal in 1823, mercantile interests turned their thoughts towards the idea of having a modern port built at Cape Town. This would permit the landing and embarkation of goods in all seasons, besides, of course, saving vessels from foundering at the open anchorage. After the 1824 winter storms, the Cape Town mercantile and shipping community approached their colleague, Captain Robert Knox, about the possibilities of building both a port and a harbour at Table Bay. In 1825, Captain Knox, in response to their pleas and his own feelings about its advisability, formulated the first comprehensive port and harbour scheme for Cape Town ⁴⁶.

44 CO 235 No. 30, Enclosure No. 2: Knox — Woodall, 24.11.1824, pp. 1-2; CC 2: Minutes, 3.7.1825.

45 CO 235 No. 60: Robert Knox, A Report on the Practicability, Necessity... of... a... Harbour in Table Bay — Government Secretary, 10.5.1825, p. 1; CO 235 No. 30, p. 2.

46 CO 235 No. 30, Enclosure No. 1: Knox — Somerset, 22.5.1825, p. 1.

CHAPTER II

PORT OR HARBOUR, 1825-1832?

"Save ships and money by a new seawall,
But for trade and shipping can do nothing at all?"

After the completion of his survey of the anchorage, Captain Knox presented to the Cape government the three different designs, which he had devised for the purpose of building a combined port, harbour and dockyard on the shores of Cape Town ¹.

Knox realized that if the anchorage were to be enclosed by only a single pier, ships would find it rather difficult to approach the old wharf to load and discharge cargo. Accordingly, he advocated that fully-equipped docks should be constructed instead. This would be the best way, he believed, to meet the persistent demands made by merchants, captains and shipowners for the provision of a larger and more durable landing-place than the old jetty. In order to provide more wharfage accommodation for cargo operations, Knox proposed building two stone piers from the vicinity of the Amsterdam and the Chavannes batteries respectively.

1 CO 235 No. 60: Knox — Government Secretary, 10.5.1825, pp. 1 & 6-9. Plan ABC between the Amsterdam and the Chavannes batteries; Plans EKG and CFG to form a port, harbour and dockyard between the Chavannes and the Mouille batteries.

The second stone pier would serve as a large and durable quay and obviate the obstacles hampering and retarding the transit of trade at the cramped, old jetty near the Castle.

The conveyance of merchandise between ship and shore was made difficult and time-consuming by the need to trundle heavy and cumbersome goods along a rickety landing-place tottering on its supports. Considerable delay was also caused by the need to hoist and lower cargo by an insecure crane attached to the opposite side of the wharf, lest the balance of the precarious structure be upset forever. African porters then bore goods through the surf to the lighters, which conveyed it to ships riding at anchor far out in the Bay.

Captain Robert Knox was a trader, marine surveyor and an amateur civil engineer of considerable talent, who understood these problems and planned their solution. He intended to dispense with the porters; this would accelerate the movement of cargo and put an end to the damage caused by this means of transportation. Henceforth, goods would be transferred from the proposed stone wharf directly into the ships awaiting alongside it. Greater safety would also be provided to merchant ships because they would be protected within the basin, or dock, to be formed by the two stone piers. Tethered in tiers and moored next to each other, merchantmen would no longer have to fear storms and gales, particularly since they would also be moored to attachments sunk at the bottom of the anchorage. In this way, Knox maintained the formation of docks at Cape Town would reduce the considerable delay and inconvenience impeding the conduct of marine business. In addition to these advantages, the second stone quay would be wide enough wide to permit two carts to convey cargo along it at the same time².

A man of considerable enterprise and vision, Captain Knox intended to provide adequate accommodation not only for conventional sailing ships, but also for the growing number of paddle steamers appearing on the world's shipping lanes.

More steamers were plying between Great Britain and India and putting in at Cape Town for water, provisions and, not infrequently, for repairs. It was only six months after the presentation of Knox's harbour and port scheme that the first paddle steamer — appropriately named the "Enterprise" — arrived at Table Bay on 15th October, 1825.

2 CO 295 No. 60, pp. 5-8.

Ship-repair facilities were still in their infancy and Captain Knox, therefore, turned his practical mind to having all vessels, from merchantmen to warships, repaired at Table Bay; they were to be refitted on the pontoon-dock, which he had especially invented for this purpose. Since he envisaged that all shipping would be repaired at Table Bay in future, Knox believed that the naval base at Simonstown would become redundant as soon as the Royal Navy had realized the considerable advantages of repairing warships at the capital. For the Admiralty had, after all, only established a naval base on the False Bay coast because of the dangerous, unsheltered nature of the Cape Town anchorage.

The cost of constructing a dockyard, port and haven at Rogge Bay would, no doubt, be formidable. Against this disadvantage, however, Knox maintained that it would be cheaper to carry out the scheme at Table Bay than had been the case at either Ramsgate or Plymouth Sound. For at Cape Town, building material was located virtually at the construction site itself. This would exclude the additional cost of quarrying stones far inland and transporting them to building sites on the coast.

To reduce expenses, Knox advocated the use of cheap convict labour. Convicts could easily be housed in the Amsterdam battery, which was almost next to the proposed building site³.

Although he fully appreciated the need for economy, Knox did not believe that saving should be seen as the ultimate consideration — the scope of his plan was at stake. For even were his provisional estimate of the cost of the immense project — £52,000 — subsequently to be doubled in practice, "... it would still be trivial, compared with the magnitude of the work, and the utility of the Mole [harbour] thus constructed"⁴.

Nevertheless, the high estimate of the cost made him somewhat apprehensive about the prospect of his venture being adopted by the Cape government. Lest Lord Charles Somerset should dismiss it on account of the expense alone, Knox took particular care to emphasize that the authorities could, in that event, undertake one of the other plans, which he

3 CO 295 No. 60, pp. 2 & 7-10 & 12; J.S. de IJm "Het Stoomvaartuigdeselfs Beschryving..." (Cape Town, 1825), p. 7.

4 CO 295 No. 60, p. 16.

had designed for constructing a combined port, harbour and dockyard — at a substantial saving of almost £11,000.

The question of whether the Cape government would adopt either his favourite plan, or indeed any of the less expensive designs, would depend upon the views of the Imperial Government. But Knox was not fully informed about the acute need for economy animating the Imperial Government; nor did he know of the careful saving impressed upon the general administration of the Cape colony. He was convinced that the British Government would adopt his plan and build the immense public work at Table Bay. For was not the Imperial Government currently engaged in extending ports and improving harbours throughout the realm, as evidenced at Plymouth, London and Ramsgate for instance? Was it not more than likely, therefore, that the Imperial Government would not only approve, but also help to carry out a similar scheme at the Cape and grant a loan of approximately £50,000 to make this possible?

Anticipating an Imperial grant, Captain Knox calculated that interest on the forthcoming loan could be paid off by levying port and harbour dues, as the new port could be expected to attract considerable shipping, which would easily defray the payment of interest.

The scope of Knox's plan appealed to the governor, Lord Charles Somerset. For it promised to render Table Bay more attractive to the ships which gave it a wide berth on account of its dangerous anchorage. Besides, Knox had indicated a novel way to resolve the acute shortage of labour for public works. The importation of convicts from Great Britain would permit the commencement of large-scale public utilities at the Cape colony by means of British labour and the financial assistance of the Imperial Government — an almost ideal remedy for the benefit of the Cape colony. It was not surprising, therefore, that Lord Somerset wrote to London with considerable enthusiasm and requested that some of the convicts intended for Australia should be sent to the Cape instead ⁵.

But unlike Lord Somerset, the Admiralty was not disposed to show the same degree of enthusiasm about the anticipated benefits of adopting Captain Knox's dockyard and port proposal. Neither Viscount Melville nor Admiral Sir George Cockburn approved of Knox's plan for removing the Cape naval base from False Bay to Table Bay.

5 CO 235 No. 60, pp. 17-19; GH 23/7, pp. 280-81: copy, Somerset — Bathurst No. 174, 8.6.1825.

Lord Melville was convinced that the anchorage at Simonstown was excellent and safe for ships of the Royal Navy; Admiral Cockburn doubted whether Table Bay could ever be turned into a safe roadstead and a secure dockyard. Despite Captain Knox's assertions to the contrary, the memory of the disastrous wreck of "H.M.S. Sceptre" in 1799 was still haunting the Admiral. Sir George Cockburn, therefore, advised that should it really be deemed wise to shift the dockyard nearer to the capital, on no account should Table Bay be selected for the new site. For Hout Bay would be far more desirable, as it could, in his opinion, easily be converted into an excellent naval station. A lot of money would be needed to build the dockyard, port and harbour envisaged by Knox at Rogge Bay; establishing the works at Hout Bay, however, could be carried out at less expense. For it would, Admiral Cockburn believed, only entail the expense of constructing an excellent highway between Hout Bay and Cape Town.

Sir George Cockburn did not mention the cost of building the extensive dock installations, jetties and wharves, which would be required to convert the open roadstead at Hout Bay into a fully-equipped naval base suitable for the use of His Majesty's Navy at the Cape of Good Hope. The considerable expenditure involved would surely have exceeded the cost of building a good road between Hout Bay and the capital. It would probably have been more expensive to construct a dockyard at Hout Bay than to build one at Table Bay in accordance with Captain Knox's design. For at Cape Town there was at least a jetty in existence, worn-eaten and ramshackle though it undoubtedly was. But Hout Bay did not possess a single port facility.

After the Napoleonic Wars, economy became a matter of paramount concern to the British Government. Times were hard in Great Britain and they were not much better at the Cape. After 1820, the colony was plagued by a general depression. It prevailed until about 1855, after which the substantial quantity of wool exported via Table Bay and Algoa Bay ultimately stimulated trade and revived prosperity. As regarded Table Bay, the worst years of the depression lasted from about 1823 until 1827⁶.

6 Public Record Office (London) CO 48/73 No. 6166; copy, Melville — Bathurst No. 3863 Cape, 14.8.1825, p. 2 & Enclosure No. 1; Admiral Cockburn — Melville, n.d. [c. 8.8.1825], p. "I".

But in the early 1820's conditions were very bleak. The depression ravaged agriculture, the main sector of the economy. Droughts reduced cereal harvests, whilst rust blighted the wheat fields. In comparison with 193,435 muids of wheat which had been harvested in 1820, wheat production fell to 99,435 muids by the following year and declined to a mere 84,108 muids by the year thereafter.

Nor did the alternate Cape export-canner — wine — fare very much better. In 1817, 1,383,800 gallons had been exported, but by 1820, however, wine exports amounted to a mere 659,500 gallons. Although wine exports subsequently increased and reached 1,097,784 gallons in 1822, they kept fluctuating around the 1,000,000 gallon mark until 1827; only then did the volume of Cape wines exported via Table Bay ultimately approximate the 1,500,000 gallon mark.

The death of Napoleon virtually closed the lucrative St. Helena market to Cape commerce. Although no statistics of Cape wines exported to St. Helena are available, the generally languishing state of trade is indicated by the estimates of Cape exports given in monetary terms. Thus, in 1820, the Cape colony had exported an estimated value of 330,431 Rixdollars (Rixthalers) of produce to the island. In the year after the Emperor's death, however, the value of Cape exports declined to an estimated Rix. 187,742 — or to almost a half. In the second year after Napoleon's death, the total value of Cape exports to the island of exile was estimated at only Rix. 117,336; this represented approximately a third of their value during his lifetime. Thereafter Cape wine exports, for example, were restricted to supplying the requirements of the English East India Company.

Due to the depression, fewer ships visited Table Bay. Hence from 1821 until 1828, the annual trade tonnage abstracts of shipping showed only slight variations from a depressive average. Thus, in 1823, 30,069 tons had been recorded, compared with a total trade tonnage of 32,556 tons in 1827. A study of annual trade tonnage abstracts clearly illustrates that from about 1823 until 1828, they remained in the 32,000 ton range. But there was an exception; in 1825 — the year of Captain Knox's harbour proposal — the trade tonnage of shipping visiting Cape Town had declined to a mere 25,738 tons — the very low-water mark of trade within a decade or so of depression at the Cape ⁷.

7 Great Britain, Commons: Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry upon the Trade of the Cape of Good Hope, the Navigation of the Coast and the Improvement of the Harbours of that Colony. (London, 1829), pp. 25, 39 & 45; WT (Winstaster) 18, Part V: Account of Cape Wine exported, 1812-22; CO 5969, pp. 188-89; Annual Cape Bluebook, 1827; PC 10/1: annual trade tonnage abstracts, Table Bay, 1821-28.

In view of the general recession and its trough in 1825, it is not surprising that the Imperial Government should have judged the moment for adopting Captain Knox's large-scale harbour project to be somewhat inopportune. There was little trade at Table Bay and the considerable expense involved would not have warranted elaborating trading facilities at a colony verging on the edge of insolvency.

Although, in 1825, the foreign trade of the Cape was neither extensive nor particularly sound, measures were currently being introduced in Great Britain to improve the Anglo-colonial commerce of exchanging British manufactures for colonial staples and foodstuffs. In 1825, the president of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, William Huskisson, introduced a series of important reforms to liberalize British trade with the colonies. His reforms granted the privileges of the Imperial bonded warehousing system to several of them. Most important of all, Huskisson's reforms permitted Canadian wheat to be imported into Great Britain free of duty. Despite the liberalisation of trade, however, Huskisson's reforms did not introduce free trade, as the Corn Laws were only to be repealed in 1848. But the reforms of 1825 heralded the policy of Imperial preference.

Somewhat understandably, perhaps, Huskisson's reforms were misinterpreted at the Cape as heralding the imminent era of free trade. Cape commercial opinion anticipated that its introduction would resolve most of their difficulties. For by 1825, the intensity of the corn (wheat) blight had passed. Indeed, in that year there were such good harvests that a surplus of 1,866,780 lbs. of wheat was exported from Cape Town in consequence⁸. Were free trade to be instituted at once, however, the entire British market might be opened to Cape wheat exports, free of duty. In addition, Cape Town merchants hoped that free trade would stimulate the export of wine and lead to the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the Eastern trade. Animated by enthusiasm and hope, in April 1825, Cape mercantile and shipping interests, organised in the Cape Town Commercial Exchange, decided to persuade the Imperial Government to introduce free trade immediately. The resultant campaign was conducted through the agency of the Cape of Good Hope Trade Society, which had been formed in London to inform Parliament and enlighten public opinion about the benefits of free trade to the Cape colony in general and the advantages of establishing a (duty) free port at Cape Town in particular.

8 H.E. Egerton A Short History of British Colonial Policy 1606-1909. (London, 1950, 12th ed.), p. 222; CO 5967, p. 174; Annual Cape Bluebook, 1825.

Accordingly, a deputation of Cape Town merchants went to interview Huskisson at the Board of Trade and to explore the happy prospect that the free trade recently granted to Canadian wheat might also be extended to Cape corn.

But the delegation from the Cape of Good Hope Trade Society, which saw Huskisson on 11th May, 1825, did not reap much success. The Cape merchants were informed that granting free trade to Cape wheat exports was no more feasible than removing all duties on Cape wines entering the British market. As regarded the proposed establishment of a duty free port at Cape Town, this was not acceptable, since the Imperial Government was not contemplating the advisability of turning Table Bay into a free resort for the benefit of other nations; this would not have harmonised with the general interests of the Empire. In view of the fact, however, that the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade had been compelled to decline most of the requests made by Cape commercial and shipping interests, Huskisson strove to remedy their most pressing grievances.

The extreme vicissitudes encountered by merchant shipping at the unsheltered anchorage in Table Bay were, of course, fully understood in London, especially since British trading interests had long lamented the limited security afforded in loading and discharging cargo. Huskisson, therefore, seized the opportunity provided by his consultation with the Cape Town merchants to study the likelihood of shielding shipping at Cape Town by means of a breakwater.

The project was immediately referred to the foremost harbour engineer of Great Britain, Sir John Rennie, who had planned and built many harbours⁹. It was also Sir John Rennie, whom the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty had consulted about the advisability of adopting Captain Knox's harbour and port scheme. For the Admiralty had sought his expert advice, in order to reach a conclusion about a plan, which they viewed with a certain amount of trepidation. The proposed relocation of the naval base to Table Bay had not appealed to the Admiralty. Having administered the Cape before becoming Secretary to the Admiralty, Sir John Barrow doubted whether Captain Knox's scheme would bring about appreciable advantages.

9 CC 119: Cape of Good Hope Trade Society (London): Minutes, 18.3.1825 & Minutes of a Conference [with Huskisson], 11.5.1825, Enclosure, Cape of Good Hope Trade Society — Commercial Exchange (Cape Town), 12.5.1825 & Minutes, 1.6.1825, p. 2.

Admiral Sir George Cockburn also feared that the projected breakwater might well endanger, rather than promote, the safety of shipping. Both naval specialists had somewhat gloomy misgivings about the entire project. Both foresaw that vessels might be shoaled and subsequently wrecked upon it. They were not at all reassured by the conviction of Captain Knox that, at its worst, the breakwater would merely "... be an obstruction in the Bay, by preventing ships from leaving it, when South-eastern prevailed ..." ¹⁰.

Besides, by 1825, the tragedy which had befallen John Rennie's novel 'detached breakwater' in Plymouth Sound, had made the Lords of the Admiralty sceptical about breakwaters in general. As recently as November 1824, furious south-easterly gales had destroyed almost half of the celebrated breakwater built by Sir John Rennie's father. It is, thus understandable that the Admiralty should have seriously questioned the desirability of permitting the construction of a similar type of breakwater at the Cape. No wonder that Admiral Cockburn advised the greatest caution. He proposed that Sir John Rennie should thoroughly examine the scheme beforehand; he should also submit a detailed estimate of the cost involved.

After 1820, the state of Cape finances was somewhat unsound.

The great gale of 1822 had forced Lord Charles Somerset to float yet another of his loans on the security of the Imperial Treasury, thereby augmenting an already substantial public debt. The frontier war of 1819 had been costly and the assistance rendered to the 1820 Settlers had been quite considerable. The currency had depreciated and the conversion to sterling had favoured inflation. Though not yet galloping, as the economists put it, inflation was certainly increasing at the Cape. That the colony was approaching bankruptcy was serious enough; that it was also heavily in arrears to the Imperial Treasury was even worse ¹¹.

On account of the precarious financial state of the Cape - where budgets had remained unbalanced for years - the Colonial Office and the Admiralty both felt it advisable to postpone the elaborate and extensive Cape Town harbour and port project, which Captain Knox had calculated would require at least £ 30,000.

10 CO 235 No. 60, p. 6.

11 P.R.O. (London) CO 48/73, pp. "D", "E" & "F"; S. Smiles Lives of the Engineers ... II, p. 261; GH 1/10, pp. 601-3; Bathurst - Somerset No. 201, 8.10.1825.

The Lords Commissioners of the Imperial Treasury could not conceivably approve of advancing £3,000 annually to the Cape government for a decade or even longer. Due to its formidable indebtedness, the Cape government was hardly in a favourable position to offer acceptable security for further loans.

Indeed, by 1825, Cape finances had become so tortuous and unmanageable that the Imperial Government was compelled to introduce fiscal reforms and this happened to coincide with the year in which large and expensive designs were advanced for building a new port and harbour at Cape Town. Sir George Cockburn had, it will be remembered, suggested that the Knox harbour project should be referred to the expert opinion of Sir John Rennie. But this had not been done because Viscount Melville had explicitly rejected the Knox scheme and had requested the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, to inform Lord Charles Somerset accordingly.

In May 1825, William Huskisson referred the breakwater design, which the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade was contemplating, to Sir John Rennie. In July 1825, the engineer had provisionally approved of it in principle, but had asked for further details before giving a final decision. On 6th October, 1825, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, sent a copy of Sir John Rennie's detailed questionnaire to the Cape and requested Lord Somerset to answer it. The adoption of the breakwater scheme, however, was to be postponed by a despatch sent two days later. Deeply concerned about financial affairs at the Cape, the Colonial Secretary could see no other alternative but to introduce careful economy; he suspended all current and proposed public works and even froze official salaries in a systematic endeavour to save the colony from what he believed to be impending bankruptcy¹².

The 1825 Schedule of economy, or retrenchment order, was the first of a series of fiscal reform measures sporadically imposed by the Imperial authorities upon the general administration of the Cape of Good Hope.

12 PRO (London) CO 48/73 No. 6166; copy, Melville — Bathurst, pp. 1-2 & enclosure No. 1, pp. "H" & "I"; Accession 455 No. 33(A); copy, Sir John Rennie — R.W. Horton, 6.7.1825, pp. 7-8; GH 1/10, pp. 579-82; Bathurst — Somerset No. 199, 6.10.1825 & pp. 585-91, enclosure, queries suggested by Mr. [Sir John] Rennie respecting the practicability of a breakwater at Table Bay, n.d. & pp. 606-9; Bathurst — Somerset No. 201, 8.10.1825.

Such saving and retrenchment continued well into the mid-1840's, by which time the Cape government had at last contrived to cancel its protracted debts to the Imperial Treasury. But the long indebtedness, currency muddle, inflation and persistent lack of labour, curtailed public works expenditure and postponed all major capital improvements until the cancellation of the colony's debts.

After financial inexpediency and the prevailing depression had deferred the port project, Cape Town commerce continued to suffer from the lack of adequate facilities in conducting marine trade. New facilities had not been provided and the existing ones were decaying. The only crane found at the old jetty, for example, had become almost useless through rust, while storage space remained insufficient. In August 1825, therefore, long-suffering - but by now enraged - traders and shippers protested to the Wharfmaster. They demanded that additional storage facilities should be provided at the jetty and its surroundings; they also insisted upon the installation of additional cranes. The old jetty was in a truly lamentable condition. It had deteriorated to such an extent that it was costing the Cape government more to repair it than to replace it by a new one. Having contemplated the construction of a new stone pier at Rogge Bay since 1819, Lord Somerset believed that the right moment had now arrived to carry out a plan so long deferred. But as economy and retrenchment had just been imposed, Lord Somerset considered it advisable to postpone the stone pier proposal and to consider building a cheaper timber wharf instead. An economy-conscious Parliament and apprehensive Treasury might yet be able to sanction a less expensive project. Lord Somerset did not fail to mention that considerable saving could be effected by building a cheaper timber jetty in preference to an expensive stone pier; initially, at least, there would be no maintenance charges.

Whereas the lack of an adequate port certainly delayed cargo operations at Cape Town, the dangerous state of the anchorage had long been a disadvantage to the colony. Regarded as being particularly perilous in winter, it failed to attract a larger volume of shipping to the colony. Besides, ships had little inducement to call at Cape Town. There was little trade to be had and the port facilities were somewhat limited.

The resultant loss of potential revenue was particularly disturbing to those, who were directly concerned with selling provisions and repairing ships.

It also reduced the prospective revenues of the Cape government, which could hardly afford to let the sorry state of affairs continue much longer. But there was little likelihood of stemming the depression as long as the anchorage remained unsheltered. No wonder that Lord Somerset was anxious to dispel the rumour that Table Bay was 'a graveyard of ships', especially after the 1825 shipwreck had again substantiated it.

The wreck of the "Mulgrave Castle" upon the rocks adjoining the recently completed Green Point lighthouse raised the old controversy about the best way to shelter ships at anchor ¹³. Would it be better to build an elaborate harbour or would a breakwater suffice to prevent shipwrecks and attract a greater number of merchant vessels? But Hood W. Christian, Commodore of the Cape Naval Station, advised Lord Somerset to reject both alternatives. Remembering the reason for the dismissal of Captain Knox's comprehensive port and harbour project in 1825, Commodore Christian realized that without Imperial assistance, the Cape colony possessed neither sufficient capital nor labour to consider building an elaborate, full-scale harbour. Were it to be attempted, he was convinced that it would have to be abandoned within half a year, when capital and labour had both been exhausted.

Nor did Commodore Christian consider a breakwater feasible. For its construction would also require large sums of money and even were funds to be found for it, the work itself would take years to accomplish. In the meanwhile, however, ships would continue to be lost in the roadstead as they drifted upon the beach after the breaking of their anchor-cables.

Ultimately, upon its completion, the breakwater might well form a dangerous 'shoal' and threaten vessels all year round. South-eastern and winter winds alike would dash them against the new breakwater.

13 W.A. Newman Biographical Memoir of John Montagu ... (Cape Town, 1855, 1st ed.), p. 30; CO 243 No. 58: Comptroller of Customs — Government Secretary, 7.9.1825, Enclosure, copy, Commercial Exchange — Wharfmaster, 31.8.1825, pp. 2-3; CO 5818: Proclamation (Somerset), 1.4.1819; GH 23/7, p. 356: Somerset — Bathurst No. 242, 17.11.1825; CO 240 No. 54: Deposition of Captain Ralph, "Mulgrave Castle", Enclosure, Deputy Port Captain — Government Secretary, n.d. [c. 4.9.1825], p. 4.

Moreover, Commodore Christian feared that, like the proposed harbour, a breakwater would, in all likelihood, silt up the anchorage and render it useless within a few years.

Instead of sheltering vessels inside a harbour, or behind a breakwater, extending from the neighbourhood of the Amsterdam battery, it would surely be less expensive and more logical, Commodore Christian argued, to remedy the fundamental cause of shipwreck itself. As most ships came to grief after breaking their anchor-cables, he suggested that they should be moored more securely in future. Twenty four moorings should be laid down at the bottom of the anchorage and a number of rusty, old anchors might be imported from naval stores in Great Britain for this purpose. Depositing the moorings would be easy — they could be laid down by a squadron under his command. As merchantmen and men-o'-war would thereafter be secured to moorings sunk at the bottom of Table Bay, the notoriously perilous anchorage would become a thing of the past and more ships could be expected to call in consequence ¹⁴.

The cost of realizing Commodore Christian's mooring scheme would not have been excessive. The work would amount to £ 20,819 6s. 0d. — only 62½% of the estimated expense of putting Captain Knox's elaborate, albeit comprehensive, design into practice. To finance his mooring project, Commodore Christian suggested levying a port duty of 5%. The charge should not be imposed immediately, he warned, but only six months after the moorings had been laid down, lest ships should then avoid the anchorage because of the high port dues charged there. Since a few rusty, old anchors promised to convert the perilous roadstead into a relatively safe anchorage at approximately 60% of the cost of Knox's elaborate scheme, Lord Charles Somerset hoped that the Imperial Government would adopt the substantially less expensive proposal. Even though considerations of economy had compelled him to defer the greater scope of the 1825 port, harbour and dockyard plan, Earl Bathurst had, of course, fully realised that the establishment of a smaller port and harbour at the Cape would reduce the depression and promote the interests of shipping in general.

14 CO 254 No. 1: Commodore Christian — Somerset, 1.1.1826, pp. 2 & 4-8.

Animated mainly by a desire to protect the British mercantile marine at the Cape, the Colonial Office also took into consideration the grievances of the merchants of Cape Town. Nor did the Colonial Secretary forget the desirability of encouraging the nascent coasting trade, which had emerged after the arrival of the 1820 Settlers. All these considerations called for the introduction of a general port and harbour development programme for the Cape colony; by 1826, the Colonial Office had devised a comprehensive plan modelled on the one followed in Great Britain. As regarded Table Bay, the general plan for all Cape harbours was, in the main, designed to realize the objectives of Captain Knox's scheme, albeit on a smaller scale and at considerably less expense¹⁵.

Accordingly, in June 1826, the Colonial Under-Secretary, Mr. Hay, introduced the Cape harbour and port development programme. A colleague of the celebrated Rennie, Henry Reveley, was appointed Civil Engineer to the Cape government. He was commissioned to proceed to the colony and to initiate the comprehensive plan at Table Bay. His instructions were to undertake "... the improvement of Table Bay — to prepare reports ... and estimates of the probable Expense of constructing a stone pier and Breakwater"¹⁶.

The Colonial Office had inaugurated a general port and harbour improvement programme, but had, unfortunately, made limited provision for carrying it out at an almost bankrupt colony. The Cape possessed little capital and labour and had little prospect of obtaining additional loans from the Imperial Treasury. The Colonial Secretary, Earl Bathurst, had forbidden the Cape government to allocate £32,000 for a new wooden jetty at Cape Town, for in Lord Bathurst's opinion, the exorbitant estimate should either be reduced, or alternatively, the Cape government should defray the cost of the work from its own funds. But neither alternative would have been feasible. For the timber wharf could not have been built for a smaller sum; nor could money have been raised locally. There was little private capital available in the colony, which could not even boast of possessing a single private banking house. The investment of public money into large-scale utilities was ruled out, for the Colonial Office had forbidden it as recently as October 1825.

15 CO 254 No. 1, Enclosure, Estimate of Mooring Plan, pp. 1-2; GH 23/7, p. 404; Somerset — Bathurst No. 277, 23.2.1826; EH 1/10, pp. 579-80; Bathurst — Somerset No. 199, 6.10.1825.

16 CO 344 No. 92: Memorial, Henry Reveley — Cole, 20.9.1828, pp. 1-2.

completed to improve, but it had little money for doing so. The
 Government considered purchasing the old pier so that it
 could last any year. But now that the Colonial Office had
 to build a stone landing-place and a breakwater, the Civil Engineer
 Henry Evelyn, was reluctant to purchase anything substantial, except
 to the old pier. He had come to build a new stone pier, not to patch
 up an old one. The Government, however, was not so much
 concerned with the quality of the pier, but with the cost. It was
 necessary to have a pier of the highest quality, and the old pier was
 considered to be of the highest quality. The Government was
 not willing to build a new pier, but to patch up the old one.



TABLE BAY.

THE BREAKWATER PROPOSED BY THE COMPTROLLER OF CUSTOMS 1822

17. On 1/11, 1822, the Comptroller of Customs proposed a breakwater of 4000 ft. long, and the Government Secretary - Civil Engineer, 19.11.1822.
18. On 1/11, 1822, the Civil Engineer proposed a breakwater of 4000 ft. long, and the Government Secretary, 19.11.1822; On 1/11, 1822, the Civil Engineer proposed a breakwater of 4000 ft. long, and the Government Secretary, 19.11.1822; On 1/11, 1822, the Civil Engineer proposed a breakwater of 4000 ft. long, and the Government Secretary, 19.11.1822.

Compelled to improvise, as it had little money for doing anything else, the Cape government considered overhauling the old jetty so thoroughly that it would last many a year. But now that the Colonial Office intended to build a stone landing-place and a breakwater, the Civil Engineer, Henry Reveley, was reluctant to consider undertaking substantial repairs to the old wharf; he had come to build a new stone quay, not to patch up rotten planks¹⁷.

Regarding thorough and expensive repairs to the old fabric as illogical, Reveley pressed for the construction of the new landing-place, which he had been commissioned to build at Cape Town. This was all very well from the perspective of a specialist. While he envisaged building a new marine work at the end of Bree Street for £22,500, Sir Richard Bourke foresaw only too clearly that the lack of funds would frustrate the project, magnificent though it would undoubtedly be, complete with landing-stairs and an additional number of cranes for the convenience of trade.

Even had there been ample funds available at the Cape, His Majesty's Government had recently forbidden them to be used for financing large-scale public works of any description. Even had financial obstacles been removed, the lack of labour alone would have frustrated the construction of the stone landing-place, which the Civil Engineer thought feasible, if it were to be carried out by the 800 British convicts, whom he confidently expected to be sent out to complete the project within three years.

Unfortunately, there was no more prospect of obtaining labour than of receiving financial assistance from the Imperial Government.

Convicts under sentence of transportation were generally shipped to Botany Bay, and the Cape government was justifiably sceptical about receiving any of them at the Cape. As regarded local convicts, not only were there too few of them, but the limited number available were engaged in maintaining the few public works and highways which the colony possessed¹⁸.

17 GH 1/11, pp. 843-44; Bathurst — Bourke No. 291, 27.7.1826; CO 4884, p. 254; Government Secretary — Civil Engineer 28.11.1826.

18 CO 275 No. 136; Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 29.1.1827, p. 1; CO 5725 Schedule 75 No. 19; Government Secretary's decision, 29.1.1827; CO 321 No. 74; Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 19.6.1827, pp. 4 & 6; CO 5726 Schedule 108 No. 73; Government Secretary's decision. 19.6.1827.

As the prospect of obtaining conscript labour was small and local labour was not only scarce but also expensive, who would build a new stone quay and breakwater at Table Bay?

The growing concern of the Imperial Government with affairs at the Cape, where the economy was in distress and the currency unsound, resulted in the appointment of a royal commission of enquiry, which was to inspect the state of the finances, the conditions and needs of trade and, most important of all, the best ways of improving them. Having inspected the conditions at the Cape, the commissioners suggested that the Cape government should practice an even greater measure of economy. As this would not be very easy to achieve, however, the commissioners compiled a detailed schedule of the probable expenditure and the presumable income of the Cape colony and submitted it as a model budget for the future guidance of colonial governors.

The respective benefits of forming either a new stone quay or a timber wharf were still under consideration and the Civil Engineer fretting at the delay, when the entire port and harbour construction programme was suddenly postponed. For the Imperial Government had just adopted the arbitrarily conceived schedule of expenditure and income, which the commissioners of enquiry had recently compiled for regulating the financial affairs of the Cape colony. Hence, in June 1827, the Colonial Secretary, Viscount Goderich, instructed Sir Richard Bourke to impose a virtual moratorium on all public works throughout the Cape. The order also deferred the port and harbour improvement programme which the Colonial Office had itself introduced in the previous year. Retrenchment was the prevailing concern and economy was vital. As the royal commissioners had arbitrarily restricted the Cape government to an annual expenditure of only £8,000 on all public works throughout the colony, there was little prospect that the expensive stone pier and breakwater would be approved for the Cape in the near future¹⁹. All that the commissioners had been able to recommend was the hope that "... we trust that a work of such general utility to commerce ... may be found deserving of encouragement in England"²⁰.

19 GH 1/13, p. 22: Goderich — Bourke No. 10, 14.6.1827 & p. 139, Enclosure, copy, Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry ... upon the Finances ... Appendix No. 22 (The 1827 Schedule).

20 Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry upon the Trade of the Cape, p. 27.

Traders and shippers in Cape Town and boatmen at Rogge Bay were extremely distressed by the unexpected cancellation of the proposed stone quay. The project had held out the promise of providing better facilities for the conveyance of cargo; it had also promised to resolve the difficulty of rendering assistance to vessels in danger of running aground. No help could be given to them from the old wharf because its unfortunate location prevented boats from leaving it with spare anchors and cables.

No wonder that shipwrecks continued to occur in Table Bay. This was proved once more by the disaster which overtook two vessels in the winter storms of 1826, described by the Port Captain as "... the strongest which has occurred in this Colony since the memorable one of the 27th July, 1822 ..." ²¹.

The Port Captain, Lieutenant James Rance, had long understood that shipping tragedies could only be averted by establishing a suitable boat-launching place on the beach. He believed that an iron boat-slip, or boat-jetty, would be the best remedy to ensure the safety of vessels in winter tempests. The slip, or jetty, should be situated near the Sappe & Mantingh Whale-fishery in the vicinity of the Amsterdam battery — the only suitable locality for launching a boat with anchors and cables during a winter storm. Furthermore, to save sailors from destruction, Lt. Rance proposed building a rescue-boat station alongside the boat-jetty, or slip.

The Port Captain of Table Bay was not the only one, who tried to devise effective means to avert the destruction of ships at anchor; merchants, boatmen and the Cape Town shipping people were also thinking in this direction. They advised the construction of a stone pier, in the belief that it would be easier to assist ships from it than from an iron boat-jetty located far ashore. Were it to be extended into the sea, however, the stone pier would be almost contiguous to ships at anchor. In addition, it would provide the commercial benefits that a boat-jetty could not give. For a stone pier would afford a modicum of shelter to boats, besides fulfilling its main function of granting marine trade a new, larger and certainly more convenient place to transact shipping business.

²¹ CO 276 No. 46: Port Captain — Government Secretary, 26.6.1826, p. 1.

But the 1827 Schedule did not promise to encourage the accomplishment of such a relatively expensive undertaking, but were the expenditure to be reduced, however, the scheme might yet be adopted. Believing that the Cape government would carry out his rudimentary port plan, the Civil Engineer submitted a design for building a cheap stone pier by convict labour, which would reduce building costs from £ 22,500 to a mere £11,921-15-0. Surely this could not be considered excessive for a public work of such utility?

But lest his scheme should be wrecked on the rocks of strict economy, the Civil Engineer simultaneously outlined an ingenious suggestion for finding the requisite funds; the Cape government could mortgage the annual wharfage dues as collateral for a loan. In this way, the trade and shipping using Table Bay might be made to pay for the construction of a new stone pier.

Merchants and boatmen shared this point of view. For ever since 1825, when their London colleagues at the Cape of Good Hope Trade Society had asked the Commercial Exchange in Cape Town to continue pressing for the construction of a port and harbour, a dedicated group of merchants, comprising, amongst others, Messrs. Ross, Ebdon, Thompson and Pillans, had kept on informing public opinion and canvassing official interest in the construction of a stone quay.

Due to the good vintage of 1827, the quantity of wine exported from Cape Town had recovered from the approximately one million gallon mark characteristic of the depression, to a total of 1,422,385 gallons. By 1828, wine exports had increased to 1,433,878 gallons and reached 1,553,741 gallons in the next year²². The good vintage of 1827 emphasized the need for better port facilities, as wine barrels had to be trundled along a precariously balanced, tottering old landing-place.

In an account of his travels published in 1827, George Thompson, a prominent merchant of Cape Town, publicized an improvisation of the comprehensive port and harbour scheme, which had been advocated by Captain Knox in 1825. To make his simplified port scheme acceptable to the authorities, Thompson reduced its cost.

22 CO 276 No. 46, pp. 1 & 4; CO 321 No. 121: Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 6.10.1827, pp. 2-3 & 8; CC 2: Minutes, 19 & 25.8.1825; CO 5969, p. 142: Annual Cape Bluebook, 1827; CO 5970, pp. 188-89: A.C.B., 1828; CO 5972, p. 211: A.C.B., 1829.

He dispensed with the second stone pier advocated by Knox; instead, he suggested building a single stone jetty from the Whalefishery, for the two rocks flanking the projected stone pier would adequately come to serve as natural, unwrought 'piers of stone', as it were.

There would be neither the necessity to build a breakwater nor a boat-jetty, as Thompson and his fellow merchants were principally interested in obtaining a new and improved landing-place; to trading and shipping people, a boat-slip was only of secondary importance.

As regarded funds, Thompson allied himself with the Port Captain's suggestion that the Cape authorities could easily overcome the chronic lack of funds by the simple expedient of raising a loan on the security of the annual wharfage duties derived from shipping using the roadstead. Funds would most probably be derived from the Cape Town mercantile and shipping interests themselves; they would become the most likely subscribers to a scheme for which they not only had the capital, but also the practical interest.

The Comptroller of Customs was clamouring for instant repairs to the old jetty. It was so rickety that in April 1828, Sir Richard Bourke had little hesitation in instructing a gang of workmen, which included many 'first-class carpenters', to proceed to the old wharf and to repair it forthwith. The steps and the landing were fashioned from new timber, an African assistant being engaged in removing the rotten planking. Although from an official perspective these slight repairs constituted the only concessions possible, merchants considered them mere palliatives, as they gave no promise of the eventual construction of a new landing-place.

That the old jetty was useless in reducing the incidence of shipwreck was again illustrated during the great gale of June 1828. Four vessels ran aground simply because a boat, laden with anchors and cables, could not be launched from the old wharf. Fearing further disasters, the Port Captain earnestly requested the Cape government to adopt his proposal for a wooden boat-launching jetty near the Sappe & Muntingh Whalefishery.

The same storm provided an excellent justification for commercial and shipping interests in Cape Town to request a new landing-place. The moment was ripe, they believed, to secure the adoption of Thompson's stone quay design, albeit in a slightly modified form. This could be achieved if their desire for a stone quay could be officially represented as a plea to promote the safety of shipping by a boat-launching jetty²³.

23 G. Thompson Travels and Adventures, pp. 426-28; CO 5276 Schedule 149 No. 14; Government Secretary's decision, 12.2.1828; PC 10/4: Labour expended at the Public Wharf, Cape Town, 30.4. & 6.5.1828; CO 356 No. 47; Port Captain — Acting Government Secretary, No. 25, 20.6.1828, pp. 1-2 & 4.

On 25th June, 1828, only days after the shipwrecks, merchants, shippers, boatmen and ship-chandlers alike resolved to present a long petition to the Cape government for work to begin immediately on a stone boat-launching jetty as the best means to prevent shipwrecks.

But the 1827 Schedule was still in force and the Cape government could not adopt the proposal. The Acting Government Secretary, therefore, began to consider the merits of realising the Port Captain's suggestion instead. Believing that the mercantile and shipping community in Cape Town was as keenly interested in promoting the safety of the anchorage as the Port Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel John Bell thought that a wooden boat-jetty would not be sufficient to achieve this purpose. Even were it to be built, it would be too small to protect the predominant type of merchant ship in the 300 - 400 ton class. In Bell's opinion, only a breakwater would protect shipping adequately and attract to the Cape colony the numerous ships, which refused to call at the unsheltered roadstead. In looking for a model on which to form the Table Bay breakwater, John Bell made the somewhat misguided choice of selecting John Rennie's 'detached breakwater' at Plymouth Sound. The damage sustained by that work was hardly likely to inspire confidence in the prospective construction of a similar one at the Cape. For if comparatively mild gales had destroyed almost half of the structure in Plymouth Sound, what would be the probable fate of a similar work built at the 'Cape of Storms'?

Despite the fragility of Rennie's breakwater and the Admiralty's refusal to allow a similar one to be built at Cape Town, the Acting Government Secretary considered the work to be so worthy of emulation that he proposed to duplicate it in Table Bay. On 28th August, 1828, therefore, he asked merchants, captains and boatmen to indicate their opinion about the advantages of building a 'detached breakwater' in the middle of Table Bay, 500 yards from the beach in the vicinity of the Amsterdam battery ²⁴.

As might be expected, his proposal evoked such vehement disapproval that, save for the Port Captain, it was unanimously rejected by commerce and shipping alike. Opposition to the scheme was based on two cardinal objections — the proposed site of the breakwater and its intended form.

24 CC 28: Minutes, 25.6.1828; CC 4388 (unnumbered pages): Acting Government Secretary's draft Memorandum on the construction of a detached breakwater in Table Bay, 7.10.1829 [recte 16.9.1829]. Lt.-Col. Bell's letter and the 1828 breakwater plan, referred to in CC 2: Minutes, Special Meeting, 4.9.1828, pp. 1-2, have not been found.

True enough, any marine work situated in the neighbourhood of the Amsterdam battery would enhance the safety of shipping in allowing a boat laden with spare anchors and cables to leave the old landing-place. Although many a vessel would be saved from disaster in consequence, the proposed location of a 'detached breakwater' right in the middle of the Bay would cancel this benefit. Despite the fact that the width of the passage between the breakwater and the shore would not present any problem, vessels of heavier draught than 12 feet of water could not, however, be expected to clear the narrows in safety. They might well become shoaled there, especially when the south-easters were blowing ²⁵.

Most of the seamen consulted about the feasibility of building a 'detached breakwater' in Rogge Bay could not but agree with the expert opinion of Captain George Smith, the former master of "H.M.S. Sprig". Remembering his survey of the anchorage in 1816, Captain Smith was convinced that it would be preferable to extend a breakwater from the Chavornas battery, rather than to build it from the officially proposed site adjoining the Amsterdam fortress. Were the breakwater to be constructed from the Amsterdam battery, however, it would tend to "... interfere with the best Anchorage in Table Bay ..." by precluding ships from anchoring there in future ²⁶.

While most mariners rejected the official breakwater design on the score of the danger it presented to shipping, merchants and boatmen condemned it on purely commercial grounds. Not only did 1827 and 1828 witness a prodigious increase in the amount of Cape wines exported from Rogge Bay, but in 1828, the export of wheat was substantial — 31,575 lbs. 1828 also saw the increased exports of barley and oats from Cape Town; compared with an average of approximately 3,000 maids of barley and oats exported from 1822 to 1827, in 1828, however, 14,406 maids of oats and 11,306 maids of barley were despatched from Table Bay ²⁷.

- 25 CO 278 No. 46; Commercial Exchange — Acting Government Secretary, 11.11.1828, pp. 19-20 & Enclosure No. 6; copy, Captain W. Hornblower — Commercial Exchange 11.11.1828 & Enclosure No. 1; copy, Captain W. Brown — Commercial Exchange, 30.8.1828.
- 26 CO 278 No. 46, Enclosure No. 2; copy, Captain G. Smith — Commercial Exchange, 29.10.1828.
- 27 CO 5964, p. 172; Annual Cape Bluebook, 1822; CO 5965, p. 192; A.C.B., 1823; CO 5966, p. 21; A.C.B., 1824; CO 5967, p. 174; A.C.B., 1825, p. 154; A.C.B., 1826; CO 5969, p. 136; A.C.B., 1827; CO 5970, p. 182; A.C.B., 1828.

John Chisholm, engineer and building contractor, realized that a 'detached breakwater' would not solve the problems caused by the increasing volume of cereals exported via Table Bay. Indeed, the very structure of the breakwater, separated 500 yards from the shore, would make it commercially useless. For "... the proposed opening will prevent its being used as a pier for Shipping and Landing ..."; Captain McLeod agreed with him and suggested that "... instead of having an opening it should be continued from the Reach ..." like any conventional breakwater and unlike the commercially useless innovation, which Rennie had designed in Plymouth Sound²⁸. Thus, although the new work would have provided additional wharfage space, it could not, however, have been used as a quay at all. The 'detached breakwater' would not have expedited the movement of cargo, not to speak of simplifying the work of the boatmen. They would have found their work even more difficult, as they would have been obliged to bring merchandise to a marine work situated mid-way in the anchorage. Thus no real benefit would have ensued from such an arrangement because the remoteness of the intended 'detached breakwater' from shipping would not have permitted the direct transfer of goods from the structure into the ships berthed alongside.

As the Cape government had just consulted them about the 'detached breakwater' notion, shippers, merchants and boatmen surmised that the authorities were thinking of developing a harbour at Cape Town, in preference to the port that they wanted to be built there. Ostensibly still anxious to promote the security of shipping, members of the Commercial Exchange emphasized that any breakwater built near the Chavonnes battery would fail to ensure the despatch of anchors and hawsers to ships in danger. The Cape government should, therefore, abandon the 'detached breakwater' proposal and construct a conventional stone pier from the Amsterdam fortress instead. Shipping and commercial interests strove to convince the Cape government that by sitting a stone quay there, a threefold advantage could be obtained. For the proximity of a pier to the majority of shipping there would facilitate the despatch of spare anchors and cables, prevent shipwreck, accelerate cargo operations and provide more wharfage space. As to finding money for a wharf off the Amsterdam, the authorities could float a loan and pay off the interest from the wharfage revenues derived annually from the use of the old wharf itself²⁹.

28 CO 278 No. 46: Enclosure, copy, Minutes of Opinion given to ... Commercial Exchange on the proposed breakwater, pp. 5 & 8.

29 CO 278 No. 46: Commercial Exchange — Acting Government Secretary, 11.11.1828, pp. 2-3.

There was little likelihood of such an eventuality, however, because no public works could be undertaken before the 1827 Schedule had either been abolished, or at least relaxed. Its enforcement limited the expenditure allowed for public works to a precarious minimum; indeed, its maintenance might well have prohibited all new public utilities had the Cape government felt it possible to observe its stipulations. But the Cape authorities were not able to follow the arbitrarily conceived economies suggested by the Schedule because this would have threatened to bring about the economic stagnation of a colony already suffering from a severe recession of relatively long duration. The Cape colony required more, and certainly not less, development.

There were few roads and communications with the neighbouring districts were rudimentary and hampered by the mountains, which almost isolated Cape Town from the rest of the country. Considerable difficulties and delays were encountered in bringing agricultural produce to market in Cape Town, and inadequate and rudimentary roads, therefore, failed to promote farming, the main activity of the colony.

Were excellent and wide roads to be built, however, and mountain passes constructed under an enlightened policy of promoting internal communications, then agriculture might well be fostered and internal trade encouraged in consequence.

In 1825, Lord Somerset had begun constructing a mountain pass over the Fransch Hoek range to facilitate the conveyance of foodstuffs and wine to the Cape Town market, where it was either consumed (and drunk) locally or exported via Table Bay. Unfortunately, however, the completion of the Fransch Hoek pass failed to achieve the anticipated objectives, as the majority of farmers bringing produce for sale to Cape Town, crossed over the Hottentots Holland range instead. There was no mountain pass there.

Almost immediately upon his arrival at the colony in September 1828, the new governor, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, realised from the numerous petitions sent to him that a good highway should be built over the Hottentots Holland mountains. This would link the capital with all the rural districts up to Swellendam; the Eastern Province generally sent its produce to Algoa Bay ³⁰.

Since the improvement of internal communications and the stimulus to agriculture and commerce expected to result from it, were vital to a colony in the midst of an economic depression, Sir Lowry Cole decided that, instead of seeking the prior approval of the Imperial Government, which would most probably be postponed on the recommendations of the apprehensive Lords of the Treasury: "I had no hesitation in giving my sanction ..." for the commencement of Sir Lowry's pass over the Hottentots Holland range; for had not Sir Richard Bourke agreed with him that the highway was indispensable and that Lord Somerset's road development programme should be continued at almost any cost? ³¹. By promoting the construction of roads, passes and bridges in spite of the advice given by the Imperial Government and the Treasury, Sir Lowry Cole was followed the policies of his predecessors; but since he was a particularly zealous road-builder, he might perhaps be regarded as the pioneer of a veritable 'transport revolution' at the Cape. For it was on the basis of the mountain pass perpetuating his memory and its continuation as How Hook pass, that the subsequent road-network was to be elaborated by John Montagu, the Government Secretary, in the early 1840's.

Since the essential improvements to passes, roads and bridges had consumed large sums of money, little remained for building a port at Rogge Bay. In any case, Sir Lowry Cole was not prepared to contemplate such a project because he was fully conscious of the almost insuperable obstacles involved. In his opinion it would "... be beyond the present means of the Colony to erect a Stone Pier ..." near the beach at Bree Street ³².

Besides - unlike enthusiastic shipping and commercial men -, he did not even consider it worth while to think about the project. Why build a new stone pier at considerable expense and far away from the centre of town, if the old wharf could still be kept in sufficient repair from the wharfage revenues derived annually from its use? Situated next to the Castle, the old jetty was near the ordnance stores, the old business quarter and the city itself. It should be mentioned that the governor was not opposed, in principle, to building a stone quay, if it could be carried out cheaply, as was the case on Robben Island for instance, where a stone landing-place had been constructed by

31 GH 23/9, pp. 183-85.

32 CO 5302, p. 21: Acting Government Secretary -- Commercial Exchange 21.11.1828.

convict labour for approximately £15. The 600 ft. long stone quay was serving well as a landing-place and shelter for boats ³³.

Since the Cape government showed little interest in building a port, some members of the mercantile and shipping community pinned their hopes on assistance from His Majesty's Government and Treasury. But those who had confidently anticipated that the Imperial Government would adopt the advice of the royal commissioners of enquiry for 'encouraging' the building of a port and harbour, were to be disillusioned. For by the end of 1828, the only visible outcome of the commissioners' "encouragement" was — as one of the disenchanted put it — "... our bay has neither Break Water, Pier or even a Mooring to protect our shipping ..."³⁴.

But Table Bay did, however, possess a first-class launch for delivering spare hawsers and emergency anchors to such ships as were in danger of running aground. After the dreadful example of the 1828 shipwrecks, an apprehensive group of individuals had quickly subscribed a considerable sum and had commissioned the James Lowe shipwright firm to build them a launch, appropriately named the "North Wester". One of the Table Bay boatmen, James Buckley, was put in command of the boat, which was launched on 22nd October, 1828, well before the next winter storms.

Thus, a group of private individuals had raised the money for realising the scheme, which the Port Captain had been asking the Cape government to carry into effect and the authorities had, thus, not contributed a penny towards promoting the safety of the roadstead. Accordingly, the Cape government was disposed to be rather generous and ceded to the owners of the "North Wester" a piece of land next to the Sappe & Muntingh Whalefishery adjoining the Amsterdam battery. The owners of the "North Wester" were resourceful and enterprising. Since the supply of spare anchors and cables alone could not stop shipwrecks, the owners of the boat were also considering whether they should open another subscription and raise money for a boat-slip, or jetty, almost identical to the one that the Port Captain was advocating with enthusiasm ³⁵.

33 GH 23/10, p. 95: copy, Cole — Goderich No. 7, 8.3.1833; J. Holman A Voyage Round the World, II, pp. 139-40.

34 "South African Commercial Advertiser" (Cape Town), 10.12.1828.

35 "South African Commercial Advertiser", 25.10.1828.

Whilst having no definite intention of building the stone quay desired by members of the Commercial Exchange, the Acting Government Secretary, too, was considering laying down a timber jetty near the Amsterdam battery in accordance with the Port Captain's advice. On the other hand, however, Lieutenant-Colonel Bell perceived that a new timber wharf would not be sufficient, since a breakwater would still be necessary to protect it from storms. In view of the vehement opposition of shipping and mercantile circles in Cape Town to his 'detached breakwater' proposal of the previous year. Bell thought it wiser to ascertain their views before submitting his modified plan to them officially.

In September 1829, therefore, he asked boatmen and traders, along with the chandlers and repairers of ships, whether they would welcome having an "isolated breakwater" (as he now called his plan) run out from the beach near the Chavannes battery. In order to gauge their feelings, Bell raised the question of finance for the first time. Would marine trade and those engaged in it, be prepared to pay for the construction of a modified version of John Rennie's Plymouth breakwater by a proportional increase in the port dues? This would be the only way to finance the project because the Cape government was reluctant to mortgage any portion of state revenues as guarantee for raising a loan.

The 1829 "isolated breakwater" plan, however, was only a slight modification of the commercially useless scheme that the Acting Government Secretary had advanced a year ago; in view of its limited use, commerce and shipping had little hesitation in rejecting it once again. For what benefits could accrue from subjecting commerce and shipping to higher port charges, in order to construct an "isolated breakwater" — or Rennie's scheme renamed — that would bring no economic benefits and not even afford a modicum of the port facilities? John Rennie's isolated breakwater' in Plymouth Sound had cost approximately £1,500,000; how could the vast sum be raised at the Cape colony, when the royal commissioners of enquiry themselves had concluded that it would not even be advisable to increase the 4½ d. tonnage duty? Nor could the Commercial Exchange share the hope of the Cape government that more ships would come to Cape Town once it had been turned into a safe anchorage by a breakwater. On the contrary, captains and merchants claimed that higher port charges would discourage shipping even further; the majority of shipowners already resented the comparatively light port dues charged for taking in water and provision ³⁶.

36 CO 4388, pp. 2-3; CC 2: Minutes, 10.10.1829, pp. 2-3; S. Smiles Lives of the Engineers... II, p. 263; Report of the Commissioners ... upon the Trade of the Cape...; p. 27.

The Cape Government, therefore, should abandon all intentions of subjecting shipping and trade to "... any additional imposts unless the Home Government felt itself justified in promoting the work" of financing and constructing an "isolated breakwater" at the Cape ³⁷. As His Majesty's Government did not see any advantages of promoting a type of structure in which the Admiralty had lost faith, and since the Cape government devoted most of its funds to promoting internal communications, the opposition of commerce to higher port dues, caused the situation to remain static.

By this time, however, the recession was coming to an end and trade was showing signs of revival. This was especially so at Rogge Bay, where the total trade tonnage of shipping using it, had increased from 26,908 tons in 1826 to 32,546 tons in 1827, to reach a total of 38,578 tons by the end of 1829. By 1829, as a result of the persistent representations which the Cape of Good Hope Trade Society had been carrying out in London since 1825, Great Britain had extended to Cape wheat exports the privilege of the free trade already enjoyed by Canadian corn for a number of years. This enabled the Cape colony to send substantial shipments of corn to Great Britain.

Yet despite the growth of trade, port facilities remained static at Table Bay. Furthermore, the remoteness of the old wharf from ships at anchor, impeded the transit of merchandise. This was already a slow process because of the reliance placed on porters in bearing cargo between lighters and the shore. During prevailing south-easters, boatmen encountered considerable difficulty in returning to the old jetty because their empty lighters were frequently blown towards the Whalerfishery instead. The ensuing delay was costly and annoying and could easily have been overcome had it been possible to discharge and embark cargo from a wharf directly into the ships lying alongside ³⁸.

37 CC 2: Minutes, Special Meeting, 22.9.1829, pp. 2-3.

38 FC 10/1: Annual Trade Tonnage Abstracts, Table Bay, 1826-29; CC 2: Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 17.4.1828, p. 4 & Annual General Meeting, Committee's Annual Report, 16.4.1829, p. 2; GH 1/23, , pp. 527-28; Glasgow -- D'Urban No. 110, 29.12.1836, Enclosure, Petition of Cape Town Merchants and Ship-owners -- Cole, 8.2.1831.

From 1822 onwards, the governors of the Cape colony were obliged to transmit an annual bluebook of statistical information about the state of colonial finances to the Colonial Secretary and the Lords Commissioners of the Imperial Treasury. It was perhaps somewhat unfortunate, therefore, that both the Colonial and Treasury authorities had erroneously been led to believe that excessive expenditure on public works had caused the deficits of 1828 and 1829. For it was under this misapprehension that the Colonial Secretary, Sir George Murray, felt compelled to ask Sir Lowry Cole to observe the 1827 Schedule more strictly in future and to direct that "... if there should be any such works, which have been commenced without the requisite authority from home, I must desire that they may be at once suspended ..."³⁹.

There was, in reality, neither urgency nor need, for imposing such a drastic embargo on the Cape colony. For the deficits of 1828 and 1829 had certainly not been caused by what the Colonial Office mistakenly regarded as the 'excessive expenditure' incurred in the construction of two mountain passes over the Hottentots Holland mountains. Indeed, the majority of public works undertaken during those years had not been borne by the Cape treasury; they had been defrayed from various sources of local revenue, such as tolls levied on roads and ferries, for instance. As Sir Lowry Cole was to point out to Viscount Gederich, when the controversy was still raging in September 1831, those taxes had not only paid for the maintenance of public utilities, but they had, in many cases, actually yielded surpluses for the benefit of the general revenue.

News that work on the Houw Hoek pass was to be postponed on the instructions of the Colonial Secretary, was not well received in Cape Town. The order would undoubtedly have compelled Sir Lowry Cole to abandon the work had not the citizenry and the mercantile and shipping community in particular, rallied to enable him to evade his instructions from London.

On 22nd January, 1831, irate citizens summoned a public meeting to protest against abandonment of the virtually completed pass over Houw Hoek; the meeting then went on to call for a Representative Assembly, which would permit colonists to manage their own financial affairs in future⁴⁰.

39 GH 1/16, p. 411: Murray — Cole No. 114, 1.12.1829.

40 GH 23/9, pp. 531-532: copy, Cole — Gederich No. 54, 10.9.1831 & pp. 293-95: copy, Cole — Murray No. 22, 10.2.1831; "South African Commercial Advertiser", 26.1.1831.

A sum of £900 was collected by the Commercial Exchange. It was given to Sir Lowry Cole to guarantee him against the contingency of having to pay for the work himself, should His Majesty's Government refuse to sanction the expenditure in future.

The improvement of internal communications had come to a standstill; but the development of a port had not even begun. Little assistance could be expected from the Cape government. Even were the Colonial Secretary, Sir George Murray, to lift the moratorium on public works, Lieutenant-Colonel Bell would most probably construct a harbour at Table Bay, where he intended to form an 'isolated breakwater' of doubtful use to shipping and of no use to commerce at all. It was, thus, highly unlikely that the Cape government would establish the port desired by shipping and trade. For even prior to the Colonial Secretary's embargo on public works, the Cape government had rejected a proposed stone pier scheme on the grounds of insufficient funds. In addition, the Acting Government Secretary had also dismissed the immediate construction of a cheap wooden boat-jetty, which might at least have served as an improvised quay.

In view of these circumstances, therefore, shippers, chandlers and merchants thought it expedient to revert to an earlier plan; they now elaborated it. They had used their own money to improve the safety of the anchorage by building the "North Wester" and were now considering whether they should raise another subscription to build a private wooden jetty for boats in the vicinity of the Whalefishery. But the step would only have brought marginal advantages. Since they would be required to pay for a new quay anyway, they resolved to make the expense worth while; why construct a private timber jetty, if a new stone quay could be built at Rogge Bay instead? Their recent sponsorship of public road-works over the Howe Hook mountains and the guarantee which they had given to the governor in this regard, led them to hope that Sir Lowry would reciprocate and build a stone landing-place at state expense ⁴¹.

Determined merchants and their shipping colleagues opened a subscription and collected £3,300 to pay for a stone landing-place near the Whalefishery. It now only remained to approach the Cape government.

41 CO 386 No. 13: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 17.3.1851, Enclosure, Sir Lowry's receipt of the guarantee, p. 2 & No. 19: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, /2/. 8.1851, pp. 3 & 5.

In February 1831, therefore, the Cape Town shipping and mercantile community addressed a petition to Sir Lowry Cole. They asked him either to build a new stone pier at public expense, or to stipulate the conditions allowing them to construct it themselves and at their own expense. Fearing that the authorities would prefer to ensure the safety of shipping by means of an "isolated breakwater" rather than build a rudimentary port, they gave the misimpression of desiring a commercial quay for the ostensible purpose of benefitting shipping⁴².

Although sufficient funds had been collected for a new stone quay, the petitioners failed to appreciate the attitude of Sir Lowry Cole towards the project. He was simply not interested in having either a port, or even a harbour, established and members of the Commercial Exchange had miscalculated in professing that the improvement of the anchorage was their main reason for desiring the extension of port facilities. Sir Lowry Cole at once saw through the subterfuge; for how could a landing-place be expected to act as an efficient breakwater? The proposed stone pier would not only be too restricted and too low, but the rocks and shallows near it would preclude ships from seeking shelter there.

Contrary to the views of shipping, commerce and even of the acting Secretary to his own administration, Sir Lowry was not convinced that a breakwater would be the best way to prevent shipwrecks; there was no need for a harbour at all, Sir Lowry thought. He shared the opinion of the Port Captain that the anchorage could be made safe enough, if only captains could be persuaded to keep spare anchors and hawsers aboard in case of emergencies. Confident that they would soon come to realize the benefits of such an arrangement, Sir Lowry dismissed the idea of having a commercial quay built for the ostensible purpose of expediting the despatch of spare anchors and cables to ships. Nor did the governor think it necessary to have a larger, stone quay built to accommodate the increasing volume of trade conducted at Cape Town. Why undertake this task, if - after a few repairs - the old jetty could be made to last a while longer?

Dubious about the value of a stone landing-place in general, Sir Lowry doubted whether it could even be carried out officially, as the petitioners had asked him to consider. For even had it been considered worth while, the Cape government could not have built the quay.

42 GH 1/23, pp. 527-29. Of the £3,300 collected, merchants contributed £2,900, boatmen £200 and a ship-repair firm £200.

...the



THE HARBOUR AND PORT SCHEME PROPOSED BY CAPTAIN KNOX 1825

Besides the latest memorandum on public works, Sir Lowry had become so discouraged by the Colonial Secretary's insistence upon a stricter adherence to the 1827 Schedule that he doubted whether the Colonial Office would even consider the plan. Although he was so lukewarm about the scheme and so convinced of its impracticability that he had even omitted to refer the petition to London, Sir Lowry could not see his way clear to allow those with money and enthusiasm to undertake the work either. Granted that the official embargo would not apply to private individuals, the governor still had his reservations about the undertaking. For were he to permit merchants and shippers to build a quay, it would not only become their property, but would also reduce official revenue, as shipping could be expected to frequent a superior, privately-owned stone landing-place in preference to the dilapidated and almost useless state one ⁴⁵.

Sir Lowry considered it wise to temporize and told the merchants, shippers and boatmen that he was not in a position to stipulate the conditions under which they might be allowed to build the quay themselves. To discover whether the projectors intended to cede the work to the Cape government, Sir Lowry enquired whether the landing-place would remain in private hands. Apprehensive lest the private wharf should prove detrimental to official revenue, the governor wanted to know whether merchants and ship-repairers would levy wharfage dues at their jetty or not.

He was wise in making these enquiries, for it subsequently transpired that he had correctly estimated the views of the petitioners. In August 1831, they assured him that even were the Cape government to help them to finance and build the work, the stone quay would undoubtedly remain their own property; how else could they derive a profit from their £3,300 investment?

On 15th March, 1831, the "Sophia Jane" arrived at Table Bay. She was the second paddle-steamer to put in at Cape Town. Her arrival stimulated the interest of the promoters of the stone pier project, who anticipated a greatly increased traffic in paddle-steamers in the future. Merchants and ship-chandlers in particular had visions of selling increasing quantities of provisions to them and more ship-repair orders would, in all probability, soon be placed at Cape Town as well. Even greater profits could be anticipated in the

45 GH 25/10, pp. 93-95; GH 25/9: copy, Cole — Colonial Undersecretary Hay, 6.8.1831, p. 3 & Enclosure, copy, Port Captain — Government Secretary, 19.7.1831, p. 1.

event of the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the Eastern trade. For the introduction of free trade might bring more shipping and commerce to Cape Town and even turn it into a great entrepôt of East-West commerce.

But all this would not be realized if the wharfrage facilities remained as they were at present — that is, without the provision of a larger and better stone landing-place. Colleagues at the Cape of Good Hope Trade Society advised the merchants of Cape Town to launch an assault against the East India Company's monopoly and to ask for the introduction of free trade.

In May, 1831, the Commercial Exchange asked for permission to hold a public meeting in Cape Town, for the ostensible reason of considering the export of wine and other matters of general concern to the community. In reality, however, the assembly was summoned to agitate for the grant of a Legislative Council and the redress of pressing commercial grievances⁴⁴.

These two issues had long been engaging the interest of the colonists. In 1829, the "South African Commercial Advertiser", mouthpiece of mercantile and political interests, had suggested that in order to put an end to the policy of economy and retrenchment, which forbade "... the large sums raised by the taxes" from being "... applied to such works of general utility ... as Roads, Bridges, Harbours ..", the colonists should "... ask for a Representative System of Government — the power of taxing ourselves and of regulating our own Expenditure ..."⁴⁵. "No taxation without Public Works" was the slogan coined for the Cape. The moment was now ripe for a change of administration; the Colonial Secretary's veto on all public works would be lifted, mercantile improvements could be introduced and a stone quay built at Cape Town at state expense, or at least begun by private enterprise. During the public meeting of Cape Town citizens held under commercial auspices on 16th July, 1831, a ship happened to run aground in Table Bay. It provided dramatic substantiation to the speech of the merchant prince, Mr. Hamilton Ross, who ascribed the accident to the shortcomings of the Cape government. Had the petitioners been permitted to build the stone pier, Mr. Ross claimed, spare anchors and cables could easily have been despatched and the disaster averted in consequence.

44 CO 5302, pp. 269-70; Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 14.4.1831; CO 386, pp. 4-5 & No. 17; Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 9.5.1831, p. 1; "South African Commercial Advertiser", 19.3 & 7.5.1831.

45 "South African Commercial Advertiser", 4.2 & 29.4.1829.

Shipwrecks could be forestalled, however, by granting to the Cape a Legislative Council, which would allow the colonists to finance such indispensable public utilities as "... a Jetty or Pier ... for the protection and encouragement of ships visiting the port ..." — to quote the words of yet another merchant, Mr. Watson, at the public meeting ⁴⁶.

In the face of the public outcry, which had been skillfully managed by commercial and shipping interests in concert with political considerations, Sir Lowry Cole felt obliged to refer a summary of this public meeting to London, if only to vindicate himself against the allegations of Mr. Hamilton Ross that the refusal of the Cape government had specifically caused the shipwreck at Table Bay. Sir Lowry, it will be remembered, had not forbidden the construction of the stone quay. He had merely deferred giving his assent. Postponement was not refusal; although, for all practical purposes, it was tantamount to it.

Unfortunately, however, governor Cole failed to let the Colonial Secretary, Viscount Goderich, know the true state of affairs that what the meeting of merchants and shippers really wanted was the construction of a new landing-place and that their agitation for improving the anchorage was merely a cover for predominantly commercial considerations ⁴⁷. Not fully informed and thousands of miles away, Lord Goderich accepted the claims of the public meeting in Cape Town as an expression of the overwhelming wish of the colonists for a stone quay to be built at Table Bay. He sympathised with them, for he had long realised the urgency of improving the safety of the dangerous roadstead. But an erroneous belief in the imminent insolvency of the colony had led the Colonial Secretary to suspend the 1826 harbour and port improvement plan, and to prohibit virtually all such works thereafter. But news of a fresh disaster at Rogge Bay impelled Lord Goderich to action and he exempted the stone pier from the general moratorium imposed on public works at the Cape colony.

It must be observed that Viscount Goderich made the exception pending an estimate of the probable cost of the work, which he did not expect to be excessive, as it would be defrayed from local revenue. Declining to accept the offer of the shipowners, merchants and boatmen to pay for the new stone quay themselves, the Colonial Secretary instructed Sir Lowry Cole to undertake the project at state expense.

46 "South African Commercial Advertiser", 20.7.1831.

47 GH 23/9 pp. 526-27: copy, Cole — Goderich, 2.8.1831 (unnumbered despatch).

Funds were to be raised by mortgaging the annual wharfrage dues derived from the use of the old jetty, and by introducing savings into other state departments.

It is true that a considerable sum came in from wharfrage dues each year, but Sir Lowry Cole was aware that the annual surplus of approximately £1,600 would not be sufficient to pay for a new stone pier. Commerce and shipping had calculated that at least double the sum would be required. Sir Lowry's precautions were to be justified, when the Civil Engineer submitted an estimate of £16,804-2-1 for the work.

Granted that the siseable estimate included the cost of constructing offices for the wharf clerk, the tidewaiter and customs officials, yet it was still a considerable outlay for building a stone pier and the additional timber ammenure, which the Civil Engineer considered necessary for transporting blocks of stone to the construction site in rafts ⁴⁸.

48 GH 1/18, pp. 263-69; Gederich — Cole No. 53, 23.10.1831; GH 23/9, p. 561; Cole — Gederich No. 58, 28.9.1831; CO 5476, p. 98; copy, Governor's Annual Report for 1831 — Colonial Secretary, 4.7.1832; CO 403; Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 17.8.1832, Enclosure, Estimate ..., pp. 5-8.

CHAPTER III

INCREASING TRADE, 1833 - 1839

To the delight of the merchants, shipowners and boatmen of Cape Town, the Imperial Government at long last permitted a stone quay to be built at Table Bay and on 6th February, 1832, Viscount Goderich's instructions arrived at Cape Town aboard the "Iavinia".

The preliminary steps were taken and the Civil Engineer, Major Michell, was asked to select the best place for the work; he was also to prepare an estimate of the cost, along with detailed drawings of the new landing-place.

In his report, Major Michell pointed out that the merchants and ship-chandlers had been correct in believing that the vicinity of the Amsterdam battery would be the best location for the new marine work. It was also at the end of Bree Street that Henry Reveley had proposed to build a stone pier many years ago and the Port Captain also favoured the site. The reef north of the Amsterdam battery would check the fury of the winter winds and act as a breakwater to shield any stone jetty located in its neighbourhood. A stone pier near the Amsterdam would also be closer to town than one built near the Chavornnes, where there were dangerous rocks. Greater exposure of a quay to north-westerns near the Chavornnes would require a sturdier structure and hence involve greater expense ¹.

1 GE 1/18, p. 260; CO 4902, p. 449; Government Secretary — Civil Engineer, 31.7.1832; CO 403 No. 102, pp. 2-3.

Work began on the new quay with great alacrity, and before long a quarry was opened near the building site. The transportation of blocks of stone was to be expedited by installing a railway on the jetty. Building made rapid headway and by the end of August 1833, almost 770 ft. had been completed, the stone quay having already passed beyond the rocks adjoining the Amsterdam battery and was about to approach the open sea. So far, its construction had cost £2,316.

The previous Colonial Secretary, Viscount Goderich, had only provisionally assented to the commencement of the work on the strict understanding that he would soon be furnished with detailed estimate of its cost, and on the unexpressed, but no less definite assumption, that it would not be very expensive. For a costly undertaking could not be allowed, lest the outlay would strain the financial resources of the colony. Lord Goderich was anxious about the state of Cape finances. He was convinced that they were so precarious that even a single expensive public work might well cause the entire colony to become hopelessly insolvent. According to the promise made to Lord Goderich, the Cape government subsequently submitted a detailed estimate of the stone pier to his successor, Lord Stanley. It was calculated that almost £17,000 would be required for this purpose.

Lord Stanley was dismayed at the high cost involved; on the other hand, he was also fully aware of the necessity for such a project. Balanced between necessity and the menace of the economic collapse of the Cape colony, the Colonial Secretary was in a dilemma.

Indispensable though the construction of a stone pier would undoubtedly prove to British shipping and Cape commerce, the spectre of bankruptcy, compelled Lord Stanley to discontinue building operations at least for the time being².

Subsequently, the state of Cape finances might improve and the work could then be resumed.

2 GH 23/10, p. 247: copy, Acting Governor Wade — Stanley No. 6, 24.10.1833; Map M 1/1753, copy, Public Record Office (Copyright) MP 558 [CO 48/149] SM 1836 Sheet No. 1; GH 1/20, pp. 35-36: Stanley — Cole No. 2, 27.5.1833.

As might be expected, the fact that the Colonial Secretary had suspended the work, caused considerable anxiety at the Cape. Wanted for so long and anticipated so confidently, the promised new landing-place had now been deferred and nobody knew when it would be resumed. Commercial and shipping interests in Cape Town were particularly disconcerted by this turn of events while the Civil Engineer faced the gloomy prospect of his venture remaining unfinished for many a year. The Acting Governor, Lieutenant-Colonel Wade, was more optimistic. As a rule, he reflected, Colonial Secretaries did not hold office for long, and Lord Stanley might soon be replaced by a more accommodating administrator. Besides, it was always possible that Lord Stanley might change his mind and order the work to be resumed. To prepare for this event, the Acting Governor thought it advisable to preserve the quay from further erosion "until the decision of HM's Government shall be made known" ³.

It was ironic that the Colonial Secretary should, for purely financial reasons, have felt it desirable to postpone the construction of the landing-place, exactly when the depression had ended and the colony was looking forward to an era of relative prosperity. The revival of trade after 1853 can be ascribed to a change in the export trade of the Cape. Hitherto, exports of wine, wheat, barley and oats had predominated. After 1853, however, these foodstuffs declined in volume and wool - and to a lesser extent, skins - became the main Cape exports, sent out from Table Bay, the main "port" of the colony.

GROWTH OF WOOL REVENUES FROM TABLE BAY ⁴

1852-1899 (in lbs.)	
1852	79,224
1853	73,524
1854	90,008
1855	176,020
1856	236,629
1857	227,855
1858	286,246
1859	577,659

³ GH 25/10, p. 247: copy, Acting Governor Wade - Stanley No. 6, 24.10.1853.

⁴ A. Wilmet & J.C. Chase History of the Colony (Cape Town, 1869, 1st ed.), Appendix I, Part VI (1852 wool export figure); CO 5975, p. 172; Annual Cape Bluebook, 1853; CO 5976, p. 172; A.C.B., 1854; CO 5977, p. 158; A.C.B., 1855; CO 5978, p. 158; A.C.B., 1856; CO 5979, p. 116; A.C.B., 1857; CO 5980, p. 154; A.C.B., 1858; CO 5981, p. 158; A.C.B., 1859.

According to statistical tables extracted from Annual Cape Bluebooks, between 1832 and 1839, the volume of wool exported from Table Bay increased almost tenfold; bales of wool sent out from Cape Town almost doubled between 1835 and 1839. Wool became so important that, by 1840, it constituted the main export of the colony and remained so well into the last quarter of the 19th century, after which mineral exports altered the traditional pattern of trade. Similarly, the export of skins showed a substantial increase second only to that of wool. In 1831, 123,027 skins had been exported, but two years later, the total increased to 314,965. It must be pointed out, however, that whereas wool exports showed a consistent increase after 1833, the number of skins exported levelled off from 1836, after which they remained in the approximately 200,000 piece range until 1846. Compared with the 341,459 pieces exported in 1836, the annual number of skins exported in 1846 totalled 346,649 pieces.

In view of the appreciably greater volume of marine trade caused by the growth of the wool trade, and to a lesser extent that of skins, exported after 1833, the total tonnage of shipping using the roadstead showed an almost proportional increase. In comparison with the 63,065 tons of shipping, which had called in 1831, a total of 75,817 tons arrived in 1832 and by the end of 1833, the annual shipping tonnage reached 96,046 tons. It is no wonder, therefore, that the greater volume of trade caused the annual trade tonnage of shipping visiting Cape Town to increase from 36,351 tons in 1832 to a substantial 48,496 tons by the end of the following year.

As more ships came to carry away a growing volume of cargo from Cape Town, the number of vessels which put in at the anchorage grew in consequence. Before the revival of trade, only 277 ships had called in 1832, for example, but their number grew to 395 by the end of 1836⁵.

5 Annual Cape Bluebook: (Skins) CO 5974, p. 205, 1831; CO 5975, p. 172, 1833; CO 5976, p. 171, 1834; CO 5977, p. 158, 1835; CO 5978, p. 158, 1836; CO 5979, p. 116, 1837; CO 5980, p. 154, 1838; CO 5981, p. 158, 1839; CO 5982, p. 170, 1840; CO 5983, p. 168, 1841; CO 5984, p. 178, 1842; CO 5985, p. 198, 1843; CO 5986, p. 196, 1844; CO 5987, p. 197, 1845; CO 5988, p. 347, 1846; CO 5989, p. 238, 1847; CO 5990, p. 268, 1848; (Total Tonnages) LCA 6 No. 13: Port Captain, total tonnages, 1831-33, 28.6.1834; (Trade Tonnages) PC 10/2: trade tonnages, 1832-33; (Shipping Volume) PC 3/2: shipping volume, 1832 & 1836.

The space available for landing and shipping an increasing number of bales of wool became scarcer at the old jetty. The resultant congestion allied with the steady development of Cape Town, led to the establishment of the majority of new sheds and goods-yards at the other side of town, where there was more space available. A new commercial quarter was springing up at the end of Bree Street in the vicinity of the Amsterdam battery and the site of the incomplete stone quay. This development inconvenienced the movement of cargo. Instead of moving cargo between the stone pier and the sheds almost next to it, merchandise had to be taken - at considerable inconvenience, cost and delay - from warehouses to the old jetty at the other side of town. Almost a mile, in fact, separated the old landing-place from the majority of goods-yards and warehouses. Sheds, however, were only about a stone's throw away from the still incomplete stone quay; should it be resumed and ultimately completed, however, the movement of cargo would be greatly facilitated and the cost considerably reduced ⁶.

In order to accelerate cargo operations and reduce "... the injuries and losses sustained by the Trade and Shipping of this Port [sic] from the want of suitable establishments for landing and Shipping Goods", merchants made strenuous efforts to have work resumed on the stone quay ⁷.

On 12th October, 1853, a meeting was held in the rooms of the Commercial Exchange to consider the matter. The sponsors of the 1831 stone pier construction scheme resolved to persevere with their representations. They requested the Cape government to consider which alternative should be adopted; the completion of the stone landing-place as a public work at public expense, or permission for the sponsors of the project to finish the work at their own cost and according to their original design ⁸.

6 GH 23/10, pp. 270 & 272; copy, Wade - Stanley No. 10, 9.12.1853; GH 1/23, pp. 534-35; Enclosure, copy, Civil Engineer - Rear Admiral Warren, 3.10.1853, pp. 1-2.

7 CC 3: Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 29.4.1839, p. 5.

8 CC 3: Minutes, 12.10.1853; CC 386 No. 38: Commercial Exchange - Acting Government Secretary, 20.11.1853.

Again, the sponsors asked the authorities to complete the work and public opinion supported their plea. In view of the widespread desire for the completion of the stone quay, Lt.-Col. Wade tried to persuade the Colonial Secretary to assent to the wishes of the colonists and to order the stone pier to be completed. Since the venture had only been discontinued because of the high estimate previously submitted to Lord Stanley, the Acting Governor thought it timely to submit a new and considerably cheaper estimate. £10,200, he thought, would be ample, instead of the previous estimate of almost £17,000. Almost £7,000 could be saved by using conscript labour and two hundred convicts should be despatched from Great Britain for this purpose. They could easily be housed in the Amsterdam battery; not only would their escape be rendered more difficult - if not quite impossible -, but they would be situated almost at the building-site itself.

There had been great hopes as to the benefits of a Legislative Council for the Cape colony. The colonists in general and the Cape Town commercial community in particular, had entertained visions of securing a greater measure of financial control. This would enable them to devote larger funds to the promotion of internal communications and to the building of a port at the capital. It subsequently transpired, however, that they had overestimated their prospects. His Majesty's Government granted a Legislative Council to the Cape colonists and its first session was duly held on 2nd April, 1834, under the aegis of Sir Benjamin D'Urban, but the new legislature did not give the colonists the degree of financial control that they had anticipated. On the very next day, the Colonial Secretary revoked any further control over finances, which the colonists might otherwise have obtained. The proposed arrival of two hundred convicts at Cape Town was ruled out and Lord Stanley declared that in view of the colony's debts, the moment for attempting to complete an expensive stone pier was inopportune⁹.

9 CC 3; Minutes, 2.12.1833, p. 1; GH 23/10, pp. 273 & 276-77; GH 1/21, pp. 805-6; Stanley — D'Urban No. 24, 3.4.1834.

The Commercial Exchange tried to persuade the Colonial Secretary to reconsider his opinion and sent petition after petition to this effect. But the Colonial Secretary was not in a position to heed their pleas. Lord Stanley pointed out that while Cape finances were still unsound and the colony in debt to the Imperial Treasury, it would be inadvisable to consider undertaking large-scale, expensive public works at the Cape¹⁰.

Although the need for additional wharfrage space increased almost annually, it would not have been feasible to permit marine and commercial interests in the capital to complete the stone pier at their own expense and according to their own scheme. Merchants, boatmen and chandlers had been anticipating this, however, and had founded new ventures and bought land near the site of the incomplete stone landing-place. The need for completing it increased with the growth of trade. In 1835, for instance, besides the export of wool, there was an appreciable growth in the export of wheat, for as a result of the good harvest of the previous year, 28,209 sacks were exported from Table Bay¹¹.

But by 1836, however, work on the stone pier had still not been resumed. It is not particularly surprising, therefore, that three years after building had been discontinued, members of the Commercial Exchange were reluctantly compelled to admit that "... that important undertaking is allowed to remain unfinished without any apparent intention on the part of Government either to complete it, or to permit its being completed by the public"¹².

Accordingly, they began once more to think of ways of influencing both the Imperial Government and that of the Cape of Good Hope in an effort to have the stone pier completed and to this end merchants and shipping interests in Cape Town launched a new vigorous campaign. Instead of petitioning the Colonial Secretary to countenance the suspension order, members of the Commercial Exchange appealed to their colleagues in London. The Cape of Good Hope Trade Society had been formed specifically for the purpose of informing public opinion. The Society in London should now launch a powerful campaign to inform public opinion about the necessity for resuming the half-finished port facility at Cape Town.

10 CC 3: Minutes, 12.10.1833; CO 386 No. 47: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 15.9.1834 & No. 48: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 8.8.1835.

11 ICA 29 No. 5: Memorial of Cape Town merchants — Legislative Council, 3.12.1834, pp. 1-2; CO 5977, p. 158: Annual Cape Bluebook, 1835.

12 CC 3: Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 30.4.1836, p. 6.

Since the Cape government had persistently discouraged members of the Commercial Exchange from completing the quay themselves, the Cape authorities should also be approached in a more persuasive manner. For it was clear that as soon as Cape finances had improved to the extent that the British Treasury need no longer feel apprehensive about them, His Majesty's Government would direct the Governor of the Cape to complete the stone quay. As regarded funds, it was highly likely that the Colonial Office would direct the Cape authorities to use the wharfage revenues derived from shipping at Table Bay. It was, in fact, probably with this intent in mind that Lord Glenelg had recently dismissed a Cape suggestion that wharfage dues should be abolished at Table Bay; without wharfage money, how could funds be found for completing the stone pier at Cape Town? ¹³.

Since the Cape government derived substantial revenue from wharfage every year, and since the Colonial Secretary had indicated that the funds would be used for completing the stone landing-place, members of the Commercial Exchange were filled with hope and set to work to expedite matters.

There was even a brighter prospect. After the completion of the stone pier and the building of an adequate port, there might still be sufficient funds left from the wharfage revenues to construct a small harbour at Table Bay. Admittedly, this was mainly speculation. Merchants and shippers, however, were not sure whether it would be better to persuade Sir Benjamin D'Urban to build a port or a harbour at Cape Town. Would it, in truth, be better to complete the stone pier and to build a number of similar stone wharves, or should a harbour be constructed instead? As both propositions had their advantages, in July, 1836, the Commercial Exchange asked Sir Benjamin D'Urban to commission a group of experts to study the alternatives. Accepting their suggestion, the governor asked the Commercial Exchange to put forward names of experts on the subject. Names were consequently proposed and with the exception of the chairman, John Fairbairn, they comprised such merchants as S.B. Venning, J. Adamson and such stone pier enthusiasts as the indefatigable Francis Collison ¹⁴.

13 GH 1/22 (unnumbered pages): Glenelg — D'Urban No. 35, 9.2.1836, pp. 3-4.

14 CO 3985 No. 36: Petition of Shipowners & Merchants — D'Urban, n.d. /c. 3.7.1836/, pp. 1-3 & 7; Cape of Good Hope, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the State of Table Bay, with a view to the erection of Stone Wharfs & c., or the excavation of Docks in convenient situations. (Cape Town, 1937), pp. 1-2 & 16.

But since the commission of experts was only to hand in the report at the end of August, 1837, it was imperative that, in the meanwhile, some provision should be made to increase room for cargo operations and to minimize delay and inconvenience at Table Bay.

GROWTH OF TRADE TONNAGE ¹⁵
OF

	<u>Ships</u>	<u>Coasters</u>
1832	36,351	362
1833	48,496	488
1834	48,226	228
1835	50,539	436
1836	51,032	678
1837	63,001	736
1838	68,596	869

From 1836 until 1837, therefore, the trade tonnage of ships putting in at the anchorage rose from 51,032 tons to an appreciable amount of 63,001 tons; the freight carried by coasters alone increased from 678 to 736 tons.

Unsteady on its supports, the old jetty was not large enough to accommodate the growing volume of cargo conducted along it, nor was there much more room for handling cargo nearby. Bales of wool, assorted crates and miscellaneous packages, besides vats and barrels of wine, congested the wharf and cluttered up its surroundings. Wagons bringing further merchandise and taking away the goods brought by porters from the surf-boats to the beach, added to the ruddle.

Insufficient cranes aggravated the already prevalent delay in the handling of cargo because there were simply too few of them to reduce the time-consuming process of lowering and hoisting goods between the old wharf and the beach beneath.

Fortunately only a small portion of cargo was handled in this way, for the bulk of shipments at Cape Town were conveyed by porters and boatmen. Porters carried goods from the beach into the lighters waiting just beyond the breakers to take them to ships anchored far in the Bay. The African porters had an unenviable job. Even in winter they often had to wade up to their shoulders through the cold surf. Understandably they were not always disposed to work in these unfavourable conditions, especially when there was a cold north-wester blowing from the open sea. But even in calm weather, it was the antiquated means

of transportation itself that caused much of the delay. Portage of cargo was also costly since it often damaged goods conveyed in this way and although there was now a particularly acute need to move a greater volume of cargo, cargo boats were not able to accelerate the process. Only small consignments could be carried and the lighters were involved in lengthy trips between ship and shore. Contemporaries calculated that it took three times longer to land and ship cargo at Table Bay than at London Docks.

It is hardly surprising that not only traders and chandlers, but also captains and shipowners were becoming increasingly irritated. This was not their only complaint; there were many grievances about the expense of this inefficient service. Boatmen charged for every trip and for every ton of cargo carried, while the wages of porters swelled the costs of handling cargo¹⁶.

A radical change was needed, which would allow a larger volume of cargo to be transacted quickly, safely and cheaply, lest merchants continue to suffer from the same disadvantages. For as they were to express it themselves: "The want of prompt and efficient means of communication between the Shipping and the shore constituted the Chief obstacle to the increase of its [Cape Town's] maritime trade to an incalculable extent"¹⁷. Many a ship gave a wide berth to Table Bay, already justifiably notorious on account of its dangerous anchorage.

But at this stage, however, little could be done to remedy the inefficient arrangement or the chronic lack of space for wharfage operations. But something could be done — to accelerate the transport of goods between lighters and the shore. Merchants and shipping people in Cape Town advanced a novel idea. A number of rafts were to be built for conveying packages and small consignment of cargo between beach and boat. Admittedly, the proposal was not a panacea; nevertheless, it would be a temporary expedient. It would at least be useful until the Cape government could eventually finance the construction of a larger landing-place.

16 CO 366 No. 49: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 11.1.1837, p. 1 & No. 50: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 23.1.1837, pp. 1-2; CO 424 No. 101: Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry into the State of Table Bay ..., 22.8.1837, pp. 2-3 & 5-6.

17 CC 3: Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 29.4.1839, p. 7.

As always, the Cape government was prepared to make moderate concessions to both trade and shipping alike. But in view of financial difficulties, however, the authorities could not allow the substantial sums raised by wharfrage to be used for completing the stone wharf any more than they could be used for renovating the old jetty. When the Government Secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel John Bell adopted the advice of the merchants that the old jetty should at least be repaired and more cranes installed on it, the question arose of whether the general revenue could cover the cost. Unfortunately, however, the Legislative Council had estimated that only £215 would be required for repairing the old wharf in 1837, but according to Lt.-Col. Bell's calculations, £571 would be needed to preserve the tottering old landing-place for at least another winter. Once again, the old wharf was not thoroughly overhauled; it was merely patched up as before ¹⁸.

On the other hand, the proposal advanced by the Commercial Exchange for building a number of rafts had little appeal to Lt.-Col. Bell. He appreciated only too clearly that their introduction would not overcome the lack of storage and wharfrage accommodation. Besides, the Government Secretary foresaw other objections. Granted that rafts might quicken the despatch and receipt of goods between cargo-boats and the beach, yet they would require a large labour force. Employing more people would increase handling charges, already excessive in the eyes of shipping and trade. Furthermore, rafts could not be used constantly at an anchorage aptly described as 'Six months of south-easters, six months of north-westers and twenty four hours of sunshine'. Moving heavy, cumbersome rafts in strong winds and heavy seas would surely be a daunting task. They might even be driven against the old jetty and destroy it altogether.

In the opinion of the Cape government, therefore, a better remedy should be devised to dismiss the rafts proposed by marine and mercantile interests and the porters whom they had been designed to replace. John Bell considered that the solution lay in extending the jetty further into the sea, for this would make it possible to transfer cargo directly from the lighters on to the quayside or vice

18 CO 424 No. 101, p. 7 & No. 32: Acting Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 25.1.1837, Enclosure, Estimate of the probable expense of putting the wooden jetty in Table Bay into a proper state of repair [£570-12-6], p. 2; CO 386 No. 50, p. 1; CO 5303: Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 2.2.1837, p. 1, Financial Memorandum re Estimate of Wharf Repairs; CO 4909, p. 20: Government Secretary — Civil Engineer, 10.3.1837.

versa, without the use of porters or rafts. Most important of all, by extending the old jetty beyond the surf, there would be more space for wharfage operations, thereby removing one of the principal grievances of the users of Table Bay.

Unlike his previously impractical schemes — such as the 'detached' and the 'isolated' breakwater notions of 1828 and 1829 — it now seemed that Lt.-Col. Bell had at long last devised an acceptable remedy. His proposal to extend the jetty would only have been of limited benefit. The jetty was so fragile that any addition to it would have caused its collapse. There was also another disadvantage to his plan. Lighters could only have approached the intended annexe from one side. To summarise, it can be said that Bell's plan was an improvement on the raft proposition, but it would not really have resolved the need to improve facilities for moving cargo at Table Bay.

In view of the difficulties which the adoption of Bell's plan would have entailed, the Civil Engineer, Major Charles Mitchell, advocated the construction of two new quays instead. Why keep on repairing the old jetty and even contemplate extending it, if it would be more economical and surely more practical to build two new quays, half of wood, half of stone? Two small landing-places, of 60 ft. each, would be more lasting than Bell's proposal for a purely timber extension to the decaying landing-place. In addition, the dual jetties would permit cargo-boats to approach them on both sides, thereby accelerating the transit of merchandise. The only disadvantage, once again, was the cost, estimated at £450 each ¹⁹.

Although the persistent representations made by the Commercial Exchange since 1833 had not led to the resumption of work on the stone pier, this was not the case with the pleas which their pressure group, the Cape of Good Hope Trade Society, had been making in London. For the Cape Trade Society, as it was generally called, eventually succeeded in securing the support of the Imperial Government and the resumption of the stone pier.

In Cape Town, too, the Commercial Exchange had been persevering. For a long time members had maintained that the stone pier should either be financed by themselves, or from public funds to be raised on the security of the annual wharfage income.

19 ICA 7: Surveyor-General, Civil Engineer, Superintendent of Works & Water Works Dept., Estimate of the probable expenditure ... for ... 1857, pp. 1-2; CO 5305: Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 2.2.1857, p. 1; CO 456 No. B2: Surveyor-General & Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 28.3.1857, pp. 2-3.

The veteran Cape Town merchant, George Thompson, had already publicized the scheme in 1827. But since the Cape government no more approved of this plan than that private individuals should be permitted to complete the stone pier themselves, the Cape Trade Society decided to modify their proposals in the hope of having them accepted. Accordingly, they advised the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, that the development of a port should be carried out, not by private capital, but from the revenues obtained by the Cape government from shipping at Table Bay. As the completion of a stone pier alone would not provide sufficient wharfage accommodation, the Cape Trade Society requested Lord Glenelg to sanction the construction of substantial docks. Admittedly, the development of such a vast undertaking would require more money than for the completion of a single stone quay. The Cape Trade Society, therefore, advised that not only should wharfage dues be used for this purpose, but all other dues obtained at Table Bay should be devoted to financing the construction of docks. In spite of an attempt to do so, wharfage dues had not been abolished and they yielded a substantial sum which could be used for this purpose. For the year ending on 5th July, 1836, for example, wharfage dues had brought in a total of £2,358-4-7½.

As the Cape government had, despite the frequent pleas of the Commercial Exchange, refused to permit a group of private individuals to construct a public utility at Cape Town, the Cape Trade Society devised a new plan. Instead of suggesting that private persons should undertake the programme, commissioners should be appointed by the government. The Commissioners would supervise the construction of the stone pier and they could subsequently undertake more elaborate port improvements, like the construction of docks, for instance ²⁰.

By 1836, the two principal reasons for postponing work on the stone pier had not yet been overcome. In the view of the Imperial Government and the Imperial Treasury in particular, the finances of the Cape had not yet shown an appreciable improvement, nor had the colony cancelled its debts to the Treasury. Despite the somewhat discouraging state of affairs, however, the Cape government had also been urging the Colonial Secretary to resume building the stone quay. Now that the Cape Trade Society was impressing the same course of action on him, Lord Glenelg was fully convinced that he should no longer allow

20 GH 1/23, pp. 521-24; Glenelg — D'Urban No. 110, 29.12.1836, Enclosure No. 1, copy, Treasury Secretary — Secretary to Colonial Secretary, 30.11.1836 & Enclosure No. 2: Government Secretary — Attorney-General, 23.8.1837.

the stone pier to remain incomplete, as this was adversely affecting both shipping and trade at Cape Town. The Colonial Secretary, therefore, undertook to persuade the Treasury and the Committee of the Privy Council on Trade to agree to the completion of the port facility at the Cape. The Privy Council, it will be remembered, had considered the construction of a breakwater in 1825, but nothing had come of the plan, which Huskisson had been considering as desirable for the interests of shipping and trade in general. The approval of the Privy Council to his plan was thus almost certain; the Council, in fact, agreed to Lord Glenelg's scheme unconditionally.

But it was another matter with the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, who had their reservations and who stipulated certain conditions in consequence. As the Cape government was still heavily indebted to the Imperial Treasury, it is understandable that the Secretary to the Treasury should have felt it inadvisable to authorize the Cape Town harbour dues to be used for financing the development of a port at Table Bay. With the exception of the wharfage dues, no further harbour duties should be used to finance the additional port facilities, which the Cape Trade Society was urging upon the Colonial Office. The Secretary to the Treasury declared that the only port improvement which the Lords Commissioners could endorse for Table Bay would comprise the completion of the stone quay; further port works could not be considered for the time being.

The wharfage dues were to be pledged as collateral to raise a sum adequate for completing the stone pier. On 29th December, 1836, therefore, Lord Glenelg instructed Sir Benjamin D'Urban to resume work on the pier and to mortgage the Table Bay wharfage dues. He stipulated that the work was to be supervised, not by private persons, but by a Commission, which was to be instituted for this purpose. The government Civil Engineer, Major Charles Michell, was to be in charge of the actual building operations²¹.

21 GH 1/23, pp. 519 & 523; Glenelg — D'Urban No. 110, 29.12.1836.

It must be remembered that it had taken the Imperial Government more than three years to order the resumption of work on the pier. By that time, there was not much left of the original work, which had suffered considerable erosion. In addition, the original sponsors of the scheme had lost much of their pristine enthusiasm. True, they had spent three years in campaigning for its resumption, but now that the Colonial Secretary had eventually heeded their pleas, they lost interest in the continuation of the work. They had, in fact, developed certain reservations about the entire project.

For although the current Colonial Secretary had agreed to continue the work, there was no guarantee that his successor would be inclined to feel the same way. The Imperial Government and the Commissioners of the Treasury might again become nervous about Cape finances and impose yet another moratorium on public works, along with strict economy and retrenchment. Were the work not to be interrupted, postponed or abandoned again, its completion would take years to accomplish. By 1836 the stone pier had been reduced by the sea and hence its completion would have taken even longer than expected. Against the uncertainty and inconvenience of resuming the stone pier were balanced the hope and more than likely prospect that further space for wharfrage would soon become available. Sir Benjamin D'Urban had indicated that he would study the possibility of establishing two dwarf jetties to the west of the old wharf and merchants and shippers dismissed the idea of the completion of the stone pier for the greater advantages of having two small jetties built instead. They would at least serve as an interim measure until a new and larger timber quay could eventually be constructed²².

There was another good reason why the stone pier project had generally fallen into disfavour. For in 1836, Sir Benjamin D'Urban had commissioned members of the Commercial Exchange to study the advantages of two alternatives; either to complete the stone pier and to build similar stone wharves, or to establish a first-class port, complete with docks. On 22nd August, 1837, the Commissioners, of whom 8/9-ths represented the marine and mercantile interests of Cape Town, presented their recommendations to the Cape government.

As the construction of the two dwarf jetties contemplated by Sir Benjamin D'Urban could soon be expected to alleviate the persistent lack of wharfage space, the Commissioners dismissed the idea of the exclusive construction of a port and rejected the plan proposed by John Chisholm for the building of docks and a seawall along the foreshore. The Commissioners felt that such a plan would not be advisable, although it presaged the Cape Town foreshore reclamation scheme, which members of the Commercial Exchange were to favour with great enthusiasm in 1845. But in 1857, however, it was rejected, ostensibly on account of the large expense involved, but in reality because the Commissioners wanted both a port and a harbour to be formed at Table Bay, in accordance with the plan P.H., which Captain Knox had advised the Commercial Exchange to consider a dozen years ago. For a commercial wharf along the shore would furnish additional wharfage accommodation and be nearer than the old wharf to the majority of sheds and goods-yards than the stone pier, or rather what was left of it ²³.

But the Lords Commissioners of the Imperial Treasury had expressly forbidden the Cape Town harbour dues to be used to finance port extensions and the realisation of the scheme suggested by the 1857 Commissioners became somewhat questionable; where was the money to come from? The Commissioners had calculated that at least £160,000 would be required to carry out Captain Knox's combined harbour and port programme. Even were the British Government to agree to the importation of British convict labour, the small saving thus effected would still mean a substantial outlay, which the colony would have to incur in financing the construction of two dwarf jetties.

It was clear to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, therefore, that since the wharfage duties could only be devoted to the construction of the stone pier and the Imperial Treasury had expressly prohibited harbour dues to be used in improving port facilities at Table Bay generally, it would be impossible to build the two dwarf jetties he contemplated from the wharfage dues; it would be impossible to use wharfage revenue to repair the old jetty. Under these circumstances, Sir Benjamin D'Urban resolved to postpone the appointment of trustees, or commissioners, for the stone pier. Instead, he would press ahead with constructing two dwarf jetties from the general revenue.

In view of the Civil Engineer's estimate of £900 for building two dwarf jetties, the Cape government decided to ask a contractor to begin building the first one and to defer the construction of the second one until a later date. It was just as well, for it subsequently transpired that the construction of a single dwarf landing-place alone would cost £1,107-7-7, instead of £900 previously estimated for building two small quays. The discrepancy in the estimates was startling. The subsequent larger estimate was given after the Civil Engineer had consulted the master boatmen in Table Bay and had, in consequence, resolved to treat the timber portion of the dwarf jetty with an anti-rot solution ²⁴.

In December 1837 the Legislative Council voted £1,200 for building two small jetties and repairing the old wharf and the cranes. The Council believed the sum to be adequate, as the Civil Engineer did not anticipate that there would be much extra expense in laying the foundations for both jetties within two feet of the surface of the water ²⁵.

Although the Legislative Council had voted the funds, the dwarf jetty could not be built immediately since the Cape government had been so alarmed by the dangerous state of the old jetty that it had spent the money intended for building the new dwarf quay on repairs to the old fabric. The cost of repairing the old landing-place had been so great that nothing remained for the dwarf jetty.

Even had money been freely available in 1837, the work could not have commenced for purely technical reasons. The Civil Engineer's department was reluctant to begin building operations in winter. Construction would have to be postponed until the summer of 1838; by that time, too, the Legislative Council would have voted new funds for the project. Understandably, members of the Commercial Exchange were rather annoyed at this state of affairs. Money intended for a new landing-place had been spent in undertaking ineffectual repairs to the old wharf, which had not been rendered serviceable in proportion to the funds spent on it, the old fabric being beyond repair. Money had been wasted and the outcome of it all was that the previous inconveniences continued ²⁶.

24 CO 5304, p. 152: Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 6.3.1838; CO 5304, p. 57: Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 23.8.1837; CO 456 No. 241: Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 27.9.1837, pp. 1-3.

25 LCA 2, p. 39: Minutes, 27.12.1837; LCA No. 44: Ordinance 13-1837, Ordinance ... for applying ... £144,038 7s. 2d. for ... 1838, p. 8; GH 23/13, pp. 384-85: copy, Napier — Stanley No. 13, 13.1.1842.

26 CO 386 No. 54: Pencilled annotation by Governor & Government Secretary, pp. 1-2; CC 3: Minutes, 20.12.1837.

Sir Benjamin D'Urban had made concessions to the interests of shipping and trade alike by agreeing to the extension of port facilities, but the lack of adequate security to ships at anchor was still a problem. The Civil Engineer was keen to complete the stone pier and the new governor, Sir George Napier, thought it advisable to do so, since as Major Michell pointed out, "... the want of it drives away shipping from our Bay, winter after winter from a well founded dread of perishing without even a hope of assistance from the shore ..." ²⁷. Aware of the truth of the Civil Engineer's words, Sir George Napier decided to sound out the views of the marine and mercantile community in Cape Town. On 6th March, 1838, therefore, he enquired whether members of the Commercial Exchange would agree to completing the stone pier, by now long deferred and almost completely eroded away. Would the merchants and shipping people of Cape Town agree to serve as Commissioners on a board to be appointed for completing the stone pier? Or should the stone pier completion project be abandoned altogether and a new wharf built at Table Bay instead? In order to prepare for the resumption of work on the pier in October, 1838, the governor sent Major Michell overseas, to purchase equipment and recruit specialists. Three experienced divers were also to be recruited, along with two cranes and a diving bell ²⁸.

Between 1838 and 1839, the volume of shipping had grown remarkably at Cape Town, as shown by the table:

SHIPS AT TABLE BAY ²⁹

1832-1839

1832	277
1833	345
1834	319
1835	362
1836	395
1837	398
1838	465
1839	505

- 27 GO 478 No. 161: copy, Michell — Colonial Under-Secretary (Sir James Stephen), 27.7.1829 [recte 1839], Inclosure No. 3, Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 30.10.1839, p. 8.
- 28 GO 5304, p. 153: Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 6.3.1838, p. 3; GH 23/12, p. 51: copy, Napier — Stanley No. 26, 22.3.1838, p. 1 & Enclosure No. 3, Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 15.3.1838, pp. 1-2; LGA 2: Minutes, 28.12.1837.
- 29 FC 3/2: Table Bay shipping numbers, 1832-1839 (abstracts).

Despite the growth of shipping at Cape Town, the lack of cranes impeded the transit of cargo at the old wharf and any hope of its quicker despatch and reception could not yet be realized. For although the stone portion of the work had already been laid and the timber portion virtually completed, the dwarf jetty was still not in use. It lacked a landing-platform, as the Civil Engineer's department was treating the planks with an anti-decay solution. The slow and expensive movement of cargo was intolerable to shipping, especially since vessels had to stay anchored in the open roadstead and were in continual danger of shipwreck ³⁰. In November 1838, in an attempt to increase business and to attract more ships to Table Bay, a group of enterprising shippers and provision merchants, who included Messrs. H. Watson, Charles S. Pillans and William Cadney, established the Cape Town Commercial Wharf Company " ... for the purpose of obviating ... the great delay, loss and expence, which has hitherto been sustained in the landing and shipment of goods ..." ³¹.

In July 1839, the first of the dwarf jetties was only three months short of completion, when Sir George Napier introduced the draft of the Stone Pier bill in the Legislative Council. The draft ordinance For Constructing and Maintaining a Stone Pier in Table Bay, as it was officially called, proposed that the wharfage revenues should be mortgaged exclusively for the purpose of completing the stone pier and for keeping it in adequate repair. For as recently as May, 1839, the Secretary to the Imperial Treasury had again emphasized that the Table Bay wharfage revenues were to be used exclusively for raising money for completing the stone pier. Should any funds remain over, he declared, they could neither be devoted to building a second dwarf jetty, nor be allocated for financing the building of a new and larger landing-place. Surplus funds should be used to keep the stone pier in repair. Should any money remain, it was to be put back into the treasury as part of the general revenue.

Since the draft ordinance stipulated the use of money to be raised on the guarantee of the wharfage revenues for the purpose of completing the stone pier and keeping it in repair afterwards, members of the Commercial Exchange appealed against the proposal.

30 CC 3; Minutes, 29.12.1838; CO 5304, pp. 233-34; Government Secretary --- Commercial Exchange, 9.1.1839, pp. 1-2.

31 CO 424 No. 129; Memorial of the Cape Town Commercial Wharf Co. --- Napier, 3.11.1838, p. 1.

They asked Sir George Napier to alter its provisions, in order to allow for using the remainder of the wharfage revenues to maintain the old pier, as well as to build an additional number of jetties in future ³².

The merchants and shipowners of Cape Town did not agree with Sir George Napier's plan to complete the stone pier. It would not be as beneficial as a larger wharf — or, at least, the provision of a second dwarf jetty in the interim. For it would not be feasible to consider completing the stone landing-place from the funds, which were to be obtained on the security of the wharfage revenues alone. They could not be expected to cover the immense cost of completing the marine work, unless the Cape government could make a substantial contribution from the general revenue. This was unlikely.

In addition, the very provisions of the draft ordinance would be detrimental to the existing port facilities. There was no provision to repair the old wharf and the dwarf jetty from the wharfage income derived annually from their use. Without money for repairs, how long could these structures be expected to last, whilst no funds could be used from the wharfage revenue to preserve the very sources of the money intended for completing the stone pier? It would probably take years to complete the stone structure, and in the meanwhile, both the dwarf jetty and the old wharf would probably fall into complete ruin. During the construction of the stone pier then, there would be even less wharfage accommodation at Table Bay than the already insufficient space about which there were such bitter complaints.

The majority of the merchants of Cape Town, like their colleagues at the Commercial Wharf Company, felt that the Cape government should use the modest income derived from the wharfage dues to provide more space for the convenience of marine trade instead. Rather than contemplate completing an inordinately expensive stone pier, Sir George Napier should use the money to be raised on the security of the wharfage duties to construct a second dwarf jetty, either near the Customs House or at the end of Bree Street. Remaining funds should be devoted to maintaining the old jetty and the dwarf quay.

32 ICA 10 No. 14, Minute 23: Draft Ordinance from Constructing and Maintaining a Stone Pier in Table Bay, 10.7.1839, pp. 1-2; GH 1/26, pp. 12-13; Glenalg — Napier No. 150, 10.1.1839, Enclosure, copy, Treasury Secretary — Colonial Under-Secretary (Sir James Stephen), 27.12.1838, pp. 3-4; CC 3: Minutes, Special Meeting, 29.7.1839, pp. 1-2.

It would be highly unlikely that the money to be placed on the security of the mortgage bond would even cover the payment of interest and the amortization should, therefore, be part of the general revenue to complete the stone pier, and any funds remaining after the construction of a second stone pier for repairs to the existing wharves 35.

The Cape Government was in a dilemma. The money to be raised from mortgaging the wharves would not cover the cost of completing the stone pier. Additional funds could, however, be raised by mortgaging to build either a second stone pier, or the longer wharf, which the Commercial Exchange had wanted ever since they had put forward the



Elevation showing the progress of the Work

approach for loans.

THE GOVERNMENT... THE STONE PIER AT THE FOOT OF BREE STREET 1832-33... have believed that the owners of the Commercial Exchange would subscribe £5,000 towards building the stone pier in the Bree Street wharf, and might again be prepared to raise funds for the pier, but had not carried out. When he asked the right authorities for completing the stone pier whether they would complete the work, they were no longer interested in the subject.

35 "Cape Colony Government Accounts", 1832-33, Annual Report of the Cape Colony Government (Cape Town, 1833), pp. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

36 LIA 10 No. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

It would be highly unlikely that the money to be pledged on the security of the wharfage dues would even cover the payment of interest and the authorities should, therefore, use part of the general revenue to complete the stone quay, and any funds remaining after the construction of a second dwarf jetty for repairs to the existing wharves ³³.

The Cape government was in a dilemma. The money to be derived from mortgaging the wharfage duties would not cover the costs of completing the stone pier. Sufficient funds could, however, be made available to build either a second dwarf jetty, or the larger wharf, which the Commercial Exchange had wanted ever since they had put forward the proposal to use rafts. But the Cape government could neither build the second dwarf jetty, nor a new wharf because the Commissioners of the Imperial Treasury had distinctly declared that the wharfage dues should only be mortgaged for the sole purpose of completing the stone quay. The suggestion recently advanced by the Commercial Exchange that the stone pier should be financed from the general revenue, did not find favour with Sir George Napier. The Cape government did not have the funds for carrying such an undertaking to completion. Besides, the appropriations for 1839 had already been voted and no provision had been made to finance the completion of the stone pier. Indeed, the general revenue voted for 1839 was just sufficient to pay for the usual expenses of government, without being able to meet any extra outlay ³⁴.

How the Government Secretary proposed to pay for completing the stone jetty is not clear. The authorities had no money themselves, the wharfage dues, if mortgaged, would not yield sufficient revenue, and neither the Imperial Government nor private capital at the Cape had been approached for loans.

The Government Secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel Ball, might conceivably have believed that the members of the Commercial Exchange who had subscribed £3,300 towards building the stone pier in the first place, might again be prepared to raise funds for the project and see it carried out. When he asked the eight candidate commissioners for completing the stone pier whether they would complete the work, they were no longer interested in the scheme.

33 "South African Commercial Advertiser", 3.8.1839, Annual Report of the Cape Town Commercial Wharf Co., 29.7.1839; LCA 10 No. 14, Minute 24; Memorial of the Inhabitants of Cape Town — Napier & Legislative Council, n.d. [c. 3.8.1839], pp. 1-3; Minute 25; Memorial of Merchants and other Inhabitants of Cape Town — Napier & Legislative Council, 7.8.1839, p. 2.

34 LCA 10 No. 14, Minute 26; Napier's Minute — Legislative Council, 10.8.1839, p. 3 & Minute 23; Napier's Address — Legislative Council, 10.7.1839, p. 10.

Having been informed that the wharfage dues did not yield more than £3,000 per year and that the Civil Engineer calculated that at least £10,200 would be needed to finish the project, the potential commissioners, who include Messrs. Hamilton Ross, H. Watson, C.F. Pillans and William Cadney, perceived that the wharfage income would not be able to finance the completion of the stone landing-place. They declined the offer to become commissioners and suggested that only the surplus of the wharfage revenues should be mortgaged to complete the stone structure at Rogge Bay ³⁵.

On 10th August, 1839, in view of the divergence of opinion between the official one, that is the completion of the stone pier, and the interests of commerce and shipping in Cape Town for the construction of a new and more modest landing-place which the wharfage revenues would cover adequately, Sir George Napier referred the dispute to the Legislative Council Committee and withdrew the draft Stone Pier bill for the time being. In order to be fully informed about the actual cost of building a second dwarf jetty, he asked the Acting Civil Engineer, Mr. John Skirrow, to prepare an estimate of the probable expense of constructing it at the foot of Bree Street adjacent to the Whalefishery ³⁶.

The Acting Civil Engineer suggested that it would be feasible to construct another wharf, half of stone, half of timber, near the Whalefishery for the sum of only £2,048 7s. 2d. The timber portion would comprise of planking based on a foundation of sturdy piles of teak wood. This would not only provide more wharfage space, but also expedite cargo operations. For boats would be able to approach the projected new quay from both sides and two cranes would also be installed on the new quay, at the junction of the stone and wood work, to expedite the haulage of merchandise from the cargo-boats directly along the inclined side of the wharf.

Since the cost of building the quay would be less than the income derived from the wharfage revenue, the Cape government could pay for the work without being obliged to secure supplementary funds from the general revenue of the colony.

35 ICA 10 No. 14 Minute 25: Government Secretary's Memorandum re Conference with candidate stone pier completion commissioners, 6.8.1839, pp. 1-3. The other candidate commissioners were Messrs. J.B. Edden, A. Chiappini, T. Sutherland and R.W. Eaton (Ibid., p. 1.).

36 ICA 2, p. 148: Minutes, 10.8.1839; ICA 10 No. 14, Minute 26: Napier's Minute — Legislative Council, 10.8.1839, pp. 2-3; CO 4912: Government Secretary — Acting Civil Engineer, 24.8.1839, p. 1.

Since merchants and shipping people requested the government to build a larger wharf, Lt.-Col. Bell asked the Commercial Exchange to make a modest contribution to help cover the costs of a work, which would be of greatest benefit to the mercantile and shipping interests of Cape Town. The Cape government would build a better and larger landing-place, provided that members of the Commercial Exchange subscribed a sum of money, purchased land and buildings near the Wharf and transferred the property to the government as the site for the new wharf ³⁷. Now that the Cape authorities were about to construct the new and larger landing-place, which shippers and chandlers had desired since 1837, they cheerfully collected £2,900, bought the site of the new jetty and ceded the area to the Cape government as evidence of their interest and goodwill.

In presenting the report of the Legislative Council's Committee, Mr. J.B. Ebdon pointed out that whilst merchants in the old part of town near the Castle could still use the old landing-place, there was no jetty for the convenience of trade in the new commercial quarter at the end of Bree Street. A new and larger landing-place should be built there and the stone pier should be deferred until that had been done. Members of the Commercial Exchange had already shown their willingness to help the authorities to pay for building a new quay. Since the stone pier should be postponed, there would be no point in nominating a board of commissioners to complete it.

Having himself declined to serve on the proposed commission, Mr. Ebdon pointed out that the Cape government would find it easier than private persons serving as commissioners to raise funds for the new wharf and to pay interest on the loan from the wharfage income. Hence the authorities should secure finance for the work and on 23rd September, 1839, the Legislative Council unanimously passed a resolution to build a new, or North Jetty, at the end of Bree Street, for a total of £2,351 10s. 7d. against the wharfage revenues ³⁸.

- 37 CO 478 No. 119: Acting Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 2.9.1839, p. 1 & Enclosure, Estimate ...; p. 3; CO 386 No. 71: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 21.9.1839, p. 1; CO 4912, pp. 338-39; Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 13.9.1839, pp. 1-2; CO 4913, p. 29; Government Secretary — Acting Civil Engineer, 21.9.1839.
- 38 CO 5476, p. 152: Napier's Annual Report for 1838 [recte 1839] — General, 27.12.1839, p. 8; LCA 10 No. 14, Minute 31: Report, Committee of Legislative Council — Napier, 23.9.1839, pp. 1-5; LCA 2, pp. 155-56; Minutes, 23.9.1839.

CHAPTER IV

PORT, HINTERLAND AND HARBOUR

1839 - 1848

"There may, perhaps, be much debating,
Reckoning, guessing and calculating;
Whilst others may be ruminating,
But yes, or nay, should be the thing"

H. Dempster "Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet"
(Cape Town, 1841), p. 7

In October 1839, it will be remembered, the decision had been taken to build a new wharf at the end of Bree Street instead of completing the half-eroded stone pier. This step had been taken in response to the plea of maritime and mercantile interests in Cape Town for the provision of a new landing-place, and it was hoped at the time that the new quay would finally overcome the chronic need for the additional wharfage space necessitated by the substantial growth of trade.

But such expectations were not to be fulfilled. During the construction of the new wharf, or North Quay, the volume of trade handled at Rogge Bay showed prodigious growth, as illustrated by the following table:

WOOL EXPORTED FROM TABLE BAY

1839 - 1848	
(lbs.)	
1839	377,639
1840	509,597
1841	573,640
1842	519,285
1843	543,377
1844	936,269
1845	1,106,554
1846	1,082,191
1847	1,135,638
1848	1,590,952

It can be seen that it was primarily due to the export of wool from Cape Town that total trade showed such a large increase; between 1838 and 1840, for example, wool exports grew from 286,246 lbs. to 509,597 lbs.¹

It was soon clear, therefore, that even whilst under construction, the new landing-place would be inadequate.

So merchants, shippers and boatmen began considering the advisability of enlarging and extending the new wharf whilst it was still under construction; they also began to consider ways of speeding up the despatch of cargo. Consequently, in May 1841, a suggestion was made that the new wharf should slope gently into the sea, as cargo could be conveyed more easily along an inclined plane than a horizontal quay. This was a practical and not too costly suggestion and the Cape government adopted it in consequence. The North Quay was given a declivity of $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet on its seaward side and extended by an additional 13 feet. The extension was still not sufficient, and in June 1841, therefore, a further extension of 50 feet was sanctioned in consequence of renewed mercantile pleas; the wharf was also declined further towards the level of the sea².

- 1 CO 5980: Annual Cape Bluebook 1838, p. 154; CO 5981, 1839, p. 158; CO 5982, 1840, p. 170; CO 5983, 1841, p. 168; CO 5984, 1842, p. 178; CO 5985, 1843, p. 198; CO 5986, 1844, p. 196; CO 5987, 1845, p. 197; CO 5988, 1846, p. 347; CO 5989, 1847, p. 238; CO 5990, 1848, p. 268.
- 2 CO 505 No. 81: Commercial Exchange — Government Secretary, 11.5.1841, p. 2 & Enclosure Cape Town merchants — Commercial Exchange, 7.5.1841; CO 4915, p. 217: Government Secretary — Actg. Civil Engineer, 27.5.1841 & p. 270: Government Secretary — Actg. Civil Engineer, 22.6.1841.

These extensions of the new wharf were, at best, only palliatives; they in no way provided the extra accommodation required by shipping and maritime trade at Rogge Bay. Consequently, merchants and shippers began to ask themselves why the dwarf jetty should not be extended towards the sea in the same way that the North Wharf had been. Such a plan would not be expensive; all that would be required would be to add an annexure on to the dwarf jetty. But why be content with small improvements? Why should the Cape government not build the second dwarf jetty, which it had long considered and which the Civil Engineer himself had advocated? Surely no official opposition could be expected to such a plan?

But the Cape authorities were not in a position to consider the representations of commerce and shipping. The construction of the new landing-place had been expensive; up to the end of August, 1841, £6,464 lls. 2½d. having been spent on the work. In view of the formidable expense already incurred, the Cape government was reluctant to consider constructing a second dwarf jetty. Besides, not only was the proposal looked on with disfavour on financial grounds, but the Cape government did not believe that there would be any necessity for building a second dwarf jetty at all. For it was officially believed that once the new quay had been completed, the chronic lack of wharfage space would at last be overcome. The new jetty could be expected to attract most of the trade at Table Bay, thereby lessening the pressure of business on the dwarf jetty and the old wharf. The Cape government, therefore, was not prepared to adopt a proposal made by the Cape Town Commercial Wharf Company that a second dwarf jetty should be built immediately³.

It should not be inferred, however, that the authorities were insensible to the necessity for inaugurating a policy of public improvements and for building numerous new public works in the colony. There was a particular need for improvements because the policy of retrenchment and economy followed on the advice of an apprehensive Treasury had limited repairs on public buildings and deferred plans for new roads and bridges. Sir George Napier, then governor of the Cape, was particularly keen to start a public improvements programme and to build a number of roads and lighthouses; but in 1840, however, it was not possible to inaugurate a comprehensive public works policy.

3 CO 5305, p. 266; Government Secretary — Commercial Exchange, 13.9.1841; CO 505 No. 63; Commercial Exchange — Acting Government Secretary, 16.10.1841, pp. 2-3, Enclosure, Commercial Wharf Co. — Commercial Exchange, 11.10.1841; CO 498 No. 107; Collector of Customs — Acting Government Secretary, 12.11.1841, p. 1.

No funds could be voted by the Legislative Council for building roads, bridges and lighthouses, or other amenities, as long as the colony's debts remained outstanding. The burden of indebtedness was formidable; in 1840, for example, it approximated to £33,000, an appreciable burden for a small country.

True, public works might have been defrayed from alternative sources of local revenue. The Cape government might, for example, have resorted to the sale of crown lands. But such a course of action did not particularly appeal to the authorities. The fact that it was considered showed the desperate need of the government for funds. The need to find money for large-scale public improvements even compelled the authorities to consider the likelihood of resorting to cheap, inflationary paper finance. The policy had, after all, been in vogue under the administration of the Earl of Caledon in 1809 and Sir George Napier was even forced to consider the only policy, which seemed to offer an acceptable alternative to allowing the colony to sink into stagnation. No assistance could be expected from the Imperial Government, which could not adopt a policy already rejected by an apprehensive Treasury, which was reluctant to sanction a proposal made by the governor of the Cape for the issue of additional paper money, part of which should be used for financing public improvements. In May 1840, the Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, observed that such a fiscal and public works policy could not be considered for the time being. The British Government could not allow the Cape colony to issue extra notes on the specific security of the pound sterling itself. The authorities at the Cape should, therefore, Lord Russell advised, defer the plan until the finances of the colony had improved. In the meanwhile, however, a most energetic attempt should be made to reduce the large public debt and no new notes should be issued before its cancellation.

It was not, perhaps, unexpected that Sir George Napier was filled with gloom; when would the Cape debt be cancelled? it would probably take years to do so. In the meanwhile, public buildings would fall into disrepair and all development plans remain cancelled. No wonder that the Legislative Council advised the governor to raise money by some means or other, lest the colony fall into stagnation. There proved, however, to be little prospect of finding funds adequate for both improvements and new roads⁴.

4 LCA 11 Minute 67; Napier's speech — Legislative Council, 3.8.1840, pp. 1-6 & Minute 86; copy, Russell — Napier No. 56, 26.3.1840, pp. 1 & 7-8 & Minute 86, Resolution No. 13 of Legislative Council re Proposed Re-issue of Government Paper Money, 27.8.1840, pp. 7-8.

A renewed plea made by the Cape government for permission to issue new money and to use a portion to finance public works, was answered in the same vein. For as Lord Russell informed the governor of the Cape colony respecting the views of the Treasury Commissioners, "... their Lordships still remain of opinion, that no ... additional issue of Notes ... on the plea of carrying on Public Works, or otherwise, either can or ought to be permitted on the part of Her Majesty's Government, until that of the Colony shall have made arrangements for the redemption or liquidation of the already existing Paper Debt ..." ⁵.

The Cape government was thus precluded from devoting any funds to providing additional facilities for embarking and landing cargoes at Table Bay; and building new warehouses for storing merchandise there. Increasing traffic and trade made it imperative that shipping business should no longer be inconvenienced and often interrupted, by adverse weather conditions, as such delays caused needless expense and discouraged ships from putting in at Cape Town. Even though no additional wharfage and storage space could be provided, it would nevertheless be advisable to accelerate cargo operations and to ensure greater security in the process.

In 1841, a proposal to attain both objectives was put forward by Henry Dempster, who contrived an ingenious scheme to pay for these improvements as well. In view of the improbability of obtaining public funds for realising his scheme, Dempster reverted to the old policy, which had already been practiced under Lord Macartney — 'let the user pay'. Dempster was confident that captains and shipowners would gladly pay for the benefits of greater safety and speed in the handling of cargo. There might be no need to petition the Imperial Treasury for funds. Her Majesty's Government could, surely, be relied upon to send the requisite supplies of labour for realising the project. Instead of contemplating the construction of a second dwarf jetty, as desired by the Commercial Wharf Company in particular and the Commercial Exchange in general, Dempster thought it wiser to discard the jetty proposal altogether.

5 ICA 12 Minute 86: copy, Russell — Napier No. 132, 1.1.1841, Enclosure, copy, Assistant Secretary to the Imperial Treasury — Colonial Under-Secretary (Sir James Stephen), 29.12.1840, p. 2.

A second dwarf jetty would, no doubt, provide more wharfage space, but as the Cape government was reluctant to consider building it, Dempster thought that the dwarf jetty should be extended further into the sea instead. This would give all three jetties in Cape Town the same length; it would enable ships to take in and discharge cargo directly onto the wharves themselves. A number of wind-screens, 60 feet high and 10 feet wide, might be placed on top of the jetties to protect ships from storms and gales. Further shelter might be provided by anchoring ships between the wharves, their stems attached to moorings sunk in mid-channel between the landing-places themselves.

Whether Dempster's scheme would have obtained official approval was questionable. It was even dubious whether the Cape Town Commercial Exchange would have adopted his programme. Members of the Commercial Exchange were, of course, concerned at the lack of space for conducting shipping business; they were also perturbed by the lack of a harbour at Cape Town. As recently as April 1841, for example, they had complained that the lack of official interest had caused the failure to appoint a commission, which would have studied ways of preventing shipwreck.⁶

Yet, on the other hand, the very communities interested in a port and harbour had long ago indicated their reluctance to higher port dues being imposed to pay for the work. Such an imposition, they believed, would not benefit, but rather harm trade because higher port dues might well discourage shipping from coming to Rogge Bay. Were higher charges to be introduced, it was questionable whether captains would be prepared to pay more for landing and shipping their cargoes in greater safety and with less delay. Anticipating the probable reluctance of shipping to pay higher harbour dues, merchants and boatmen felt that merchantmen should not be asked to pay for improvements, which were the responsibility of the Cape government to provide.

6 H. Dempster "Remarks on Table Bay", Cape of Good Hope Pamphlet (Cape Town, 1841), pp. 5-6; CC 3: Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 24.4.1841, pp. 5-6.

Unlike merchants and shippers, the Cape government did not regard the extension of loading and landing facilities at Rogge Bay as a prime consideration. The authorities had their own ideas about what should be done when funds became available and the sanction of the Imperial Treasury had been given. The Cape government wanted to build roads, bridges and mountain passes. What would be the advantage of devoting money for a port, if the links with the hinterland remained so rudimentary that the transport of agricultural and pastoral produce to the coast would still be arduous, cumbersome and costly to the farming community, forming the majority of the colonists? Surely it would be better, the Cape government thought, to establish links with the interior; only afterwards should ports be developed and additional accommodation granted to marine trade.

On maritime and commercial grounds, therefore, the Cape government was lukewarm about building a second dwarf jetty at Rogge Bay. Rather than elaborating transit facilities and providing more room for business, the Cape government intended to promote the safety of shipping and navigation instead. This was to be principally effected by constructing additional lighthouses along treacherous lines of coast. One such place was Table Bay, the main resort of ships calling at the Cape. Hence, in view of the Cape authorities, the construction of an efficient, powerful lighthouse on the western approach to Cape Town would be of greater benefit than the addition to wharfrage space at Table Bay.

Little had been done to promote the safety of ships entering the roadstead by night. True enough, in 1824 Herman Schutte had built the Green Point lighthouse to light the western approach to Table Bay. But in the following year, the disastrous wreck of the "Milgrave Castle" had raised serious questions about the utility of the structure. Although the shipwreck, almost on top of the lighthouse, had led Lord Charles Somerset to blame the lighthouse for the accident, Captain Owen subsequently exonerated it from all blame, declaring that it was, on the contrary, an asset to the safety of Table Bay. In order to avert further shipwrecks, however, Captain Owen compiled instructions for entering the roadstead safely by night; his advice was later incorporated into the Port Instructions⁷.

7 CO 4853, p. 496: Government Secretary — Port Captain, 5.9.1825, p. CO 234 No. 265: Captain W.P.W. Owen — Somerset, 11.11.1825 & Enclosure Instructions for entering Table Bay by night by the plan constructed on the Observations made by H.M.S. "Levan", November, 1825.

Both Captain Owen (official surveyor to the Royal Navy) and the Port Captain (Lt. James Bance R.N.) were convinced that the Green Point lighthouse was eminently located to light up the entry into Table Bay. Four years later, however, it became evident that they had judged too hastily. By 1829, it was clear that any hope of the Green Point lighthouse reducing shipwreck was an illusion. The new lighthouse did not really avert shipping disasters; one might even say that it encouraged them. Due to poor construction and inefficient reflectors, the lighthouse cast a relatively weak beam. Often, its dual lights failed to converge, leading ships to believe that there were two distinct lighthouses on shore. To promote the safety of navigation, in May, 1829, the Port Captain suggested equipping the lighthouse with powerful, high-quality parabolic reflectors able to project a beam lighting up the sea brightly at night.

Since lack of funds, however, postponed the plan, shipping kept complaining about poor light from the Green Point lighthouse which was often so faint that it was hardly visible more than four miles at sea. Understandably, captains of vessels frequenting Table Bay were convinced that the lighthouse should never have been built at Green Point in the first place; a powerful lighthouse should have been built on the dangerous Mouille Point reef instead. The Green Point light was not only indistinct; its visibility was often further reduced by weather. At night ships often found it hazardous to pass the Mouille Point rocks while beating into the Bay. Haze and fog often reduced visibility to zero, and many a vessel was wrecked in consequence. So faint were the beams that captains could not always calculate the distance from the rocks at Mouille Point. It was vital, however, that captains should know the distance from shore to avoid passing too close inshore, lest the incoming current near Mouille Point should drive them upon the rocks almost adjacent to the lighthouse⁸.

The safety of navigation by night, undoubtedly, have been improved by a more systematic use of plumbing-leads to ascertain both the depth and the nature of the anchoring-ground.

⁸ CO 377 No. 80: Port Captain — Government Secretary, 16.10.1830, pp. 1-2 & Enclosure No. 3, copy, Port Captain — Government Secretary, 8.5.1829, pp. 1-2; CO 459 No. 72: Port Captain — Government Secretary, 10.10.1837, Enclosure No. 2, copy, Port Captain — Government Secretary / No. 6 / 5.1832, p. 1; CO 406 No. 29: Port Captain — Government Secretary, 5.5.1832, pp. 2-3.

Similarly, a stricter observance of Captain Owen's set of instructions for entering the roadstead by night might considerably have reduced the incidence of shipping disasters. Within thirteen years after the completion of the Green Point lighthouse, a number of ships had come to grief there. Three vessels had met their doom upon the rocks which projected from the lighthouse. Two other ships the "Hecetris" and the "Augusta Sophie", might well have shared the same fate had they subsequently not been got off the shoal. In May 1832, the "Singapore" joined the "Mulgrove Castle" on the rocks as a grim victim of the inefficiency of the Green Point lighthouse. It was yet another shipwreck, that of the "Royal William" in September 1837, near the usual site of such shipping accidents at Green Point, that induced the Port Captain to impress upon the Government Secretary the seriousness of the position. The inefficient lighthouse should no longer be permitted to destroy lives and vessels. An efficient and powerful lighthouse should immediately be built on the western approach to Table Bay. In the view of the Port Captain it should be built at the site of recurrent shipwrecks -- that is, on the reef at Mouille Point⁹.

The extremely dangerous roadstead had, of course, long been worrying the Cape government, which was, however, compelled to keep deferring all contemplated improvements until the cancellation of the colony's debts. In September 1840, it will be remembered, Sir George Napier had already broached schemes of building a number of good lighthouses along the coastline; this was to be undertaken as part of the general improvement programme which he desired to begin without delay.

Although they had been discouraged from constructing a new and indispensable lighthouse at Mouille Point by the cautious attitude of the financial administrators in London, Sir George Napier and the Legislative Council realized that its construction simply could not be deferred much longer. Unless navigation could be improved, shipwrecks would continue and numerous lives would be lost. Money would have to be found for the new lighthouse, for otherwise shipping would continue to avoid Table Bay, to the detriment of Cape Town and the prosperity of the colony in general.

The funds for the Mouille Point lighthouse were subsequently found; money was taken from the surplus revenue accumulated from dues collected at Table Bay from 1838 to 1840.

Wharfage dues had yielded a surplus of £3,414-3-3 $\frac{1}{2}$; it was perhaps appropriate that some of the money derived from Table Bay should be used to render it a safer anchorage and landing-place. Hence funds were now appropriated from this source of revenue, the action being undertaken without the prior sanction of the Colonial Secretary and the Treasury Commissioners, whose endorsement of any additional expenditure would not have been very certain. Only after a new lighthouse had been built in Mouille Point, did the governor ask the Legislative Council to sanction the expense of £808-3-4; the Council was, in fact, requested to vote the funds, which had already been defrayed from surplus wharfage revenue. Only thereafter did Sir George Napier consider it expedient to request the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, to grant his retroactive authorization to a step, which had been taken in evasion of the expressed wishes of both the Colonial Office and the Imperial Treasury ¹⁰.

Under the administrations of Lord Charles Somerset and Sir Lowry Cole in the mid-1820's and the early 1830's, a number of indispensable highways had been constructed near Cape Town, with the limited means and the small amount of labour then available. The entire project had been carried out in disregard of the Colonial Secretary and the Commissioners of the Treasury. Despite their disapproval however, the guide lines had been laid for the subsequent elaboration of the road network. The benefits of such a programme were already evident to the Royal Commissioners, who visited the Cape to study, amongst other things, the prospects of how to stimulate the trade of the colony and to increase its prosperity. "Nothing", they perceived, "would tend so much to stimulate the industry of the inhabitants, and to augment their means of ... supplying a trade of exports as the improvement of the internal communications ... to the bays and harbours on the coast ..." ¹¹.

In the meanwhile, internal trade had made substantial headway and the improvement of roads and the construction of passes and bridges over mountains and rivers had become a matter of some urgency.

10 GH 23/14, p. 6; copy, Napier — Stanley No. 58, 15.3.1842 & pp. 103-4; copy, Napier — Stanley No. 125, 22.6.1842; ICA 15 Minute 106; Napier's Minute — Legislative Council, 15.6.1842, p. 2.

11 Report, Commissioners of Enquiry into the Trade of the Cape ... p. 13.

For unless additional highways were built and communications improved with the hinterland, farmers would continue to suffer from the difficulties and the high costs of bringing produce and wool to the coast for export. The transport of wheat, wine and wool to the Cape Town market was an arduous and costly undertaking because of the lack of good roads, high municipal taxes on produce entering the Cape Town market and the toll exacted at the Toll Gate on Sir Lowry Road.

These taxes, no doubt, benefitted the municipal treasury. But they were strongly resented by the farmers as extra expenditure reducing their already meagre income. The taxes were also regarded with distrust by the very merchants of Cape Town. It was all very well for the city to enrich itself at the expense of agriculture, merchants observed, but these taxes tended to deter many farmers from undertaking the long trek to town. Many farmers resorted to Port Beaufort, which developed into a subsidiary export centre for wool, hides and skins. Were this state of affairs to prevail, not only would the commerce of the capital suffer, but less wool would be exported from Table Bay in consequence, to the loss of the local mercantile and maritime community in Cape Town¹².

As the advice, which had been given by the Royal Commissioners for improving internal communications could not be carried out, in view of the chronic lack of labour and the cautious attitude entertained by pessimists at the Imperial Treasury, Sir George Napier was prevented from beginning his policy of building roads, bridges and passes at the Cape colony. No wonder that farmers were justified in complaining about the sorry state of the roads. For, as a Worcester petition put it, "The Farmers are deterred from bringing more land under cultivation by reason of the expenditure of time and labour, which the transport of produce to Market [in Cape Town] demands"¹³.

But by 1843 the long era of indebtedness of the Cape colony to the Imperial Treasury was almost coming to a close; the other impediment to the commencement of public works - the lack of labour - was also about to be overcome.

It was the appointment of a financial and administrative genius, John Montagu, as Government Secretary in April 1843, that led to these remarkable improvements - indeed, almost to a new era.

12 Report pp. 15, 19, 20 & 22; CC 4, p. 33(a); Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 19.4.1843, p. 5.

13 ICA 14 Minute 132; Memorial of Worcester wheat farmers -- Napier & Legislative Council, 12.6.1843, p. 5.

For it was the work of John Montagu that ultimately led to the adoption of the policy of building new roads, bridges and passes, which Sir George Napier had wanted to inaugurate since 1840. Montagu removed the obstacles and made it possible for the new policy to be adopted. Realising that there was not sufficient convict labour available, Montagu devised a novel scheme for building highways and repairing old roads. He improved the efficiency of convict labour, with which he had become acquainted in Australia. He forbade convicts to waste time on small public works in boroughs and villages. Convicts should be gathered together and be made to work exclusively in building new highways and in tunnelling passes through Cape mountains. The hitherto wasteful and inefficient system of convict labour used by local authorities for maintaining public buildings was superseded by the new system which was recommended by Montagu and endorsed by both the Civil Engineer and the Attorney-General. The direction of convict labour was centralised in the Central Road Board, which controlled the divisional road boards in each district. On 22nd November, 1843, the machinery for building roads, passes and bridges by convict labour was duly enacted by the Legislative Council, with the creation of the Central Road Board¹⁴.

14 W.A. Newman Biographical Memoir of John Montagu ... p. 29; ICA 14 Minute 140: copy, Napier's Minute Roads — Legislative Council, 14.9.1843, p.1 & copy, Government Secretary's Memorandum — Napier, 16.8.1843, pp. 1-2 & copy, Report of Government Secretary, Civil Engineer and Attorney-General — Napier, 4.9.1843, pp. 1-3; ICA Minute 149: Ordinance 8-1843 For Improving the Public Roads, 22.11.1843.

With the construction of new highways and passes, a larger volume of agricultural produce in general and pastoral produce in particular, was conveyed to the coast. The volume of produce reaching Cape Town for consumption and Table Bay for export, increased in consequence. Between 1843 and 1844, the volume of wool despatched from Table Bay almost doubled from 534,377 lbs. to attain 936,269 lbs. by the end of 1844¹⁵.

The greater traffic handled at Rogge Bay in consequence kept outstripping the provision of space for landing and shipping cargo. The completion of the new or North Quay at the foot of Bree Street had failed to provide sufficient wharfrage accommodation. The need to do so, however, became acute, as the greater trade of the anchorage attracted an increasing number of ships to carry away and bring cargo.

SHIPS AT TABLE BAY¹⁶
1840 - 1848

1840	486
1841	433
1842	477
1843	405
1844	539
1845	680
1846	550
1847	523
1848	560

The greater volume of shipments and of ships themselves, made it necessary to provide more space as well as further berthing for the vessels.

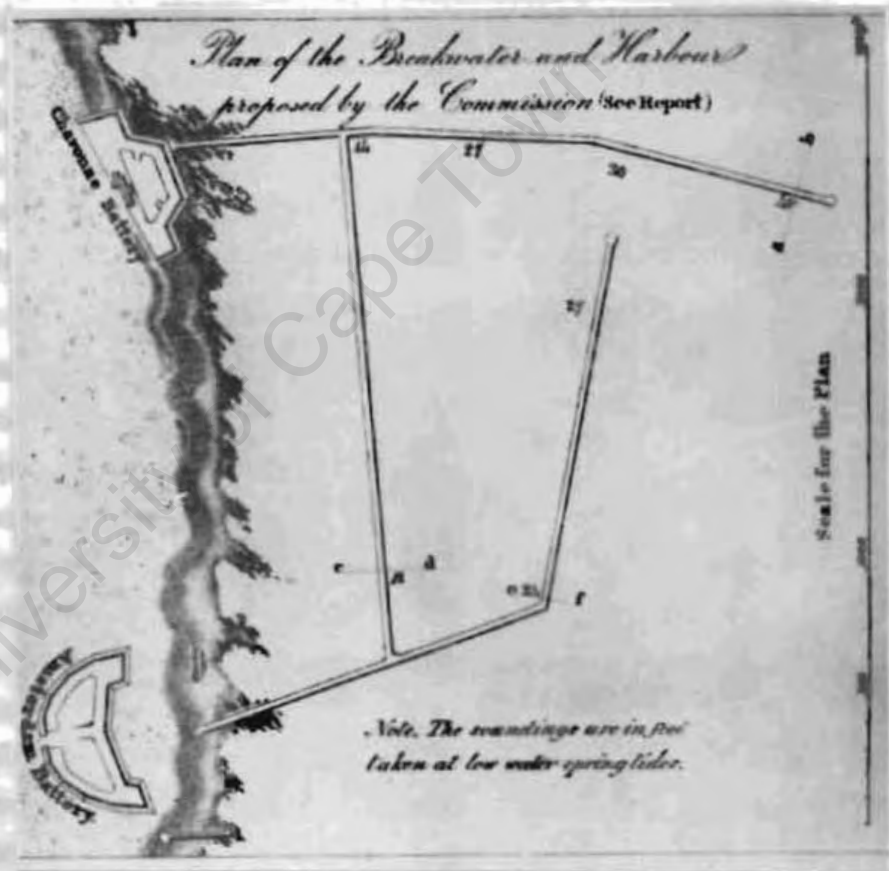
- 15 CO 5985: Annual Cape Bluebook 1843, p. 196; CO 5986: A.C.B. 1844, p. 196; GH 23/15, p. 374; Maitland — Stanley No. 115, 14.8.1845; p. 3; CC 4, p. 62; Minutes, Annual General Meeting, Annual Report of the Committee of the Commercial Exchange, April 1845, p. 4.
- 16 FC 3/2 & FC 3/3: abstracted from Table Bay shipping volume statistics, 1840-1848.

By 1844, the port of Cape Town had been surveyed. The survey of the port was completed in 1844, the harbour and the bay, and the survey of the bay was completed in 1844. The survey of the bay was completed in 1844, the harbour and the bay, and the survey of the bay was completed in 1844. The survey of the bay was completed in 1844, the harbour and the bay, and the survey of the bay was completed in 1844.

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THE PORT AND HARBOUR SUGGESTED BY THE 1844 COMMISSION

...of the bay was completed in 1844, the harbour and the bay, and the survey of the bay was completed in 1844. The survey of the bay was completed in 1844, the harbour and the bay, and the survey of the bay was completed in 1844.

By 1844, the age of the steamship had truly arrived. The new type of vessel appearing on the world's shipping lanes in ever larger numbers made it necessary to accommodate ships of larger tonnage and heavier draught. Decks should be built for their use and coal depots and colliery jetties should be established at their regular ports of call. There were no real port facilities at Table Bay, however; there were only three wharves, of which one was of very limited utility to both shipping and trade.

By 1844, Sir Peregrine Maitland pointed out, nothing remarkable had been undertaken to ensure the safety of navigation. Ships still anchored in the open roadstead, exposed to storms and frequent disaster. Between 1634 and 1844, for example, 190 lives had been lost and considerable cargo sunk to the bottom of the Bay. It was estimated that approximately 380 tons of shipping had been lost in the roadstead — or about 0,3% of the total trade tonnage visiting the anchorage per year. This was not only disquieting in itself; it prejudiced the prosperity of the colony. Had Table Bay been a safe harbour, more ships might have come to the anchorage, thereby promoting the trade of Cape Town and, indirectly, that of the entire colony.

With the steady improvement of Cape finances and the ultimate liquidation of two decades of debt, in 1844 there was, for the first time, a substantial surplus of revenue available. Theoretically, excess funds could now have been used to finance the construction of either a harbour, a port, or perhaps even both.

But in reality, however, there was little likelihood that a port would be built at Table Bay. For the Cape government was more interested in having a harbour and not a port constructed there; Sir Peregrine Maitland regarded the development of a harbour as the next step after the road improvement programme. Consequently, the governor resolved to investigate whether a major portion of surplus revenue might be used to finance the building of a harbour at Cape Town. Accordingly, Sir Peregrine Maitland asked the Port Captain, Lieutenant James Bance, to estimate the probable cost of building a breakwater at Table Bay ¹⁷.

17 RH 23/15, pp. 372 & 374-75; Maitland — Stanley No. 115, 14.8.1845, pp. 1 & 3-4; LGA 15 Minute 3; Maitland's Minute-Finance — Legislative Council, 28.5.1844, p. 23.

The Port Captain, too, had long felt the need for such a work; he gladly submitted a provisional memorandum to Sir Peregrine Maitland on how a breakwater harbour should be constructed, how long its construction would take and how much it would cost. Lt. Hance believed that if a breakwater were to be built at Table Bay during seasons free of wind and gales, the project would probably take seven years to complete. The cost, he calculated, would probably approximate to £200,000.

Furnished with the Port Captain's rough estimate, Sir Peregrine Maitland approached the Legislative Council for funds. In introducing the Appropriations Ordinance for 1845, he requested the Council to devote a large portion of surplus revenue to building lighthouses at Cape Agulhas and Cape Recife and a new Port Office in Cape Town. In order to build a breakwater-harbour, however, it would be necessary to obtain additional funds. These would have to be borrowed. Sir Peregrine Maitland was confident that the Imperial Treasury could be approached for loans. He hoped that the British Treasury would permit the Cape government to use its own funds to finance the work in part. The Imperial Treasury would probably advance an annual loan for at least seven years. As to the repayment of the anticipated Imperial loan, it was calculated that since the total revenue of the colony was about £30,000 per annum, the sum would have to cover both working capital and repayment of the loan. It would be best to remit half-yearly instalments to the Imperial Treasury for the next twenty years (1844-1864).

Incurring another long-term debt for the next two decades to build a harbour would bring many difficulties. It would be advisable, therefore, to consider whether a breakwater would be the best type of harbour and this should be done before approaching the Imperial Government and Treasury Commissioners for substantial long-term credit. This assumed of course, as the governor did, that the Imperial Treasury would permit the colony to incur such long-term indebtedness now that it had just attained solvency after twenty years of debt. The Council should, therefore, study the Port Captain's breakwater proposal and assess its cost and feasibility carefully ¹⁸.

18 LCA 2, p. 502; Minute 3, 28.5.1844, p. 3; LCA 15 Minute 3; Maitland's Minute-Finance — Legislative Council, 28.5.1844, pp. 1, 20-21 & 23-26.

On 27th June, 1844, therefore, the Legislative Council adopted the governor's advice. Amidst great enthusiasm, the Council unanimously agreed to nominate a commission to study the feasibility and cost of adopting the breakwater-harbour proposal suggested by the Port Captain of Table Bay. As commissioners, Sir Peregrine Maitland appointed the Port Captain, (Lt. Bance), the Civil Engineer (Maj. Michell), Rev. James Adams and John Fairbairn.

The Port Captain's estimate of the cost of a harbour - £200,000 - had only been calculated provisionally. It might well be possible to reduce this and to refrain from having to ask Her Majesty's Government and Treasury for substantial long-term credit. Besides, it was not at all certain whether the breakwater-harbour proposed by Lt. James Bance would really constitute the best type of marine work to shelter ships at the 'Cape of Storms'. Even if a breakwater would be the best way of promoting the safety of shipping, it would still be desirable to determine the merits of both a conventional and an isolated breakwater harbour¹⁹.

The construction of a breakwater, as suggested by the Port Captain, did not particularly appeal to the commissioners. They observed that neither an isolated breakwater (of the type built by Rennie in Plymouth South) nor a conventional breakwater, would be suitable for Cape Town. Admittedly, the commission was prepared to consider a detached, Rennie-type breakwater; at the same time, however, the commissioners were conscious of limitations of such a structure. The detached nature of the isolated breakwater would neither give complete shelter to shipping nor provide additional wharfage space.

Instead, the Civil Engineer, one of the commissioners, proceeded to devise a new scheme, calculated to ensure the construction of both a breakwater harbour and an adequate commercial port. As a breakwater alone would not realise these objectives, the Civil Engineer suggested the building of two separate enclosures. A breakwater, which would also act as a quay, should be constructed for the safety of shipping; an additional stone quay should also be built.

19 ICA 2, pp. 542-43; Minute 8, 27.6.1844, pp. 3-4; CO 534 No. 53; copy, Government Secretary — Commissioners of the Board for Improving Table Bay, 15.8.1844, pp. 1-4 & Enclosure, copy, Maitland's appointment of Commissioners, 15.8.1844, pp. 1-2.

The outer, sheltering pier, or breakwater, would be extended to 2,600 feet, to provide adequate shelter from north-westerly wind in winter. The outer harbour would enclose an area of 35 acres, sufficient to accommodate at least 60 ships. The largest frigates could anchor there, not to speak of usual man-o'-war and merchantmen.

In addition, a second enclosed harbour should also be constructed. A transverse sea-wall, built in the roadstead parallel to the shore, would separate the outer from the inner harbours. The resultant enclosure - 32 acres - would provide space for at least 26 ships in all ²⁰.

It is difficult to envisage the feasibility of the proposed inner harbour advocated by the 1844 commissioners. Being fully enclosed, how could the harbour be expected to permit the entry of ships in the first place? No wonder that when he heard of the plan, Captain Robert Knox, Goyen of port and harbour engineering, expressed a considerable degree of astonishment. Perceiving the uselessness of the proposed inner harbour as a resort for shipping, Captain Knox characterised the entire scheme as " ... an enormous abortion ..." and fervently hoped that it would never be adopted ²¹.

After they had made provision to accord ample room to shipping by means of outer and inner harbours, the commissioners turned to finding a solution to the main evils bedeviling Table Bay - namely, the lack of port facilities and the slow movement of cargo, the latter being mainly occasioned by dependence upon lighters or boats. The contemplated port would overcome both these disabilities. Although the shielding pier of the outer harbour - the breakwater - would, to a certain extent, also serve as a quay, it would be the second stone wharf which would increase wharfage space and accelerate cargo operations. Goods would be transferred from the second stone landing-place directly into ships moored alongside, thereby eliminating the delays caused by conveying merchandise in lighters. Since the stone pier of the outer harbour would only shield shipping operations from strong winter gales, landing and loading would still be interrupted in summer. In order to reduce delay in summer as well as to provide more room for cargo operations, the Civil Engineer proposed building an additional landing-place in the outer harbour.

20 CO 534 No. 34: Report of the Commissioners ... [c. 15.11.1844], pp. 9 & 11-14; GH 23/15, pp. 378-79; copy, Maitland - Stanley No. 115, 14.8.1845, pp. 7-8.

21 GH 23/15, p. 540; copy, Stanley - Maitland No. 242, 5.7.1845, Enclosure, copy, Knox - Stanley, 20.6.1845, p. 2.

As the extension of trade had made it desirable that even more space should be provided at Table Bay, the Civil Engineer felt that a sea-wall should also be constructed to serve as a quay. Alternatively, a very much smaller sea-wall might be built along the shore itself. Should neither proposal be acceptable to the Cape government, a number of jetties analogous to the newly-completed North Wharf, might be constructed instead.

The blocks of stone required to build the outer sheltering pier, the second stone quay along with the stone wall could easily be obtained from quarries on Lion's Hill. To convey the heavy blocks from the quarries to the building-site about a quarter mile away, a number of inclined planes might be constructed, or a few light railways installed for this purpose. There was also a good supply of lime available in the quarries nearby. As regarded labour, the commissioners felt that this would not be a problem, for sufficient supplies of labour could, it was believed, easily be obtained from Great Britain.

The cost of building the combined harbour and port would, of course, be large. The project could, in fact, only be carried out at approximately three times the cost of £200,000 of building the breakwater harbour alone. According to their calculations, the commissioners believed that the combined work would require at least £700,000. Admittedly, the actual estimate was put at £698,211, but the remainder would comprise necessary repairs to lighthouses at both Green Point and Mouille Point. Indeed, the high estimated cost of the work would be so immense that the commissioners did not even consider the possibility of asking private enterprise to carry out a project, which not even the surplus revenue of the entire colony would be able to cover²².

Members of the Commercial Exchange in Cape Town did not possess such large sums of money, even had they been interested in contributing to such a vast public work. Ever since their stone pier proposal had been abandoned in 1839, the Cape Town mercantile community had adopted a policy of refusing to consider paying for any port improvements; let the Cape government raise the money, they thought. At the same time, however, they foresaw the small likelihood of the Cape government obtaining such substantial credit from the Imperial Treasury. For even were such large financial assistance to be accorded, it would in itself bring disadvantages to the colony. Such vast loans would plunge the colony back into the sea of indebtedness, from which it had, at long last, just managed to emerge. The prospect of another two decades

22 CO 534 No. 34: Report pp. 13-16; GH 23/15, pp. 376-78; copy, Waitland — Stanley No. 115, 14.8.1845, pp. 5-7.

of debts was frightening. Would it really be worth while mortgaging a substantial portion of the Cape revenues to finance the combined construction of a port and harbour on the shores of the capital ? The construction of an elaborate port, fully equipped with docks, would have entailed immense expenditure and the 1844 commissioners did not even refer to the proposal²³. Besides, the Cape government was not really interested in a port, but preferred establishing a harbour at Rogge Bay and those interested in a port as a means for obtaining more wharfrage space, did not desire the construction of docks. The only ones who might have desired the building of an elaborate harbour, equipped with dry docks for ship-repairs, were the ship repairers of Cape Town, but they were, however, outnumbered by merchants, who preferred to have wharfrage space extended instead. Thus the commissioners realized that satisfying the limited shipping interests would only be subsidiary to promoting the advantages of the much more numerous Cape Town mercantile community. Accordingly, the commissioners felt that extending wharfrage space for landing and embarking cargo and merchandise would be much more important.

That mercantile interests in Cape Town were predominantly — indeed, exclusively interested in the extension of wharfrage accommodation can be seen from the only slight modification of the 1844 plan, which they supported in the following year, when the Cape Town municipality began considering the expedience of building a sea-wall, or a commercial wharf, along its shore.

In the 1830's, it will be remembered, a new commercial quarter had sprung up in the western sector of the city, near the foot of Bree Street, which housed the merchants' sheds and stores, besides other enterprises. But the adjoining foreshore area between the New Quay at the foot of Bree Street and the old jetty near the Castle remained undeveloped. Urban extension did not remain stationary and with it, too, the city obtained a new status. In 1840 Cape Town was declared a municipality and the city subsequently began to take even greater interest in extensions and improvements. The Cape Town Corporation began considering the expediency of further extension towards the sea and securing advantages from it at the same time. Developing the foreshore area would also embellish the city, for it contained the butchers' shambles along with other dilapidated shacks and outbuildings which spoiled the beauty of the Mother City and imparted a shabby impression to visitors arriving by sea.

If the foreshore area between the North Wharf and the old jetty and adjacent port office and Castle were reclaimed and the area between rocks and the lowwater mark filled in with rubble, considerable territory would be added to the city and the polder turned into a thing of beauty to the joy of citizens and a wonder to visitors.

The reclamation of the foreshore, however, would make it impossible for merchants to continue using the three wharves of Cape Town - and merchants were already complaining about the lack of adequate space to conduct their business. As the merchants did not desire the construction of full-scale port facilities, complete with decks, but only wanted more wharfage space, the Cape Town Corporation decided to combine the foreshore reclamation scheme with benefits about to be given to members of the commercial community. Situated alongside one of the busiest shipping lanes, Cape Town might well develop into a great shipping resort if space were provided for ships and marine trade. Increased trade would not only benefit the merchants, who were engaged in marine and shipping business, but would also bring considerable advantages to the city.

Hence the municipality decided to combine the urban reclamation scheme with a project to provide further landing-place, as well as a patent slip for the benefit of Cape Town ship-repairers. Not only would the foreshore be reclaimed and Cape Town extended in consequence, but a sea-wall should be built along the beach stretching from the New Quay to the old wharf. The sea-wall would, in fact, act as a commercial wharf and thereby satisfy the merchants, who had long desired a sea-wall analogous to the one which the commission had recommended the Cape government should build as part of the combined harbour and port programme.

In 1845, the wish of the municipal authorities to extend and embellish the city by reclaiming the foreshore found agreement with the merchants' desire for a rudimentary port that would give more room for landing and loading operations at Cape Town. Not only were members of the Commercial Exchange happy at the prospect of the municipality furnishing further space for expediting the movement of cargo that could no longer be accommodated by the North Quay, but they were jubilant at the likelihood of the municipality building a patent slip for ship-repairers nearby ²⁴.

24 CO 4929, p. 606: Government Secretary — Civil Engineer, 28.4.1847, p. 1; CTM 4/11, p. 53: Municipal Secretary — Government Secretary, 1.11.1845, pp. 2-3.

The prospects appeared bright to merchants and shippers, for both the Cape government and the Cape Town Corporation intended to extend wharfage accommodation for them. In addition, the municipal foreshore reclamation plan, which was advanced by a special committee of the municipality in November 1845, offered to provide a patent slip for the benefit of ship-repairers; the latter benefit was not, however, offered by the official plan of the Cape government.

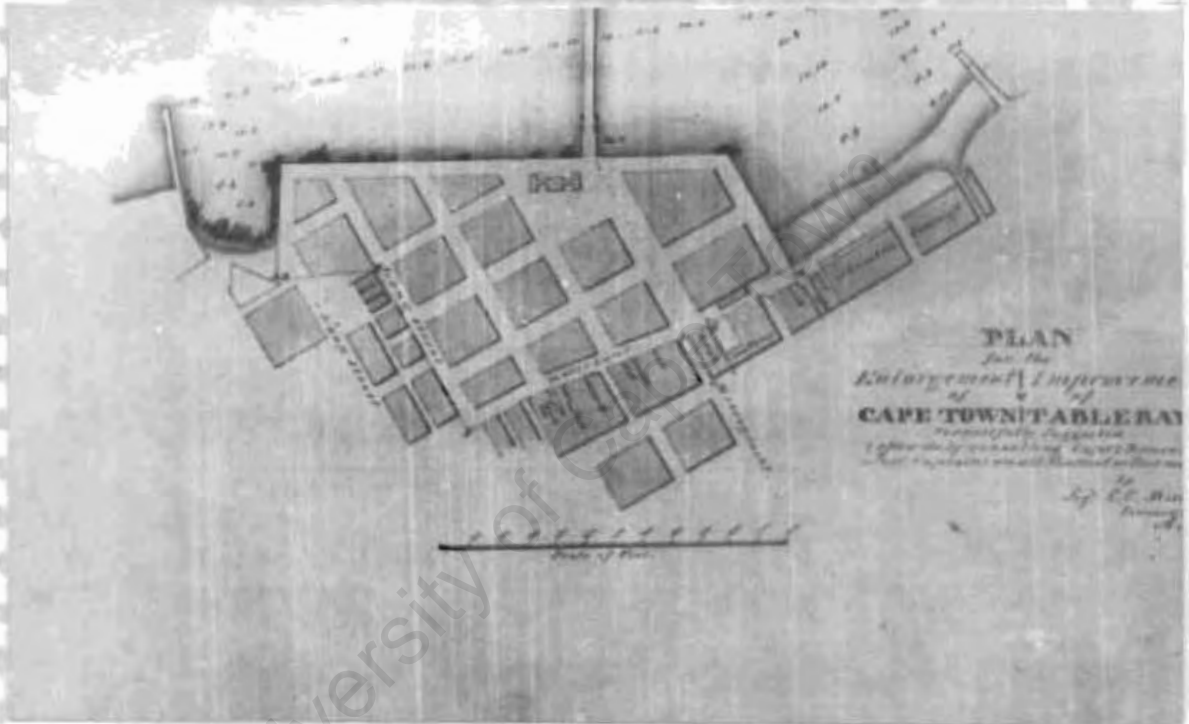
The cost of constructing a sea-wall, or a new landing-place, along with the expense of a patent slip would have been beyond the resources of the municipality of Cape Town. Carrying out the extensive port and harbour project, which had been suggested by the commissioners in 1844, would even have been beyond the means of the entire colony. Sir Peregrine Maitland felt that it would be more advisable to allocate a major portion of surplus revenue for colonial development in general. Further roads should be built and communications improved rather than a highly elaborate and expensive harbour constructed on the shores of Cape Town. It should perhaps also be remembered that Sir Peregrine Maitland did not want to build a port; he preferred building a harbour. Besides, it would not really be quite fair to devote even middling portions of surplus revenue to improve Rogge Bay at the expense of leaving all the other harbours of the Cape undeveloped.

Long-term finance for achieving the immense Cape Town plan could, of course, have been obtained from the imposition of higher dues at Table Bay. But this might have prejudiced the entire scheme, as ships might thereby have been even further deterred from putting in at the roadstead. As the marine work could be expected to take six years to complete, in the meanwhile, however, it would not be fair to exact payments from shipping which would only obtain benefits after more than half a decade. As neither the use of a major portion of surplus revenue recommended itself any more than the imposition of higher duties at Table Bay, Sir Peregrine Maitland felt that money for the scheme might perhaps be raised by remitting quitrents throughout the colony. This could be expected to bring in about £200,000. Should funds still be inadequate, a very small portion of surplus revenue might be used, along with the proceeds from the sale of crown lands.

These financial expedients would not, however, bring in sufficient money to realize the 1844 plan, calculated at approximately £700,000.

Instead of attempting to contemplate the achievement of the harbor and
 immediately extensive plan, the government of the Cape colony considered
 that, initially, only a portion of the project should be executed,
 that is, only the quay, wharfing plan, or breakwater, should be
 constructed. The rest of the scheme could be carried out later, when
 more light would be available for larger works.

A breakwater constructed under the above scheme would probably
 only cost £100,000, instead of the cost of nearly twice the value of
 the full reclamation plan would require.



THE TABLE BAY PORT AND CAPE TOWN FORESHORE RECLAMATION PLAN 1847

The Table Bay Port and Cape Town Foreshore Reclamation Plan 1847
 was a comprehensive plan that aimed to reclaim the foreshore of
 Table Bay, Cape Town. The plan included the construction of a
 breakwater, a quay, and a wharf. The plan also included the
 construction of a breakwater, a quay, and a wharf. The plan also
 included the construction of a breakwater, a quay, and a wharf.

79 On 25/10, pp. 171 & 172, in the 1847 edition of the 119, M.A. 1847,
 pp. 171 & 172, in the 1847 edition of the 119, M.A. 1847, pp. 171,
 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185,
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Instead of continuing to contemplate the achievement of the immense and inordinately expensive plan, the governor of the Cape colony considered that, initially, only a portion of the project should be commenced, that is, only the outer, sheltering pier, or breakwater, should be constructed. The rest of the scheme could be carried out later, when money might become available for larger works.

A breakwater constructed near the Chavonnes Battery would probably only cost £313,062, instead of the mint of money which the realization of the 1844 commission plan would require.

Accordingly, in requesting the Imperial Government to sanction the work to begin on the Cape Town breakwater, Sir Peregrine Maitland pointed out to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, that it would not only benefit the Cape colony, but would also bring many advantages to the Empire at large. The export of British manufactures to the Cape would be stimulated and the interests of British mercantile marine would be promoted by a breakwater at the Cape. In view of these benefits, Sir Peregrine Maitland hoped that the Imperial Government would permit the colony to raise the additional sum of £100,000. As the financial status of the Cape colony had shown a remarkable improvement recently, it was not expected that any difficulties would be encountered in raising a third of the amount required to finance the breakwater. The Cape government might issue debentures for £100,000 not upon the credit of the Imperial Treasury, but on the credit of the Cape public coffers. Without actually asking for British loans, the governor of the Cape made an oblique plea for financial assistance from the British crown. Sir Peregrine Maitland anticipated no problems regarding labour; he believed that sufficient workmen would be forthcoming from Great Britain in the form of immigrants ²⁵.

Unlike their former, critical attitude towards Captain Knox's combined port and harbour project in 1823, by 1846 the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty fully approved of building a breakwater at Table Bay. The colony's finances had now recovered and there was no real obstacle to the achievement of a practical scheme about to benefit not only the colony, but also the Royal Navy and the mercantile marine.

²⁵ OH 23/15, pp. 377 & 380-82; copy, Maitland — Stanley No. 115, 14.8.1845, pp. 6 & 9-11; OH 3/10 (unnumbered pages); copy, Gladstone — Maitland No. 72, 29.4.1846, Enclosure, copy, Admiralty — Colonial Under-Secretary (Sir James Stephen), 20.4.1846, p. 1.

Specialists at the Admiralty suggested that the breakwater should be formed of rubble. A rubble pier should be built of large blocks of stone interspersed with small ones to impart the structure the stability required to withstand the winter winds and storms for which the Cape was notorious.

The Colonial Secretary, William Ewart Gladstone, was so impressed by the importance of the Cape Town breakwater project and by the eagerness of the Cape colony to pay for it, that he accorded his sanction to the proposal.

Realising that the Cape colony would not have adequate capital and labour available for the vast undertaking, Gladstone did not even consider it advisable to call upon the Cape government to pay for the work. Sir Peregrine Maitland had hinted at the desirability of British financial assistance.

The Colonial Secretary kindly offered to request the Treasury to untie its purse strings and be generous towards a colony, which had just recovered from a long bout of financial malaise. Gladstone, in fact, offered to intercede with the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury to advance the Cape credit to the amount of £500,000.

In view of the dearth of labour for the harbour project, most Cape convicts being almost exclusively engaged in building roads and highways, Gladstone thought that a few hundred British convicts should be sent to build the breakwater at the Cape. He did not anticipate that any difficulties would be encountered, or any objections raised, to the despatch of three hundred convicts to build a breakwater at Cape Town. All that the Cape government would have to do, on its part, would be to repay interest upon the generous British loan, which Gladstone promised to expedite. The interest would be repayed from higher duties levied on shipping using Table Bay ²⁶.

Gladstone's proposal was well received in Cape Town. At long last, it would be possible to construct a breakwater harbour with British financial assistance and the labour of three hundred British convicts, whom the Colonial Secretary had promised to send to the Cape. The grant of assistance and labour from Her Majesty's Government would, it was hoped, induce more ships to come and trade with the Cape colony, once its main shipping resort had been turned into a place of security; on the other hand, however, the imposition of harbour dues might well negate the anticipated benefit. But without harbour dues it would be impossible to build the rubble breakwater.

26 GH 3/10: copy, Gladstone — Maitland No. 72, 29.4.1846, pp. 1-5 & Enclosure, copy, Admiralty — Colonial Under-Secretary (Sir James Stephen), 20.4.1846, pp. 1-2.

As a result of the new roads being constructed, a greater volume of produce was reaching Table Bay for export. But the construction of a breakwater could not be expected to provide more room for maritime trade. That there was a particular need for more room is attested by the decay into which the old wharf had fallen, along with the dilapidation of the recently constructed North Wharf. At the new wharf the customs quay was so decayed that it impeded the transit of trade. But in view of Gladstone's promise to grant a £300,000 loan on the credit of the Imperial Treasury and realizing that the colony would merely have to pay interest on the loan annually, members of the Commercial Exchange began to see the advantages of a breakwater harbour. Although it would not overcome the lack of wharfage space, yet it would have its advantages nonetheless, in attracting more ships to Cape Town ²⁷.

The municipality of Cape Town and the citizens, too, supported the breakwater harbour proposal as a means of bringing more ships to Table Bay in winter. But both the Cape Town Corporation and citizens voiced considerable disquiet at the anticipated arrival of three hundred British convicts to build the marine work. The people of Cape Town expressly asked that the British convicts should only be allowed into the Cape colony as labourers on the project and that they should not be allowed to mix with the citizenry during the six years that they would be at the Cape. They also asked that convicts should be kept under strict guard for more than half a decade, and that they would be repatriated upon the completion of the breakwater.

Accordingly, in August 1846, the governor presented Gladstone's promises to the Legislative Council, so that they could budget for the project. The Council decided to pay interest on the £300,000 loan, which Gladstone had promised to advance on the credit of the Imperial Treasury, from the wharfage dues received from Table Bay. Wharfage dues should be imposed during the construction of the breakwater to cover the building cost; upon its completion, they should be doubled and an additional duty should be levied on the tonnage of shipping coming to the newly-built breakwater harbour. The necessary legislation should then be enacted for this purpose ²⁸.

- 27 "South African Commercial Advertiser", 28.1.1846; CO 549; Collector of Customs — Govt. Secty., 19.6.1846, Enclosure No. 1, Memorial of C.T. merchants & boatowners — Collector of Customs, 17.6.1846, p. 2; ICA 18 No. 23 Minute 20; Commercial Exchange — Maitland & Legislative Council, 26.8.1846; CC 4, p. 86; Minutes, Special Meeting, 24.8.1846.
- 28 ICA 18 No. 2 Minute 26; Memorial of Commissioners & Wardmasters of the Cape Town Municipality in Common Council Assembled — Legislative Council, 26.8.1846, pp. 2-3 & No. 4 Minute 21; Report of the Committee of the Whole Council... — Maitland, 28.8.1846, pp. 4-7.

Enthusiastic that work on the breakwater should commence as soon as possible, the governor sent the Civil Engineer to see the Colonial Secretary in London. It was intended that Major Mitchell would discuss engineering details with Gladstone and also inspect British harbour works to find a suitable model for the rubble pier, which the Admiralty had suggested should be constructed at Table Bay. He would also be able to recruit the specialised services of British harbour engineers and ask them to come to help him in building the Cape Town breakwater. Machinery and equipment could also be bought in England.

Prior to his departure to see the Colonial Secretary, Major Mitchell would make preliminary arrangements for the introduction of the three hundred British workmen, who were about to come to the Cape. The proposed breakwater works would be laid out to await their arrival and the Amsterdam battery would be converted into suitable quarters for them.

In the despatch which Major Mitchell carried with him to Gladstone, Sir Peregrine Maitland repeated the conditions which the citizens of Cape Town had made for the introduction of criminals to the Cape. Convicts should be isolated from the citizenry and kept under strict surveillance.

In order to finance the breakwater and pay interest on the British loan, which Gladstone had promised to advance to the Cape on the credit of Her Majesty's Treasury, the Cape Legislative Council drew up a scale of increased wharfrage dues. The new dues were compiled in consultation with the mercantile and shipping communities in Cape Town, the Collector of Customs assisting with valuable advice²⁹.

It seemed at last that the work on the breakwater would begin soon.

Due to a change of government in Great Britain, Gladstone had been replaced by a new Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, and when the Cape Civil Engineer reached London with Sir Peregrine Maitland's despatch, he found that Earl Grey was decidedly reserved about the Cape Town breakwater project. The Earl viewed his predecessor's promise to advance a loan of £300,000 on the credit of the Imperial Treasury with a certain amount of disquiet. In his view, Gladstone's offer should be regarded as having been merely a preliminary step in the negotiations.

29 GH 25/16, pp. 140 & 143-44; copy, Maitland — Gladstone No. 144, 10.9.1846, pp. 1 & 4-5; CC 4, pp. 89-90; Minutes, 14.11.1846 & Minutes, Special Meeting, 1.12.1846.

Lord Grey felt that it had only been an enquiry, which the Cape had made to his predecessor about the possibility of commencing such an immense project at one of the many possessions of the British crown. Officially, however, Lord Grey gave the unfavourable state of the Cape colony as the ostensible reason for deferring the scheme. It is true that financial affairs at the Cape were somewhat disquieting during the prevalent frontier war. But the Cape treasury was not in so deplorable a condition as the new Colonial Secretary feared. Military expenditure had been heavy, but despite this, the Cape treasury was not empty. In 1846, there was even a surplus. In truth, however, Lord Grey deferred the substantial Imperial loan, which had been promised by his predecessor, not because of the state of Cape finances. The real reason for withholding the promised loan was due to the reluctance of Lord Grey to advance such a sizeable loan - almost a third of a million pounds - on the express security of the Imperial Treasury. Although he did not specifically mention this reason, Lord Grey felt that the Cape Town breakwater should be defrayed by the Cape government itself, rather than relying upon the financial assistance of the Imperial Treasury ³⁰.

In view of the deferral of the project, it would no longer be necessary to have higher wharfage dues imposed at Table Bay. Why impose wharfage dues specifically for a breakwater, which would not be built? Conversely, however, there was still the prospect of Earl Grey sanctioning the project in future; he had not dismissed the scheme, he had merely postponed it. But the Cape government was reluctant to abandon the scheme and hoped for its ultimate realisation. Pending the Colonial Secretary's final decision, on 5th April, 1847, the Executive Council was opposed to abolishing higher wharfage dues entirely. Instead, the Executive Council resolved to reduce them by a third, in accordance with the advice of the Collector of Customs at Table Bay. The settlement was also acceptable to mercantile and shipping interests because lower duties would probably attract more vessels to Cape Town. Furthermore, full wharfage dues would probably only be introduced upon the commencement of the breakwater - and that would probably take years, Colonial Secretaries being well known for their adherence to the doctrines of "Unripe Time" and the "Bad State of Affairs" ³¹.

30 GH 1/35, pp. 55-56; Grey - Pottinger No. 18, 18.1.1847, pp. 2-3; ICA 20 Minute 17; Pottinger's Minute-Finance - Legislative Council, No. 2, 3.7.1847, pp. 1-2; GH 1/38 No. 70; Grey - Smith No. 207, 29.10.1848, pp. 1-3

31 GH 26/36; Pottinger - Grey No. 47, 3.5.1847, Enclosure, copy, Minute of Executive Council, 5.4.1847, pp. 4-5 (original minute cannot be found); CC 4, p. 94; Minutes, 10.4.1847, p. 2.

Although the governor, Sir Henry Pottinger, and the Civil Engineer regarded the postponement of the breakwater scheme as only temporary and hoped that Earl Grey would soon reconsider the matter, merchants and shippers, however, realized that even were the breakwater built soon, it would hardly overcome their problem of the lack of sufficient space for cargo operations. They began to consider how a new wharf, or landing-place, might be constructed and how long its building would take. It might perhaps be possible to obtain additional wharfage room from the Cape Town municipality, if the Corporation carried out its combined foreshore reclamation and sea-wall programme. But the construction of a new landing-place between the old and the new wharves, that is between the Heerengracht and Bree Street, would depend upon financial considerations. Would the municipality obtain funds from the Cape government, for instance? There was, however, little prospect of financial help from the Cape government, for as recently as November, 1845, it had indicated its reluctance to lend funds for the purpose ³².

This had been some time ago, however, and conditions had changed in the meanwhile. The Cape government had become more conscious of the need for improving landing and loading facilities at Table Bay as a result of the suggestion of the official stationed there; on 3rd July, 1847, the Collector of Customs at Rogge Bay had asked the Cape government to do something to improve the approach to the North Wharf, which was obstructed by carts and waggons bearing and taking away merchandise.

In order to sound out the views of the Cape authorities and to determine whether the Cape government might be prepared to improve the foreshore and build a sea-wall, or wharf, there, members of the Commercial Exchange approached John Montagu, the Government Secretary. They asked him whether he would adopt the Cape Town municipal scheme and use official funds for that purpose.

In view of the purely municipal scope of the project, Montagu was loth to use official funds. But he devised a compromise to meet mercantile pleas for a sea-wall or new landing-place. The Cape government would construct the sea-wall if the city agreed to repay the expenses out of the proceeds of the sale of municipal land. Should the sale of reclaimed land not cover the expense, the government would make up the shortfall; should surplus funds remain, they would revert to the municipality ³³.

32 CO 4929, p. 91: Government Secretary — Collector of Customs, 24.4.1847, p. 1; CO 572: Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 5.4.1847, p. 1; CO 5307, p. 417: Government Secretary — Cape Town Municipal Secretary, 21.11.1845, p. 1.

33 The letter of the Collector of Customs to the Government Secretary, 3.7.1847, cannot be found; it is referred to in ICA 20 No. 59 Minute 28; Memorial of C.T. merchants & inhabitants, 28.12.1847, p. 2; ICA 20 No. 45 Minute 24; Government Secretary's memorandum — Pottinger, 12.8.1847, p. 1; CFM 4/11, pp. 447-48; Cape Town Municipal Secretary — Government Secretary, 15.7.1847 pp. 1-2.

The municipality of Cape Town was interested in the Cape government's offer to reclaim the foreshore and to build a sea-wall at state expense. A portion of the land to be reclaimed from the sea would be devoted to the proposed sea-wall, customs house and other public buildings. But the remaining land would be divided into erven and sold to merchants and shippers to enable them to establish businesses and stores near the proposed landing-place. Streets would also be laid out in the new reclaimed area and the city moved towards the seashore in consequence. In order to raise money for financing the scheme, the erven would be sold at public auction. The entire project, the Cape government proposed, should be directed by a Board of Commissioners, analogous to the Commissioners of the Road Board. The sea-wall Commissioners would be authorized to raise any supplementary funds required on the security of the dues to be recovered from the future income of the new Cape Town landing-place or sea-wall. Should any money remain after the completion of the scheme, the Cape government promised to hand over the surplus to the municipal treasury. The Cape Town Corporation might then use the surplus to improve the city itself.

The price of government assistance was not large. The Cape Town municipality would, for its part, merely have to relinquish ownership of part of the foreshore to be reclaimed. The Cape government offered to undertake a survey of the area, as well as to provide an estimate of the cost of the project ³⁴.

Having endeavoured for years to interest the authorities in carrying out the combined urban reclamation and wharf construction programme, it was perhaps no wonder that the municipality willingly agreed to the conditions specified by the Cape government and asked the authorities to commence the plan immediately.

Accordingly, on 28th July, 1847, the Civil Engineer was requested to draw up plans for building a sea-wall, patent slip and government buildings to be built on the reclaimed foreshore. A new customs house, port office and other public buildings were to be constructed on the area between the old jetty and the new wharf at Bree Street. Facilities should be established for the accommodation of lighters and a place provided for fishermen to haul their boats ashore. To embellish the city, the Cape Town fishmarket should be removed to a more unobtrusive part of town.

34 CTM 4/11, pp. 447-48; Cape Town Municipal Secretary — Government Secretary, 15.7.1847, pp. 1-2; CO 5309, pp. 49-51; Government Secretary — Cape Town Municipal Secretary, 17.7.1847, pp. 1-3; CO 554 (unnumbered pages); Cape Town Municipal Secretary — Government Secretary, 22.7.1847, p. 1.

The scheme to extend and improve Cape Town and to provide additional wharfrage space appealed to municipal, commercial and shipping interests alike. It was also favourable to boatmen at Rogge Bay. All had some benefit to gain from the proposed government project.

For according to the plan, which the Civil Engineer advanced to the Cape government on 1st September, 1847, a sea-wall, or wharf, would give ship-chandlers and merchants slightly more room to shift cargo and provisions. Major Mitchell, however, realized that even more space should be provided and accordingly, he drew up plans to build a second landing-place. This should be constructed perpendicular to the sea-wharf and run out to the extent of 800 feet from the foot of the Heerengracht. These two landing-places should at last overcome the chronic lack of space, the subject of mercantile pleas, complaints and petitions for decades. The proposed installation of cranes on the long Heerengracht quay would also permit cargo to be both despatched and landed directly onto the wharf, with less delay and bother, as lighters would be able to approach alongside it. As the long quay would also be nearer to shipping at anchor, lighters would no longer have to waste so much time in making protracted trips to vessels in the roadstead. To accommodate the interests of ship-repairers, a patent slip should be established on the eastern side of the North Quay. The work should also be built by the Cape government and leased to a private company for two or three decades.

The interests of boatmen at Rogge Bay were not forgotten. The area between the sea-wall and the old jetty should be made available to them. They would be able to beach their lighters there, as would the fishermen, who would, moreover, be almost adjacent to the fishmarket, which Major Mitchell proposed relocating near the old jetty.

The sea-wall itself would enclose the foreshore and reclaim approximately 22 acres for Cape Town from the sea; St. George's Street and Burg Street would be extended towards the beach and the city enlarged in consequence. The Mother City would also be turned into a real thing of beauty, as the Civil Engineer planned to build new public buildings near the Heerengracht jetty. The port office, searcher's office, customs house and government stores would not only be new buildings, but all decorated "... in Grecian Style of Architecture". The entire scheme would probably cost the Cape government £98,037 ³⁵.

35 CO 4929, pp. 606-7: copy, Government Secretary — Civil Engineer, 28.7.1847, pp. 1-2; "South African Commercial Advertiser", 28.7.1847; LCA 20 No. 45, Minute 24; Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 1.9.1847, pp. 1-6; GH 23/17, pp. 328-29: copy, Pottinger — Grey No. 216, 6.12.1847, pp. 5-6.

THE CENTRAL JETTY OFF THE HEERENGRACHT 1848-1850

Despite new roads and better transportation, the export of both agricultural and pastoral produce via Table Bay was still not free, but restricted by the market dues levied by the Cape Town municipality on all produce passing the municipal market. In 1845, for example, wheat farmers in Swellendam and the wool farmers living at Tigerberg, Noeberg and Mardenburg complained to the Legislative Council about the injustice of such a system. They pointed out that the charge levied on the export of produce and wool nullified any of the benefits, which the improvement of communications would otherwise have accorded to them. Not only the merchants of Cape Town, but the Cape government itself realized the injustice of subjecting produce brought to Table Bay for export



the Civil Engineer's Department and various other departments of the Cape Town Corporation shall only with the sanction of the Cape government if the latter shall have agreed to their the charges and a list of the Cape Town market dues.

- 36 104 15 Minute 25: Memorial of Merchants of Noeberg, Mardenburg & Tigerberg — Mithrid & Legislative Council, n.d. [c. 15.10.1845] & Minute 26: Memorial of the Merchants and Agriculturists ... Swellendam — Mithrid & Legislative Council, n.d. [c. 15.11.1845]; 00 4, p. 10; Minute 27: Special Meeting of Council, 18.11.1845, 17 Minute 18: Reply to the same for the purpose of showing that the necessity of passing such a law would be of great benefit to Cape Town, 28.1.1846.
- 37 104 20 No. 25: Memorial of Merchants and Agriculturists for the Municipality of Cape Town — Legislative Council, 27.10.1847, pp. 1-4; 101 20 No. 24 Minute 24: Cape Town Municipality — Government Secretary, 2.11.1847, pp. 1-2 & Cape Town Municipality — Government Secretary, 10.11.1847, p. 1.

Despite new roads and better transportation, the export of both agricultural and pastoral produce via Table Bay was still not free, but restricted by the market dues levied by the Cape Town municipality on all produce passing the municipal market. In 1845, for example, wheat farmers in Swellendam and the wool farmers living at Tigerberg, Koeberg and Paardenberg complained to the Legislative Council about the injustice of such a system; they pointed out that the charge levied on the export of produce and wool nullified many of the benefits, which the improvement of communications would otherwise have accorded to them. Not only the merchants of Cape Town, but the Cape government itself realized the injustice of subjecting produce brought to Table Bay for export to municipal taxation. In April, 1846, therefore, Sir Peregrine Maitland declared his intention to repeal the Cape Town market dues³⁶.

The Municipality of Cape Town, however, viewed the proposed repeal of its municipal market dues as an unwarranted instance of government intervention and an infringement of municipal privilege. It was also a threat to municipal revenue and administration; were the Cape government to carry out its intention to abolish the market dues, how would Cape Town streets be kept in repair, as market dues helped to pay for repairing the streets damaged by heavily-laden wagons bringing produce to market.

The resultant dissension between the Cape Town municipality and the Cape government made the Corporation reluctant to co-operate with the authorities in the foreshore plan, despite the offer of the Cape government to pay for the scheme, which would benefit the city rather than the colony. Offended by the intention of the Cape government to encroach upon municipal privilege, in November, 1847, the Commissioners of the municipality informed the government of their refusal to co-operate in the Civil Engineer's foreshore and wharves' plan. Indeed, the Cape Town Corporation would only work together with the Cape government if the latter would agree to defer the contemplated abolition of the Cape Town market dues³⁷.

- 36 LCA 16 Minute 25: Memorial of Inhabitants of Koeberg, Paardenberg & Tigerberg — Maitland & Legislative Council, n.d. [c. 16.10.1845] & Minute 26: Memorial of the Landowners and Agriculturists ... Swellendam — Maitland & Legislative Council, n.d. [c. 13.11.1845]; CC 4, p. 70: Minutes, Special Meeting, 15.11.1845, pp. 1-2; ICA 17 Minute 16: Draft Ordinance For Relieving Farmers and others from the necessity of passing their produce through the Public Market in Cape Town, 24.4.1846.
- 37 ICA 20 No. 22: Memorial of Commissioners and Wardmasters for the Municipality of Cape Town — Legislative Council, 22.10.1847, pp. 1-4; ICA 20 No. 24 Minute 24: Cape Town Municipality — Government Secretary, 3.11.1847, pp. 1-2 & Cape Town Municipality — Government Secretary, 10.11.1847, p. 1.

Like his predecessor, Sir Henry Pottinger realized that the improvement of roads and the promotion of transport would bring no benefits if the ports of the colony remained small and under-developed. Port facilities should be enlarged and extended to promote the export of Cape wool and produce. Accordingly, he decided to embark upon a policy of developing the port and harbours of the Cape colony.

The logical place to start would be at Cape Town, the main site for the export of wool and agricultural produce and the principal shipping resort of the colony. Since exports were hampered and made more costly by the market dues levied in Cape Town, the governor resolved to abolish them and to carry out the port scheme, which the Civil Engineer had just outlined.

Since the co-operation of the Cape Town municipality could not be secured for realizing the Table Bay port programme, which Major Michell had just suggested for building a sea-wall and the Heerengracht landing-place, Sir Henry Pottinger decided to dispense with municipal co-operation and to create the administrative machinery necessary for commencing the project.

On 19th November, 1847, therefore, he introduced the Table Bay Improvement Bill designed to give effect to the construction of a fairly elaborate port of two additional wharves at Rogge Bay. The legislation for realizing the Cape Town port formed part of the overall port and harbour improvement programme for the entire Cape colony, which the governor introduced at the end of November, 1847. The legislature abolished the Cape Town market dues and passed the Ordinance for Improving the Ports, Harbours and Roadsteads of this Colony. The second piece of legislation provided for the future nomination of the administrative machinery, which would comprise of the the Boards of Harbour Commissioners, who would not only supervise construction, but finance it from the sale of reclaimed land, or from money to be raised on the security of annual wharfage dues. Money thus raised would be guaranteed by the Cape government and not on the security of the Imperial Treasury ³⁸.

38 GH 23/17, pp. 265-66; copy, Pottinger — Grey No. 194, 29.11.1847, pp. 1-2; LCA 2, pp. 258-59; Minutes, 19.11.1847, pp. 1-2; LCA 20 No. 28 Minute 28; Ordinance 20-1847 For Relieving the Agricultural and other Articles from the Necessity of passing through Public Markets, 29.10.1847 & No. 29 Minute 23; Ordinance 21-1847 For Improving the Ports, Harbours and Roadsteads of this Colony, 29.10.1847.

On 8th January, 1848, the Legislative Council unanimously accepted his proposal and enacted the Table Bay Improvement Ordinance. The long-awaited provision of further wharfage space would, moreover, not cost commerce and shipping a penny, as the cost of the two new quays would be defrayed from the sale of reclaimed land and also from the wharfage dues. A Board of Commissioners would soon be nominated for Table Bay and they would raise the funds and supervise the construction of the additional Cape Town landing-places, which the Commercial Exchange had been desiring for many a decade.

The municipality of Cape Town, too, had come to realize the immense benefits of the urban extension scheme and the city commissioners, therefore, withdrew their opposition and promised to allow the wasteland, which they owned on the foreshore, to be sold as a contribution to the cost of financing the port and urban extension programme³⁹.

To permit future improvements of Table Bay, the Commissioners were permitted to use wharfage dues for this purpose.

That there was, in fact, a particularly pressing need to repair the existing wharves before building new jetties, is sufficiently attested by the remarkable growth of trade at Table Bay during these years. Between 1847 and 1848, the exports of wool, for example, had grown from 1,135,638 lbs. to 1,590,952 lbs. The Cape government had attempted to alleviate the position by repairing the wharves and from September to the end of 1847, the Civil Engineer's Department had been busy in repairing them. Such exertions were somewhat inadequate, however, and at the end of 1847, merchants and shippers had cause to address an urgent plea to the authorities. They asked the government to ensure that the Civil Engineer's Department would complete repairs at the North Wharf with greater speed. They also asked the Cape government to help them by building some sheds and stores on the North Wharf itself; these would protect bales of wool and other merchandise from the weather⁴⁰.

39 LCA 2, pp. 295-96; Minutes, 8.1.1848; LCA 21 No. 2; Ordinance 1-1848 For Improving the Port of Table Bay, 8.1.1848.

40 CO 5989; Annual Cape Bluebook 1847, p. 238; CO 5990; Annual Cape Bluebook 1848, p. 268; CO 579 (unnumbered pages); Bookkeeper & Store-keeper, Civil Engineer's Office — Government Secretary, 16.3.1848; LCA 20 No. 59 Minute 28; Petition of Cape Town merchants and other inhabitants — Smith & Legislative Council, 28.12.1847, pp. 1-2.

The approach to the North Quay was only 22½ feet and it was congested by carts carrying goods for shipment and taking away merchandise landed from the ships. As carts were generally about 9½ feet wide, two waggons had difficulty in passing each other, the entire operation requiring much time and impeding the despatch and arrival of cargo.

In view of the imminent provision of additional wharfrage and storage space by the construction of the new jetties, the Cape government neither extended nor repaired the new quay at the end of Tree Street. Boatmen and merchants renewed their petitions and requested that a new platform should be laid on the North Quay and that the structure should be widened by at least 20 feet. As the only four sheds which had existed there had recently burned down, it would be useful if the Cape government would construct a number of sheds or stores on the North Quay as well.

In order to meet the representations of boatmen and merchants, the Legislative Council decided to study the actual state of wharfrage and storage accommodation, to reconcile the Civil Engineer's plan with the demands of commerce and shipping. In view of the imminent provision of two new landing-places, should the existing wharves still be kept in repair and, if so, where would funds be obtained from? Recent legislation had only provided funds for the construction of the sea-wall and the Heerengracht jetty and not a penny had been allocated for repairing the existing landing-places. Merchants and shippers would soon be able to establish their sheds and warehouses near the new foreshore landing-place, or sea-wall, and would it really be worth while for the Cape government to build sheds on the North Wharf in the meanwhile?

The growth of trade, however, made it necessary to provide warehousing facilities and to increase wharfrage accommodation in the interim. After their investigation, the Wharf's Commission suggested that half of the total wharfrage revenue derived from Table Bay (about £5,000) should be used to widen the North Quay and establish stores there; the other £5,000 of wharfrage revenue for 1848 should be used to extend the dwarf jetty 20 or 30 feet seawards and to repair the old wharf as well. To carry these improvements into effect without delay, a Board of Commissioners should be appointed immediately ⁴¹.

41 ICA 21 No. 26 Minute 5: Memorial of merchants & other inhabitants of Cape Town — Smith & Legislative Council, 26.6.1848, pp. 1-2 & No. 41 Minute 8: Memorial of the ... Proprietors of Boats ... 3.7.1848, pp. 1-2; ICA 21 No. 55 Minute 13: Report of Table Bay Wharf's Committee, 13.7.1848, pp. 1-4 & Enclosure, Minutes of Evidence, Evidence of William Roome, boatowner, 5.7.1848, p. 10.

CHAPTER V

THE PORT AND HARBOUR OF TABLE BAY

1848 - 1860

In July, 1848, Sir Harry Smith nominated the Commissioners for improving the Port and Harbour of Table Bay¹. Their title was perhaps somewhat inaccurate, for they could only improve the port and not the harbour while Her Majesty's Government was considering the possibility of granting an Imperial loan and providing the labour requisite for building a breakwater.

The merchants and shippers of Cape Town were happy that the landing-places would be repaired and that more room would be provided for the storage of goods; the Commissioners were also asked to build a jetty off the Heerengracht as part of the Michell plan for a seawall, or wharf, along the foreshore.

Merchants in the centre of town encountered considerable difficulty in conducting marine business at the old jetty nearby and the prospective construction of a new wharf there promised to resolve many of their problems. As the new Civil Engineer, Captain George Pilkington, had not yet arrived in Cape Town, work on the jetty could not begin immediately.

On 26th August, 1848, almost immediately after the nomination of the Commissioners for improving the port, the merchants and boatmen of the city requested them to postpone the construction of a permanent sea-wall and to build a temporary landing-place off the Heerengracht instead. The Commissioners assented and began building the Central Jetty perpendicular to the beach at Waterkant Street.

1 CO 5838 (unnumbered pages): Proclamation (Smith), 26.7.1848.

The existing port facilities were also improved, the North Wharf being considerably widened and the dwarf jetty extended by 60 ft. to make it last for another five years. The Commissioners also provided more storage space by building sheds on the North Wharf and leasing them to the owners of cargo boats ².

The Cape government was also considering the prospect of building the harbour, which had been suggested by the 1844 Commission, but in January, 1849, this likelihood had to be deferred. Sir Harry Smith was informed that Earl Grey was, unfortunately, not in a position to grant substantial Imperial aid, for the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury had not approved of floating a loan on the express guarantee of the Imperial Treasury itself. Besides, numerous harbour works all over the Empire were petitioning for substantial grants of aid. A harbour of two breakwaters for Cape Town, Lord Grey felt, should not be postponed for long and the Cape government might consider financing the project on the security of the general revenue.

Lord Grey could, however, send ^{the} ~~to~~ convicts, whom his predecessor had promised to despatch. In 1846, colonists had entertained considerable disquiet at the prospect and now that Lord Grey was actually sending them without the provision of financial assistance for the work, the Cape colonists were even more opposed to their arrival. Although the "ticket of leave" men subsequently arrived at Cape Town to build the breakwater, no harbour ensued, because of the Anti-Convict Agitation, which commenced on 15th November, 1848, when a protest meeting was called by the Commercial Exchange ³.

The construction of the temporary landing-place off the Heerengracht made rapid progress and on 11th March, 1850, the Central Jetty was opened for use.

Even during its construction and pending the commencement of the permanent sea-wall designed by Michell in 1847, the Cape government considered ways of carrying the sea-wall plan into effect. The new Civil Engineer subsequently arrived at the colony and on 8th June, 1849, he devised an improved design for building a sea-wall.

² CHB 1, p. 8; Minutes, 7.8.1848, p. 2; CHB 1, p. 10; Minutes, 9.8.1848, p. 2; CHB 1, p. 15; Minutes, 12.8.1848; CHB 1, p. 24; Minutes, 26.8.1848, p. 2.

³ GH 1/38 No. 70; Grey — Smith No. 207, 29.10.1848, pp. 2-3; CC 3, pp. 124-25; Minutes, 13.11.1848, pp. 1-2.

To provide more wharfage accommodation than the completion of the Central Wharf could make available, Captain Pilkington improved the plan of his predecessor for building a wharf along the foreshore between the Heerengracht and Bree Street. As a temporary structure was being built from the bottom of the Heerengracht, Captain Pilkington planned to replace it by a permanent stone sea-wall.

Further space for cargo operations would be obtained by extending the main landing-place, the North Wharf. A small breakwater might also be added to it. The two landing-places, one off the Heerengracht, the other off Bree Street, would partially enclose the Bay and form a breakwater harbour.

The cost of the work would probably amount to £212,315-6-0. This might be financed not from the wharfage revenues, but rather from the sale oferven, or plots, of the land to be reclaimed on the foreshore. At £300 an acre, for example, a sum of £180,000 might be obtained; the shortfall of £32,315-6-0 might be met from the Cape treasury itself. Labour costs could be reduced by installing a railway for transporting the stone and earth to be used in filling the land to be reclaimed. There would be no need to buy an expensive diving bell, nor even to incur the cost of a coffer-dam, for the work could be done by machinery invented by the Civil Engineer himself. Captain Pilkington impressed upon the Cape government that the scheme would not be extravagant, considering that his improved plan would reclaim almost three times more land than Michell had intended and include the cost of drainage, which his predecessor had failed to take into account ⁴.

The completion of the temporary wharf at the end of the Heerengracht provided slightly more room for cargo operations, but it neither expedited the transference of goods nor satisfied the needs of shipping. As the wharf did not extend far enough, steamers could still not come alongside and cargo continued to be conveyed in lighters. Despite the growth of steam shipping, there were still no adequate facilities for coaling steamers at Table Bay.

No wonder that shipping interests dreamed of the formation of an elaborate port, complete with docks, where steamers might load and embark cargo and passengers and take in coal directly at the quayside.

4 CO 596 No. 92: 17th Report of the Commissioners for Improving the Port & Harbour of Table Bay, 20.4.1850, p. 3; CPM 2/88 No. 162: Civil Engineer — Government Secretary, 8.6.1849, pp. 1-8.

In February, 1851, Captain C.D. Hays, the representative of the General Screw Steam Shipping Company at the Cape, thought of building a coal depot and asked the Municipality of Cape Town for a piece of land on the northern side of the Central Jetty.

He subsequently realized, however, that this would not be practicable, since a coaling shed near the wharf would interfere with the operation of lighters and impede the transfer of cargo. Bunkering steamers from a coal shed on shore would have caused much delay as boats would have been obliged to convey coal over the long distance to ships at anchor. In the event of the Cape government building the permanent sea-wall, the coal shed would interfere with the planned line of streets.

Captain Hays, therefore, modified his proposal into an ingenious plan for using a coal barge and a small boat. Instead of relying on lighters for carrying coal from a depot on shore, a coal barge might be permanently moored in the anchorage. A small boat stationed alongside would permit coal to be hoisted into it by a crane attached to the barge. The arrangement would reduce the distance between steamers and the coal supply to a mere 420 ft. If the Cape government would permit the adoption of the scheme, the British shipping company would gladly lay down moorings at its own expense.

It would be even better if the Cape government could provide a special place for coaling steamers directly at the quayside. In the interim, however, a special coaling area might be set aside by extending the Central Jetty by about 300 feet, until the establishment of a proper colliery jetty.

The Port Captain, Lt. Bance, approved of the scheme as the best expedient for the time being and the Cape government permitted a coal barge to be moored in the roadstead and offered the help of the Port Department in laying down moorings.

But the authorities rejected the provision of a temporary colliery jetty, since the Port Captain doubted whether the Central Wharf could be extended by an additional 300 feet; the temporary work was not strong enough to carry the extra weight. To have satisfied the needs of shipping would have been tantamount to building a new and much stronger wharf and this would have been beyond the means of the Cape government.

The needs of shipping also demanded the construction of a breakwater type of harbour and Captain Hays asked the Municipality of Cape Town to support his plea to the Cape government in this regard ⁵.

5 OTM 2/91 No. 136: Capt. Hays — Cape Town Municipality, 11.2.1851, pp. 1-3; CO 610 No. 50: Report, Asst. Surveyor-General — Govt. Secty., 4.3.1851, p. 1 & draft, Govt. Secty. — Capt. Hays, 6.3.1851, pp. 3-5 & Enclosure; CO 610 No. 51: Port Capt. — Govt. Secty. — 27.2.1851, pp. 1-3; CO 610 No. 52: Capt. Hays — Government Secretary, 22.2.1851, pp. 1-3.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE BREAKWATER BY H.R.H. PRINCE ALFRED 1860

University of Cape Town

The following account of the battle of the Clouds is taken from the journal of the late General Sir David Baird, who was present at the battle. It is a very interesting and accurate account of the battle, and is worth reading to all who are interested in the history of the Cape of Good Hope.



The battle of the Clouds was fought on the 15th of June 1795, between the British and the Dutch. The British, under the command of General Sir David Baird, were victorious. The Dutch, under the command of General Jan van Rensburg, were defeated. The battle was a decisive one, and it led to the British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope.

The Municipality remained interested in harbour construction and all port improvements, particularly in the context of urban development and the improvement of the foreshore.

In June 1850, the Chairman of the Commissioners of the Municipality, Mr. Hercules Jarvis, had asked the Municipality to consider carrying out a plan designed by Mr. I. Irving for improving the foreshore. This was to be effected by building a sea-wall between the old jetty and the North Quay and extending an iron pile pier from the Heerengracht. The Irving scheme championed by Jarvis also envisaged the laying down of moorings in the anchorage and the construction of a breakwater, 4,200 ft. in extent, from the Chavannes battery. The Municipality had desired to commence the Irving plan, estimated at £213,660, but since it lacked the necessary authority and funds, the project had to be postponed.

But when shipping interests revived the breakwater proposal, the Municipality received new encouragement and approached the government with renewed vigour. The Municipality pointed out that the moment was now ripe for adopting the Irving harbour plan, which would, moreover, be less expensive than the harbour suggested by the 1844 Commission. The growth of shipping and the greater need for its protection would make the grant of Imperial assistance fairly certain. As the Imperial Treasury had refused to advance a considerable loan on its own security, the Municipality of Cape Town requested the Cape government for authority to construct the breakwater in accordance with the Irving plan on the guarantee of the Table Bay wharfage and customs revenues. Alternatively, a body other than the Port and Harbour Improvement Commission might be instituted and furnished with the wharfage revenues as security for raising loans for harbour construction ⁶.

By 1852, however, the Municipality and the Commercial Exchange had both become sceptical about the eventuality of the Cape government ever undertaking the improvement of a wharves' port by constructing a permanent sea-wall off Adderley Street. They had been expecting the event for years and members of the Commercial Exchange realized that even were the Port and Harbour Improvement Commission to build the sea-wall immediately, extending a wharves' port would no longer be meaningful. For only an elaborate, and not a simple port of jetties, could remedy the chronic inconvenience of moving cargo by lighters and satisfy the requirements of shipping for the provision of better coaling facilities.

6 CTM 1/4/13, pp. 125-26: Minutes, Meeting, 5.6.1850; CTM 2/31 No. 139: Report of the Special Committee of the Cape Town Municipality, n.d. [18.2.1851] CO 610 No. 7: Cape Town Municipality -- Government Secretary, 22.2.1851, Enclosure, Report of the Special Committee of the Cape Town Municipality ..., 18.2.1851, pp. 4-5 & 8-12.

But since it seemed even more improbable that the Cape government would build docks when it had not even managed to extend a simple port of jetties, in February, 1852, the merchants and shippers of Cape Town considered the possibility of building docks themselves.

A meeting was held and besides Mr. John Fairbridge, the six speakers present comprised Captain Hays and four Cape Town merchants. One of the participants, Mr. J. Wight, had, in conjunction with Hercules Jarvis, long been asking the Municipality of Cape Town to consider how much easier it would be to ship and land cargoes if a proper port were established at Cape Town.

A subscription might be opened and a number of shares floated to enable the proposed dock formation company to excavate a basin, 800 ft. long and 250 ft. wide, on the foreshore west of the Chevannes battery. After the removal of about 400,000 tons of rock, the resultant dock of about 4 acres would accommodate 30 ships, which could reach the dock along a canal 900 ft. in extent. Some of the debris excavated could be used to line the walls of the dock and to build sheds and bonding-stores for the merchants and shippers. A number of cranes might also be installed to expedite cargo operations with steamers berthed at the dockside. This arrangement should satisfy the inveterate desire of both shipping and trade for the quicker handling of cargo and a colliery wharf might also be built for the special benefit of steamers.

The charges paid for lighters would accrue to the intended dock company, which might also consider imposing a modest fee for port improvements effected. The cost of the project, estimated at £80,000, might be further reduced by the anticipated recovery of £20,000 from the sale of excavated slate to ships for ballast at 5/- a ton. Should the Cape government eventually decide to build a sea-wall or even construct a breakwater, the contemplated company might find a new customer for its products, as the authorities would probably find it cheaper to buy the building material rather than to incur the expense of quarrying it themselves.

Besides the suggestion that a British contractor should be engaged for the work, there was no indication as to who would actually perform the work. Indeed, the estimate failed to take any labour costs into consideration⁷. As the Port and Harbour Commission already existed for undertaking port improvements and since there was little likelihood of obtaining funds and labour, mercantile and shipping interests were not inclined to raise money for the project.

7 Commercial Exchange "Proceedings of a Public Meeting, held at Cape Town, on the 14th February, 1852, for the purpose of forming Docks in Table Bay". (Cape Town [1852]), pp. 1-8.

Money should have been raised for this purpose, however, for by August, 1854, only four years after its completion, the Central Jetty was no longer being used for cargo operations. It had become useless because the tramways on both sides of it hindered the landing and loading of merchandise, and some of the piles were already decaying. Cargo activities had, therefore, to be carried out at the old jetty and the North Wharf, where the facilities were not very much better. A crane had once existed on the North Wharf, but it had become so unserviceable that it had to be removed, leaving the main landing-place without a single crane or winch.

Mr. Hercules Jarvis, therefore, continued his representations, this time taking them to the new Cape Parliament. He suggested to the House of Assembly that he and Messrs. Fairbairn, Watson and Barry should be appointed as a Select Committee to study the state of cargo facilities and ways of improving the safety of the roadstead. Parliament agreed and also assented to his second proposition that the Select Committee should consult the opinion of the Civil Engineer, Mr. J. Scott Tucker, in this regard.

The Civil Engineer consequently devised a plan for building a breakwater, 5,400 ft. in length, from the Chavannes battery. An inner harbour should be built for merchantmen by forming two moles, the South Cross Wall and a South-East Inner Guard. The cost of the work would probably amount to £349,294, if carried out by free labour; but only half the price -- say £200,000 -- if British convicts could be used⁸.

The harbour for which an Imperial grant was being anticipated, was the design for two breakwaters proposed by the Commission of 1844. Although the plan envisaged the construction of two breakwaters to enclose an area of 67 acres of the anchorage for accommodating 86 ships, the plan was impractical, as Captain Knox had rightly perceived. For the intended construction of a transverse sea-wall in the anchorage in line with the shore would have prohibited ships from entering it and hence the effective harbour would only have comprised of 35 acres able to accommodate 60 ships.

The Admiralty, therefore, commissioned Lieutenant Dayman R.N. to devise a suitable harbour and in 1853, he submitted a slightly improved, but almost identical, design for two breakwaters.

8 Cape of Good Hope: Report from the Select Committee appointed to report upon the safety of the Port of Table Bay and the facilities for landing and shipping goods. (Cape Town, 1854), pp. 12-13; Evidence, William Roome Esq 19.8.1854 & p. 15; Evidence, Asst. Port Captain, 25.8.1854 & pp. 21-23; copy, Civil Engineer -- Government Secretary, 8.9.1854; Cape of Good Hope: Assembly, Votes & Proceedings 1854, p. 52, 18.7.1854 & p. 107, 4.8.1854.

Dissatisfied with Lt. Dayman's scheme, the Admiralty decided to contact Mr. Rendel, the engineer building harbours at Portland and Holyhead, and asked him to devise an improved plan on the basis of former plans in the possession of the Admiralty. The Cape Civil Engineer, Mr. Scott Tucker, subsequently visited England and was able to give Rendel first hand information about the harbour scheme which he had just submitted to the Cape government.

Rendel perceived at once that the 1844 breakwater harbour scheme would be useless and that neither the single breakwater design of Tucker nor the dual breakwater design of Lt. Dayman would form a sufficiently ample harbour. What was needed at Table Bay was a large harbour of refuge of two strong breakwaters enclosing at least 200 acres of the roadstead and comprising of numerous jetties for the use of commerce.

Rendel, therefore, elaborated Lt. Dayman's plan into a scheme for building a harbour of refuge and an additional number of jetties. The harbour of refuge should be made large enough by forming two rubble breakwaters, the North breakwater off the Chavonnes battery and a South breakwater to be run out from the North Wharf, to enclose an area of 216 acres instead of the 76 acres proposed by Lieutenant Dayman.

The port itself should be elaborated to accommodate the largest steamers touching at the Cape for provisions and repairs. A coaling jetty should be constructed by running out a jetty at the end of the South breakwater at right angles to it. On the South breakwater, which would be formed at the site of the North Wharf, a number of sheds and stores might be established and quays constructed parallel to the breakwater.

Railways should be constructed from the quarries to the sites of the two breakwaters.

Construction would probably take about five years to accomplish at a cost of more than £485,500, since the estimate excluded the expense of railways and of building jetties ⁹.

In May 1855, the Committee of the House of Assembly, which had investigated the harbour of refuge according to the plan which the Admiralty had asked Mr. Rendel to design, thought that it would be useful to ask the Admiralty whether the Cape government should consider adopting the plan of Mr. Rendel or Mr. Scott Tucker. In response to the enquiry, the Admiralty renounced its championship of the Rendel scheme and asked the Cape to consider a new plan altogether — that of Captain James Vetch R.E.

9 Table Bay Harbour Board "A short Account of the Construction of Harbour Works in Table Bay from 1656 to 1895, with a descriptive plan. (Cape Town, 1895), p. 11; Lt. Dayman's report was already inextant in 1853 (CO 5476, p. 248: Government Secretary's Memo., 23.8.1853); GH 19/9 (unnumbered pages): copy, Rendel's report — Capt. W.A.B. Hamilton R.N., 15.1.1855, pp. 1-5, 8-9, 11-15 17, 19-23, 34 & 39-44.

On 8th November, 1855, the Admiralty gave to Captain Vetch various plans and documents on the subject and by August 1856, he had devised a suitable plan ¹⁰.

In view of the anticipated difficulties and the inordinate expense of excavating docks in an area consisting of almost solid rock, Rendel had contented himself with suggesting an improved wharves' port, instead of having elaborated his design into the provision of docks.

A specialist at the Admiralty's Harbour Department, Captain Vetch at once discerned the limited scope of Rendel's plan and elaborated it into a comprehensive scheme for establishing docks and a larger type of harbour for the largest type of steamers calling at the Cape.

Elaborate docks should be constructed, comprising an esplanade or a sea-wall on the foreshore between Fort Knocks in the east and the North Quay in the west to house sheds and goods-yards for the storage of cargo, and equipped with roads and tramways for the quicker transference of goods. A coal depot for steamers might also be built on the esplanade. In addition, a stone landing-place should be run out from the eastern breakwater and the North Quay should be replaced by a larger wharf made of timber.

Believing that from an engineering viewpoint, it would be very difficult to construct the small harbour of refuge envisaged by Rendel, Captain Vetch proposed to enclose more than twice the area of the roadstead by means of running out two breakwaters. One of 5,600 ft. from the Chavornas battery and another one 4,600 ft. from Fort Knocks; these would enclose the entire anchorage.

The elaboration of Rendel's wharves' port into docks and more than doubling the size of the harbour proposed by Rendel would take about a decade to build and would - Captain Vetch surmised - probably cost twice as much - that is, approximately £1,000,000, although this was only a rough approximation. Much money and time could be saved, however, if the work might be performed by a thousand convicts sent out from England. The Cape government, he calculated, had an annual revenue of about £25,000 and upon the receipt of an Imperial grant of £300,000, the magnificent harbour of refuge could be carried into effect with the assistance of British convict labour ¹¹.

10 Cape of Good Hope: Report and Plan for a Harbour in Table Bay, Cape of Good Hope, by Captain Vetch, R.N. (Cape Town, 1859), pp. 3-4; copy, Colonial Secretary - Secretary to Admiralty, 31.10.1855, Enclosure A, Sub-enclosure D, Report of the Committee of House of Assembly to report upon .. the formation of a Harbour of Refuge ... as proposed by Mr. Rendel 12.5.1855; Report and Plan ... pp. 5, 6 & 9; copy, Colonial Secretary - Grey, 2.11.1856, Enclosure, Secretary to Admiralty - Colonial Secretary 17.9.1856, Enclosure, copy, Report of Captain Vetch on the Harbour Works in Table Bay, 27.8.1856, p. 1.

11 GH 19/9; copy, Rendel's report ..., pp. 44-46; Cape of Good Hope: Report and Plan ... pp. 7-9.

Accordingly, in June, 1857, the Cape government enacted legislation to implement Captain Vetch's scheme for a harbour of refuge. This was to be done by guaranteeing an annual repayment of at least £25,000 by doubling the wharfage and crange duties at Table Bay and selling land to be reclaimed from the sea. Since the Colonial Secretary, however, felt that the harbour should entirely be financed from loans mortgaged on the general revenue, Act 20 of 1858 was passed in consequence. It provided for the issue of debentures of £50 and £100 charged upon wharfage revenues accumulated so far and upon the imposition of double wharfage duties, as well as the sale of reclaimed land.

In view of the Anti-Convict Agitation, the Legislative Council suggested that Cape convicts should be used to build the harbour ¹².

Although the Cape government had made provision for paying for the estimated £1,000,000 scheme, Captain Vetch subsequently realized that it would be advisable to obtain a second opinion about the provisional estimate which he had given to the Cape government. In December, 1857, therefore, he approached one of his colleagues, who was carrying out the harbour works at Portland which Mr. Rendel had designed. This was Mr. John Coode, regarded as the foremost harbour engineer in England and whom the Admiralty intended to appoint engineer-in-chief for the harbour at the Cape. The actual construction, however, would be under the direction of a resident engineer.

Since even the Admiralty found Vetch's provisional estimate extravagant, they appointed Coode engineer-in-chief and charged him to revise Vetch's provisional estimate of the cost of the work ¹³.

If the Admiralty itself had doubts about the prohibitive cost of carrying out the Vetch plan, which the Cape government intended to adopt on its recommendations, is it any wonder that doubts also arose at the colony about the excessive cost of the project? "I consider Captain Vetch's plan", the Cape Civil Engineer declared "as a dream almost ..." ¹⁴.

- 12 Cape Parliament, Bills & Acts, Session 1857. (Cape Town, 1857): copy, Act 11-1857, 29.6.1857, pp. 1-2; Cape Parliament, Session 1858. (Cape Town, 1858): copy, Act 20-1858, pp. 1-4; C 2-1859 Report and Proceedings of the Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to consider the documents relative to a Harbour of Refuge in Table Bay. (Cape Town, 1859), p. iv: Report ..., 20.5.1859.
- 13 Report and Plan ..., p. 16: copy, Vetch -- Secretary to Admiralty, 1.12.1857; p. 21: copy, Secretary to Admiralty -- Colonial Secretary, 30.11.1858; Sir George Grey Papers No. 42: Coode -- Grey, 22.12.1858, Enclosure, Confidential Memorandum on Harbor of Refuge ... [by Admiralty], 1.12.1857, p. 3.
- 14 C 2-1859, p. 30: Evidence of Civil Engineer, Mr. J. Scott Tucker, 9.5.1859.

Although Coode had been requested to revise Vetch's prohibitive estimate of the cost of building a harbour of refuge for one million pounds sterling, Sir George Grey suggested that instead of reducing the cost of extravagant scheme, he should compile a cheaper one for building the work at half the cost -- that is, for not more than £400,000. On 8th June, 1859, the Assembly's Select Committee endorsed the suggestion and approached Coode in this regard ¹⁵.

Accordingly, towards the end of 1859, Coode submitted a plan for this purpose at an estimated cost of £396,475 by using at least 400 Cape convicts. The rocky shore near the Chavannes battery should be excavated to form an inner basin of almost 10½ acres. Its sides would form quays, 4,075 feet in extent, where ships might land and embark cargo at the quayside by means of cranes. Railway lines should also be installed on the wharves to bring and take away goods.

Another part of the inner basin might be turned into a dry dock to provide proper facilities for repairing and refitting vessels, while the rubble obtained from the excavations would be used to build a breakwater from the Chavannes battery on the 'pierre perdu' principle adopted at Portland harbour.

Further security to shipping would be afforded by laying down moorings on both sides of the breakwater and establishing a lighthouse at the end of it. Further wharfrage accommodation of 650 feet would be provided by building an East Embankment, which would also serve as a breakwater, to form an outer basin of 4½ acres. In the event of need for even more wharfrage accommodation, a number of timber jetties might be built from the embankment ¹⁶.

Subsequently, the Cape Parliament enacted the Breakwater Act, which provided for the issue of debentures on the London market on the security of the general revenue and the income derived from wharfrage dues and reclaimed land at Cape Town ¹⁷.

- 15 Cape Parliament, Assembly Votes & Proceedings 1859. (Cape Town, 1859), p. 254, 23.5.1859, p. 2; copy, Grey's Message No. 18 -- Assembly, 23.5.1859; A 78-1859 Report & Proceedings of the Select Committee on His Excellency the Governor's Message relative to the Cost of constructing a Harbor of Refuge in Table Bay. (Cape Town, 1859), p. 1.
- 16 GH 19/9: copy, Coode -- Government Secretary, 30.11.1859, pp. 7 & 11-19.
- 17 Cape of Good Hope, Votes & Proceedings Assembly 1860. (Cape Town, 1860), p. 416, 17.7.1860; Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope passed by the Second Parliament during the sessions 1859-1863. (Cape Town, 1871), pp. 102-3; copy, Act 6-1860, 17.7.1860.

During his recent visit overseas, Sir George Grey had requested Queen Victoria to ask Prince Alfred to inaugurate the building of the harbour of refuge at Table Bay and Her Majesty had kindly granted the request. On the 17th September, 1860, H.R.H. Prince Alfred officiated at a brilliant ceremony attended by Sir George Grey, Mr. Arthur Andrews, the resident engineer, parliamentarians and numerous dignitaries. The royal party proceeded to the site of the breakwater at the Chavannes battery. There the Prince activated the mechanism, causing a heavily-laden truck to tip into the sea the first stones for building the harbour and port of Table Bay ¹⁸.

18 [R. Noble, ed.] The Progress of His Royal Highness Prince Alfred Ernest Albert through the Cape Colony, British Kaffraria, the Orange Free State and Port Natal in the year 1860. (Cape Town, 1861, 1st ed.), pp. iv, 112 & 115-16.

S O U R C E S

I ARCHIVAL SOURCES (UNPUBLISHED)

(In the Cape Archives Depot, Cape Town)

(a) RAAD VAN POLITIE (Council of Policy) of the Dutch East India Company

1. Indices to Letters Received

C 719	Instructien uit Holland en Batavia: Alfabetisch	1652-1737
C 720	Supplement der Positive Orders & Positive Orders	1652-1749 1757-1787
C 728 No. 6	Opmerkelijke Stukken en Documenten, dewelke ingebonden en te vinden zijn bij de Inkomende Brief Boeken van Anno	1652-1715
C 717	Instructien uit Holland en India ontvangen	1655-1765
C 718	Register der Papieren ter Secretarij aan de Cabo de G.H. berustende	1655-1739
C 721	Positive Ordres ... van de Jaaren ... van ... Patria als van ... Batavia ... ontvangen ...	1749-1757
C 723	Orders uit Holland en Batavia	1750-1787

2. Letters received from Commissioners

C 800 No. 4	Kommissaris Valkenier: Vraagpunten en Antwoorde insake Administrasie van die Knap	c. Jan 1742
C 710	Memorie Instructies door den ... Gouverneur Generaal van Inhoff alhier nagelaten	25.2.1743

3. Letters Received

C 409 I	Inkomende Stukken	1649-1655
C 423 IV	Inkomende Stukken	1697-1699
C 424 I-III	Inkomende Stukken	1699-1700
C 431 I-II	Inkomende Brieven	1710-1711
C 440 - C 446	Inkomende Brieven	1725-1739
C 448 - C 450	Inkomende Brieven	1742-1747
C 452 - C 454	Inkomende Brieven	1750-1755

4. **Journal**
- | | | |
|-------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| C 596 | Dagregister | 1697-1698 |
| C 605 | Dagregister: origineel | 1718-1724 |
| C 607 | Dagregister: duplikaat | 1728-1732 |
| C 609 | Dagregister: original | 1731-1732 & 1735-1738 |
| C 618 | Dagregister: duplikaat | 1743-1745 |
| C 619 | Dagregister: original | 1744-1751 |
5. **Indices to the Minutes of the Council of Policy**
- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| C 780 | Register der Resolutien D-H | 1750-1787 |
| C 778 | Ekstrakte Resolutien I-M | 1751-1785 |
| C 790 | [Copias van Extract] Resolutien | 1755-1765 |
| C 789 | Extract Resolutien | 1756-1759 |
6. **Minutes of the Council of Policy (Index prefaced to each volume)**
- | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| C 19 - C 27 | Resolutien | 1724-1732 |
| C 30 I-II | Resolutien | 1737-1738 |
| C 34 - C 47 | Resolutien | 1742-1755 |
7. **Index to Annexures to the Minutes**
- | | | |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| C 782 No. 5 | Principaale Stukken, dewelk in de
Rijlagen Boeken geïnserceert
worden gevonden | 1716-1765 |
|-------------|--|-----------|
8. **Annexures to the Minutes of the Council of Policy**
- | | | |
|---------------|----------|-----------|
| C 121 - C 133 | Rijlagen | 1717-1732 |
| C 138 - C 139 | Rijlagen | 1737-1738 |
| C 149 | Rijlagen | 1748 |
9. **Index to Memoranda and Instructions (given to officials)**
- | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| C 782 No. 1 | Register de Instructie Boeken | 1652-1714 |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
10. **Memoranda and Instructions to officials (with Index prefaced)**
- | | | |
|-------|--|-----------|
| C 703 | Instructien
& Index der Instructie Boek | 1747-1764 |
|-------|--|-----------|
11. **Memoranda and Reports by officials to Council**
- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| C 291 - C 299 | Memorien en Rapporten | 1710-1754 |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|
12. **Index to Affidavits (with numerous reports to Council by officials)**
- | | | |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| C 782 No. 4 | Opmerkelijke Stukken dewelke ingebonden
in de respective Attestatien Boeken | 1652-1753 |
|-------------|--|-----------|

13. Affidavits (reports of breakwater supervisors are found here)

C 335	Attestation	1710
C 337 - C 341	Attestation	1717-1724
C 346 - C 349	Attestation	1729-1732
C 359 - C 371	Attestation	1742-1754

14. Indices to Proclamations

C 772	Register der Placcaten	1753-1806
C 773	Algemeen Register op de Placcaten & Ordonnantien	1686-1805

15. Proclamations

C 682	Origineel Placcat Boek III	1714-1734
C 683	Origineel Placcat Boek IV	1735-1753

16. Copies of Letters Despatched

C 493 I	Uitgaande Brieven	1652-1661
C 506	Uitgaande Brieven	1699-1700
C 516 - C 520	Uitgaande Brieven	1726-1732
C 528 - C 530	Uitgaande Brieven	1743-1745
C 537	Uitgaande Brieven	1752
C 539	Uitgaande Brieven	1754

(b) VERBATIM COPIES (of Dutch East India Company records in the Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague)

VC 36	Rapporten der Commissarissen: Twaalf Stakken	1657-1764
VC 95 No. 2	J.W. Cleppenburg- Generale Saamrvoeging van Zaaken, die ik tijd tot tijd geobserveerd en aangeteekend hebbe, nevens het algemene Welsijn van 't Gouvernement aan Cabo de Goede Hoop. (From Algemeen Rijksarchief, Kol. Aanw. No. 242)	1762-1768
VC 155	Bouwen, Repareren, Instructies enz. van Comps Schepen & het Vertuigen en Anloping van Schepen aan de Knap. (From Algemeen Rijksarchief, Kol. Aanw. No. 107)	1727-1731
VC 156 A	Brieven van Hendrik Swellengrebel aan de Heer Rademacher (From Alg. Rijksarchief, Kol. Aanw. No. 111).	1746 & 1749

(h) PORT CAPTAIN AND DOCK SUPERINTENDENT, TABLE BAY

1. Shipping numbers

PC 3/1 - PC 3/3 Arrivals and Departures, Table Bay 1806-1849

2. Shipping tonnages

PC 10/1 - PC 10/2 Port Dues received at Cape Town 1806-1899

3. Old Jetty repairs

PC 10/4 Labour expended at the Public Wharf, Cape Town 1828-1829

(i) TABLE BAY HARBOUR BOARD

1. Historical Summary of Harbour

CHB 256 No. 3 History of Table Bay Harbour 1822-1852

2. Minutes

CHB 1 Minute Book of the Commissioners for
improving the Port and Harbour of
Table Bay ... 1848-1852

(j) COLONIAL OFFICE

1. Indices to Letters from Private Individuals

CO 2457 - CO 2466 Indices to Letters received 1816-1825

2. Indices of Letters from Heads of Departments

CO 2468 - CO 2469 Index to Papers received from
Heads of Departments, Cape Town 1827-1829

3. Letters from Private Individuals

CO 92 Private Individuals 1818

CO 166 Private Individuals 1822

CO 235 Private Individuals 1825

4. Letters from Civil, Military and Private Individuals

CO 68 Sundry Civil and Military Officers and
Private Individuals 1815

CO 233 Sundry Military and Naval Officers Vol. I 1825

CO 235 Sundry Military and Naval Officers Vo. II 1825

CO 3985 Memorials C-E 1836

5. Letters received from Superintendent of Government Works and Buildings, Surveyor of Lands, Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer
- | | | |
|--------|---|------|
| CO 19 | Letters received from Saldanha, Plettenberg and Mossel Bay, Simons's Town, Surveyor of Lands and Agent H.E.I.Co. | 1809 |
| CO 27 | Letters received from H.E.I. Company, Post Office, Saldanha, Plettenberg and Mossel Bay, Inspector of Buildings, Inspector of Lands and Woods and Simons's Town | 1810 |
| CO 275 | Superintendent of Government Works & Buildings | 1826 |
| CO 321 | Civil Engineer and Superintendent of Water Works | 1827 |
| CO 344 | Surveyor-General, Government Architect, Superintendent of Water Works and Civil Engineer | 1828 |
| CO 456 | Land Board, Surveyor-General, Water Committee and Superintendent of Water Works | 1837 |
| CO 467 | Land Board, Surveyor-General, Water Committee and Superintendent of Water Works | 1838 |
| CO 487 | Land Board, Surveyor-General, Water Committee and Superintendent of Water Works | 1840 |
| CO 496 | Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer | 1841 |
| CO 508 | Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer | 1842 |
| CO 538 | Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer | 1844 |
| CO 547 | Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer | 1845 |
| CO 563 | Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer | 1846 |
| CO 572 | Surveyor-General and Civil Engineer | 1847 |
| CO 579 | Surveyor-General, Civil Engineer, Collector of Customs, Post Office | 1848 |
6. Letters from Post Office and Customs Office, Cape Town
- | | | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| CO 72 | Post Office, Receiver-General and Collector of Tithes and Customs | 1815 |
| CO 110 | Customs | 1819 |
| CO 240 | Letters received from Post Office and Government Vessels | 1825 |
| CO 243 | Customs | 1825 |
| CO 276 | Post Office | 1826 |
| CO 356 | Customs House and Post Office, Cape Town | 1828 |
| CO 498 | Customs, Cape Town, Post, Post & Printing Office | 1841 |
| CO 4388 | Arrears Correspondence: Naval and Military, Foreign Governments, Post Office, Customs | 1844-1850 |

7. Letters received from Commercial Exchange, Cape Town
- | | | |
|--------|---|-----------|
| CO 278 | Inspector of Lands and Woods, Commercial Exchange,
Land Surveyors and Overseer of Woods | 1826-1829 |
| CO 386 | Commercial Exchange | 1830-1840 |
| CO 505 | Sundry Committees, Municipalities and Commercial
Exchange | 1841 |
| CO 506 | Sundry Committees, Municipalities, Commercial
Exchange, Foreign Governments, Consuls and
Agents | 1841-1843 |
| CO 522 | Sundry Committees, Municipalities and Mixed
British and Portuguese Commission | 1843 |
8. Letters from Commissions of Enquiry
- | | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| CO 424 | Sundry Committees | 1833-1840 |
| CO 534 | Sundry Committees and Municipalities | 1844 |
9. Letters from Municipalities
- | | | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| CO 544 | Sundry Committees and Municipalities | 1845 |
| CO 554 | Municipalities | 1846-1848 |
| CO 4385 | Arrears Correspondence: Municipalities and
Sundry Committees | 1841-1852 |
| CO 610 | Sundry Committees | 1851 |
10. Schedule of Papers received by the Governor
- | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|
| CO 5716 - CO 5727 | Schedule of Papers submitted to
Governor | 1815-1830 |
|-------------------|---|-----------|
11. Indices to Letters sent to Departments and Private Individuals
- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| CO 4873 - CO 4876 | Index to General Letterbook | 1816-1820 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
12. Copies of Letters despatched to Heads of Departments
- | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| CO 4828 | General Letterbook | 1810 |
| CO 4836 | Letterbook | 1814 |
| CO 4840 | Letterbook | 1818 |
| CO 4841 | Letterbook | 1818-1819 |
| CO 4853 | General Letterbook | 1825 |
| CO 4884 | Letter Book : Departments, Cape Town | 1826-1827 |
| CO 4885 | Letter Book : Departments, Cape Town | 1827-1828 |
| CO 4915 | Letter Book, Civil | 1841 |

13.	Copies of Miscellaneous Letters despatched		
	CO 5302	Letterbook Miscellaneous	1828-1833
	CO 5303	Letterbook Miscellaneous	1833-1837
	CO 5305	Letterbook Miscellaneous	1840-1842
	CO 5308	Letterbook Miscellaneous	1846-1847
	CO 5309	Letterbook Miscellaneous	1847-1848
14.	Government Secretary's Memoranda		
	CO 5476	[It.-] Colonel Ball's Memorandum Book from 6 December 1828 - 15 November 1853 [recte Ball 1828-1829; Southey 1853-1854]	1828-1854
15.	Proclamations		
	CO 5818	G[eorge] R[ex] Proclamations	1819
	CO 5838	Government Notices and Proclamations	1848
16.	Shipping Statistics		
	CO 6083 - CO 6085	Ships' Arrivals and Departures	1806-1816
17.	Cape Annual Bluebook and Statistical Registers (1832 Annual Bluebook inextant)		
	CO 5964 - CO 5990	Cape Annual Bluebook and Statistical Register	1822-1848
(k)	GOVERNMENT HOUSE (formerly the Colonial Office records)		
1.	Index to Subject of Despatches from the Colonial Secretary		
	GH 6/15	Subject Index of Despatches received	1806-1839
2.	Despatches received from the Colonial Secretary		
	GH 1/1 - GH 1/38	Despatches received	1806-1848
3.	Duplicate Despatches from the Colonial Secretary		
	GH 3/10	Duplicate Despatches received	1844-1846
4.	Copies of Despatches sent to Colonial Secretary		
	GH 34/3	Letter Book	1807-1833
	GH 23/2	Despatch Book	1808-1810
	GH 23/7	Despatch Book	1821-1826
	GH 23/9 - GH 23/18	Despatch Book	1828-1849
5.	[Copies of] Papers on proposed Harbour at Table Bay		
	GH 19/9	Correspondence and Reports relating to the Construction and Improvement, etc., of the Harbours at Cape Town, East London & Durban	1855-1859

(1) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

1. Minutes

ICA 2 - ICA 3 Minutes 1857-1852

2. Appendices to the Minutes

ICA 5 - ICA 22 Appendices 1854-1848

ICA 29 Unbound Appendices 1854-1853

(m) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

EC 2 Minutes [Minute of 5.4.1847 inextant] 1844-1851

(n) CAPE TOWN MUNICIPALITY

1. Minutes

CTM 1/4/13 Record Book 1850-1851

CTM 1/4/14 Record Book 1851-1852

2. Appendices to Minutes

CTM 2/88 Appendix to Records of Cape Town Municipality 1850

CTM 2/90 Appendix to Records of Cape Town Municipality 1850

CTM 2/91 Appendix to Records of Cape Town Municipality 1851

3. Copies of Letters despatched

CTM 4/11 Despatch Book 1845-1848

(o) COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE, CAPE TOWN (and Cape of Good Hope Trade Society, London)

1. Minutes

CC 1 Minutes of the Commercial Room & Public Exchange 1819-1821

CC 2 Minutes of Commercial Room & Commercial Exchange 1822-1831

CC 3 Letter Book [recte Minutes], Commercial Exchange 1833-1842

CC 4 Minutebook 1841-1853

CC 119 Proceedings of the Cape of Good Hope Trade
Society, London 1825

2. Copies of Letters despatched

CC 30 Letter Book

II ARCHIVAL SOURCES (PUBLISHED)

- Leibbrandt, H.C.V. (ed.) Précis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Letters and Documents received, 1649-1662.
(Cape Town, 1898).
- Précis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Letters despatched from the Cape, 1652-1662.
(Cape Town, 1900), I.
- S.A. Argiefstukke (Knaap) Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1651-1669.
(Cape Town, 1957) I
- Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1670-1680.
(Cape Town, 1959) II
- Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1681-1707.
(Cape Town, 1961) III
- Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1707-1715.
(Cape Town, 1962) IV
- Theal, G.M. (ed.) Records of the Cape Colony from May 1609 to March 1611, copied for the Cape Government from Manuscript documents in the Public Record Office, London. (London, 1900) VII

III HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

1. Privy Council Papers

Public Record Office (London) PC 1/65 Privy Council Papers
2. Secretary of State for War and Colonies: 1st Viscount Melville
 - (a) Cape Archives (Cape Town) Accession No. 455
 - (b) South African Library (Cape Town) Lady Barnard Papers to Melville
 - (c) *Public Record Office (London) 30/8/157 Viscount Melville Papers*
 - (d) National Library of Scotland (Edinburgh)
 - i. No. 1045 (i) Melville Papers: Royal Navy, Docks and Harbours (including some commercial), ship-building and material ... 1793-1827.1838.1841 & n.d.
 - ii. No. 1066 (ii) Melville Papers: Eastern Shipping, 1786-1817, 1825 & n.d. The Company's shipping (ship-building ... harbours ...)
 - iii. No. 1070 (iii) Melville Papers: Cape of Good Hope, 1782-1810
3. Secretary to the Admiralty: Sir John Barrow Papers
 - (a) British Museum Add. MSS 35302: Sir John Barrow Papers
 - (b) Kimberley Public Library (South Africa): Barrow's manuscript of his book, TRAVELS
4. Cape Governor: Major-General Sir James Craig Papers

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