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ASPECTS OF THE GROWTH OF TRADE  
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PORTS IN  
THE CAPE COLONY 1795-1882

A Thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements of the Master  
of Arts Degree at the University  
of Cape Town

BY

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## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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Department of Economics,           D.W.R.  
UCT,  
October, 1972

Abbreviations used in the footnotes

Because of the repetition of certain sources and a wish to avoid the cluttered look that such gives to a thesis, some of them have been reduced to a shortened form as follows:

- CA . . . Cape Archives, Dutch East India Company Records
- BO . . . Cape Archives, First British Occupation Records
- BR . . . Cape Archives, Batavian Republic Records
- CO . . . Cape Archives, Colonial Office Series
- CC . . . Cape Archives, Chamber of Commerce Records
- BK . . . Cape Archives, British Kaffrarian Records
- \* 1829 Report . . . The Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry upon the Trade of the Cape of Good Hope, the Navigation of the Coast, and the Improvement of the Harbours of that Colony (House of Commons: Printed by Command, 1829).
- CHBE . . . . . Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. VIII (Cambridge: London, 1941).
- OUSA . . . . . Oxford History of South Africa, 2 volumes (Oxford: London, 1970-1).
- \* AYB . . . . . Archives Yearbook for South African History (The Archives Commission: Cape Town, annual dates).
- CBB . . . . . Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers. (Handwritten from 1821 to 1837; printed by Government Authority from 1838 onwards, issued annually).
- Annexures . . . . . Annexures to Votes and Proceedings, House of Assembly, Government of the Cape of Good Hope (Solomon: Cape Town, annually from 1854).

VRS . . . . . Volumes published by the Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, under various dates and numbers.

H.C.V. Leibbrandt: Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope (Richards: London, various dates).

LDR . . . . . 1. Letters and Documents Received.

LDD . . . . . 2. Letters and Documents Despatched.

Journal . . . . . 3. Journal.

#### A COMMENT ON THE FOOTNOTES

Many of the volumes consulted in the Cape Archives had no page numbers. The worst offenders in this regard were the Colonial Office Records, some of which were un-numbered, others had pages numbered hap-hazardly and in no discernable order, while many had only the entry numbered (often not consecutively).

The Chamber of Commerce records had no page numbers at all; merely the date of the entry was given.

In view of this unsatisfactory state of affairs, many of the footnotes given as source references appear incomplete. However, as full information as circumstances permitted, has been given.

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

The economic history of South Africa poses a great number of questions, not the least of which concern aspects of the economic development of the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century. The few studies of this aspect of South African History leave many things untouched.

The Nineteenth Century is a particularly interesting period in the history of South Africa for it was during this time that a number of occurrences took place that were materially to influence the development of the Cape Colony and its surrounding territories as well as to alter the subsequent pattern of economic growth in the whole of the sub-continent.

Compared with the relatively under-developed foreign trade of the Cape during the lengthy period of Dutch East India Company control, the growth of the export trade after the British took the Cape for a second time was probably the most important event. Next in order of importance was the creation of an additional development sector apart from the Western Province, in the Eastern area of the colony after the arrival of the 1820 Settlers. Other factors contributing to change during the nineteenth century were the development of the wool exporting trade in the Eastern Province; the gaining of representative

government by the Cape in 1854; the arrival of the German Settlers in British Kaffraria in 1856/7; the discovery of diamonds in 1867; the gaining of responsible government in 1872 in the Cape and the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1884. In all, these added up to a considerable change in a part of Southern Africa that had remained relatively backward during the Dutch occupation.

An essential part of the change that took place was the growth of foreign trade and the construction of ports as an aspect of the general process of economic development in the Cape during the nineteenth century. One of the most reliable gauges of the extent of economic growth in a country is port development and foreign trade activity. (The extent of the economic activity taking place in the ports can best be measured by the trade and traffic passing through them.) The composition of port trade is important since combinations of goods that make up the traffic, both inward and outward, can give a good indication of the level of economic development in the region served by the port. For example: if the total trade of a port is made up of 90% imports and 10% exports, this generally means that the port serves a region of low economic development. However, the vice versa combination of 10% imports and 90% exports does not necessarily indicate a developed region, since it can also mean that the region is under-developed enough to have to depend on the bulk

exporting of primary materials.

This thesis came about because the published works on the development of the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century tended to give the impression that public work construction in the form of harbours just 'appeared' when they did.<sup>1</sup> Since the construction of harbour works is a major civil engineering undertaking involving extensive planning and high costs, and closely related to the economic development of an area, it seemed likely that a fruitful field of research had been neglected.

Several questions arose from this line of thought. The Cape was not a wealthy colony and despite the established trade in wine and wheat and the very lucrative trade in wool that developed from the Eastern Province between 1830 and 1850, general state revenues before 1870 were never very great. How then did the Cape finance the building of very costly harbour works? What connection was there between the growth of foreign trade and the building of harbours?

In seeking to answer questions such as these, an interesting amount of information was discovered not only on the relevant points but also on hitherto unsuspected aspects, showing that it was not until the 1860's that the

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1. M. H. de Kock: Selected Subjects in the Economic History of South Africa, Juta, Cape Town, 1924, p. 338.

first proper harbour was built in the Cape Colony. This naturally raised the question of why it had taken so long for harbour works to be constructed in a colony the main business of which was ships and the sea.<sup>1</sup> Cost alone could not account for this. What other factors had been responsible? It was decided to consider these questions in relation to three periods:

- a) 1795 - 1822
- b) 1823 - 1850
- c) 1851 - 1882

To a large extent, the development of the ports over these periods followed a clearly discernable pattern. For the entire 143 years during which the Dutch East India Company held control of the Cape, there was no definite policy undertaken by the company to develop Table Bay into a port. The few facilities that were provided were merely to ease the normal business of the place i.e. that of re-victualling company and other ships on their journeys to and from the Far East. There was no programme to promote a foreign trade in Cape produce which meant that extensive installations to ease the landing and embarkation of goods were unnecessary.

Between 1795 and 1825 the foreign trade of the

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1. M.H. de Kock, op.cit. p. 339-341.

Cape received its first impetus through the removal of the absolute restrictions imposed by the Dutch East India Company, but until 1815 the growth was slow. After 1815 a new stimulus came in the award of the Cape to the British by the Congress of Vienna which removed the uncertainty that had stifled trading growth up to that date. During this lengthy period, few attempts were made to provide better facilities for maritime traffic and trade.

From 1826 to 1850, the pattern of maritime traffic and trade along the Cape coast underwent a considerable change with the development of a new economic growth point in the Eastern Province and the simultaneous development of a significant export trade from that area. The Cape now had two areas of economic importance separated by many hundreds of miles of relatively backward territory. For the first time for many years, the dominant position of Table Bay as the entrepôt for the Cape Colony was challenged by the emergence of Port Elizabeth and later, East London, both of which began to develop as a result of the export trade in wool from the Eastern Province. However, once again over a long period of time there was little done by the Cape Government in the way of port development,,

It was during the period 1851 to 1882 that a properly-planned scheme of harbour works was first put

into effect. This scheme was largely confined to Table Bay, despite a massive growth in the import and export trade of all three ports. Although its volume of trade was far greater than Table Bay's, the Eastern Province lagged behind in port construction until the 1890's.

Attention will therefore be focussed on the foreign trade of the Cape Colony between 1795 and 1882 and the volume of maritime traffic that carried it; the numerous schemes, both abortive and successful, that were devised and applied in the ports of the colony and what was eventually done to achieve a measure of success in the provision of port facilities after 1850.

The reason why the period 1795 to 1882 was chosen in preference to the whole of the nineteenth century, was that the discovery of gold in the Transvaal and the manifold changes that took place after 1886, marks a completely new era in the economic development of Southern Africa.

One further item requires clarification. It was felt that the position of Table Bay during the time of the Dutch control of the Cape should be included in this study for no other reason than to shed some light on what the British found in the way of harbour works when they arrived for the first time in 1795. Without consideration of this period the story of the development of Table Bay

would have been incomplete.

Chapter I consists of a detailed examination of the trade and shipping movements at the ports of the Cape of Good Hope between 1795 and 1882.

Chapter II shows the influence that the trade had on port development in the colony in two principal periods: 1795 to 1850, and 1850 to 1882.

Chapter III covers the historical development of the three principal ports through a discussion of the many plans that were put forward between 1795 and 1882. It is treated under separate port headings, ignoring the period of Batavian Republic control during which time, no activities were pursued for the inadequate facilities in Table Bay.

Chapter IV draws the different development plans for the three harbours together under one heading after 1875 when Sir John Coode provided a comprehensive series of plans for harbour works.

Chapter V concludes the discussion and includes a sub-section on the financing of harbour works as part of the public debt of the colony after 1850.

CHAPTER I

## CAPE TRADE AND SHIPPING MOVEMENTS 1795 - 1882

A. CAPE TRADE 1795 - 1820

The foreign trade of the Cape during the last decade of the eighteenth century was, as the British discovered when they took over in 1795, virtually non-existent.

One contemporary writer noted that:

"The Inhabitants of this Settlement were so oppressed by their late Masters, the Dutch East India Company, that there was no encouragement for Agriculture or Industry, further than were (sic) necessary for the produce of the Articles of their Consumption and to supply the few ships that called there for refreshment, - Commerce being almost wholly prohibited." 1

The restrictive trading monopoly of the Dutch East India Company as well as the lack of industrial development at the Cape had resulted in the colony being destitute of almost everything.<sup>2</sup> The want of articles of everyday necessity was particularly severely felt. These

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1. D. Campbell: An Account of the Principal Productions of the Cape of Good Hope in its Present State, RCC, I, p.138.

2. Craig to Dundas, 27th December, 1795. RCC, I, p.284.

were items such as "all sorts of metal goods, coarse clothing for the farmers and more particularly, tea and China goods."<sup>1</sup>

The arrival of the British brought no immediate change. Lord Macartney pointed this out in a letter to Dundas in which he commented that "the trade here since my arrival ... has been chiefly confined to necessaries for consumption of the place. Scarcely any exports (besides sea stores for the passing ships) have taken place."<sup>2</sup>

However, the natural outcome of these deficiencies was a growth of imports into the Cape. For the period 1795 to 1803, the average imports of all goods of all kinds was in value £ 253,927.<sup>3</sup> The average revenue from exports over the same period amounted to only £ 15,047,<sup>4</sup> resulting in an average deficit against the Cape of £ 237,880.

The arrival of the British had brought the trading control of the Honourable East India Company.

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1. Pringle to Secret Committee, 30th July, 1796. Cape of Good Hope Factory Records, VI, in M. Arkin: John Company at the Cape, Archives Yearbook for South African History, 1960, II, p.194 (the Archives Commission: Cape Town, 1961).

2. Macartney to Dundas, 27th November, 1797. RCC, II, p.206.

3. G.McC. Theal: A History of South Africa since 1795, V, (Struik reprint: Cape Town, 1964)p.23.

4. G.McC. Theal, *Ibid.*, pp.40-41.

This system of commercial control, partially similar to the old Dutch East India Company monopoly, was to influence Cape trade for a considerable number of years. For as Arkin points out, the advent of John Company at the Cape meant that despite the ousting of the Dutch East India Company and the disappearance of absolute control over all foreign trade, the major part of the commercial relations with the outside world remained the exclusive preserve of a trading company armed with monopoly rights.<sup>1</sup>

Lord-Macartney mentioned that the Cape had little to export in this period. John Pringle, the Agent of the Honourable Company, agreed with this observation for he felt that the great distress of the colony was due to its inability to produce desirable exports, except for some demand for local wines in Indian military hospitals.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, during the First British Occupation, the Company was interested in maintaining its exclusive status, instead of deriving maximum returns from the trade that it controlled which led to virtually no attempts to promote the wellbeing of the colonists themselves.<sup>3</sup> The traditional mercantilist notion that a colony should be run for the sole benefit of the occupying power was still regarded as being very much a practical proposition.<sup>4</sup>

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1. M. Arkin: op. cit. p.195.

2. M. Arkin: op. cit. p.194.

3. M. Arkin: op. cit. p.210.

4. M. Arkin: op. cit. p.211.

The control over foreign trade imposed by the company lapsed when the British left in 1803.

After the Cape was returned to the Batavian Republic, Janssens and de Mist attempted to promote the commercial development of the Cape through a scheme to increase foreign trade.

Realising the advantageous position of the Cape for trade with both Europe and the Far East, they suggested that the commerce of the Indian Ocean be opened to Dutch private citizens. Only the traffic in tea, spices and saltpetre was to be a state monopoly.<sup>1</sup> The Cape colonists were to be allowed to trade freely with all Dutch possessions and the Netherlands and were to have access to American markets and the African Islands.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately for the foreign trade and the economic development of the Cape, these grand schemes did not take into account the effects of a global naval war upon Dutch mercantile shipping. By the end of 1803, Dutch commercial shipping had virtually disappeared from the seas and the colony became dependent for supplies on irregular visits from neutral vessels such as American

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1. J.A.I. de Mist: Memorandum of Commissary de Mist, Van Riebeeck Society, Volume III, p.284-5.

2. J.P. van der Merwe: Die Kaap onder die Bataafse Republiek, 1803 - 1806, p.227-331.

and Danish.<sup>1</sup> Cape farmers were left with unsold surplusses and there were serious shortages of imported goods.<sup>2</sup>

Between the 16th September, 1795 and the 20th February, 1803, 1 095 ships had called in Table Bay. Of this total, only 40 were Dutch and these came in 1802 and the early part of 1803.<sup>3</sup>

During the time of the Batavian occupation, from 1803 to mid 1806, only 5 Dutch ships appeared and these were not engaged in trade.<sup>4</sup>

So serious was the economic depression brought about by the commercial isolation of the Cape, that doubts were expressed about the usefulness of the colony to the Republican Government, both as a possession of commercial consequence and as a position of strategic importance. When by the end of 1804, it was quite clear that the Dutch would not regain control of the sea route around the Cape and the East Indian trade, the Cape Settlement was regarded as more of a burden than an asset

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1. R.M.F. Immelman: Men of Good Hope, p.23.

2. J. Barrow: Travels in the Interior of South Africa, Volume II, p.341.

3. M. Arkin: op. cit. p.201.

4. Gearriveerde ende Vertrokkene Scheepen, 1803 - 1804, 1804 - 1805 (BR 95/97. Batavian Republic).

to the Republic.<sup>1</sup> The opinion was expressed that it would be less costly if the Cape were to be abandoned.<sup>2</sup>

With the return of the British in 1806 came the re-establishment of the trading control of the Honourable East India Company. According to a contemporary writer, one of the reasons why the British re-took the Cape in 1806 had been the advisability to close the Cape, a door through which competitors could too easily slip into Company preserves.<sup>3</sup> The circumscription of Cape trade that followed was the principal cause of the low rate of growth of foreign trade from 1806 to 1823 when the Company lost its trading privileges<sup>4</sup> through the limitation of its charter.

During this period Cape interests were forced to concentrate their efforts on trying to break through the restrictions imposed by the East India Company on the one hand and on trying to secure preferences on the

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1. A. van Pallandt: *General Remarks on the Cape of Good Hope*, reprint (South African Public Library, Cape Town, 1917), p. 9 - 11.

2. A. van Pallandt: *Ibid.*, p. 31-35.

3. R. Percival: *An Account of the Cape of Good Hope*, (Balwin: London, 1804, p.334)

4. M. Arkin: *John Company at the Cape*, op. cit., pp.296ff.

British market on the other. In December, 1811, Cradock pointed out that it was hopeless for the Home Government to expect agricultural development at the Cape until the Colony was able to dispose of its surplus produce in an external market.<sup>1</sup> He continued, saying that the company monopoly was stultifying all improvements.

Even when the company's monopoly had been limited to the trade in tea and the China trade in 1813, a special provision was made for the Cape whereby the monopoly remained for the trade between the Cape and Great Britain. Efforts to have this restriction removed were unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, an important success was achieved with the wine trade. As a result of representations made by Cradock, the Committee of Trade in May, 1813, recommended a reduction in duties imposed on Cape wine to one third of those previously imposed. The only article that the Cape had been able to produce which Great Britain could absorb in a large amount was thus given a useful substantial preference.<sup>3</sup>

By 1815, wine was established in England and

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1. Cradock to Robert Willimott, 10th December, 1811. RCC VIII, p.345-6.

2. Cambridge History of the British Empire, VIII, p.230-1.

3. Ibid. p.231-232.

by 1817, was selling on a large scale.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it has been suggested that without this new export trade the Cape would have become hopelessly insolvent<sup>2</sup> since, out of a total export of colonial produce from the Cape in 1820 valued at 1,74,035 Rixdollars, wine accounted for 1,095,600 Rixdollars; more than 62%.<sup>3</sup>

When in 1819, the ports of Mauritius were opened to foreign vessels by Order-in-Council, representations were made for the Cape to be granted a similar concession,<sup>4</sup> and on the 19th April, 1820, it was accepted by the Committee for Trade.<sup>5</sup> The significance of this concession was that the old policies of exclusiveness and monopoly, instead of being continued, were being gradually put aside in favour of a more internationally acceptable policy of reciprocity of trade which by 1825 had begun to form a new commercial system.<sup>6</sup> The monopoly of the tea and China trades which the East India Company had retained in terms of the 1813 Charter, was finally abolished in 1833 when at the same time, the Government

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1. CHBE op. cit. p. 232.

2. CHBE op. cit. p. 232.

3. CHBE op. cit. p. 232.

4. Courtenay to Goulburn, 18th August, 1819. RCC XII, p.287-289.

5. CHBE op. cit. p. 233.

6. CHBE op. cit. p. 233.

of India Act removed from the Company its trading functions in India effective from the 22nd April, 1834.<sup>1</sup>

"By becoming an instrument of British Government in India, John Company had now ceased to exist as a commercial enterprise."<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the re-appearance of the British, the Collector of His Majesty's Customs at the Cape was instructed to submit an annual report to the Governor of all imports and exports of the colony.<sup>3</sup> No trace of these reports from this date until 1821 has been found. However, the ("Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry upon the Trade of the Cape of Good Hope, the Navigation of the Coast and the Improvement of the Harbours of that Colony, 1829,"<sup>4</sup> contains figures of Cape imports and exports for the years 1807 to 1826 inclusive,<sup>5</sup> as shown in Table I below.

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1. Hansard, 3rd Series, XVIII, p.701, 722-741, in: M. Arkin: Agency and Island, Archives Yearbook for South African History, 1965, I (Government Printer: Cape Town, 1966), p.315.
  2. M. Arkin: *ibid.* p.315.
  3. Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser, 20th February, 1808.
  4. These figures are only total amounts. Consequently it is not possible to gain any detailed breakdown of the composition of the import and export trade in this period.
  5. House of Commons: printed by Command, 1829.

TABLE I  
CAPE COLONY

YEAR	IMPORTS	EXPORTS	<u>EXCESS</u> <u>IMPORTS</u>	<u>EXCESS</u> <u>EXPORTS</u>
1807	27 535	34 484		6 949
1808	78 484	70 261	7 863	
1809	65 106	26 153	39 943	
1810	105 078	102 688	2 390	
1811	72 348	89 392		17 044
1812	88 740	109 396		20 566
1813	268 170	127 506	140 664	
1814	299 008	120 556	178 452	
1815	478 956	148 444	330 512	
1816	369 683	166 655	203 028	
1817	415 518	294 699	120 519	
1818	414 876	273 925	140 951	
1819	333 149	209 061	124 088	
1820	298 754	187 490	111 264	
1821	405 555	182 544	223 011	
1822	365 328	224 392	140 936	

Three aspects of Cape trade can be deduced from the above table.

Firstly, exclusive of the years 1807, 1811 and 1812, when there was an excess of exports over imports, Cape trade in this period showed a continual concentration on imports, repeating the pattern established earlier during the First British Occupation.

Secondly, until the Cape became a permanent possession of the British after the award to the Congress of Vienna, imports tended to remain low (although considerably more than exports) since uncertainty about the

political fate of the Cape made Cape people wary of importing large quantities of goods.

Thirdly, after the Congress of Vienna and the removal of the uncertainty, the import trade grew very rapidly resulting in the annual average imports for the period 1815 - 1822 reaching £ 337,000 compared with £ 105 000 for the period 1807 - 1814. These figures are considerably greater than the corresponding annual average exports; £ 210,900 and £ 85,054 respectively.

Nonetheless, the immediate post-war years were a time of short-lived prosperity for the Cape. The contributing factor to this was the internment of Napoleon on St. Helena Island which created a demand for supplies which were obtained from the Cape. But after Napoleon died in 1821, this useful market contracted leading to a marked falling off in the number of vessels calling at Table Bay as well as a severe drop in the value of Cape exports to the island.<sup>1</sup> It was said that this slump led to a "considerable convulsion"<sup>2</sup> amongst local traders which was intensified by the failure of the wheat crop in 1821 and 1822, and the widespread flood damage which hit the Cape in 1823.

1. Exports to St. Helena from the Cape fell from £ 30,844 in 1820 to £ 15,440 in 1822 and were less than £ 8,000 in 1824.

A.W.O. Bock: Foreign Trade of South Africa since 1807, Unpublished Phd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1929, Statistical Appendix No. 4.

2. W. Bird: State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822, (Struik re-print: Cape Town, 1967), p.3.

However, the 'freedom' given to Cape trade in 1820 did not achieve much for as Arkin points out, Cape trade until 1825 was virtually a one-way trade catering for direct consumption, the goods serving neither as a basis for any local-re-finishing industry nor as re-processed re-exports. Furthermore, the Cape produced virtually nothing in exchange for these imported goods except some wine. Even if it had, the monopoly of the honourable East India Company would have made it virtually impossible for the colonists to reap any benefits.<sup>1</sup>

D. SHIPPING MOVEMENTS 1795 - 1830

There was an initial increase in the numbers of ships calling in Table Bay in 1796. But thereafter, the numbers fell off markedly, declining from 220 in 1796 to only 108 in 1805.

The cause of the fall was that "war conditions prevailed, greatly hindering trade".<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the naval wars in Europe demanded some of the ships that previously were used on the India run and which, because

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1. M. Arkin: John Company at the Cape, op. cit., p. 277.

2. R.F.M. Immelman: Men of Good Hope, (Chamber of Commerce: Cape Town, 1955), p. 23.

they were armed, could be used to supplement the fighting navies of the nations of Europe.

TABLE II

TABLE BAY SHIPS INWARD 1795 - 1806

1795	57	(5)	16th September, 1795 to 31st December, 1795 <sup>(1)</sup>
1796	220	(6)	
1797	197	(5)	
1798	161	(5)	
1799	119	(5)	
1800	84	(6)	
1801	136	(6)	
1802	151	(6)	
1803	43	(6)	1st January, 1803 to 20th February, 1803 <sup>(2)</sup>
	92	(7)	15th April, 1803 to 31st December, 1803 <sup>(3)</sup>
1804	75	(7)	1st January, 1804 to 19th September, 1804 <sup>(4)</sup>
1805	108	(8)	
1806	137	(9)	

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(1), (2), (3), and (4): Records incomplete.

- (5) BO 72. British Occupation. A List of the Arrivals of All Ships in the Bays of the Cape of Good Hope. 16th September, 1795 to 20th July, 1800.
- (6) Arkin, M.: 'John Company at the Cape', AYB, 1960, p.201
- (7) BR 95. Batavian Republic. Gearriveerde ende Vertrokkene Scheepen. 1803 - 1804.
- (8) BR 97. Batavian Republic. Gearriveerde ende Vertrokkene Scheepen. 1804 - 1805.
- (9) CO 6083. Colonial Office. Ships Arrivals and Departures. 1806 - 1807.

The significance of Table Bay between 1807 and 1830 in terms of numbers of ships, their tonnages and exports and imports is shown in the table below. There were but two reasons for this flourishing traffic: Table Bay was the only port in regular use in the colony in this period and the wars had come to end in Europe by 1806, thus allowing a resurgence in shipping traffic and trade between the Far East and Europe which continued despite the later resumption of hostilities in Europe.

TABLE III

TABLE BAY SHIPS INWARD 1807 - 1830

YEAR	<u>INWARD SHIPS</u>	TONNAGES	IMPORTS (£)	EXPORTS (£)
1807	200	+	27 535	34 484
1809	128	+	65 106	26 153
1810	118	+	105 078	102 688
1815	192	+	478 956	148 444
1820	254	+	298 754	187 490
1825	128	40 750	299 658	251 372
1830	194	63 765	402 319	210 764

Sources: Inward ships, 1807 - 1820. Record of Ship's Arrivals in Table Bay. Records of the Port Captain, Table Bay.  
Cape Archives, Volumes numbered P.C.3/1-3.  
No records of ship tonnages given in these volumes.

Imports and Exports, 1807 - 1820. Statistical Appendix to The Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry on the Trade of the Cape of Good Hope, the Navigation of the Coast, and the Harbours of that Colony, 1829.

Imports and Exports, ships and tonnages after 1820. Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers for the years given.

As the figures above indicate, the number of ships using Table Bay between 1807 and 1830 fluctuated markedly. Generally, these fluctuations were not related to fluctuations in, or the actual size of, Cape foreign trade since "during this early period, Table Bay was an emergency port rather than a regular trading port-of-call for the English."<sup>1</sup>

Ports are most often concerned with two services other than trade: the provision of shelter and the replenishment of ship's stores and fuel. The replenishment of fuel was not a service provided by Cape ports during the early part of the nineteenth century before the arrival of the ocean-going steam ships. (The replenishment of stores was confined to Table Bay because it was only this port that had the facilities to deal with this type of traffic in the whole of the period before 1882. The possession of these facilities was probably one reason for the small size of the trade in relation to the number of ships calling at Table Bay during these 30 years.

A further possible reason for the low level of trade in these years was the small size of the domestic market which until 1820, was largely confined to Cape Town where the main concentration of people was.

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1. H.L. Hoskins: *British Routes to India*, (Cass: London, 1966), p.85.

C. THE TRADE OF THE CAPE COLONY 1820 - 1850  
A CHANGE IN PATTERN AND EMPHASIS

The decade after 1820 witnessed several events which were to have a marked impact on the future pattern of economic development in the Cape Colony.

The first was the creation of an economic growth point in the Eastern part of the colony with the arrival and establishment of over 4 000 British Settlers in the new District of Albany.

The second was the creation by the Settlers, when the agricultural basis of their settlement proved inadequate, of a pastoral industry based on woolled sheep. Prior to 1816 there had been no serious attempts to exploit the large numbers of sheep in the colony except as supplies of mutton. A small amount of experimentation was done after 1816 but it was only when the 1820 Settlement experienced set-backs that the exploitation of woolled sheep received the necessary stimulus.<sup>1</sup>

The presence of the Settlers in the Eastern Province and the trade that they began to develop after 1830, resulted in the foundation of a second point of

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1. H.B. Thom: Die Geskiedenis van die Skaapboerdery in Suid-Afrika, (Swets & Zeitlinger: Amsterdam, 1936), p.146.

ocean contact; Algoa Bay, separated by some 500 miles of land and 600 miles of sea, from the older established Table Bay.

Prior to this in the period 1820 to 1830, the Cape import trade continued to be very large and comprised goods principally destined for direct consumption. One of the largest items was cotton piece goods, followed closely by iron and steel goods.<sup>1</sup> The export trade on the other hand showed a very low rate of growth.

As is indicated in the tables IV, V and VI below the foreign trade of the Cape Colony began to grow in absolute terms after 1825, a growth that is largely accounted for by increasing exports of colonial products, especially wool, that were in demand in England as well as, a slackening of the old mercantilist system.

Between 1825 and 1850, the foreign trade of the Cape grew very rapidly as did the number of ships calling for trade. Table Bay saw the heaviest use while the new calling point of Algoa Bay also experienced rapid growth after 1829.

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1. In 1822, manufactures accounted for 64% of total imports, 57% of which was made up of clothing and textiles. 34% comprised food and drink.  
(Cape of Good Hope Blue Book and Statistical Register, 1822, Import and Export and Shipping Section).

TABLE IVIMPORTS CAPE COLONY 1822 - 1840

YEAR	FOOD AND DRINK	% OF TOTAL	MANUFACTURES	% OF TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
1822	122 691	33.5	235 554	64.4	365 328
1824	80 858	23.7	241 262	70.7	340 894
1826	96 173	34.4	172 598	61.8	278 964
1828	62 076	23.4	188 125	71.1	264 497
1830	103 960	24.6	305 054	72.0	423 277
1832	+	+	+	+	+
1834	152 810	33.0	293 762	63.4	462,768

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Government Blue Books).

+ No breakdown for the year 1832 has been found.

- The composition of imports into the Cape Colony was discontinued in the Blue Books after 1834. It was only in 1857 that the breakdown of the composition of imports was re-instated. Very little can thus be deduced of the pattern of Cape Colony imports for these 21 years omitted, beyond seeing that the trade grew.

TABLE VIMPORTS CAPE COLONY 1836 - 1850

YEAR	TOTAL
1836	881 782
1838	1 058 960
1840	1 493 208
1842	766 349
1844	775 377
1846	1 073 061
1848	1 152 018
1850	1 277 046

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Government Blue Books).

TABLE VI

## EXPORTS CAPE COLONY 1822 - 1850 (£)

YEAR	WINE	% OF TOTAL	WOOL	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL EXPORTS	RE-EXPORTS
1822	106 858	47	1 460	0.6	224 392	52 156
1824	150 190	68	1 314	0.5	220 313	18 290
1826	98 422	52	545	0.2	188 672	17 632
1828	129 265	50	820	0.3	259 406	21 106
1830	105 335	43	1 721	0.7	240 853	20 036
1832	+	+	+	+	+	+
1834	93 728	25	9 806	2.6	369 802	94 488
1836	83 147	21	26 169	6.8	384 384	115 376
1838	102 433	28	26 627	7.2	364 814	112 779
1840	78 369	7	45 986	4.1	1 095 809	856 724
1842	43 140	12	72 497	20.0	345 699	87 892
1844	55 870	13	113 507	34.0	402 855	97 480
1846	40 433	8	178 011	36.0	488 554	89 788
1848	49 035	9	155 213	30.0	512 778	184 888
1850	35 890	6	285 600	45.0	637 353	174 535

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Government Blue Books).

+ No figures for 1832.

As may be expected in a relatively undiversified economy, Cape exports tended to be concentrated upon a variety of primary products of agricultural origin.<sup>1</sup> Such products were generally of high bulk and low value and until the volume was great enough, did not go very far towards redressing Balance of Payments deficits. Furthermore, dependence on a single trading partner was very marked. Great Britain accounted for over 80% of all imports into the colony and took over 75% of the colony's exports.<sup>2</sup>

In 1822, wine formed 47% of total exports from the the Cape Colony while wool was a mere 0.6%. By 1830, wool had risen to 0.7% and wine had fallen to 43%. By 1850, wine had fallen to 6% of total exports and wool had grown to 45%.

Exports for the period 1823 to 1830 averaged only £ 237 447 whereas imports averaged £ 322 442 per

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1. For example: In 1822,

Wine exports	£ 106 858	:	47.00%	of total
Wool exports	£ 1 460	:	0.65%	" "
Other exports	£ 116 074	:	52.35%	" "
<b>TOTAL EXPORTS</b>	<b>£ 224 392</b>	:	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>of total</b>

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Book: 1822).

2. A.W.O. Bock: Foreign Trade of South Africa since 1807, Unpublished Phd. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1929, p.87.

annum yielding an adverse trade balance against the Cape during the period of £ 84 995.

Generally however, there was virtually no change in the pattern of trade of the colony between 1823 and 1830. From 1830 to 1850, the import trade continued to grow, rising from £ 423 277 in 1830 to £ 1 493 208 in 1840 and £ 1 277 046 in 1850.<sup>1</sup> Exports showed a similar trend though at a much lower level. Exports in 1830 were £ 240 853, £ 1 095 809 in 1840 and £ 637 353 in 1850.

Three aspects of Cape trade in the period 1823 to 1850 require comment.

#### I Decline in Wine Exports

Exports of Cape wine fell from £ 106 858 in 1822 to £ 35 890 in 1850. This virtual collapse of an important trade can be ascribed to the lowering by Great Britain of duties on continental wines in 1825 and a raising of duties on Cape wines in 1831.<sup>2</sup> Although numerous

1. It has not proved possible to examine the composition of the import trade in this period since from 1834 to 1856, the Cape Blue Books contain no breakdown of commodities in the trade through the individual ports. As will be shown later, there are however, no significant additions to the list of commodities given in 1857 to the list last used in 1833.

2. CHBE, VIII, p.762.

attempts to alter the position were made by the Cape Town Commercial Exchange in conjunction with the Cape of Good Hope Trade Society in London, wine did not figure again as an important item of Cape export trade during the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

## II Growth of Wool Exports

Small and sporadic exports of wool to England had been made from the Cape between 1822 and 1830. As a result of the involvement of Eastern Cape farmers in an exporting trade in wool, total exports of raw wool from the Cape Colony grew from £ 1 721 in 1830 to £ 45 986 in 1840 and £ 285 600 in 1850. Total exports of wool from the Eastern Province were greater than those from the Western Province and by 1850, more than 70% of total exports from the Cape Colony came from the Eastern Province. In 1830, total wool exports from the colony were merely 0.7% of total exports. By 1850, this had risen to 44.8%; a phenomenal growth in 20 years. On the other hand, exports of wine totalling 43% of total exports in 1830 had fallen to an insignificant 5.6% of total exports by 1850.

## III Entrepôt Trade

There was a rapid increase in both imports and exports between 1830 and 1850. By 1840 imports had reached

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1. R.M.F. Immelman: op. cit., p.72 et seq. and p.241.

a total of £ 1 493 208 and exports £ 1 095 809. From this the conclusion may be drawn that the Cape was undergoing a period of rapid economic development. Such a conclusion would be incorrect.

An examination of the export trade in this period discloses the fact that this tremendous growth was due almost entirely to a growth in the entrepôt trade of the Cape: a trade which in fact was confined to Cape Town where the Government bonded warehouses were sited.

This growth of re-exports can be seen from the following table:

TABLE VII

YEAR	CAPE PRODUCE	RE-EXPORTS	TOTAL
1830	220 258	20 595	240 853
1833	264 012	24 500	288 512
1835	250 728	111 552	362 280
1837	273 355	92 158	365 513
1840	239 085	856 724	1 095 809

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

By reducing Cape Exports and Imports by the amount of goods re-exported, it can be seen that Cape-produced exports tended to remain fairly constant in

this period. while the figures for the import trade are considerably reduced as can be seen from table VIII.

TABLE VIII

YEAR	IMPORTS	RE-EXPORTS	GOODS RETAINED IN COLONY
1830	423 277	20 595	443 872
1833	395 890	24 500	371 390
1835	541 037	111 552	429 485
1837	1 090 506	92 158	998 348
1840	1 493 208	856 724	636 405

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

Very little is known of the entrepôt trade of the Cape during the nineteenth century. The 1829 Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry upon the Trade of the Colony etc. contains mention that "the largest portion of this trade consisted of the re-exportation of cotton goods of Indian manufacture, spices and drugs to Great Britain and South America and in smaller proportion to the Netherlands".<sup>1</sup>

A more important observation on the entrepôt trade is contained in the Annual Report of the Cape Town

1. Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry upon the Trade of the Cape of Good Hope etc., op. cit. p.9.

Commercial Exchange for 1841, which ascribed the large reduction in exports for that year "to the discontinuance of the practice of the bonding of foreign coffee, for transhipment to England for entry at a reduced duty".<sup>1</sup>

According to a speech made by Gladstone in the House of Commons in 1842,<sup>2</sup> coffee had been subjected to a number of duties on importation into Great Britain:

1. 1/3 d from abroad.
2. 1/- d from any place within the East India Company's charter not being a British possession.
3. 9 d from any British possession within the limits of the charter not being the produce thereof.
4. 6 d on the produce of any British possession in America or within the limits of the Company's charter.

Therefore, "to obtain the advantage of importing from a British possession, the naturalised coffee was shipped to the place from which imported, there unshipped and re-shipped to Great Britain."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Chamber of Commerce Annual Report, 1841. Cape Archives CC 3.

2. Hansard: Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, LXIII, p.521.

3. Ibid. p.521.

The alteration of these rates of duty on coffee imports to the following seems to have been largely responsible for the dwindling in importance of the entrepôt trade at the Cape after 1840.

1. 4 d upon British coffee coming directly from our possessions within the limits of the East India company's charter.
2. 8 d on all coffee of foreign countries.<sup>1</sup>

Following this adjustment, there was no longer any advantage to be gained from shipping coffee to the Cape and re-shipping it to Great Britain and the entrepôt trade declined.

But in general, the Cape Colony suffered, as did Australasia and India, from a rigid application of the old commercial system. Applied to the trade of these colonies, this system restricted the colonies to a direct trade with England; it compelled them to concentrate their produce in England and it required them to draw all their supplies from England.

In 1844 the colonies were told that when produce from them came into competition with British products, they would be regarded as non-British countries.<sup>2</sup> At the

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1. Hansard, *op. cit.*, p.521.

2. E. Porritt, *Fiscal and Diplomatic Freedom of the British Oversea Dominions* (Oxford: London, 1922) p.28.

same time, when the Cape, Australia and India were denied preferences in British tariffs that had been given to Canada, Stanley told them that this was the policy of the Government since landed interests in Great Britain demanded this policy towards the colonies.<sup>1</sup> As a result, none of the above colonies derived any material advantage under the old commercial system for colonial products marketed in England.

Furthermore, there had remained in force during these first 50 years of British Colonial Rule in the nineteenth century, numerous laws, the spirit of which was always embodied in instructions from the Colonial Office to newly-appointed colonial governors. These restrained the colonies from enacting any fiscal legislation or any legislation affecting coastal or ocean navigation which was in any way antagonistic to the old commercial system.<sup>2</sup>

Encouragement of a programme of export promotion which could have lessened the colonial burden to the mother country was, therefore, never a definite aspect of colonial government policy during the first half of the nineteenth century. In the case of the Cape Colony, there does not seem to have been any concrete commercial

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1. E. Porritt: op. cit., p.29.

2. E. Porritt: op. cit., p.33, 55-57.

policy in relation to exports from the Cape to secure an expanding market for Cape produce.

It is thus not surprising that the economic development of the Cape Colony and in particular, the undertaking of capital works that could have aided such development, tended to lag or at worst, was entirely ignored.<sup>1</sup> Because of the sparseness of the population, inadequate means of transport and recurrent droughts, the colony remained a poor country with few prospects of solid prosperity or solvency. The home market was small and after 1830, the most important export, wine, had begun to decline. Its place was taken by increasing exports of wool which over the following 20 years, accounted for more and more of the colony's exports until by 1850 it had become the most important single item of trade from the Cape. But even this growth contributed but little to the general revenue of the Cape, and the Government budget remained small.

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1. Theal, G.Mc.: A History of Southern Africa since 1795; Vol. 6, p.28.

Some capital works had been done, the most important of which was the road and pass over the Hottentots Holland Mountains. Opened on the 6th July, 1830, it had cost £ 7 011; a sum which increased the Public Debt considerably. Ibid. p.24. Theal, G.Mc.

D. SHIPPING MOVEMENTS 1830 - 1850

After 1830 a marked growth took place in the number of ships calling at the Cape, particularly after 1834 when the trading monopoly of the Honourable East India Company came to an end. Although the changeover from commercial company to instrument of government was "accompanied by much uncertainty, muddle, and procrastination"<sup>1</sup> in the Cape Agency of the company, the way seemed to set be for a general expansion of Cape international trade.

Although after 1835, the growth of trade was rapid, in aggregate terms it was still small, even by 1850. In 1830, total exports from the colony were £ 240 853; by 1850, it had grown to only £ 637 353. Imports in the corresponding periods were £ 423 277 and £ 1 277 046 respectively.

The growth of trade was accompanied by a concomitant growth in the number of calling ships in the two principal ports of the colony as indicated on the tables below.

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1. M. Arkin: Agency and Island, Archives Yearbook for South African History, I, 1965, p. 315.

TABLE IXTABLE BAY

YEAR	<u>INWARD SHIPS</u>	TONNAGES	(£) IMPORTS	(£) EXPORTS	(£) RE-EXPORTS	TOTAL COLONIAL PRODUCE
1835	367	106 616	498 565	328 579	111 552	217 027
1840	475	139 023	1 371 582	1 011 916	856 724	155 192
1845	757	207 805	783 059	331 142	86 733	244 409
1850	607	175 228	912 343	339 942	174 535	165 407

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers for the years given).

TABLE XPORT ELIZABETH

YEAR	<u>INWARD SHIPS</u>	TONNAGES	(£) IMPORTS	(£) EXPORTS
1829	5	4 274	6 773	15 015
1830	9	7 306	18 454	24 438
1835	73	10 938	39 817	33 299
1840	75	9 776	88 665	70 376
1845	141	23 994	201 485	181 694
1850	155	29 626	354 749	294 905

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers for the years given).

A fact that is obvious from the above tables is that the greatest growth in trade and shipping did not take place in the older, well-established Western Province but in the new Eastern Province. As the tables

clearly show, Port Elizabeth progressed from very minor activity in both spheres in 1829 to a fair-sized trade and shipping point by 1850: the number of calling ships grew thirty-one times by 1850; imports grew by sixty-one times and exports by twenty-nine times. This growth in trade and shipping at Port Elizabeth over the period 1830 to 1850 was the result of the expansion of the Eastern Province wool trade.

At Table Bay nothing like the same growth took place, although in aggregate terms, activity in all three spheres was far greater. Between 1835 and 1850, the number of calling ships grew but less than twice; imports also grew to nearly double while exports barely changed in size.

#### E. THE TRADE OF THE CAPE COLONY 1850 - 1882

The year 1850 marked the beginning of a new era in the foreign trade of the Cape Colony. From this time onward, foreign trade was dominated by increasing exports of wool, from the Eastern Province through Port Elizabeth. Added impetus was given to the wool trade in the east through the advent of a further group of settlers (the Germans who arrived in British Kaffraria in 1856/7). This new inland settlement led to the establishment of a further land/sea transit point at the Buffalo River mouth, and the

eventual building of the port of East London.

Between 1850 and 1870, the greater part of the export trade from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London was concentrated on bulk shipments of wool, though, re-exports continued to form a large part of harbour activities at Cape Town. In the Eastern Province, East London continued to account for increasing exports of wool while Port Elizabeth went through a small decline in wool exporting probably caused by competition from East London. As more ships began to call off the Buffalo River mouth, the need for farmers in British Kaffraria to send their wool to Algoa Bay for sale and export became unnecessary. Port Elizabeth however, remained the principal export point for Eastern Province wool and other agrarian products such as hides and skins, ostrich feathers, aloe extract, and mohair.

In general, until the start of diamond exports after 1869 the most important aspect of Cape Colony exports after 1850, was the continued concentration on agricultural primary products,

The imports of the Cape colony were important after 1850, in the structure of total traffic since they reflect the degree of the colony's dependence upon overseas sources of essential goods.

The economy of the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century, like that of many developing areas, was fundamentally based upon the production for export of a fairly narrow range of agricultural primary raw materials. Local resources for the development of a manufacturing industry were relatively small. The basic pattern of the imports of the Cape Colony therefore, was comprised of four main elements: fuel supplies (coal), industrial products (machinery, transport materials, etc.), manufactured goods for the consumer market, and supplementary foodstuffs.

By far the most important import was manufactured articles, principally textiles, destined for the consumer market. Second in order of importance was foodstuffs. Coal for fuel, and machinery and transport materials were not imported in any great quantities until after 1870; when a demand for such products arose from the diamond mines and the expanded programme of railway building.)

Imports into the Cape Colony showed a fairly steady increase in the period 1857 to 1870.<sup>1</sup> After 1870,

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1. The composition of imports into the colony was discontinued as a statistical item in the Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers between 1835 and 1856. However, when the composition of the import trade is compared between the periods before and after these dates, a marked similarity is observed in the distribution. As will be seen from the table below, there was a concentration on the import of manufactured articles of which textiles formed the major part. This underlines the fact that the Cape was still sufficiently industrially undeveloped to require a great deal of manufactured

there came an extra-ordinary increase caused largely by the discovery of diamonds which made much needed capital available. Between 1870 and 1882 imports rose from £ 2.3 million to £ 9.3 million.

TABLE XI  
CAPE COLONY IMPORTS 1870 - 1882

YEAR	<u>FOOD AND DRINK</u>	TEXTILES	<u>TOTAL MANUFACTURES</u>	<u>MANUFACTURES % OF TOTAL</u>	TOTAL
1870	546 933	1 047 604	1 730 060	73.5	2 352 043
1875	1 087 075	1 828 334	4 420 194	77.1	5 731 319
1880	1 604 109	2 291 986	5 731 986	74.9	7 648 863
1882	1 817 817	2 685 506	7 053 443	75.2	9 372 019

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

TABLE XII  
CAPE COLONY IMPORTS 1830 - 1860

YEAR	<u>FOOD AND DRINK</u>	TEXTILES	<u>TOTAL MANUFACTURES</u>	<u>MANUFACTURES % OF TOTAL</u>	TOTAL
1830	103 960	203 124	305 054	72.0	423 277
1834	152 810	183 087	293 762	63.4	462 768
1857	632 298	1 068 161	1 865 778	70.7	2 637 192
1860	458 667	853 608	2 042 337	76.6	2 665 902

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

goods which generally formed more than 70% of all imports, even as late as 1882.

TABLE XIII  
EXPORTS CAPE COLONY 1854 - 1882

YEAR	WINE	WOOL	DIAMONDS	OTHER	RE-EXPORTS	TOTAL
1852	24 587	501 135		143 326	200 213	772 537
1854	40 280	446 939		175 717	101 525	764 461
1856	86 356	831 152		323 117	86 550	1 327 175
1858	121 268	1 014 173		516 221	146 517	1 798 179
1860	81 578	1 446 510		306 911	160 119	2 080 398
1862	32 468	1 276 542		391 508	257 168	1 957 686
1864	26 540	1 865 703		503 430	198 921	2 594 594
1866	15 321	1 994 054		446 346	134 627	2 590 348
1868	13 368	1 806 459	150	396 058	90 813	2 306 698
1870	14 664	1 669 538	153 460	616 106	115 731	2 569 499
1872	15 109	3 275 150	1 618 076	1 070 026	91 423	6 069 529
1874	17 148	2 948 571	1 313 334	1 150 496	94 723	5 538 744
1876	13 730	2 278 942	1 513 107	1 094 668	99 951	5 012 303
1878	15 228	1 888 928	2 159 298	1 374 058	143 312	5 615 589
1880	13 203	2 429 360	3 367 897	1 806 697	72 307	7 708 914
1882	11 658	2 062 180	3 992 502	2 242 613	182 472	8 506 600

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Book and Statistical Registers).

Cape Colony exports during this period showed a continual increase but the period is notable for the rapid and continuing diminution of the importance of wine as an

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The item "RE-EXPORTS" included in the Table is difficult to classify since it is not clear from the records what volume of Cape Colony goods was being re-exported through Table Bay having been brought by coasters from East and west coast export points. There is also no indication of what else these re-exports may have comprised. There may have been a certain amount of foreign goods from both overseas and Natal.

export article. Between 1852 and 1858, exports of wine showed a short-lived increase, rising from £ 24 587 to £ 121 268 but thereafter the decline was swift, falling to a mere £ 11 658 in 1882.

Wool exports showed a continual growth reaching £ 3 275 150 in 1872 but then falling back to £ 2 062 180 in 1882.

These declines in the two great staple products of the Cape - wine and wool - were offset by increasing exports of diamonds after 1870 which reached a total of £ 3 992 502 by 1882.

The increase in the item 'other' on the Table is attributable largely to exports of ostrich feathers which grew from £ 87 074 in 1870 to £ 1 093 989 in 1882. It further includes commodities such as mohair, hides and skins and copper ore, the exports of which are given in the table below.

TABLE XIV

YEAR	<u>OSTRICH FEATHERS</u>	MOHAIR	<u>HIDES AND SKINS</u>	COPPER	(£)
1868	57 725	4 030	157 293	60 985	
1870	87 074	26 273	235 062	146 368	
1872	158 024	58 823	376 929	328 458	
1874	205 640	107 139	388 286	321 434	
1876	341 020	113 967	238 325	257 155	
1878	591 859	108 353	295 038	252 485	
1880	883 632	206 471	305 575	306 790	
1882	1 093 989	253 128	403 357	384 032	

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

F. SHIPPING MOVEMENTS 1850 - 1882

The number and net registered tonnage of ships entering the three major ports of the Cape Colony during the period after 1850 showed a significant increase after 1869. The important aspect of this growth lay in the fact that the net registered tonnage of ships rose more sharply than the number of ships; this was important since the rising number of ships did not necessarily mean an increase in progressive activity at a port but more often reflected increasing ship sizes with concomitant economies in freight movements, for the greater the proportion of cargo traffic landed or shipped at one port, the greater are the economies effected in ship working. The differences between the net registered tonnages of ships calling at the three ports were not as great as those between the total volume of cargo traffic movements because (the same ships frequently called at all of the ports but tended to land or ship a greater proportion of their cargo at a specific terminal.

The comparative significance of the three major ports of the Cape Colony between 1851 and 1882 in terms of number of ships, their tonnages, imports and exports is shown in the following tables. The overwhelming importance of Table Bay in terms of numbers of ships and tonnages is immediately apparent but the greater importance of Port Elizabeth in terms of imports and exports is also obvious.

Furthermore, the rapid growth at East London of all these aspects can be clearly seen.

TABLE XV

NUMBER OF SHIPS, TONNAGES, VOLUME OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

TABLE BAY:

YEAR	SHIPS	TONNAGE	IMPORTS (£)	EXPORTS (£)
1851	688	203 911	1 344 270	382 357
1855	642	160 076	742 922	492 287
1860	724	215 150	+	+
1865	528	184 562	884 563	524 572
1870	559	167 546	986 357	448 066
1875	797	429 139	2 144 750	690 454
1880	914	843 807	2 801 463	861 027
1882	926	1 039 230	3 186 912	887 143

ALGOA BAY:

YEAR	SHIPS	TONNAGE	IMPORTS (£)	EXPORTS (£)
1851	163	29 875	317 921	268 241
1855	163	26 752	376 638	580 911
1860	228	64 576	+	+
1865	249	94 992	1 148 762	1 574 032
1870	222	99 404	1 214 254	1 858 185
1875	360	264 467	2 681 333	2 832 523
1880	516	643 574	3 382 378	2 653 729
1882	551	725 157	3 760 650	2 442 051

EAST LONDON:

YEAR	SHIPS	TONNAGE	IMPORTS (£)	EXPORTS (£)
1866	34	13 818	26 957	77 720
1870	55	26 599	51 117	33 169
1875	172	85 855	552 033	131 800
1880	287	351 927	1 152 610	303 991
1882	362	557 247	2 115 930	438 736

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

+ There are no separate import and export statistics for individual ports given in the Blue Books between 1857 and 1860.

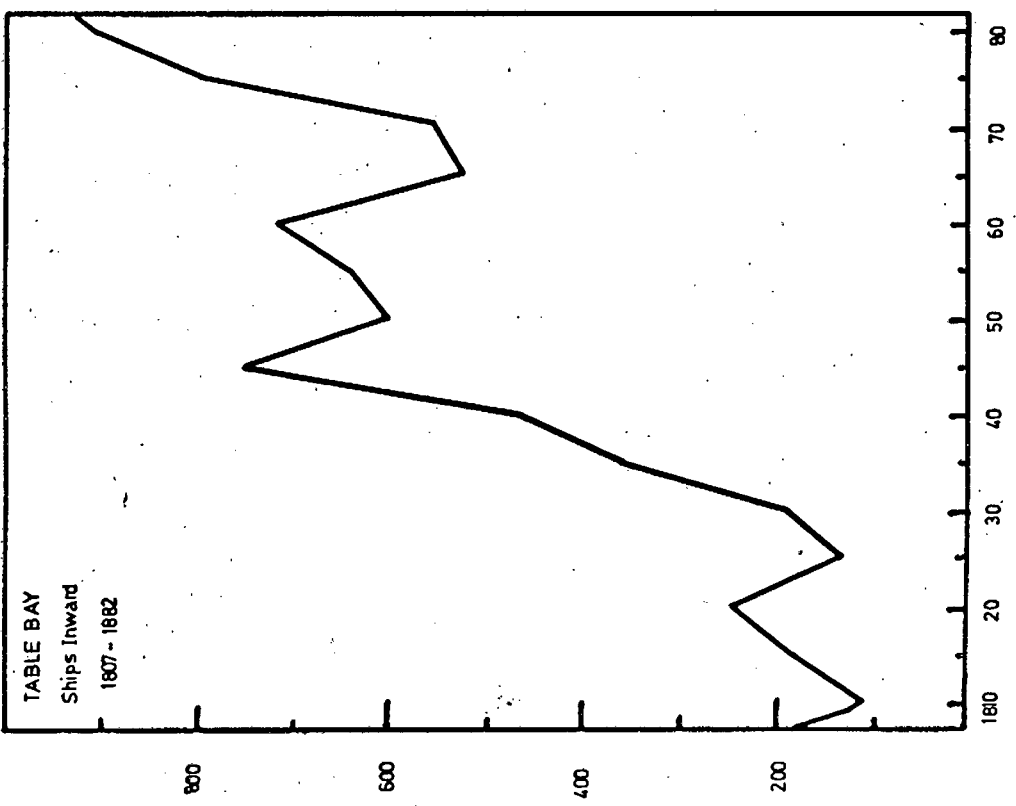
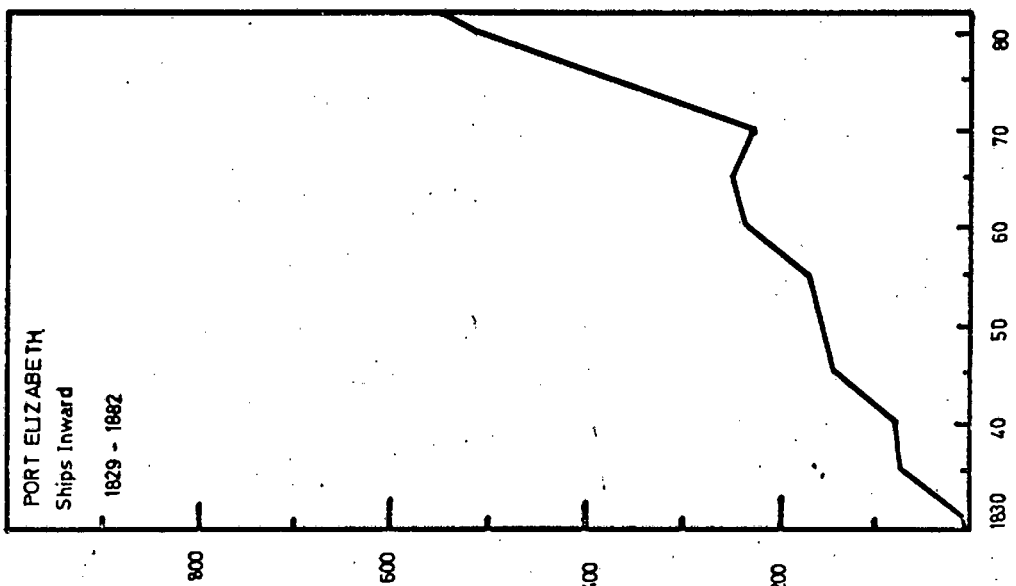
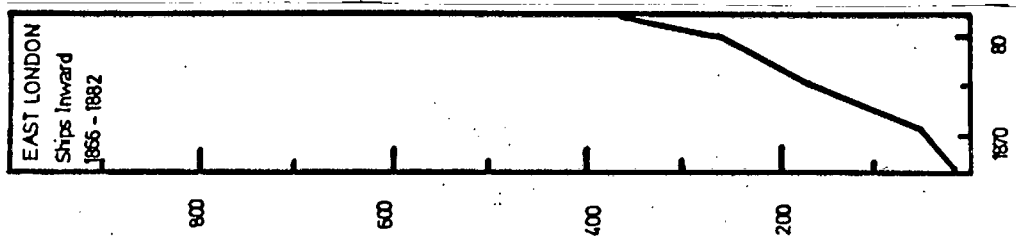
- Prior to 1866, there are no statistics in the Blue Books for East London.

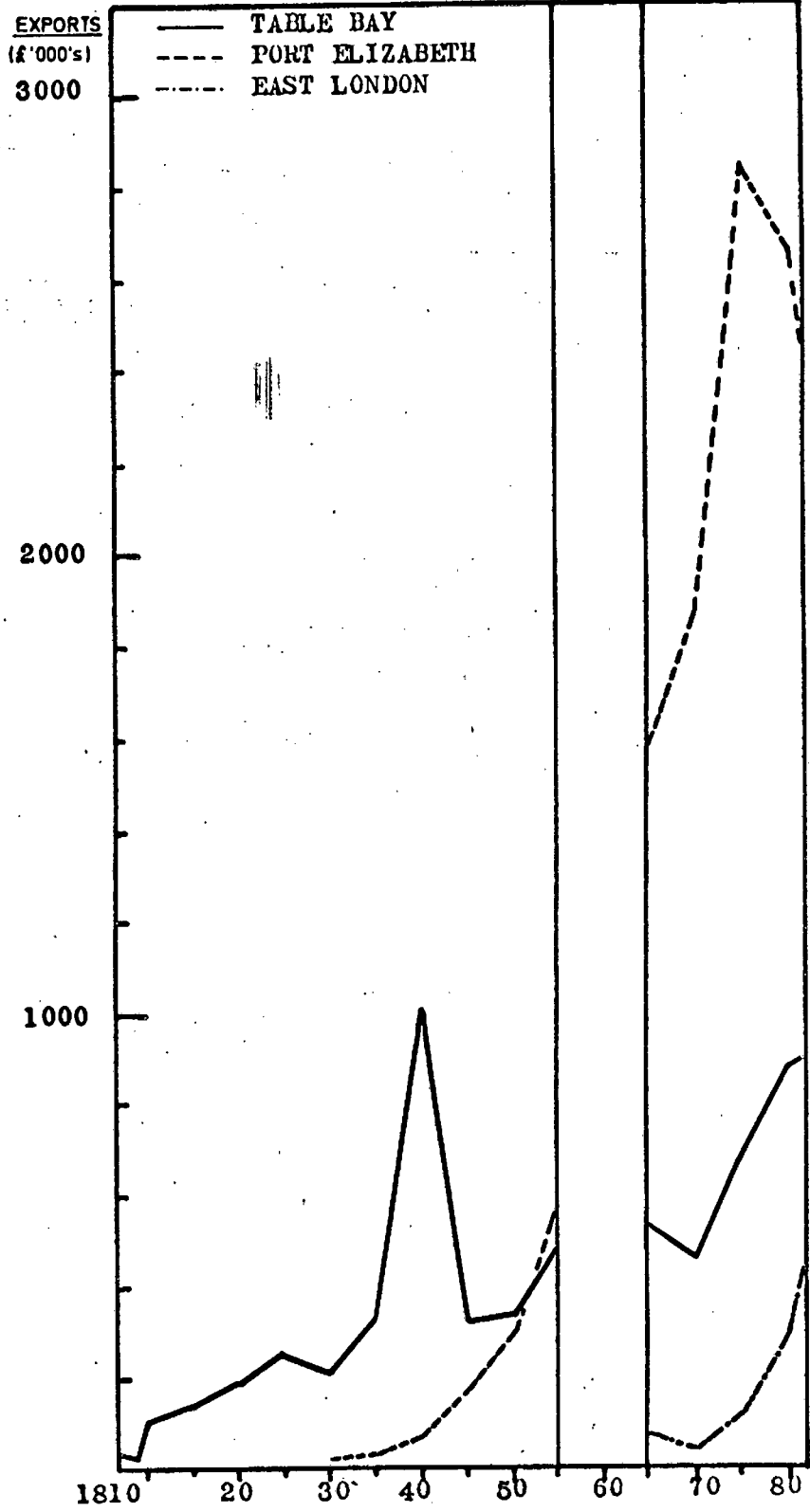
As indicated above, trade at Cape Town and the number of calling ships showed a fairly slow increase until 1870 but thereafter the growth was swift. Imports grew from £ 742 922 in 1855 to £ 986 357 in 1870 but the growth that followed was tremendous. By 1875 imports had grown to £ 2 144 750 and reached £ 3 186 912 by 1882. Exports showed a similar growth though lower in absolute amounts rising from £ 492 287 in 1855 to £ 887 143 in 1882.

The number of calling ships grew considerably, rising from 642 in 1855 to 926 in 1882.

Trade and shipping at Port Elizabeth showed a far greater growth than that at Table Bay. Imports grew from £ 376 638 in 1855 to £ 3 760 650 in 1882 while exports increased from £ 580 911 in 1855 to £ 2 442 051 in 1882. The number of ships calling at Port Elizabeth increased from 163 in 1855 to 551 by 1882.

A similar marked growth took place at East London after 1866 (the date when records in the Blue Books start). In that year, merely 34 ships called to land imports to the value of only £ 26 957 and to load exports valued at £ 77 720. By 1875, these figures had grown to 172 ships, £ 552 033 of imports and £ 131 800 of exports. Seven years later in 1882, 362 ships called with £ 2 115 930 of imports and loaded £ 438 736 of exports





IMPORTS  
(£'000's)

— TABLE BAY  
- - - PORT ELIZABETH  
- · - · EAST LONDON

3000

2000

1000

1810

20

30

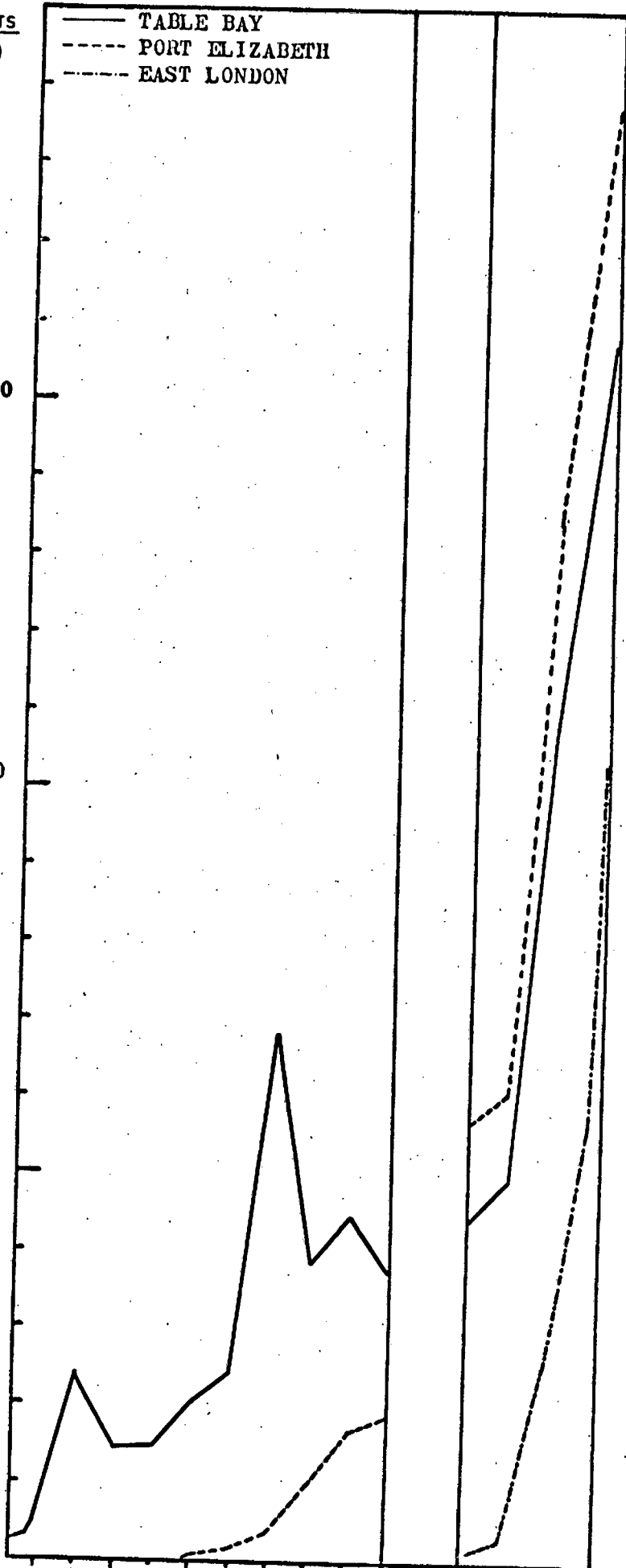
40

50

60

70

80



A clearer idea of the rapid growth after 1870 of shipping traffic and exports and imports at the three main ports, as well as the comparative significance of each, can be gained from the above diagrams.

Considerably more ships were handled at Table Bay after 1870 than at Port Elizabeth and East London. This fact is particularly significant since it emphasises the greater importance of Table Bay over the other ports. This importance is emphasized when the total trade of each of the ports under discussion is compared, in relation to the numbers of ships that were using each port.

The greater amount of imports and exports and the smaller numbers of ships at Port Elizabeth and East London is a clear indication that these two were mainly trading ports whereas the greater number of ships and the smaller volume of trade at Table Bay shows that its function was not only trade but also the servicing of ships that did not call to trade but which were in transit to elsewhere in the world.

Why Table Bay should have achieved this position was a matter of historical emphasis through the establishment by the Dutch of a stopping point for their ships in the bay as well as the special geographical significance of the Cape of being the most logical calling point on the

long journey between Europe and the Far East. One further aspect was that Table Bay had better port facilities earlier than the other two ports.

The greater bulk of exports from the Eastern Province reflects the fact that the primary function of these two ports was the export of a single product - wool - from the immediate hinterland; an area which in itself did not constitute in either case, a very important or the only market for imported goods.

The smaller number of ships that called at Port Elizabeth and East London was probably a reflection of the inadequate harbour facilities that existed there and not of any low level of economic development of the hinterlands of the two places. That the economic structure of the two hinterlands was changing is reflected in the rapid growth of the import and export traffic flowing through the two ports between 1851 and 1882. In part, this growth was accounted for by the pattern of traffic that developed subsequent to the discovery of diamonds in 1867 but also the realisation by importers that the ports of the Eastern Province were closer to the Diamond Fields than was Cape Town. Hence it was cheaper to consign goods direct to Port Elizabeth and East London instead of to Table Bay.

## CHAPTER II

THE EFFECT OF THE GROWTH OF TRADE ON THE PORTS OF THE  
CAPE COLONY

The growth of the ports of the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century falls into two distinct phases: the first from 1806 until 1850 and the second from 1851 to 1882.

A multitude of factors enters into any consideration of a seaport, and the problem becomes increasingly complex when attention is focussed upon a group of seaports in terms of their development over time. The development and maintenance of an adequate range of port facilities is essential to any area engaging in external trade. This was particularly so in the case of the Cape Colony in the nineteenth century where the economic structure was based upon bulk exports of primary raw materials and the importing of large quantities of manufactured goods.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PORTS AND HARBOURS

As a starting point, it was decided to utilise the concept of "Anyport"<sup>1</sup> developed by J.H. Bird to

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1. J.H. Bird: The Major Seaports of the United Kingdom, (Lutichinson: London, 1963) p.23.

overcome the difficulty of examining the growth of different ports over a lengthy period of time, which at the same time, provided a theoretical framework into which the process of development could be fitted.

The first stage of port development comes when twoway exchange between land and water is regularly performed at a place, even if there are no port installations of any kind on shore. Pressure on space, and the increasing size and number of vessels soon demand an expansion from the port nucleus, which sometimes takes the form of a new beginning on a slightly different site. This marks the second stage of development, that of marginal quay extension which involves lineal expansion beyond the confines of the primitive nucleus. Distance from the nucleus and physical obstacles limit the process and introduce the third stage of marginal quay elaboration which is characterised by the construction of jetties extended into the water and of quays developed with the help of land excavations, either as land-encroaching or water-encroaching sites. Pressure on water space initiates the fourth stage, that of dock elaboration, in which the first docks are built to minimise the effect of tides and wind on the activity of the port. Such docks are also equipped with warehouses and often have elaborate outlines since their designers usually wish to obtain the maximum length of quayage in relation

to the available water area.<sup>1</sup>

A number of difficulties were encountered when attempting to apply Bird's concept of 'Anyport' to the development of Cape Colony ports in the nineteenth century.

Implicit in the concept is the fact that increasing trade and maritime traffic brings about changes in the port in a pattern similar to that outlined above. However, on attempting to assess the influence that growing maritime trade from the Cape Colony exerted on the building of ports, one clear fact emerged. This was that until 1854, the volume of trade carried on through the ports had only a peripheral effect on harbour development. Some attempts at changing the rudimentary form of the ports were made through the building of jetties but the commonly used transit areas between land and sea remained primitive.<sup>2</sup>

Why this was so was the result of a complicated set of inter-related factors, each of which had a direct bearing on the economic development of the colony in

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1. J.H. Bird: op. cit. pp.24-34.

2. What was done in the colony prior to 1854, is classified by Bird as marginal quay elaboration, i.e. the construction of jetties extended into the water with few, if any, other facilities provided for the easy transit of good between ship and shore.

general and on the creation of the infrastructure in particular.

First and probably the most important was the problem of finance. Because of the financial inadequacies of the Cape, port development was neglected for far longer than it should have been. The transit areas remained primitive despite the greatly increasing trade and maritime traffic at the ports. The second factor was the political status of the colony; third was the relatively unimportant place occupied by the Cape in the British Empire; fourth was a lack of faith in the future of the Cape in view of the constantly recurring 'native problem' on the frontier between the colony and the tribal lands; fifth and closely associated with the fourth, was the concentration by the British Government on the difficulties in the interior of Southern Africa arising out of clashes between the Trekkers and indigenous Bantu tribes; and sixth, arising out of all of these, was the seeming lack of any economic viability and future in the Cape or the whole of Southern Africa.

After 1850 the pattern of port development outlined above cannot be applied in any detail to the main port sites of the Cape Colony. The reason for this lies in the fact that the coastline of Southern Africa is notable for its lack of indentations, bays, its river

mouths closed by sand-bars and strong off and on-shore winds. Sailing ships calling at any of the major contact points were exposed to dangers of being blown on shore or great difficulties when attempting to land or embark cargoes in the absence of any facilities and safe shelter.

Because of the need to provide enclosed dock space on the open shoreline of the colony, port development did not follow the lines given above. After 1850 the growth of trade and the increased number of ships made it necessary to proceed from the merely primitive form of port with exposed jetties directly to full-scale schemes of dock elaboration, the main function of which was two-fold: that of providing safe shelter for ships from wind and wave in the absence of any natural topographical features that could have provided this, and that of providing quays for ships engaged in trade, to land and embark growing volumes of goods more easily and safely.

The chief characteristic of the harbours of the Cape Colony was,, as a result, that they were all man-made constructions involving a great deal of time and money. This was a direct consequence of the neglect of port development in the 44 years prior to 1850, as well as the deficiency of topographical formations that could have eased construction.

In not one of the three major port sites of the Cape Colony could use be made of an advantageous coastal configuration of a form similar to for example, the port at Durban in Natal. The harbours of the Cape Colony that were built after 1850 were all major civil engineering undertakings which created ports in the open sea. The exception was East London where a port was built in a river mouth but once again, the work required was a major task which until the success of dredging the river, seemed to have been a hopeless failure.

Foreign Trade came to exert an increasing influence after 1850 by accentuating the awareness of the need for port development but there was little that could be done about it generally, because of a shortage of funds for the purpose. Despite this, the Cape Government embarked upon an ambitious programme of public works after 1854. Tenders were called for the building of a telegraph line from Cape Town to Grahamstown,<sup>1</sup> and permission was granted in the Parliamentary Session of 1860 for the construction of a breakwater in Table Bay.

An outcry from the Eastern Province followed this latter project. The Grahamstown Journal complained that "in spite of a bankrupt budget and a violated constitution one end of the country was authorised to obtain and spend

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1. Votes and Proceedings. House of Assembly, 1860, p.394.

for its own advantage, a sum of not much below a quarter of a million pounds".<sup>1</sup>

But in 1860, depression hit the colony and for the following eight years, the colony suffered an increasingly deteriorating position. Nevertheless, the growing concentration of traffic at specific places, each of which lay on an unprotected coastline, made it necessary for the Government to continue the effort to build artificial harbours though the shortage of funds resulted in major work being carried on in Table Bay only. Very minor works involving small amounts of money were carried out in Algoa Bay and East London as aids to trade needs but no properly designed harbour plans were undertaken in either place until the end of the 1860's. Even these initial plans for both Port Elizabeth and East London were not designed on a similar scale to that of Cape Town, and were mere stop-gap affairs.

There was a great deal of apprehension, particularly amongst Cape farmers and merchants at the prospect of the opening of the Suez Canal, which they feared would cause a massive decline in shipping passing between Europe and the Far East and so affect their re-victualling trade.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Grahamstown Journal, 16.10.1860 and 1.1.1861.

2. ONSA, II, p.9; also Cape Argus, 6.10.1863.

Although the Cape was facing economic difficulties and troubles with her finances, by 1870 there was some promise for the future because of the 1867/9 diamond discoveries. Within a short time, the character of Cape trade changed and the population grew almost overnight as a result of a flood of immigrant fortune-hunters. So many people flocked to the diggings, from both inside the colony and abroad, that by the end of 1870, the camp town of Kimberley had the largest population in Southern Africa.<sup>1</sup>

Contrary to the fears of the Cape farmers and merchants, the diamond discoveries negated the effects of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 by creating an enormous increase in the numbers of ships calling at Cape Ports.<sup>2</sup>

The coming of diamonds and the massive growth of trade that followed changed the pace of port development in the colony. In common with general economic

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1. LCA. Knowles: Economic Development of the British Overseas Empire, Volume III, South Africa, (Routledge: London, 1936), p.206, gives figures of 15 000 white, 10 000 coloured and 20 000 Bantu.

2. <u>Cape Town:</u>	1869	549	<u>Port Elizabeth:</u>	1869	221
	1875	797		1875	360
	1879	1048		1879	523

<u>East London:</u>	1869	41
	1875	172
	1879	267

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

development in the colony, the pace shifted within 10 years from a leisurely one to a rapidly changing one bringing in its wake the creation of all the public works, including harbours, that the Cape had been struggling for so long to build.

The three main ports came under close scrutiny after 1870 as the Cape Government began to realise that the inadequacies of each were forming a great hindrance to the successful growth of the foreign trade of the colony. This was particularly relevant after 1870 since the development of an adequate range of port facilities was important to any of the areas engaging in external trade as seaports constitute a vital link in the chain of transport through which goods are imported or exported.

These hindrances were serious when attempting to deal timeously and expeditiously with greatly increased cargoes both inward and outward since they severely affected the easy flow of traffic. The newly completed harbour at Cape Town was found to be inadequate in 1873 not only because there had been a great increase in the numbers of calling ships but also because the size of the ships had increased which had resulted in greater congestion of the new harbour area. It became difficult for ships to get berths to load and land cargoes since the port was servicing not only trading cargo-boats

but also those which required re-fuelling and re-victualling for the continuation of their voyages elsewhere.

This latter problem was not one which presented itself at the two other ports in this period since their facilities for dealing with ship servicing were limited and in any case, most of the ships calling there had already been (or would be on the return journey) serviced at Cape Town.

At the same time, after 1871, with the annexation of the Diamond Fields, Southern Africa entered a politically difficult period. Previously South African politics had been a relatively simple affair, involving as they did merely the conflicting claims and aspirations of Bantu and missionaries on one side and the interests of farmers and trekkers on the other.

But with the advent of mining and the introduction of new interests and great numbers of immigrants, the problem became more complicated; a complication that was accentuated by the slow penetration of the interior by railways from the three main ports of the Cape Colony. In part, this latter factor was more important than the building of harbours, for the mere physical presence of railways meant that imported goods were able to be more

widely distributed and more quickly, and furthermore, inland producers could get their products down to the ports more easily. But this naturally meant that the demand on the services of the harbours began to get heavier as ever increasing volumes of goods had to be handled.

## CHAPTER III

Section AHARBOUR WORKS IN TABLE BAY DURING THE PERIOD OF THE DUTCH  
EAST INDIA COMPANY

Shipping and trade formed the major part of the foreign activities of the Dutch East India Company. Hence the building of facilities for ships in its various settlements was usually of great importance.

However, this was not the case at the Cape where ships did not call to carry on a direct trade with the hinterland. It did not appear justifiable to incur avoidable expenditure to improve a mere port-of-call for ships which were trading elsewhere. Hence the provision of even the most rudimentary harbour facilities took a long time. Yet some amelioration of the conditions of an exposed and dangerous port was called for, even for this purpose.

CONSTRUCTION OF A JETTY

As early as May 1652, Jan van Riebeeck had indicated the need for a jetty to prevent sickness amongst sailors who had to stand in the sea to load boats, and to facilitate the landing and embarkation of goods and

people when large numbers of ships lay in Table Bay.<sup>1</sup> However, by late 1655, construction work had not begun. The Council of India at Batavia was alarmed at this delay as there had been a marked increase in the number of ships calling at the Cape between 1652 and 1655.

TABLE XVI

SHIPS INWARD TABLE BAY 1652 - 1655<sup>2</sup>

April - December, 1652	1653	1654	1655
7	21	21	40

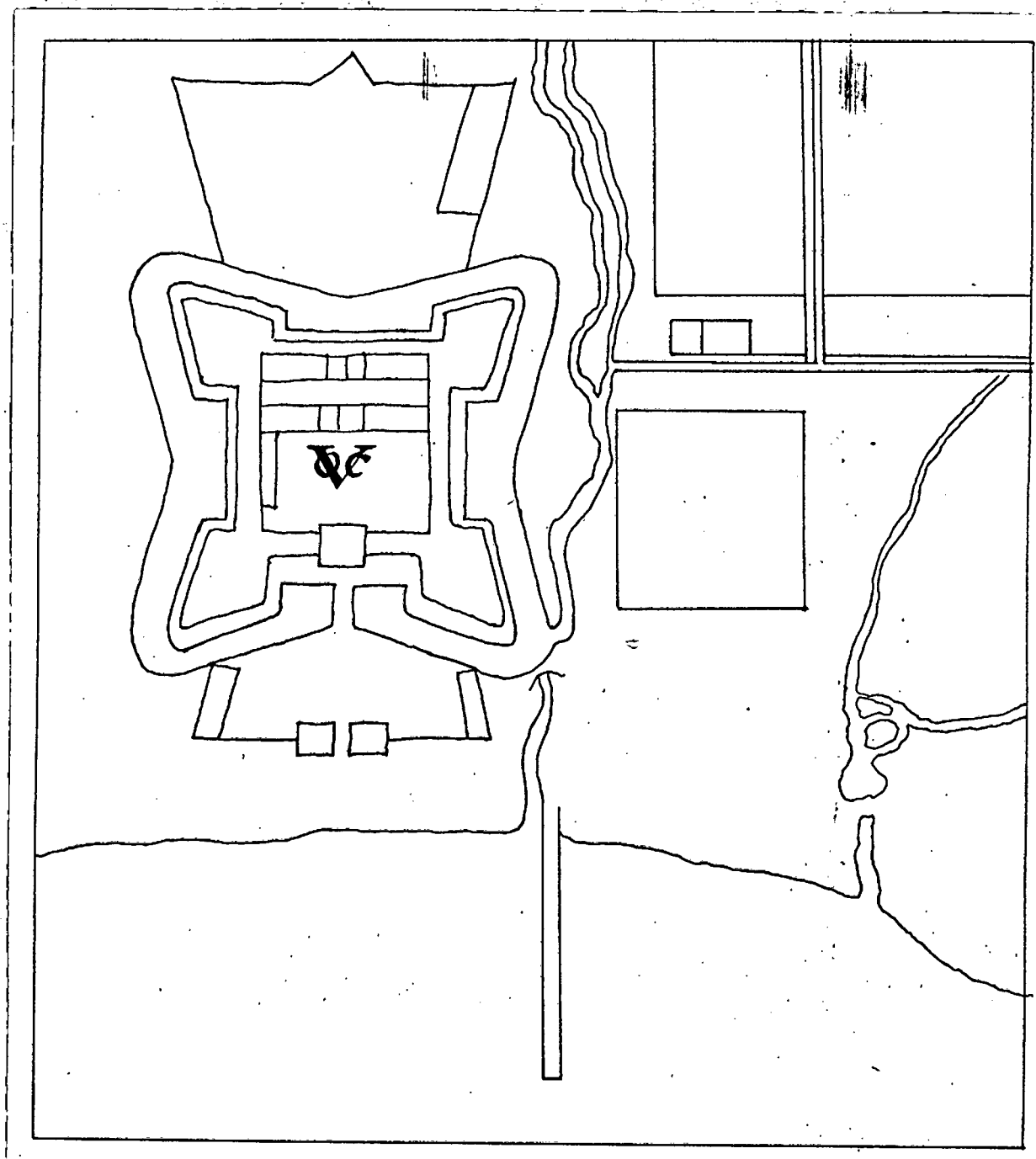
This increase of nearly 600% in shipping traffic in Table Bay between 1652 and 1655, meant that by 1655 the ships of the Return Fleet waiting their turn for stores, often had to spend as long as two weeks at the Cape as a result of the lack of landing facilities.

These delays were an expense to the company since they sometimes led to the ships missing the best selling period for their cargoes in the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> The

1. Uitgaande Brieven, 13th May, 1652, CA 493, Part I, p.17.

2. H.C.V. Leibbrandt: Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope. Letters and Documents Received, 1649 - 1662, Part III, Sections i - xviii.

3. H.C.V. Leibbrandt: op. cit. p.226.



Drawn from: H.W. Pichard: Gentleman's Walk

(Struik: Cape Town, 1968), p. 6

Map dated 1660

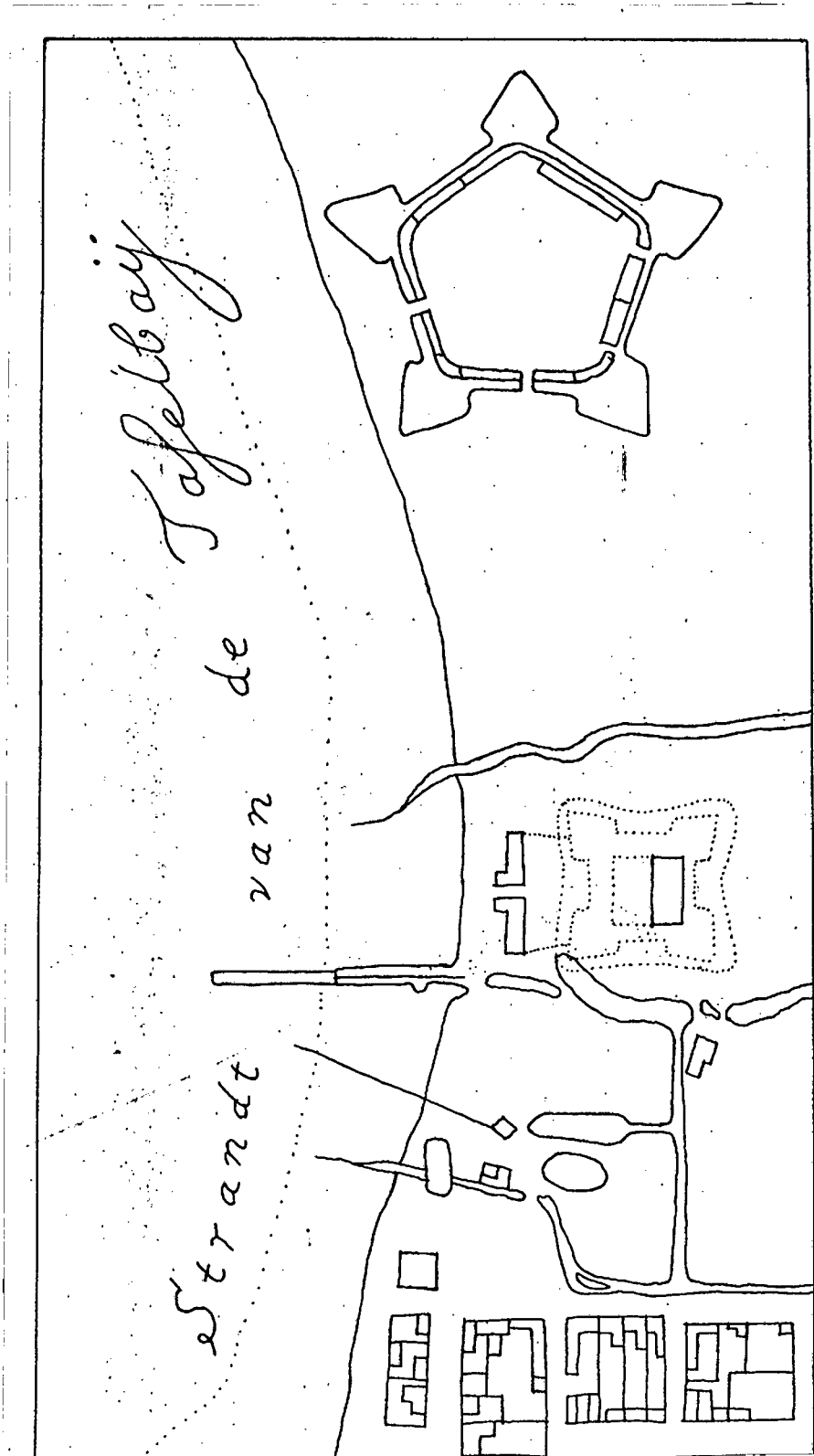
Showing the Jetty as completed by Van Riebeeck

Drawn from a map of Cape Town in 1693

L. P. Richard: Gentleman's Walk

(Struik: Cape Town, 1968) p. 17.

Showing the Jetty as extended



Council of India therefore wrote to Van Riebeeck stressing the need for the immediate construction of a jetty,<sup>1</sup> work on which was begun early in 1656.<sup>2</sup> It was not completed until after January 1658.<sup>3</sup>

THE REASONS FOR THE DELAY IN UNDERTAKING AND COMPLETING  
THE JETTY IN TABLE BAY

The factors responsible for the delay in the completion of the jetty were the same as those which had prevented construction during the years 1652 to 1656.

The Cape Settlement, as envisaged by the XVII was to be merely a station where "passing ships could obtain meat, vegetables, water and other necessaries and the sick restored to health".<sup>4</sup> It was therefore the aim of the XVII to run the Settlement as cheaply as possible,

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1. Inkomende Brieven, 24th December, 1655, CA 409, Part II, p.381-394.

2. It is not clear from the records when in 1656 the work was actually begun, but at the end of March 1656, Van Riebeeck reported to the Council at Batavia that 'we are at present making a permanent jetty of stone about 70 or 80 roods into the sea'.  
Uitgaande Brieven, 25th March, 1656, CA 493, Part II, p.509.

3. No record exists giving the date when the jetty was completed but it would appear to have been soon after 17th January, 1658. The Daagboek entry for that date notes that 'the jetty has reached such a stage of completion, that the Commander, going on board, for the first time, walked along the beams...'.  
Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, 17th January, 1658.  
(Van Riebeeck Society: Cape Town, 1964), Volume II, p. 215.

4. H.C.V. Leibbrandt: op.cit., p.28.

staffing it with the minimum of men and providing only essential facilities.

Consequently, the immediate problem which faced Van Riebeeck was a shortage of labour. His band of some 90 unskilled men had been instructed to perform diverse tasks such as erecting dwelling houses and store-rooms, building a fort and excavating a moat around it and constructing a hospital for sick sailors. As illness often depleted the numbers of workers to fewer than 60,<sup>1</sup> none could be spared for the construction of a jetty during the early stages of the settlement.

During the Naval War against England, the XVII allowed Van Riebeeck to strengthen his garrison with 25 men from passing ships. But when he disregarded this stipulation by employing 170 extra men he was sharply reprimanded and told to reduce the numbers by 50.<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that it was several years before work could begin on the jetty. Even after the threat to their profits had persuaded the XVII of the need for harbour facilities (above) they were reluctant to increase the labour force at the Cape. They

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1. H.C.V. Leibbrandt: Letters and Documents Dispatched, 1652 - 1662, Part I, p.40.

2. Inkomende Brieven, 7th November, 1654, CA 409, Part I, p. 236.

wrote to Van Riebeeck in October 1656, complaining that "the Cape costs are heavy. Nor is it necessary to have such a large garrison for the making of a stone jetty, so much required for watering the ships with facility. You are to get on in the best way possible and slowly proceed with the work, using as far as possible for the purpose, the men of the ships calling there, for which purpose you have our authority".<sup>1</sup>

Yet, although the XVII had given Van Riebeeck this authority to use men from the passing ships, until 1657 the Commanders of Fleets were often not prepared to allow their sailors to work. In that year however, they were compelled to release men for work on the jetty. In March, 1657, Ryckloff von Goens, Senior, visited the Cape with instructions from the XVII to undertake a general survey of the settlement. He was dismayed by the slowness of work on the jetty and on his departure, included in his instructions to Van Riebeeck the following:

"With the object of carrying water for the ships your Honour shall also every day make it a duty to make it up - yet without any neglect of agriculture, and to assist your Honour in this, in addition to the Company's people here, your Honour has been authorised by special orders to the ships' authorities to make use of as many 'Noorlui' and others, during the time that the ships lie here, as discretion allows and as can be done without

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1. Inkomende Brieven, 12th October, 1656, CA 409, Part II, p.463.

inconvenience, just as we have assisted your Honour with the ships MALACCA and ORANGIE. So we can expect that a year from this it can have been built up completely."<sup>1</sup>

This extra labour was however, only available during the short time that the Outward and Return Fleets lay in Table Bay. The Outward Fleet generally arrived in Table Bay sometime between February and April and the Return Fleet between December and February. It was only seldom that men could be obtained from the Outward Fleet since its time of arrival coincided with the beginning of the North-Westerly gale that blew directly into Table Bay. When these winds blew, the sailing ships were often hard pressed to avoid being blown onto the shore in Table Bay - a problem that was made more serious if a ship arrived with a crew badly depleted by scurvy.

Consequently, construction work on the jetty was performed intermittently especially since Van Riebeeck had only the few men of the settlement who could seldom be released from other more important tasks.

The anxiety of the XVII to keep down costs also

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1. Report of Ryckloff van Goens, Senior, 16th April, 1657. S.A. Argiefstukken: Belangrike Kaapse Dokumente I, Memoriën en Instructiën, ed. A. Boëseken (The Archives Commission: Cape Town, 1966), p.2.

prevented Van Riebeeck from importing the materials necessary for building a strong jetty. Requests to the XVII for deal planks and heavy timbers met with no response.<sup>1</sup>

He was thus forced to abandon his ideas for a stone jetty since he had to send men into the local forests to cut wood<sup>2</sup> which meant that they had not time to quarry the necessary stone.

#### INADEQUACIES

The low-cost jetty when completed, was a piece of false economy. Because of the labour difficulties, what was constructed was merely a short jetty extending 500 feet out into the Bay. As Commissioner Andries Frisius pointed out to the XVII in a report dated 4th July, 1661, the jetty did not provide any specific facility for the ocean-going ships, nor did it aid the landing and embarkation of cargoes and people since the jetty could not "on account of the shallowness of the

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1. H.C.V. Leibbrandt: LDD 1652-1662, Part I, 30th May, 1652, p.48.  
LDD 1652-1662, Part II, 5th March, 1657, p.293.  
LDB 1649--1662, Part I, p.264.
  2. Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, Volume II (ed.) H.B. Thom, 11th November, 1656, p.72;  
23rd November, 1656, p.81;  
23rd April, 1657, p.113.  
VRS (Balkema, Cape Town, 1952-4).

beach be reached at low tide".<sup>1</sup>

Van Riebeeck undertook an extension to the jetty which was completed in about May 1662, but the entire structure was very weak. As early as December, 1662, Van Riebeeck's successor, Zacharias Wagenaer, found it necessary to send men into the forests to cut heavy timbers for "repairs to the shaky jetty which had been damaged by the rolling of heavy water casks".<sup>2</sup>

Because of the weakness of the structure, repair work was a constant necessity. The expense of this work led to attempts by two Governors to strengthen the construction. What is significant about these attempts is that they indicated both the lack of raw materials at the Cape and the need forced upon the Governors by the XVII to keep costs as low as possible.

1. On the 16th October, 1676, Governor Johan Bax issued orders for the jetty to be masoned up on the part that lay on the shore. This work was completed in a day.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Report of Commissioner Andries Frisius, 4th July, 1661, CA VC 36, p.134.  
 2. Dagboek, 16th December, 1662, CA 586, Part I, p.135.  
 3. H.C.V. Leibbrandt: Journal, 1671 - 1674, 1676, p.287.

2. Simon van der Stel's scheme of 1696 was an ingenious attempt to provide a cheap method of strengthening the jetty.

He decided that the SWARTE LEEUW, a badly damaged frigate-of-war, that had been lying at the Cape for more than a year unable to be repaired, should be sunk at right angles to the end of the jetty. It could then be used as a mole by ships' boats during storms and heavy weather to enable them to land safely and could also be used as a seaward gun platform in time of war.<sup>1</sup> This was done but in the following year on the 24th May, a heavy North-Westerly storm blew up.

The SWARTE LEEUW was broken up by the force of the waves, twenty-six small boats were thrown on shore and the jetty was badly damaged, requiring extensive repairs.<sup>2</sup>

#### OTHER HARBOUR SCHEMES

The XVII's reluctance to spend money on the settlement is further evident in the failure of two other projects to provide safer anchorage for ships

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1. Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, Deel III, (Argief Kommissie: Kaapstad, 1964), pp.308-9.

2. Uitgaande Brieven: 11th June, 1697, CA 505, p.569.

calling at the Cape. Both of these projects were attempts to prevent financial losses to the company resulting from shipwrecks in Table Bay, yet both schemes because they were unsuccessful, involved the company in futile expenditure.

#### SALT RIVER PROJECT

Between 1652 and 1698, seven wrecks had occurred in Table Bay, six during winter storms.<sup>1</sup> In 1698, Simon van der Stel saw what he thought was a way to provide for greater safety for ships lying in the exposed unsafe anchorage.

During a particularly heavy storm, the mouth of the Salt River had become blocked by sand and a large lagoon had formed behind the sand-dunes on the beach. It seemed possible that the lagoon could be developed into a protected harbour for small boats if a suitable new outlet could be found.<sup>2</sup> A channel was dug through the dunes some distance from the old river exit to make a shallow entrance for the company's small boats. Van der Stel hoped that the channel would open up in times of heavy rain to provide a wider entrance for the larger ships to enable them to be laid up during storms.

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1. G. McC. Theal: A History of South Africa before 1795, Vol. IV (Struik reprint: Cape Town, 1964), pp. 510-2.  
 2. Dagboek, 10th May, 1698, CA 596, p.513.

The scheme however, failed. In December, 1698, the river ploughed out its old exit and the lagoon drained away. It is possible that it could have succeeded had Van der Stel been able to spend more money on better construction. As it was, he felt it necessary to justify his actions and his expenditure of company money on the project when the plan failed.<sup>1</sup>

#### TABLE BAY BREAKWATER SCHEME

The Breakwater project arose out of two disastrous storms which occurred during the first half of the eighteenth century in Table Bay. Ten vessels were lost in a storm on the 16th June, 1722 and nine on the 21st May, 1737. A further five were lost before 1750.

Following the losses of 1737, Baron van Imhoff, Councillor Extra-Ordinary of India, drew the attention of the XVII to the possibilities of building a mole in Table Bay.<sup>2</sup> When he called at the Cape in 1743 on his way to the Indies, he was able to comment upon the beginning of

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1. *Uitgaande Brieven*: 18th March, 1699, CA 506, p.88.

2. J.P.I. du Bois: *Vies des Gouverneurs Generaux, avec l'Abrégé de l'Histoire des Etablissements Hollandois aux Indes Orientales. Appendix: l'Considerations sur l'Etat du Compagnie ...* Baron Gustave Guillaume d'Imhoff, 21 November, 1741, (Pierre de Hondt, Hague: 1763).

the attempt to build a protective breakwater on a reef that jutted into the sea.<sup>1</sup>

Work on the breakwater was begun on the 4th February, 1743. Because the work was considered of great importance to both the colony and the company, a special tax was levied on all Europeans at the Cape to finance the work. Company servants and free burghers in the Cape district were assessed at a rate of 153 labourers per two months and those in the country, in lieu of 166 labourers, at a rate of 4 Rixdollars per man per month.<sup>2</sup>

Stone for the breakwater was quarried on the slopes of Lion's Head. Each free burgher bringing produce to the Cape was required to cart one load of stone before returning home. By December, 1746, the construction was 350 feet in length from the shore but thereafter work was suspended.<sup>3</sup> The reason for the suspension was that the free burghers and others could no longer pay their dues in either labour or money as many of them had been reduced to penury through locusts destroying their crops.<sup>4</sup> In September 1747, the Council of Policy at the Cape

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1. Report of Baron van Imhoff: VRS, I, p. 130.

2. van Imhoff, *Ibid.*, p.131.

3. G.McC. Theal: *op. cit.*, p. 64.

4. G.McC. Theal: *op. cit.*, p. 64.

resolved to continue the work<sup>1</sup> but in the following year after Daniel Nolthenius had reported to the XVII on the feasibility of continuing the project,<sup>2</sup> it was finally abandoned as the XVII felt that the expense was beyond the means of the company and the Cape people.<sup>3</sup>

This important though ill-fated project was the first real attempt to turn Table Bay into a safe anchorage for the ocean-going sailing ships. It came to nothing because the XVII were not prepared to spend money on the scheme. By expecting to be able to pay for the building of the breakwater from the limited finances of the Cape as well as expecting the project to be undertaken from limited resources, the XVII committed the cardinal error of under-financing a difficult project, which virtually assured its failure.

The problem of recurrent shipwrecks in Table Bay was eventually solved by so simple a scheme that it is surprising that it took until 1729 to be conceived. However, a number of years passed before it was put into operation.

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1. Resolutions of the Council of Policy, 5th September, 1747, CA 39, p.228.

2. Report of Daniel Nolthenius, 2nd April, 1748 (S.A.C.A. Vol. 28, no. 2008, 9th September, 1846).

3. G.McC. Theal: op. cit., p.65.

In that year, the XVII ordered the charting and sounding of False Bay in an attempt to find an alternative anchorage from Table Bay during the Winter months when the North-Westerly gales were at their strongest. Although the survey was completed and a report sent to the XVII, nothing came of it.<sup>1</sup> It was only in 1741, four years after the losses in Table Bay in 1737, that the XVII resolved that company ships should refresh at Simon's Bay from the 15th May to the 15th August each year.<sup>2</sup> Simon's Bay was used for the first time during the winter season of 1742.

The provisioning of ships in Simon's Bay was a time-consuming and expensive operation as the bay was difficult of access by land from the Cape,<sup>3</sup> but this was clearly preferable to the possibility of ship losses in Table Bay.

In 1743, Van Imhoff repeated the XVII's instructions, insisting that "the company ships must use False Bay and they are hereby definitely instructed to

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1. Theal: op. cit., p.61.

2. De Heeren Bewindhebberen van d'Oostindische Compagnie te Kamer ... lasten en ordineeren by dezen de Opperhoofden van het Schip ... dat sy weer en wind dienende zullen hebben zee te kiezen. (Printed Instructions from the XVII to the Commanders of Company Ships: Middelburg, 1741).

3. Theal: op. cit., p.61.

repair thither from the middle of May to the middle of August."<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to the abandonment of the breakwater scheme, these sailing instructions became the normal arrangement for all company ships calling at the Cape during winter. This arrangement was so successful that during the following years until the end of company rule at the Cape in 1795, only nine Dutch ships were lost in Table Bay and one in Simon's Bay out of a total of thirty-five wrecks in Cape waters in this time.<sup>2</sup>

After 1750 until the end of Dutch rule at the Cape 45 years later, there were no attempts at turning Table Bay into a protected anchorage because the winter and summer shipping arrangements proved more than adequate.

Indeed, schemes involving expensive construction could not be considered because of the parlous state of the Capes finances. In 1743, the annual deficit of the Cape had long been roughly, two and one-half times the annual revenue,<sup>3</sup> and from 1757 to 1777 it was about one

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1. Van Imhoff: op. cit., p.131.

2. Theal: op. cit., p.510.

3. Van Imhoff: op. cit., p.146.

Up to 1743, the annual deficit of the Cape was about 300 000 guilders whereas revenue was merely 120 000 to 130 000 guilders annually.

and one-half times as large.<sup>1</sup> Hence, it no wonder that the XVII displayed an intense pre-occupation with Cape costs particularly during the last part of the 18th century. Deficits of this magnitude naturally meant that the company would endeavour to avoid any financial demands being made upon it. As a result, there was a lack of financial and material support from the company which caused the most promising scheme - that of the Breakwater, an obvious solution to the problem of recurrent shipwrecks in Table Bay - to fail dismally.

Furthermore, Cape Governors and the Council of Policy were on occasion, driven to display great ingenuity and expediency in carrying out their ideas while at the same time, avoiding expense to the company. Simon van der Stel's schemes for the protection of the jetty and the creation of a small protected harbour are good examples of this.

It is thus understandable that apart from the building of a small jetty in Simon's Bay in 1768,<sup>2</sup> nothing further was done at the Cape to provide for the

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1. J.A. de Mist: The Memorandum of Commissary de Mist, VRS, III, p. 181. Annual profits and revenues between 1757 and 1777 amounted to between 160 000 and 200 000 guilders while expenditure was about 433 000 to 454 000 guilders annually.

2. Theal: op. cit., p. 116.

safety and convenience of company and other ships calling there during the second half of the eighteenth century.

#### SUMMARY

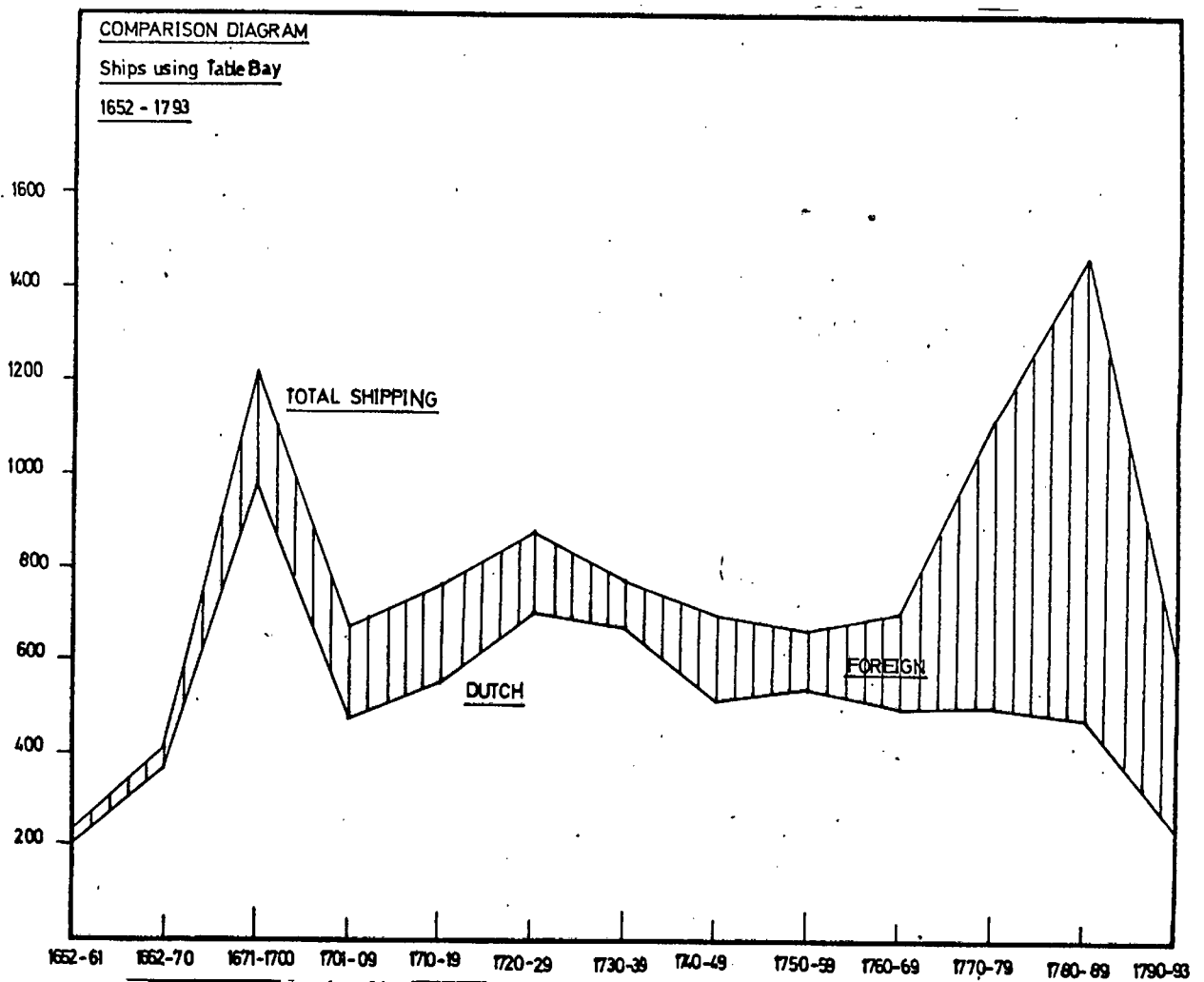
During the period in which the Dutch were in control of the Cape, the principal motive for ships calling at Table Bay did not change. Both Dutch and foreign ships called for re-victualling and not to do any trade with the hinterland.

Cape production and marketing was designed and carried on with this single purpose in view and not attempts were made by the company to build up a foreign trade in Cape produce or imported goods. In fact, what little trade was carried on at the Cape, the company reserved for itself since it prevented the local free burghers from becoming involved in foreign trade which was an exclusive company monopoly. The only trade that was allowed was the freedom to sell produce to ships lying in Table Bay, three days after their arrival.

It appears, therefore, that Table Bay and its harbour were not regarded as sufficiently important to warrant any great expenditures on harbour works despite the fact that the annual numbers of calling ships using Table Bay during the eighteenth century were fairly high.

Furthermore, as will be seen from the diagram below, the absolute number of Dutch ships using Table Bay began to decline after 1730.

This factor was more important than the total number of all ships using Table Bay when other reasons are sought for the Dutch East India Company not having built harbour works in the bay during the eighteenth century.



(Source: Calculated from; C. Beyers: Die Kaapse Patriotte, (Van Schaik: Pretoria, 1967), Appendix G

Section BTHE HARBOUR OF TABLE BAY 1795 - 1804

By the end of the eighteenth century and for the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, Table Bay and Cape Town had become the only place on the entire coastline of the Cape Colony where a regular interchange of trade between land and sea took place.

The reasons for this dominant position are both historic and economic:

The creation of a settlement by the Dutch and their establishment of the seat of government at the town, resulted in Cape Town having a greater concentration of people than any other place in the colony. In time, it became the only town of any size and consequence in the colony, the population of which formed a fair sized market for both foreign and local produce.

Furthermore, the annually recurring activity of the business of re-victualling ocean-going ships, arising out of Cape Town being the only place to which the ships regularly made on their journeys to and from the Far East, meant that foreign and local trade was concentrated in Cape Town.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Table Bay and the hazards that it held for sailing ships were well known to the ships using the Cape sea route to the East. The roadstead was open and exposed to North-Westerly gales in winter and tremendous South-Easterly gales in summer. As there was no breakwater behind which ships could shelter from the gales and the consequent heavy seas, there was a continual danger through ships dragging their anchors or being driven on shore. In addition, there were often lengthy delays when seas became too rough for lighters to work cargoes.<sup>1</sup>

Facilities for the ships were rudimentary. Ships had to anchor out in the bay from whence they were loaded or unloaded from small rowing boats. Only one rickety wormeaten jetty existed<sup>2</sup> to provide for the landing and embarkation of passengers and cargoes. So bad was the state of the jetty that it drew the attention of the Colonial Governor soon after the establishment of the First British Occupation of the Cape in 1795. On the 27th December of that year, Craig wrote to Dundas<sup>3</sup> telling him that it had been found necessary to undertake repairs of an expedient nature as a matter of urgency as the jetty was in danger of being washed away in the

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1. Craig to Dundas: 27th December, 1795, BO 48, No. 1/23, p. 80.

2. Ibid. p. 81.

3. Ibid. p. 81.

event of any heavy storm in Table Bay. He further noted that there was a need to erect something more permanent than a wooden jetty in Table Bay.

However, despite the obvious need for shipping improvements in Table Bay, Governors of the Cape subsequent to Craig merely ordered repairs to be done when necessary.<sup>1</sup>

In 1800, Sir George Yonge attempted to reduce the amount spent by the government on repair work by levying a duty on all ships calling at Table Bay and making use of the jetty.<sup>2</sup> The money collected from this source was intended for repairs to the jetty only but generally, income from the duty was not enough to defray costs.

Although there was an awareness on the part of the Colonial Government that the harbour facilities were inadequate, nothing further was done during the First

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1. On the 10th July, 1797, Macartney reported to Dundas that he had ordered repairs to be done on the wharf "costing little less than a thousand pounds" having found it "urgently necessary" though he feared that these repairs "would be barely sufficient to sustain it until the next season". He justified the expenditure by saying that the wharf was "of first importance to this place".

Macartney to Dundas, 10th July, 1797, RCC, Vol II, p. 113.

2. Proclamation, Sir George Yonge, 14th February, 1800, RCC, Vol III, p.44.

British Occupation to alleviate the situation despite the fairly large number of ships that called at the Cape for trade, re-victualling or both. The reasons for this seem to have been two-fold:

Firstly, the uncertainty of whether the Cape would remain in British hands despite the British knowledge that whomsoever held the Cape, could control the sea route to the East and thus influence the British hold on India.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, this uncertainty made it inevitable that any expense associated with public works, particularly those of harbour works, would not be countenanced by the Imperial Government.

#### THE HARBOUR OF TABLE BAY 1806 - 1822

Between the time of the re-establishment of British control in 1806 until after 1815, no attempts were made to provide for safer anchorages or better landing facilities for ships calling in Table Bay.

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1. Sir Francis Baring to Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War, 4th January, 1795, RCC, Vol. I, p.17.

The reason for the delay was the same as that that inhibited trade growth in this period; namely, the general uncertainty prior to 1814, of the political future of the Cape. The Imperial and Colonial Governments were simply not prepared to spend large sums on harbour improvement in a place, the future of which was in doubt.

After 1815, there was no change in this attitude. In fact, the reluctance to allot funds remained, because the Cape continued to be regarded by most of the British Parliament as nothing more than a military and trading outpost, a naval station and a port-of-call.<sup>1</sup>

Nor indeed could the colony itself finance any projects designed to alleviate the situation since it was an incontrovertible fact that the Cape was poor; a situation which was aggravated by the continuing large trade deficit in this period - an annual average of £ 73 862 for the period 1806 to 1814 and £ 174 288 for the period 1815 to 1822.

After 1815 when the political future of the Cape had been clarified, the small but important number

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1. Bell, K. N. and Morrell, W.P. (eds):  
Select Documents on British Colonial Policy,  
 (Clarendon: Oxford, 1922), p. xxiv.

of Cape Town merchants began to be more voluble in their protests to the government about the inadequacies of Table Bay. In 1817, these men of the 'Commercial Establishment'<sup>1</sup> combined and rented "a Commercial Room in Berg Street"<sup>2</sup> where meetings could be held and discussions undertaken on matters affecting the commerce of Cape Town.

Most of the subsequent activities of this 'Commercial Exchange' (later the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce) were centred upon the problems of Cape Town harbour. They constantly maintained an interest over the following years in the harbour and sought to keep the problem before the authorities, though many years were to pass before anything came about.<sup>3</sup>

Sporadic repair work was done on the jetty, though expenditure of this nature was not favourably considered by the Imperial Government.<sup>4</sup>

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1. A Collective term used by the Colonial Government to denote all those private individuals and firms connected with shipping and foreign trade at the Cape.
  2. P.W. Laidler: A Tavern of the Ocean, (Maskew Miller: Cape Town, 1952), p.144.
  3. It is however, difficult to gauge precisely the extent to which the mercantile pressure group was instrumental in securing improved harbour facilities in the ports of the colony. Probably a more important influence was exercised by the Cape Governor and the Secretary of State for the Colonies with whom, ultimately, rested the final decisions.
  4. For Example: Somerset was called upon by Earl Bathurst in a despatch dated 22nd November, 1828, to justify items of expenditure showing in the Cape Accounts for 1819, one of which was an amount of 2 687-6-2 Rixdollars for repairs to the wharf at Cape Town. Somerset in his reply to Bathurst wrote that "The State

### Plans for Development

In 1819, James Callander put forward a plan for harbour improvement. He advocated a scheme for the imposition of harbour and wharfage dues on ships calling at Table Bay and using the 'facilities' there. Revenue received was to be spent on the construction of a new jetty in Rogge Bay and the repair of the ramshackle old jetty near the Castle.<sup>1</sup>

The Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, agreed to the proposal and implemented it by proclamation. However, the revenues collected were found to be sufficient to provide only for repairs to the extant wharf and the building of a new jetty was not undertaken.<sup>2</sup>

Somerset further approved the appointment of a wharfmaster for Cape Town whose duty it was to arrange for repairs to the wharf.<sup>3</sup> He was called upon to justify

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of the Wharf at the period when these repairs were undertaken was such that if any delay had occurred, until reference could be made to a regular authority for incurring the charge, delapidation would have proceeded rapidly and the ultimate expenditure considerably increased".

Somerset to Bathurst, 5th June, 1825, RCC XXI, pp.470-474.

1. Callander to Secretary to the Governor, 10th March, 1819, CO 92, No. 6.
2. W. Bird: The State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822, (Struik reprint: Cape Town, 1964), p.138.
3. Ibid. p.138.

the creation of this post by Bathurst in 1824.<sup>1</sup>

The next scheme for harbour improvement in this period was put forward in a volume entitled "The State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822" by an anonymous author 'Civil Servant'.<sup>2</sup>

The plan provided for the formation of a mole to protect ships at anchor in Table Bay from heavy seas.<sup>3</sup> These seas which rolled into Table Bay during the winter monsoons had given the harbour "a character highly injurious to the interests of the colony generally and those of Cape Town (the principal port) in particular".<sup>4</sup>

The plan envisaged the building of a 2000 yard mole only; the aim being to provide protected anchorage. A mole of this length would have offered considerable advantages through the enclosure of a large area of safe water.

However, the plan omitted to include any scheme for improved landing and embarkation facilities in the way of new wharfs or quays.

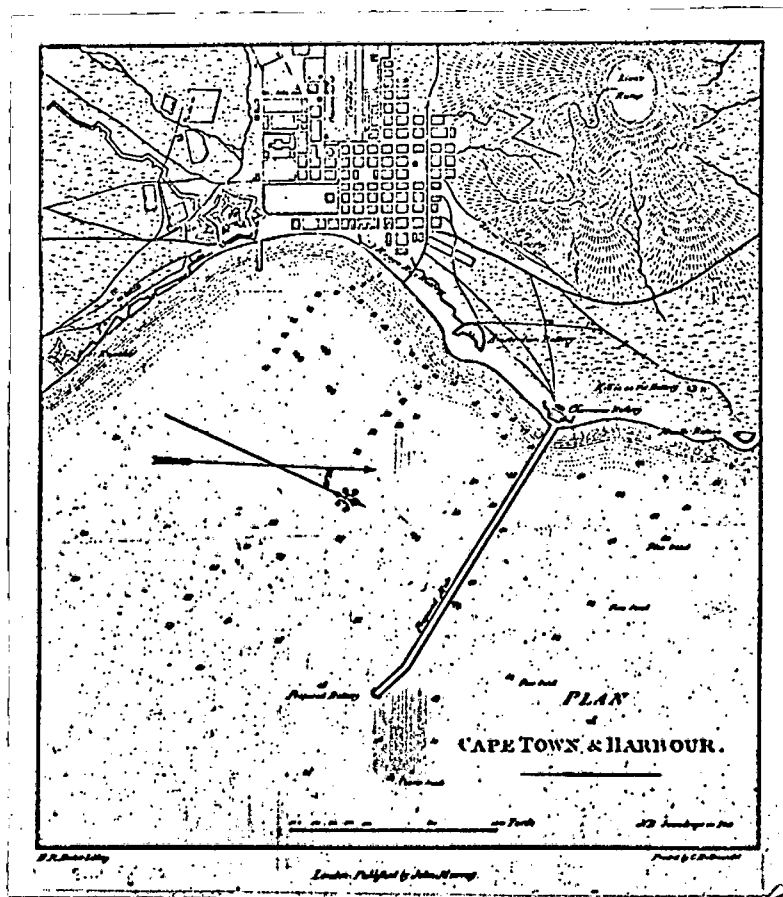
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1. Bathurst to Somerset, 22nd November, 1824, RCC XXI, p.470

2. Now believed to be W. Bird, Collector of His Majesty's Customs at the Cape at the time.

3. W. Bird, op. cit. p.132

4. W. Bird, op. cit. p. 132



W. Bird: State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822, p. 132.

Bird was not at all hopeful of the adoption of the plan since he observed that "the expense of such a measure rendered it chimerical" because "the trade and importance of this place did not justify entering into such a scheme at that period of time",<sup>1</sup> even though the idea "had long been a point of discussion amongst individuals anxious for the prosperity of the Cape".<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, no serious consideration could be given

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1. W. Bird, op. cit. p.133.

2. W. Bird, op. cit. p.132.

to the scheme at that time for not only was the Cape in serious Balance of Payments difficulties caused by an inability to find some staple export commodity that could bring in much needed funds but it was also undergoing a severe economic depression.

In 1822, there occurred a storm of great severity in Table Bay which focussed attention on the fact that some form of protective breakwater was urgently needed. During the storm, fifteen sailing ships that had been lying at anchor in the roadstead were blown off the ground and by the time that the storm ended, seven lay wrecked on shore.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that colonial trade was growing, albeit slowly, bringing about heavier use of the roadstead and the rudimentary facilities in Table Bay as well as the frequently dangerous position of the ships during storms, resulted in nothing more than an awareness of the inadequacies of the harbour. In this period, foreign trade and shipping does not seem to have exerted any influence upon those responsible for the smooth working of Table Bay as a port-of-call.

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1. Cape Town Gazette and Commercial Advertiser,  
27th July, 1822.

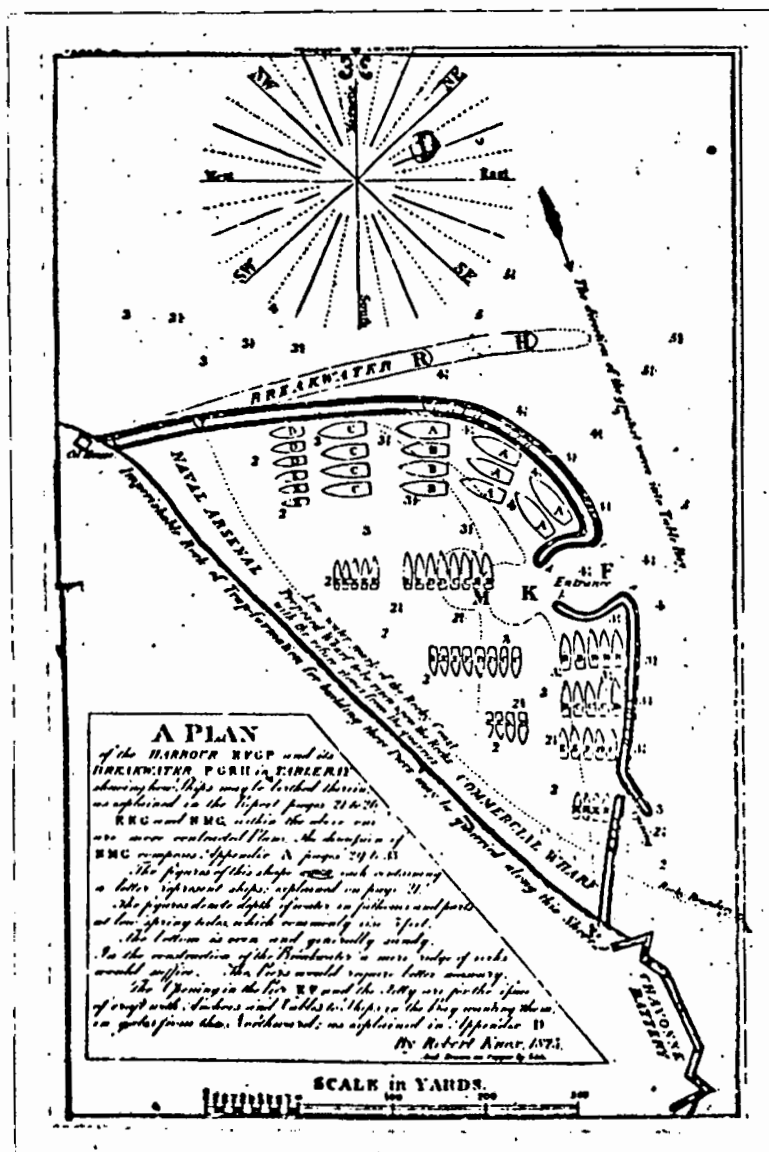
DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR TABLE BAY 1823 - 1850

Arising out of the storm of 1822 and the concern expressed by the members of the Commercial Exchange about the dilatoriness of the Government in undertaking harbour improvements, Robert Knox addressed a request to the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, to be allowed to undertake a survey of Table Bay and to report on the practicability of constructing a protective mole and breakwater.<sup>1</sup>

This request was acceded to by Somerset on the grounds that "there can be no question of the Magnitude of the Benefit that would accrue to this Settlement could this Improvement to Table Bay be successfully accomplished".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Knox submitted his report on the 10th May, 1825.<sup>3</sup>

His plan envisaged the construction of two moles on three separate possible sites to enclose a small harbour as shown in the plan below.

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1. Knox to Somerset, 27th March, 1825, CO 235, No. 30.
  2. Somerset to Bathurst, 8th June, 1825, RCC XXI, p.480.
  3. Knox to Secretary to Governor, 10th May, 1825, RCC XXI, p.481



Cape Archives: Map Collection M 1/2459 also RCC XXI, p. 485

Somerset sent the plan to Earl Bathurst<sup>1</sup> and there the matter rested.

In 1827, George Thompson proposed a plan for harbour works in Table Bay.<sup>2</sup>

His scheme was "for the accommodation of the trade of the place, something might certainly be done in the way of erecting a substitute for our frail jetty,

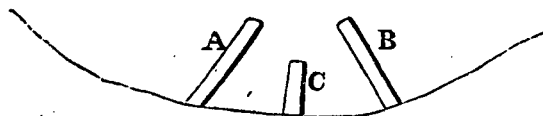
1. Somerset to Bathurst, 8th June 1825, CO 235, No. 60.

2. G. Thompson: Travels and Adventures in South Africa, VRs 49 (Van Riebeeck Society: Cape Town, 1968), Part 2, p. 182.

that totters upon little more than one-third of its original supports".<sup>1</sup>

As he wrote:

"The new jetty, or pier, I should propose to be built of stone, which could easily be procured on the spot. The situation to which I allude presents some great natural aids in forming it, as follows: To the right and left, chains of rocks, A and B, run out some distance, as shown in the annexed sketch, on which ought to be constructed piers sufficiently substantial to protect the jetty C from the north-west and south-east winds, which would form a wharf for landing goods etc. The head of the pier C being in tolerably deep water, some of the smaller coasters, in fair weather, might be brought even up to the wharf and discharged; and the basin would form an excellent protection to the small craft and boats now so much injured in bad weather."<sup>2</sup>



The shortcomings of this plan seem to have escaped Thompson, for the plan as annexed would have served little purpose except for the dubious advantage of providing some shelter for small boats, whereas what was needed was a much more commodious harbour into which the ocean-going ships could go, not only for shelter but for the loading and unloading of cargoes. It is not known whether he communicated this plan to the Colonial

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1. G. Thompson: op.cit., p.182.

2. G. Thompson: op.cit., p.183.

Government or not but in any case, it was not likely of adoption. There is no evidence of any notice having been taken of it, but the similarity of the stone pier project of 1832/3 is striking. The stone pier was built on a similar rock chain which jutted into Table Bay from the shore. It may be that Thompson's scheme provided the idea for the later stone pier.

In 1829, as a result of the unacceptability of Knox's plan, J. Bell, the Secretary to the Governor, proposed a scheme for an isolated breakwater in Table Bay.<sup>1</sup>

The plan was to build a breakwater from the Amsterdam Battery with an opening of 100 yards between it and the mainland. It would be about 500 yards long and give protection to vessels of 300 to 400 tons.

As mentioned in the memorandum, general opinion was adverse to the plan because:

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1. Memorandum on the Construction of a Detached Breakwater in Table Bay, 7th October, 1829; J. Bell, Secretary to the Governor, CO 4388, no pagination.

- a) vessels clearing from the Bay would not have been able to clear the breakwater,
- b) it would have occupied and spoilt the best part of the anchorage,
- c) with the proposed opening, it would have served no use as a landing place or quay,
- d) without an opening, it would have choked up the inner anchorage "by stopping the current".<sup>1</sup>

It was proposed instead that a breakwater of 900 yards be built out from the Chavonne Battery, but as Bell noted, the expense of either project was against construction, since "wharfage dues are unequal at present to the expense of keeping up the Port Establishment".<sup>2</sup> In either case, no estimates of cost were given by Bell.

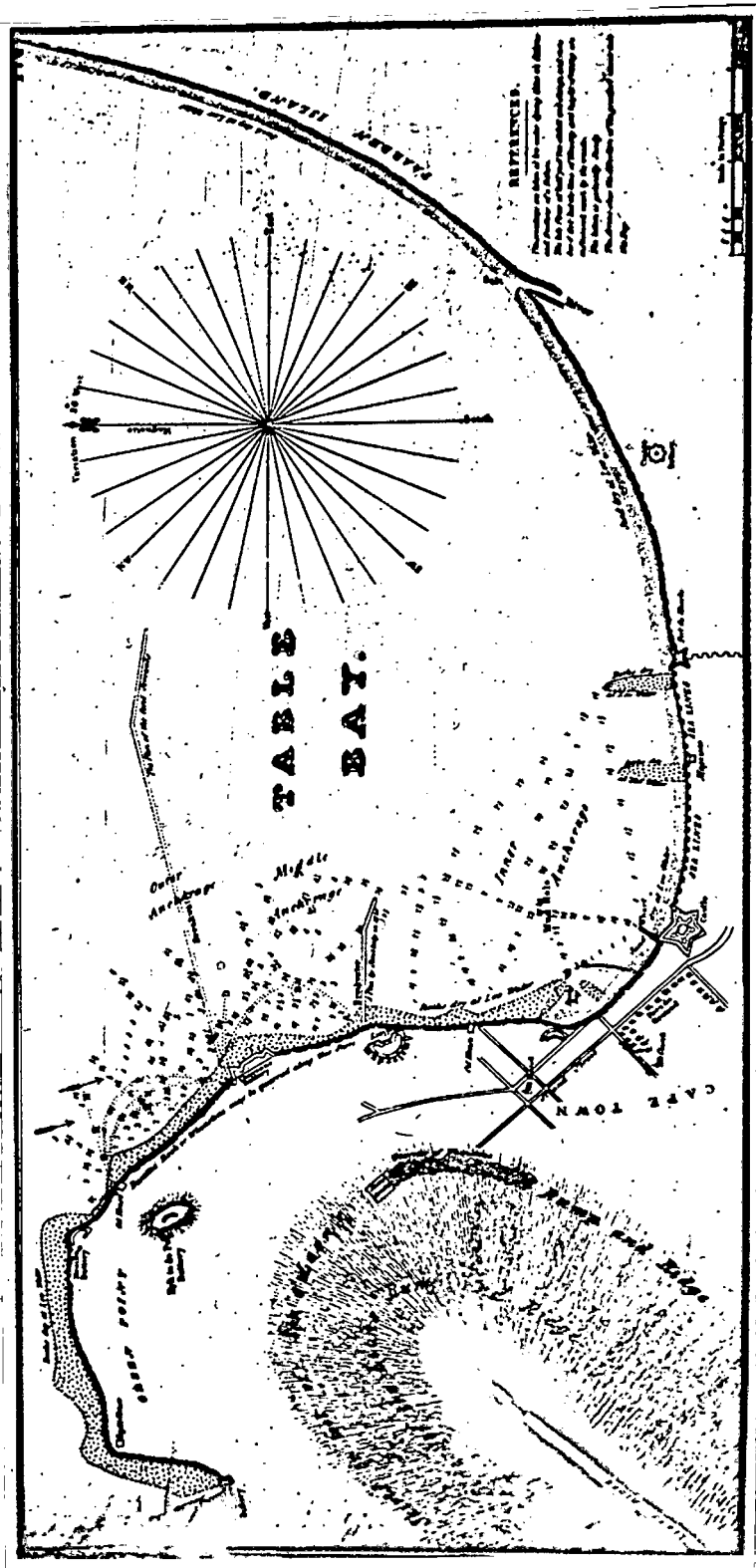
The map published in 1830, below, shows the three plans as proposed. The three separate sites proposed by Knox are clearly visible.

When nothing more was heard of any of these plans, the members of the Commercial Exchange began to take an active interest in the harbour. They inspected

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1. Ibid. CO 4388

2. Ibid. CO 4388



Cape Archives: Map Collection. (Unnumbered.)

the rickety old wharf and sent a memorial to the Harbour Master in which they pointed out its dangerous condition.<sup>1</sup> At the same time they began discussing the advisability of building a stone pier and breakwater in Table Bay and addressed memorials and petitions to the Governor on the subject<sup>2</sup> but nothing came of them.

The reason is contained in the 1829 Annual Report of the Chairman of the Commercial Exchange which also gives the reason for the non-acceptance of Robert Knox' plan. The Chairman noted that expense held up a start being made on any project designed to improve conditions in the harbour.<sup>3</sup> (This fact was borne out in the Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry upon the Trade of the Cape of Good Hope, the Navigation of the Coast, and the Improvement of the Harbours of that Colony published in 1829.) Mention was made in this report of the fact that "the expense attending the construction of a mole or breakwater would exceed any means which the Colony could afford to defray out of its own funds."<sup>4</sup>

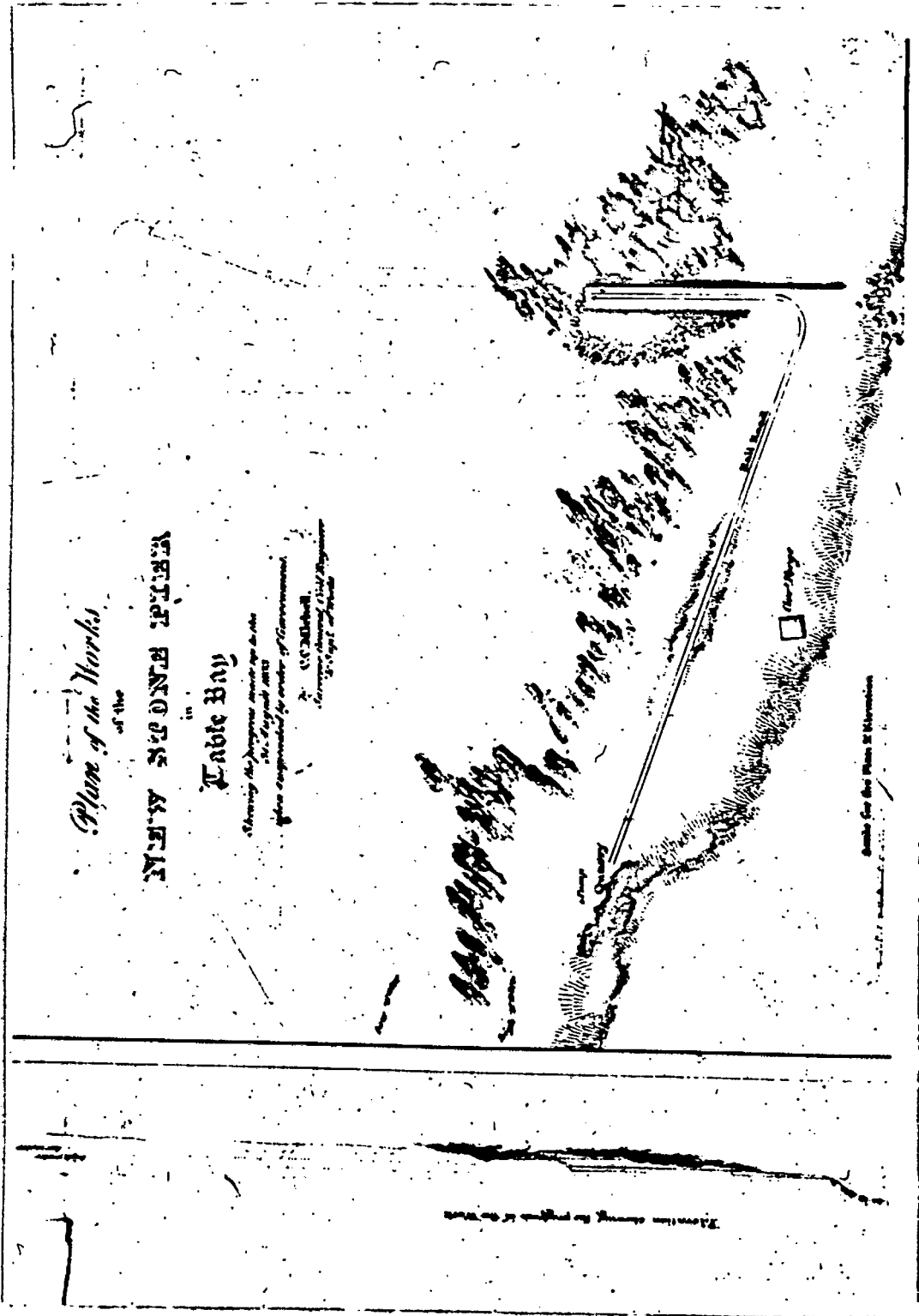
Nor did they think that funds could be raised

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1. CC 2, Minutes, 1.9.1825, no pagination.
  2. Ibid.
  3. CC 2, Annual Report, 16.4.1829.
  4. 1829 Report, p.27.

by increasing wharfage dues; an idea which had resulted in vigorous protests from the Commercial Exchange.<sup>1</sup> However, the comment by the Commissioners that such a work "of such general utility to commerce ... may be found deserving of encouragement in England"<sup>2</sup> eventually bore fruit. (In February, 1831, Hay, the Colonial Secretary, authorised work to be started a stone pier in Table Bay.<sup>3</sup>

Construction on the pier began in December 1832, but was stopped in August, 1833. The cause was an order of suspension of work contained in a letter from Stanley to Cole.<sup>4</sup> Stanley's reasons were that the projected cost<sup>5</sup> of the pier "exceeded the amount of the means which had been contemplated as available for defraying the cost of such an undertaking".<sup>6</sup> This had made it necessary for him to order suspension of work on the pier.

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1. CC 2, Annual Report, op. cit.
  2. 1829 Report, p. 27.
  3. Hay to Cole, 6th February, 1831, GH 1/18, No. 1286, Despatch 53.
  4. Stanley to Cole, 27th May, 1833, GH 1/20, No. 1377.
  5. E 16 304: Civil Engineer to Admiral Warren, 30th October, 1833, GH 1/23
  6. Stanley to Cole, 27th May, 1833, GH 1/20, No. 1377



Cape Archives: Map Collection. (Unnumbered.)

A memorial from the inhabitants of Cape Town urging a resumption of the work was submitted to the Governor in December 1833,<sup>1</sup> but Stanley's reply was that "His Majesty's Government continue to be of the opinion that, in the present state of the finances of the Colony, it would not be expedient to take any steps for the completion of the work".<sup>2</sup>

In April 1834, a petition was sent direct to the Secretary of State in England requesting a resumption of work on the stone pier<sup>3</sup> but the reply received in 1835 was virtually the same as Stanley had written in 1834: namely that the colony had too little money and no means of defraying the costs.

In 1836, the members of the Commercial Exchange again brought the matter to the attention of the authorities.

A memorial<sup>4</sup> was submitted to the Governor, D'Urban, signed by a considerable number of ship owners, merchants and others interested in the commerce of the colony, in which attention was drawn to the inadequate

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1. CC 3, Minutes, 16.12.1834 (no pagination).
  2. Stanley to D'Urban, 3rd April 1834, GH 1/20, no. 1246.
  3. CC 3, Minutes, 30.4.1834 (no pagination).
  4. Memorials, Colonial Office, CO 3985, July 1836, no. 36.

shipping facilities which were available in Table Bay+  
 It was pointed out that the distance from the anchoring ground to the beach and landing place was too great and that in times of unsettled weather, caused interruptions and losses to the trade of the colony. Goods landed or shipped were exposed to great risks of loss and waste and during the winter months when the ships were exposed to gales and heavy seas, it was impossible to afford them any assistance or security.

D'Urban was requested to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to inspect the state of the bay and to obtain the opinions of 'Scientific Men' on the "practibility and probable expense of erecting stone wharfs and excavating docks to protect shipping and to facilitate the landing and supply of goods at all time".<sup>1</sup>

D'Urban acceded to this request and a Commission was appointed with terms of reference as suggested.<sup>2</sup> However, nothing came of it though information was sought amongst the commercial establishment of Cape Town.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid. CO 3985, July, 1836, no. 36.

2. Commissions, Colonial Office, 1826 - 1852, CO 5760, 22nd July, 1836, p.150.

3. CO 224 No. 64, 2nd August, 1836:  
 No. 67, 17th August, 1836.

The shipping situation in Table Bay had meanwhile worsened. In 1823, 101 ships had called and imports to the value of £ 318 785 were landed. Exports to the value of £ 222 870 were shipped. In 1836, however, Table Bay had to deal with 388 calling ships and £ 780 673 worth of imports and £ 225 800 of exports.

This growth led to a great deal of congestion in the still unprotected roadstead and problems in the area of the wharf itself where difficulties of loading lighters from only one jetty meant that the trans-shipping of cargoes took an "overly lengthy time".<sup>1</sup> Shippers using the jetty were faced with congestion on land as bulky cargoes of wool, hides and skins, and wine barrels became more difficult to handle.<sup>2</sup> Representations to the Government on the problem met with no response.<sup>3</sup>

Commanders of merchant vessels frequenting Table Bay ~~complained~~ <sup>complained</sup> to the Commercial Exchange about the delays in landing and shipping cargoes from Table Bay. It was noted that the expenses resulting from this had created "a decided disinclination on the part of many officers commanding merchant vessels to enter Table Bay".<sup>4</sup>

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1. CC 3, Minutes, 10.8.1836.

2. Ibid.

3. CC Letter Book, 12th May, 1835.

4. Commercial Exchange to Bell, 11th January, 1837, CO 386, No. 49.

However, in December 1836, Glenelg authorised the creation of a harbour board for Table Bay with the power to collect wharfage dues, to borrow money on the security of those charges and to complete the stone pier, work on which had been suspended by Stanley in 1833.<sup>1</sup> The scheme for completing the stone pier was rejected in the Legislative Council on the grounds that it was inadequate for the state of the colony trade.<sup>2</sup> A different scheme was proposed and adopted.<sup>3</sup>

The replacement scheme was that the Government should construct two or three cheap jetties which would serve the purposes of trade "until such a time when a more comprehensive plan could be taken in hand".<sup>4</sup>

Two jetties were subsequently built at the foot of Bree Street, Cape Town. The first cost £ 1 404 and the second £ 7 479. However, because the Government was so short of money, the building of the second jetty was not begun until the merchants of Cape Town had raised £ 2 900 by public subscription, purchased some buildings and transferred them to the Government for use

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1. G.Mc.C. Theal: A History of South Africa since 1795, Vol. VI, (Struik reprint: Cape Town, 1964), p.199.

2. Legislative Council Minutes: M 26 of 10th July, 1839, No. 2, p.23.

3. Legislative Council Minutes: M 31 of 23rd August, 1839, No. 3, p. 24.

4.GMcC. Theal: op. cit. p.199.

as offices and bond-stores.<sup>1</sup> Both jetties were nevertheless completed by the end of 1841.

Table Bay now had three jetties to serve calling ships but the protected harbour was still a long way away. No further action was taken on the question of safety for ships lying in Table Bay until the 27th June, 1844.

On that date, the Legislative Council re-opened the question by passing a resolution requesting Governor Maitland to appoint a board to report on the "practicability, advantage and probable expense of constructing a break-water in Table Bay".<sup>2</sup>

On the 15th August 1844, Maitland appointed a Commission of four persons to undertake the investigation<sup>3</sup> and a year later, he submitted the report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>4</sup> This report embodied the recommendations of both commissions<sup>5</sup> and Maitland suggested that, in the event of H.M. Government approving, "a Board of Commissioners for the Improvement of the Harbours of the Colony", should be appointed.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Legislative Council Minutes, op. cit. p.24.

2. Legislative Council Minutes, 27th June, 1844, p.543.

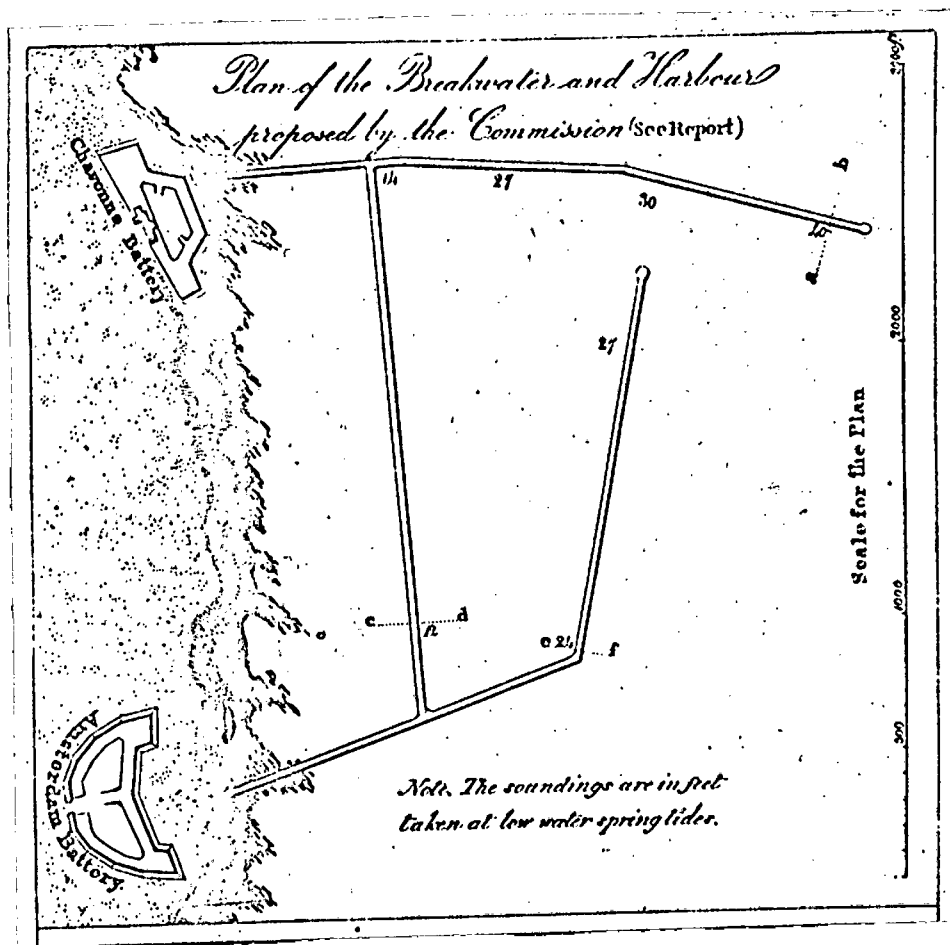
3. Colonial Office; Commissions, 1836 - 1852. CO 5760, p.374

4. Maitland to Stanley, 14th August, 1845, GH 23/15, No. 115

5. D'Urban's Commission of 1836 and Maitland's Commission of 1844.

6. Maitland to Stanley, 14th August, 1845, GH 23/15, No. 115

This was acceded to though the plan for harbour improvement put forward by the commission was not considered.<sup>1</sup>



Cape Archives: Map Collection No. M 1/345  
 Michell, 1844.

As far as the colony was concerned, what was more important was that H.M. Government declared itself willing to grant a loan for the construction of a break-

1. Maitland to Stanley, 14th August, 1845, Gl. 23/15, No. 115, Annexure.

water,<sup>1</sup> a sum of nearly £ 200 000 to be raised by debentures.<sup>2</sup>

On the strength of this, the Legislative Council enacted an ordinance for "Improving the Ports, Harbours and Roadsteads of this Colony" on the 29th October, 1847,<sup>3</sup> the aim of which was to "facilitate and encourage the export and coasting trade of this Colony, for increasing the Safety and Convenience of the Several Ports, Harbours and Roadsteads thereof."<sup>4</sup>

Ordinance 21 was a significant enactment since it provided scope for the development of all of the harbours of the Colony through the creation of nominated harbour boards which were empowered to:

1) improve the harbours for which they were appointed as they saw fit.<sup>5</sup>

2) raise loans for Harbour Improvement.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Legislative Council Minutes, 19th August, 1846, pp.88-89

2. Maitland to Stanley, 14th August, 1845, GH 23/15, No.115

3. Legislative Council Minutes, 29th October, 1847,  
Ordinance 21, p.252.

4. Preamble to Ordinance 21.

5. Ordinance 21, Clause 4.

6. Ordinance 21, Clauses 5 and 6.

The Board of Commissioners for Improving the Port and Harbour of Table Bay was appointed on the 26th July, 1848. These commissioners were not able to achieve much during their first years of existence other than some general repair work to the existing jetties.<sup>1</sup> In fact, nothing ambitious could be contemplated in 1849 and 1850 since the Cape people were in general turmoil over the anti-convict agitation.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there could be no serious resumption of harbour activities "until changes in the Legislature shall have been decided and sanctioned."<sup>3</sup> This was a reference to the change in government that came about with the granting of representative government to the Cape in July, 1854 which gave the Cape a greater say in the arranging of its affairs.

Ordinance 21 was in fact, enacted at what seemed an opportune time. It came at the end of a period of rapid growth in port traffic in Table Bay. By the end of 1850, imports through Cape Town had grown to £ 912 343

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1. In December, 1847, Lieut. Colonel Michell, Civil Engineer of the Cape Colony, submitted a general plan for the improvement of the Heerengracht Area of Cape Town which incorporated some reclaimed land and these piers, but he received no reply from the colonial office. A plan for the Improvement and Extension of the Heerengracht, 6th December, 1847, GH 26/38, No. 213.
  2. CC 4, Annual Report, 6th June, 1850.
  3. CC 4, Ibid.

and exports to £ 339 942. The numbers of calling ships had grown from 388 in 1842 to 607 by 1850.

Fears were being expressed that the poor facilities in Cape Colony harbours would tend to slow the growth of trade through increasing congestion in the roadsteads and difficulties in loading and clearing ever-increasing volumes of goods from the harbour areas. Frequent complaints of similar nature to those mentioned earlier, began to be voiced at the meetings of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce. Continual mention was made of the extra-ordinarily badly arranged clearing procedures for Table Bay Harbour. Instances were cited where wagons arriving with goods for shipment were obliged to wait as long as two days before they could be unloaded.<sup>1</sup> Other complaints were received from ship's captains who objected to the "inordinate delay attendant upon the lack of landing facilities" which kept them waiting in the roadstead "sometimes up to 5 days".<sup>2</sup>

But as much as the members of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce were aware of these difficulties, they were also conscious of the fact that nothing could be done about them, pending changes in the Cape Legislature.<sup>3</sup>

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1. CC 4, Minutes, 10. 5. 1849.

2. CC 4, Minutes, 30. 5. 1849.

3. CC 4, Annual Report, 12. 4. 1850.

HARBOUR PLANS AND CONSTRUCTION IN TABLE BAY 1850 - 1875

Development Projects and Plans

It was not until 1854 that the Cape Government could give serious consideration to the problem of the improvement of Table Bay as a whole, for no decisions could be taken until the question of government change was settled.

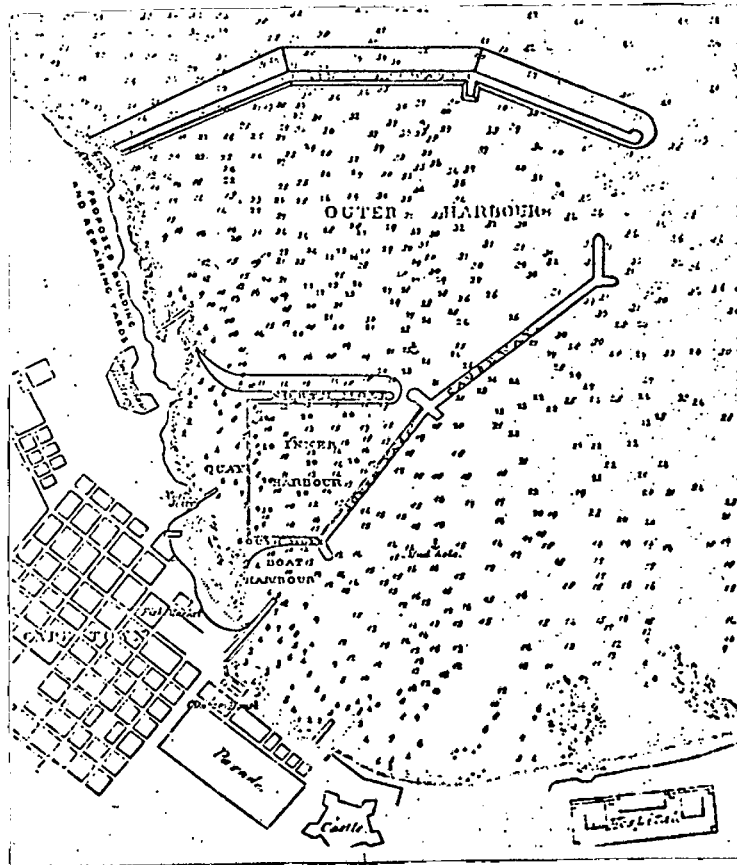
Soon after the establishment of the new form of government, a plan and report was obtained from Mr. J. Scott Tucker, a civil engineer who had experience of harbour construction. The plan of the scheme he designed (below) was reported on by a Select Committee appointed to investigate his recommendations<sup>1</sup> but nothing came of the plan for reasons outlined below.<sup>2</sup>

The following year, a further plan of harbour works drawn up by Colonel J.M. Rendal and estimated to cost £ 500 000, was laid before Parliament. It was submitted to a Select Committee who requested in their report that the Governor submit the plan to H.M. Government for favourable consideration. This he did, requesting the

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1. Annexures to Votes and Proceedings, House of Assembly, 1854, Appendix II, p.65 et seq.

2. Report of the Select Committee on the Safety of Table Bay, Annexures, 1854, SC 2-16.



South African Public Library, Cape Town, Map Collection

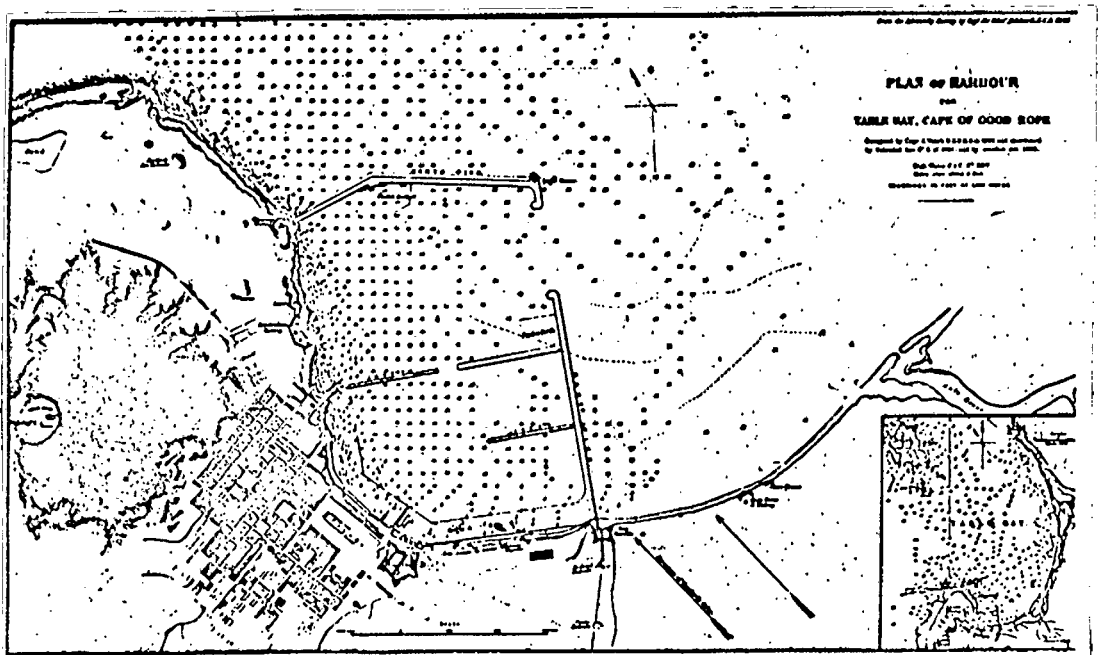
Home Government to assist with the necessary cost.<sup>1</sup> H.M. Government declined to do so since the Lords of the Admiralty were of the opinion that that the plan, as many others including that of Scott Tucker, failed to answer the nautical requirements of the case; i.e. that of a harbour of refuge. Furthermore, the finances of the colony did not allow for security of funds or a reasonably easy method of repayment of sums advanced.<sup>2</sup>

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1. G.McC. Theal: op. cit. pp.166-167.

2. Annexures, 1855, Appendix I, A 8 - 1855, p.441

Two years went by. Then in 1857, an elaborate scheme designed by Captain Vetch, Harbour Surveyor to the Admiralty, was submitted to the Colonial Government. H.M. Government indicated that they would be prepared to finance this plan. Vetch's plan, consisting of a breakwater, inner and outer harbour (below) and estimated to cost £ 1 million was adopted in its entirety following a recommendation from a Select Committee appointed specially to investigate the plan.<sup>1</sup> Act No. 11 of 1857 provided for the immediate implementation of the proposal and the raising of funds through an interest-free loan from Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>



Vetch 1857 Cape Archives: Map Collection M 1/2602

1. Report of the Select Committee, Annexures, 1857, A 2 - 1857.
2. Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, I, p.268.

But no sooner had the act been passed, than H.M. Government had second thoughts about the plan, holding that the expense of the scheme was too great and that the repayments of £ 25 000 paa. were beyond the capacity of the colony to secure.<sup>1</sup>

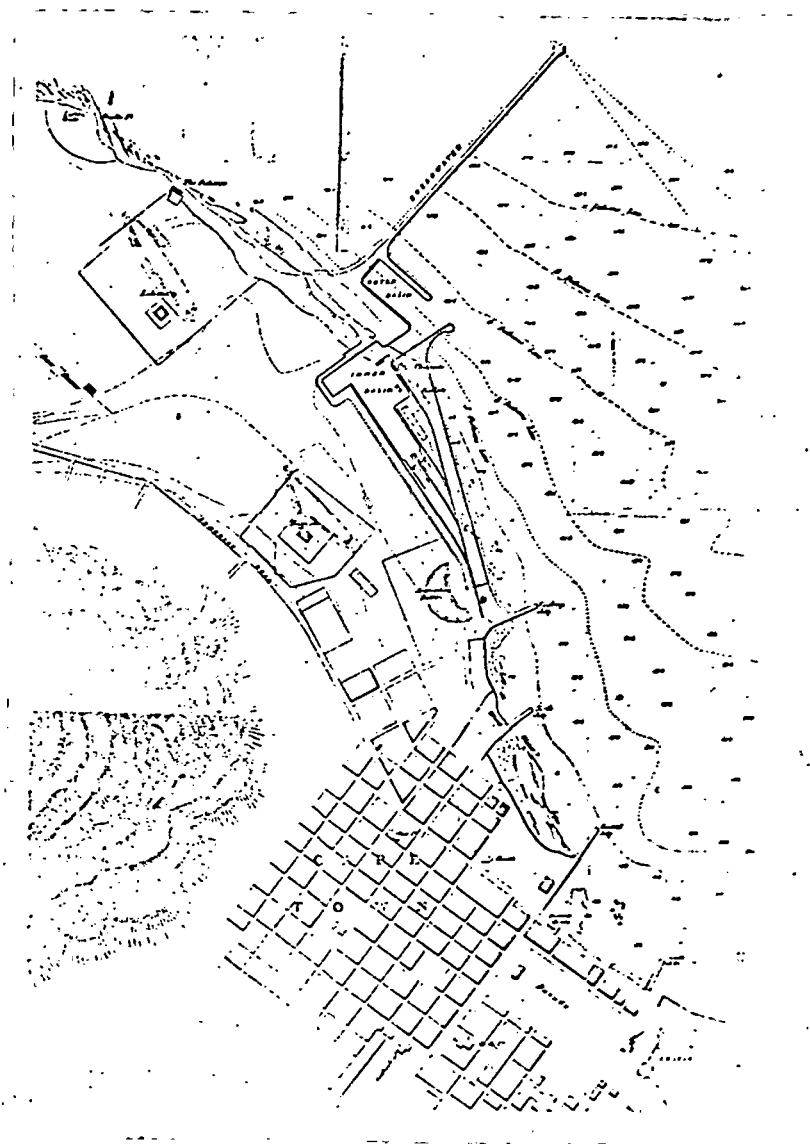
The Cape Government then resolved to go ahead alone, deciding that the works should be undertaken as and when funds could be raised upon the security of harbour revenues.<sup>2</sup>

By Act No. 20 of 1858, Captain Vetch's plan was adopted and authorisation given for the raising of £ 200 000 preliminary construction funds through the issue of debentures secured by doubled wharfage dues.<sup>3</sup>

But because Captain Vetch's scheme was nothing more than a proposal and not a detailed set of engineering estimates and plans, it was necessary that a qualified engineer should be engaged. Upon Captain Vetch's recommendation, Mr. (later Sir) John Coode was selected as Engineer-in-Chief and Mr. A.T. Andrews as Resident Engineer at the Cape.

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1. Stanley to Grey, 5th March, 1858, GH 1/54, No. 6.
  2. Report of Table Bay Breakwater Management Commission, 30th June, 1881, Annexures, G 92 - 1882, p. 2.
  3. Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652 - 1882, Volume I, p. 1224-1228.

From a careful survey made by Andrews of the environs of the bay, the roadstead and the needs of the port, Coode drew up a plan based upon Vetch's proposals, for a breakwater, inner protected dock and outer basin; estimated to cost £ 399 000 and using convict labour to reduce costs.<sup>1</sup>



Coode 1859 G 12 - 1860

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1. Report of the Select Committee, 30th November, 1859, Annexures, A 4 - 1860, p.168, also G 12-1860 p. 2.

The plan was adopted by the Cape Government<sup>1</sup> and Andrews was instructed to commence work on the 7th July, 1860.<sup>2</sup>

(Stress was laid on speed of preparation to enable H.R.H. Prince Alfred to tip the first truck of stones for the breakwater. This he did on the 17th September, 1860 during his visit to the Cape).

Act No. 6 of 1860 also provided for the appointment of a Board of Commissioners charged with the supervision of the work and the administration of the properties, funds and revenues connected with the new harbour. This new Board was appointed by proclamation on the 13th August, 1860.

The first stage of construction envisaged merely a breakwater some 3 000 feet long extending out from the Chavonne Battery and using stone quarried from Lion's Head. Andrews however, wisely selected stone from the site adjoining it; i.e. the proposed dock in Coode's plan.

Consequently, application was made to Parliament to be allowed to construct the dock simultaneously with the breakwater. This was done by Act No. 16 of 1861 but because no provision could be made for more funds, the

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1. Act No. 6 of 1860, Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, Vol. II, p.102.

2. Annexures, 1860, Minute 21, p.452.

length of the breakwater had to be reduced to the size that could be built from the excavated stone:<sup>1</sup> a length of some 1 800 to 2 000 estimated feet.<sup>2</sup>

While the constructions were being carried out, they were subjected to three severe tests while in an unfinished state.<sup>3</sup> In June 1862, Table Bay was battered by a seventeen day gale and heavy seas so that parts of the advanced points of the breakwater were carried away, but the financial losses were small. In May 1865, one of the most violent gales ever known swept over the bay. Eighteen vessels were driven on shore, sixty lives were lost and the breakwater was severely damaged with 220 feet washed away.

But the merit of the breakwater was proved. The three old jetties which lay inside the protected area of water received only trifling damage through the breakwater checking the strength of the run of the waves along the shore.<sup>4</sup> Reporting on the effect of the gales upon the breakwater, Coode noted that the actual damage had been far less than anticipated and once again, repair costs were low - less than £ 3 000.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, Vol. II, p.249.
  2. Annexures, G 92 - 1882, p.3.
  3. Anonymous: The Harbour Works of Table Bay, pp.14-15.
  4. Ibid., p. 17.
  5. Annexures, G 92 - 1882, p.4.

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1. Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, Vol. II, p.249.

2. Annexures, G 92 - 1882, p.3.

3. Anonymous: The Harbour Works of Table Bay, pp.14-15.

4. Ibid., p. 17.

5. Annexures, G 92 - 1882, p.4.

By the beginning of 1869, the breakwater had been carried out 1 790 feet from the shore; i.e. as far as the excavation of stone from the dock would allow.

The head of the breakwater was protected by large blocks of concrete, each weighing some 80 tons.<sup>1</sup>

On the 15th June 1869, the excavation of the dock was completed. Removal of the coffer dam until late November 1869, and the first ship - the steam tug GNU entered on the 30th November.<sup>2</sup>

The extent of the constructions in Table Bay in 1870 are shown on the survey map done by Messrs. Archdeacon and Jenour, Harbour Surveyors to the Admiralty.

The overall cost of the works at 24th January 1871, was £ 355 488-5-2,<sup>3</sup> a sum considerably less than the original estimate, most of which was covered by debenture issues as follows:

Act No. 6 of 1860	£ 200 000
Act No. 9 of 1866	50 000
Act No. 26 of 1868	<u>49 950</u>
	£ 299 950
	=====

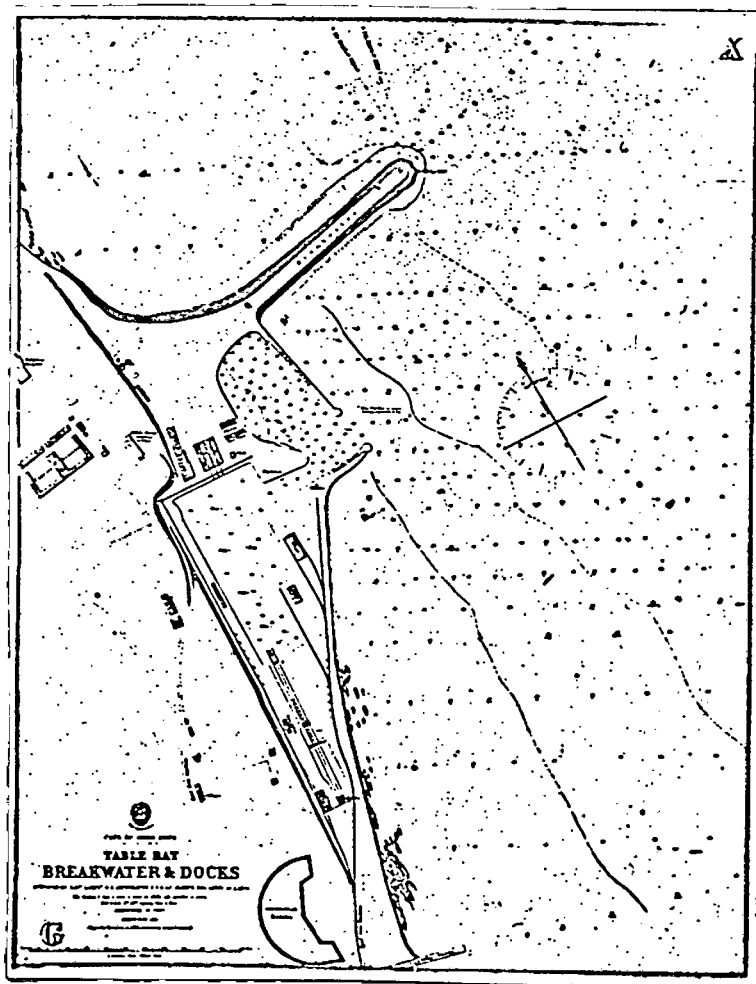
The Harbour was now regarded as complete.

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1. Anon, op. cit. p.19.

2. Anon, op. cit. p.22.

3. Annexures, G 25 - 1871, p.1.



Cape Archives: Map Collection M 2/148

### The Patent Slip

In 1859, the Government let to Messrs. De Pass, Spence & Co., a strip of land with a portion on the foreshore for the purpose of laying down a slip; the lease to be of 30 years duration. By Deed of Agreement of 1861, between the Government and the Table Bay Slip and Marine Yard Company (consisting of the Directors of De Pass, Spence & Co.) the company undertook the

construction of a slip in Table Bay.<sup>1</sup> The slip was subsequently built but its site cut off direct communication between the outside harbour works and the town. As a result of intervention by the Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse, the slip was sold to the Table Bay Harbour Board for £ 7 500 by the company. The lease was cancelled and both slip and land handed over to the Harbour Board on the 1st October, 1869.<sup>2</sup> Eventually the slip was removed to a site in the inner basin but the date of this is uncertain.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Graving Dock

Coode's original plan of the harbour works at Cape Town included a ship-lift instead of a Patent Slip as the Patent Slip was privately owned and built. However, while construction was in progress, Admiral Uhlenbeck of the Dutch Navy visited the site and suggested that it should be converted into a graving dock.<sup>4</sup> This idea, submitted to the Admiralty, resulted in an offer of £ 20 000 at 4 % by H.M. Government for the deepening of

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1. Deed of Agreement: Table Bay Slip and Marine Yard Company, 1861, p. 4.
  2. Report of the Table Bay Harbour Board, 1881, Annexures: G 92 - 1882, p.8.
  3. See plan B, Sir John Coode, Report on Table Bay Harbour, 1877.

the excavation.<sup>1</sup> However, as the total cost was estimated to be £ 36 000 the offer was declined.<sup>2</sup>

Coode reported on the proposal on the 8th January 1867, approving of the idea but estimating the total cost at £ 59 000 plus £ 2 220 for lengthening and deepening the north end. The harbour board decided to take on the task of deepening and lengthening at a cost of £ 4 000 and in anticipation of the dock being completed in the future, the foundation stone was laid by H.R.H. Prince Alfred on the 24th August, 1867.

No further work was undertaken on the dock until the passing of Act No. 8 of 1872 which provided a sum of £ 30 000 towards the cost of construction. Protracted correspondence followed between the Cape Government and the Admiralty which objected to bearing any part of the cost since there was disagreement on questions of priority for naval vessels using the dock and the length of time they were to be exempt from charges. This led eventually to the Cape Government deciding on the 5th August 1876, to undertake the work itself and at its own cost.<sup>3</sup> The dock was completed and formally opened on the 20th October, 1882; having cost a total sum of £ 156 888.<sup>4</sup>

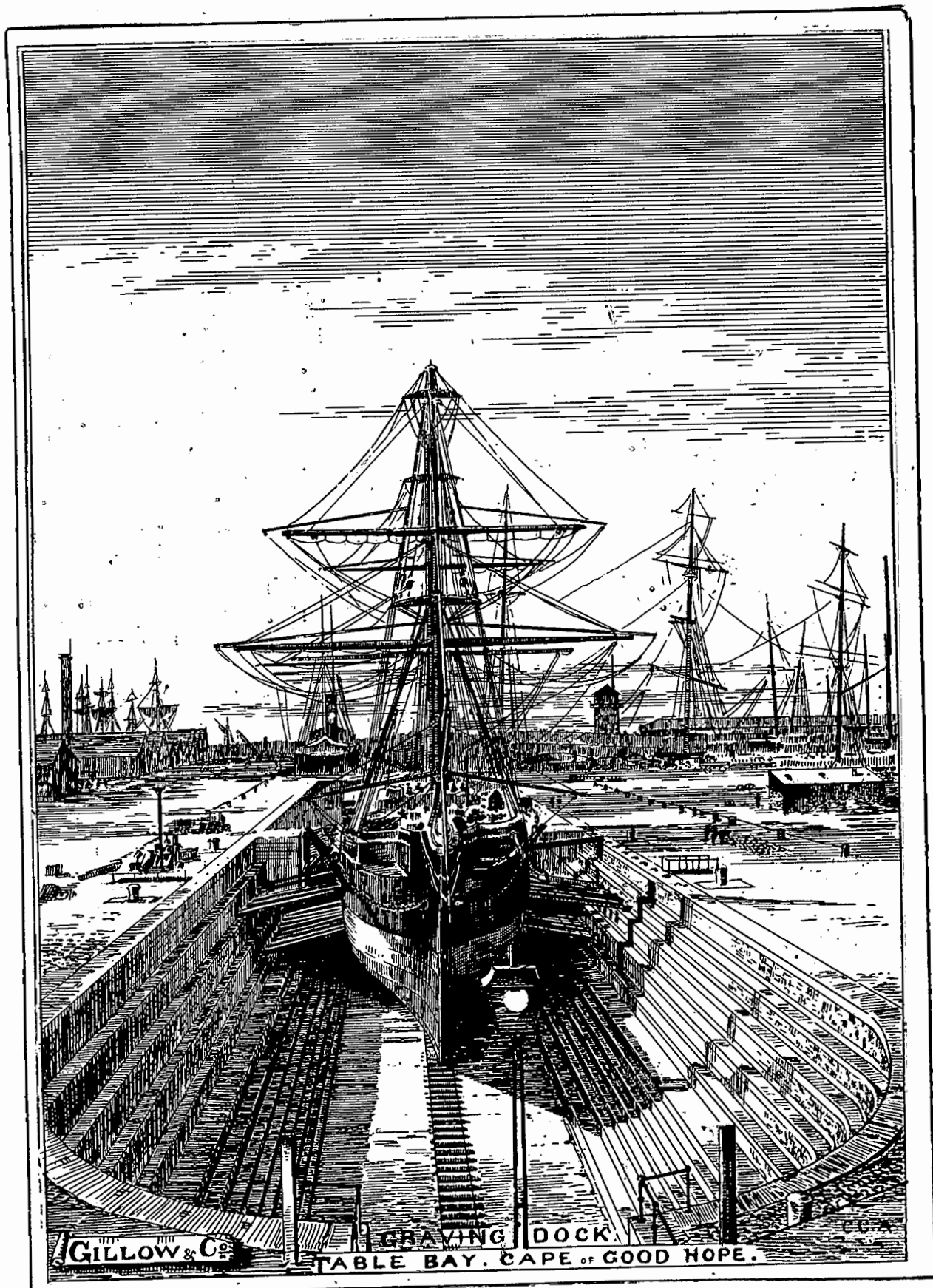
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1. Report of the Table Bay Harbour Board, 1881, Annexures: G 92 - 1882, p.9.

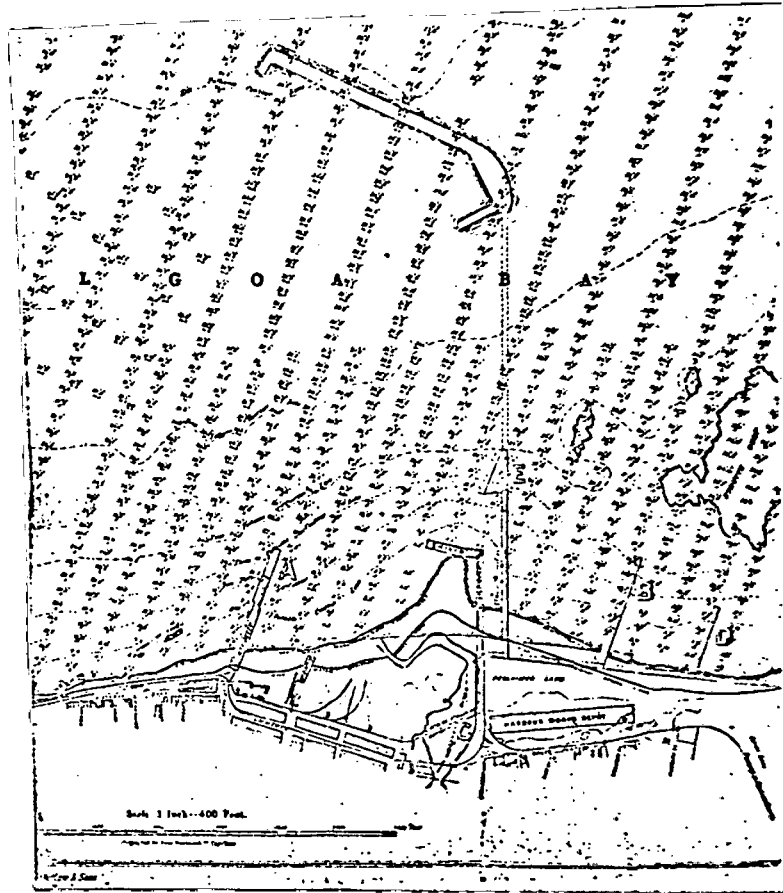
2. Annexures: G 92 - 1882, p.9.

3. House of Assembly: Votes and Proceedings, 1876.

4. Anonymous: Ibid., p.20.



South African Public Library: Picture Collection.



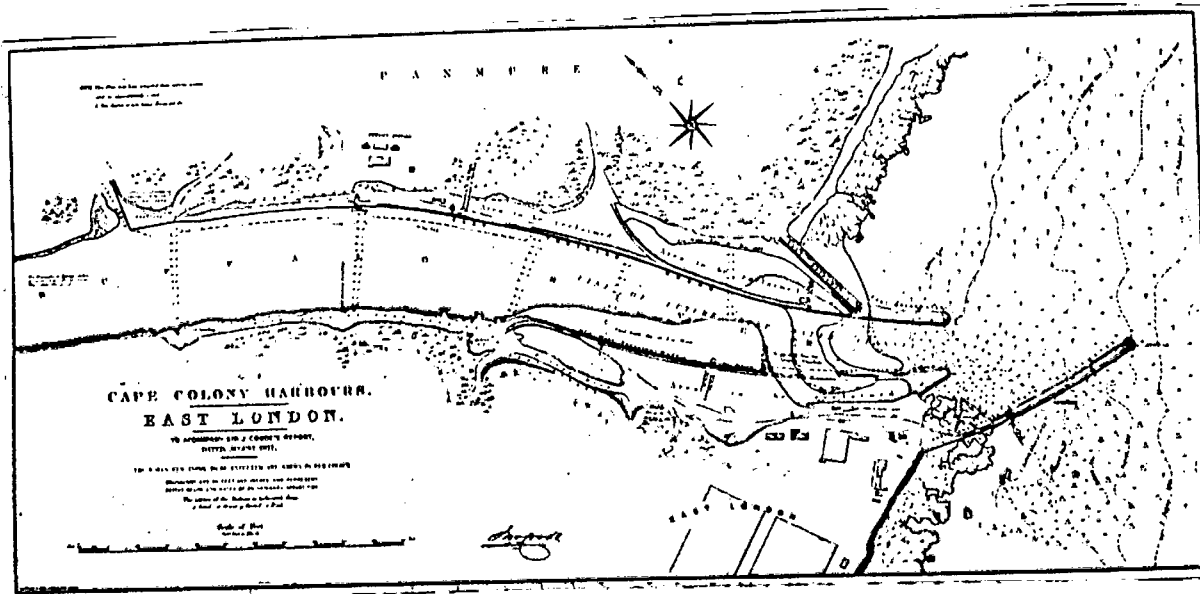
Enclosure to annual report of Commissioner for Public Works, G 2, G 41-1880 and G 28-1881.

### East London

The plan for East London was not new but Coode found it necessary to review the work as the difficulties encountered in the building of the breakwater and training walls as a result of the heavy surf, had altered all his original cost estimates.

The plan was a repeat of the one which he had drawn up in 1870<sup>1</sup> and on which work had been started in 187

1. Annexures, Report of Mr. Coode on the Harbour of East London, G 24 - 1870, estimate of cost £ 180 696, p.3.



Annexure to Cape Colony Harbours, East London.

By the time he made his 1877 report, £ 117 000 had been spent on the works and they were far from complete. The new estimate of costs was based upon the increased labour costs, the works taking longer than expected and the increase in costs of all the general expenses associated with the construction as well as increased costs of imported materials. He reckoned that it would cost a further £ 175 485 to complete the work, bringing it to a grand total of £ 292 485. His estimate was hopelessly incorrect, for by the end of 1883 a sum of £ 533 000 had been spent.

Coode fell into a certain amount of disrepute with the Cape Government over the failure of the works at East London. Despite the high hopes of all concerned, the scheme was a dismal failure. The expected scouring effect of the river and tides which it was hoped would keep the river clear of sand and remove the bar blocking the mouth,

did not come about. Until the success of the dredgers in removing the sand, it seemed as if the sum of £ 533 000 spent on the East London Harbour Works had been wasted.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Although the need for harbour development existed at the Cape and had been evident since 1652, it took some 210 years before any start was made on extensive harbour works in the colony.

The reason for this lengthy period of delay can be found in the fact that principally during the period of Dutch East India Company control, but extending into the nineteenth century as late as 1820, there was no economic reason for harbour works to be undertaken at the Cape. The trade of the area was virtually non-existent; harbour facilities were required for only short periods during the year and in any case, the construction of expensive harbour works was beyond the means of the Cape itself and also not part of the arrangements made by the Dutch or the British for the running of the Cape Station in the period from 1652 until 1820.

Between 1820 and 1850, foreign trade grew and internal economic development expanded but basically the Cape Colony remained a poor place, ill-equipped to provide a solid base for growth. With the exception of Cape Town and to a lesser extent, Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, the country was backward. Nevertheless, in these 30 years,

a start was made on a mono-culture in wool, principally from the Eastern Province but also from the Western, which increased the income of the colony considerably. The outcome of the increased influx of money in payment for growing wool exports, was a rise in the purchasing power of the Cape which led to a general increase in the importing trade.

Resulting from the expansion of the import and export trade, was a need for improved harbour facilities to service more efficiently the increased number of ships that were calling annually to land and embark cargoes. This need was most pronounced in Table Bay where by 1850, the greatest numbers were arriving.

In view of the obvious needs of trade and ocean transport, why was so little done by both the Imperial and Colonial Governments during the first 44 years of British control at the Cape.

The first part of the answer lies in the prevailing attitude in England towards the possession of colonies.

It may be expected that policies would differ according to the governments in power and the current attitudes of people holding high government positions. But

in fact, debates in the House of Commons on the Colonial Question had a common theme during most of the nineteenth century. It was the advisability of getting rid of the colonies. Richard Cobden expressed the general parliamentary opinion about colonies when he said to the House that the colonies of Britain served but as glorious and ponderous appendages to swell ostensible grandeur, complicating and magnifying Government expenditure without improving the Balance of Trade.<sup>1</sup> This attitude was carried further:

"We believe that our colonies have cost this country an amount of money which it is impossible to estimate in wars, in protective duties and in expenses of government. We shall not regret to see more of them follow the example of Canada and be at the trouble and expense of maintaining themselves."<sup>4</sup>

(The Advertiser, Dundee, Scotland, no date).<sup>2</sup>

The attitude towards the Cape Colony specifically was that it was nothing more than a military and trading outpost.<sup>3</sup> From the point of view of the mother country, territorial sovereignty over large areas of distant lands

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1. A. Bullock and F.W. Deakin (eds): The British Political Tradition, Vol. 6, The Concept of Empire, (Black: London, 1953), p.224.
  2. E. Porritt: Fiscal and Diplomatic Freedom of the British Oversea Dominions (Oxford: London, 1922), p.283.
  3. K.N. Bell and W.P. Morrell (eds): Select Documents on British Colonial Policy (Clarendon: Oxford, 1928), p. XXIV.

was a privilege for which the British taxpayer was heavily charged and consequently the British Exchequer found it difficult to allot funds for the development of places that were not regarded as important.<sup>1</sup> Seemingly, the Cape colonists were out of mind as well as being out of sight.

As Grey said:<sup>2</sup>

"Beyond the very limited extent of territory required for the security of the Cape of Good Hope as a naval station, the British Crown and nation have not interest whatever in maintaining any territorial dominion in Southern Africa."

Largely as a result of this clarity of opinion, British policy towards the economic development of her colonies was not well defined nor particularly specific. No concerted plan of economic development for the Cape Colony was ever envisaged by H.M. Government. If Great Britain can be said to have had any clear colonial economic policy, then it must have been the encouragement of exports from the colonies and in return, the selling to them of manufactured goods. But this policy was unplanned and uncontrolled and therefore was not always to the best interests of the inhabitants of the colonies.<sup>3</sup>

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1. K.N. Bell and W.P. Morrell: *Ibid.*, p.XXIV.

2. K.N. Bell and W.P. Morrell: *op. cit.*, p.529

3. Lord Hailey: 'The Colonies and the Atlantic Charter', Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, XXX, 1943, pp.233-246.

The second important factor contributing to the lack of progress made towards the building of harbours in the Cape Colony prior to 1850 was the unsuitability of the proposed plans.

In the event of harbour construction in any area where natural topographical features were deficient but where trade volume dictated building, one of the first considerations was that harbour plans had to be designed to provide assafe shelter for ships from wind and wave.

Concomitant with, though secondary in importance to the provision of safety, was the necessity to provide features in the form of wharves, quays and docks designed to facilitate the transit of goods between land and sea.

A 'good' harbour plan attempts to provide both safe anchorages for ships as well as facilities for the inwards and outwards movement oftrade goods.

However, an examination of most the plans proposed prior to that of Captain Vetch in 1856, revealed a common failing - that of a lack of provision of sufficient safety for ships - as was pointed out by the Lords of the Admiralty when they commented upon the unsuitability

of the plans designed by messrs. Scott Tucker and Rendal.<sup>1</sup> In the few instances where safety was planned for, servicing features were omitted.

The faults of the various plans for Table Bay can be briefly summarised as follows:

1) Bird's Plan 1822

A single breakwater giving neither full safety for ships nor provision for the handling of goods through the lack of jetties.

2) Knox's Plan 1825

Two curved breakwaters enclosing far too small an area and no facilities for the transit of goods.

3) Lell's Plan 1828

Detached breakwater - an unrealistic plan since it would have provided neither safety for ships nor facilities for the handling of cargoes.

4) Stone Pier Project 1832/33

This was a jetty only. It gave no protection for ships.

5) Michell's Plan 1844

This plan had possibilities since it enclosed a fairly large area of water but it made no provision for ship cargo handling.

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1. See above, pages

6) Michell's Plan 1847

This was a plan for the extension of the Heerengracht which incorporated three jetties but left the anchorage still exposed.

7) Scott Tucker's Plan 1854

This plan was basically good except that the area of exposed water inside the breakwater was too great. It was felt that this factor defeated the purpose of breakwaters and that the safety for ships would still be in doubt.

It was only when Coode adapted Vetch's plan in 1859 that a viable scheme incorporating both the provision of safety for ships and facilities for the transit of goods was arrived at for Table Bay.

A third factor in the period prior to 1850 was that the British Government had troubles of its own at home.

A slump in England which had begun in 1825/6 had lasted some ten years and had brought a programme of financial stringency towards her colonies. The recovery did not last long; a new slump carrying on until 1843 with an even greater turn-down in 1845 - the so-called 'Hungry Forties'.<sup>1</sup> This meant that there were few funds available

1. J.B. Chambers: The Workshop of the World: British Economic History, 1820 - 1880 (Oxford: London, 1968), p.81.

for overseas lending for a relatively long period.<sup>1</sup> In any case, important as British possessions were to British trade and the financial structures which depended on its growth, extensive development by the export of saved capital or through the magnanimity of the London bill-broking mechanism had not been seriously undertaken before 1850.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the Cape had gained the reputation of being an unsafe place for investment funds - a reputation which was maintained and re-inforced by the outbreak of three major wars between 1830 and 1850 on the common frontier between the Bantu and the white settlers.

The fourth factor was a problem of finance. The revenue of the Cape Government prior to 1850 was never very great. This meant that even if the proposed plans had been suitable, the wherewithal to carry them out was lacking. Further, it meant that the Cape had few means at its disposal to defray any costs arising out of public work construction if funds were lent by H.M. Government for the purpose.

Generally plans for harbour construction were

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1. J.D. Chambers: *Ibid.*, p. 106 et seq.

2. L.H. Jenks: *The Migration of British Capital to 1875*, (Nelson reprint: London, 1971), p. 993.

defeated by either a lack of money or the unwillingness of H.M. Government to assist with funds for projects.

The unsuitability of the early harbour plans, the lack of interest on the part of H.M. Government in the problems of the colony and the chronic shortage of Colonial Government funds made it inevitable that the Cape would have to provide its harbour works itself as and when loans could be raised. But before it could in fact, do this, it was necessary to have a change in government, agitation for which culminated in the granting by H.M. Government of representative government to the Cape Colony in 1854.

Compared with the half-hearted progress of the previous 44 years, what followed was a vigorous programme of public works which led to the building and completion of the harbour in Table Bay by 1870 as well as the beginning of works at Port Elizabeth and East London. Generally however, work at these latter two ports lagged behind the efforts being made in Table Bay despite the fact that the need for improved facilities was pronounced in both, particularly after 1869.

Despite the fact that customs revenue from the Eastern Province ports contributed a significant sum to the general revenue of the Cape, a lesser emphasis was placed upon the East. It seems that the Cape Government

held the view that Table Bay as the principal port-of-call had to be attended to first.

But, a dilemma faced the Cape between 1850 and 1870. Trading and shipping growth was making the demand for port facilities more emphatic but money continued to be a problem. It was a difficulty that was aggravated by the economic depression of the 1860's. This slump meant that not enough funds were available to enable all the public works programmes to proceed. Some projects naturally gained priority.

Harbours and other public works had to be built, and the only way that lay open to provide the money was through the raising of loans in London.

But financial stringency in England caused by the ominous trend of Franco-Prussian relations and the feeling that less should be spent on the colonies and more on home defence, led to the Parliamentary Grant for British Kaffraria being peremptorily withdrawn.<sup>1</sup>

The colonial finances were in a parlous state. Governmental mismanagement of finance could be blamed for the deplorable financial position since Parliament rejected most taxation proposals, preferring instead retrenchment

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1. CHBE, Volume VIII, p.420.

and foreign loans to remedy the situation.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, so poor was the position that if the Cape was to attract investors, she would have to pursue a less ambitious expenditure programme and offer greater security and assurance.<sup>2</sup> The Cape was further advised against floating large loans<sup>3</sup> since colonial government securities were in bad odour<sup>4</sup> and by November 1864, the Crown Agents had seven distinct loans for the Cape awaiting better times.<sup>5</sup>

In 1867, the then Governor of the Cape attempted to deal with the economic recession and the difficulty of falling government revenues, by proposing an export tax on wool. Parliament refused to accede to this and a crisis developed between Parliament and the Governor. At the same time, the Cape Parliament was told by the British Government that the frontier troops would be reduced and that the Cape Government would have to pay for those that remained. Parliament replied by refusing to vote any

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1. Votes and Proceedings: Cape Legislative Council, 16.4. 1863, 28.7. 1863, also Wodehouse to Newcastle, 16th September, 1863, GH 23/29.

2. F.G. Julyan to Wodehouse, 5th January, 1864, GH 18/7 (Private).

3. Southey Papers: Cape Archives, Julyan to Southey, 5th July, 1864.

4. Ibid. 5th August, 1864.

5. Ibid. 5th August, 1864.

Money and Wodehouse had to resort to loans. But the colonial treasury was virtually empty.<sup>1</sup> Deadlock prevailed until Wodehouse's recall in May 1870.

By 1870, the Cape had not been greatly successful in attracting British capital.<sup>2</sup> However by 1872, the home investment climate had changed and assurance was given that if loans were negotiated through the Crown Agents for the Colonies, they would be on favourable terms because of the colony's small debt.<sup>3</sup> The Colonial Office was also pleased at the remarkable increase in the revenue of the Cape "with little or no corresponding increase in expenditure".<sup>4</sup> On the strength of this, the Cape Parliament voted a loan of £ 5 million for new railway lines from Port Elizabeth and East London to the Diamond Fields.<sup>5</sup>

The discovery of diamonds and the ensuing influx of capital into a colony which had suddenly become acceptable from an investment point of view, enabled the colony to carry out the provision of the infrastructure in the

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1. CHBE, Volume VIII, p.431.

2. SH, Frankel: Capital Investment in Africa, (Oxford: London, 1938), pp.48-49.

3. Southey Papers: Cape Archives; Thomson to Southey, 9th April, 1872.

4. Southey Papers: Cape Archives; Thomson to Southey, 8th June, 1872.

5. CHBE, Volume VIII, p.461.

form of railways, roads, telegraphs and harbours which it had been struggling for so long to provide.

This new source of funds had a marked effect on the size of the colony's exports between 1870 and 1882 but more importantly, the size of imports rose by far more, principally as a result of increased imports of capital goods.<sup>1</sup>

It would however be erroneous to assume that the discovery of diamonds solved the financial troubles of the Cape. The revenues of the Cape Colony, while they grew tremendously after 1870 were alone not enough to provide for the financing of the public works programme.

The Government of the Cape Colony had a great deal of difficulty during the nineteenth century with its revenues and expenditures, and its attempts to undertake economic development. As will be seen from the table below,

1. CAPE COLONY

YEAR	IMPORTS (£)	EXPORTS (£)	CUSTOMS REVENUE (£)
1870	2 352 043	2 659 499	326 629
1872	4 388 728	6 069 529	577 392
1874	5 558 215	5 538 744	690 241
1876	5 556 077	5 012 303	751 657
1878	6 151 023	5 615 589	808 934
1880	7 648 863	7 708 914	987 438
1882	9 372 019	8 506 600	1 206 174

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

in the period until 1850, the problem arose from the meagre size of the total revenue. The smallness of the revenue was clearly an effective barrier to most development projects as it was obviously beyond the scope of the Colonial Government to finance expensive schemes, particularly like those of costly harbour works, from such slender means.

TABLE XVII

CAPE COLONY

YEAR	REVENUE (£)	EXPENDITURE (£)
1794	49 000	68 000
1806	103 000	93 000
1820	145 000	136 000
1832	131 000	127 000
1837	167 000	145 000
1841	179 000	173 000
1844	229 000	223 000
1850	245 000	245 000

Even so, prior to 1850, with the exception of a few instances, revenues were greater than expenditures. After 1854 the revenue of the Government began to improve markedly but at the same time, there developed a chronic tendency for expenditure to exceed revenue in the years that followed. At first the deficit was small but after 1859 it began to increase very greatly. The reason for this can be

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1. M.H. de Kock: *Economic History of South Africa*,  
(Juta: Cape Town, 1924), p.393.

found in the fact that given the small size of total revenue even by 1857, the only way that the Cape Government could go about financing development projects was by embarking on a series of loans. This was done through the Crown Agents in London, largely on the security offered by customs revenues which provided the Government with the opportunity of paying interest when it fell due as well as enabling the redemption of parts of the loans as and when there were sufficient spare funds.

TABLE XVIII

CAPL COLONY

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>SURPLUS</u>	<u>DEFICIT</u>
1851	220 883	221 284		401
1853	308 472	268 111	40 361	
1855	306 026	360 030		54 014
1857	406 702	343 024	63 678	
1859	650 925	664 645		13 720
1861	748 866	763 237		14 371
1863	757 603	682 866	74 737	
1865	856 762	870 089		13 327
1867	898 826	885 197	13 629	
1869	593 245	648 732		55 487
1871	836 174	764 915	71 259	
1873	2 078 220	2 159 658		81 438
1875	2 246 179	2 272 275		26 095
1879	3 541 720	3 742 665		200 945
1881	4 835 189	5 472 263		637 074
1882	4 893 399	5 520 797		627 398

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books for the years given).

To<sup>a</sup> very great extent, the excesses of expenditure over revenue which came after 1850 were caused by increases in the amount spent on capital works which resulted in an

increase in the public debt of the colony.

Following the redemption of all public debt in the colony by 1845, the Cape Government was entirely free of debt until 1859, a period of fourteen years.<sup>1</sup> In 1859, however, a loan of £ 80 000 was floated in London for the purposes of aiding immigration. This was followed by a series of loan acts for harbours and other public works. Between 1860 and 1881, thirty-three general loan acts at rates ranging from 6 % down to 4 % were passed (21 of the 33 after 1870) involving a sum of £ 15 302,758. In addition, seventeen acts were passed for loans for public works managed by corporate bodies (e.g. the Table Bay and Algoa Bay Harbour Boards) involving a sum of £ 795 650.

The general loan acts covered general public works such as railways, bridges, telegraphs, war expenses and "general purposes". The "corporate bodies" loan acts provided for the financing of the construction of a breakwater and harbour in Table Bay and harbour works in Algoa Bay. Loans to these bodies as well as the general loans were secured by guarantee of general revenue but the harbour loans had their interest paid from harbour revenues.

As a result of these loans and the decrease in  
1. de Kock, M.H.: Economic History of South Africa, (Juta: Cape Town, 1924), p.393.

revenue during the depression of the 1860's, the public debt of the colony rose to £ 1 591 000 in 1871.<sup>1</sup>

After 1871, the public debt grew enormously as more and more funds were raised overseas for public works:

TABLE IV  
PUBLIC DEBT CAPE COLONY (£)

YEAR	DEBT
1859	80 000
1871	1 591 000
1875	2 790 000
1880	11 392 000
1882	16 098 000

(Source: CBE for years indicated).

By far the greater proportion of this debt was incurred for the construction of railways and harbours, only a small amount being spent on public buildings and other schemes.

As will be seen from the tables below, expenditure on harbour works was concentrated upon those in Table Bay between 1861 and 1870, up to which time a sum of £ 644 154 was spent. Concurrently, merely £ 171 588 was spent on Port Elizabeth and £ 31 117 on East London.

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1. Ibid., p. 393.

TABLE XXRETURN OF TOTAL COST OF BREAKWATER AND HARBOUR WORKS TO31/12/1870<sup>1</sup>

	<u>TABLE BAY PORT ELIZABETH EAST LONDON<sup>2</sup></u>		
CONVICT CHARGES	124 006	nil	7 601
INTEREST ON DEBENTURES	129 301	33 294	nil
COST OF BREAKWATER	390 747	137 294	23 516 <sup>1</sup>
<u>TOTAL</u>	644 154	171 588	31 117

By the end of December, 1870, the Table Bay Harbour Board had collected a total of £ 171 989 towards the interest owing on its loans but had the convict charges not been taken over by the Commissioner for Public Works, the Board would have been hopelessly insolvent.<sup>4</sup> In 1873 the Board's constitution and powers were changed and wharfage dues were no longer collected since the Cape Government had declared itself liable for the payment of interest after 1872.

At Port Elizabeth by 1873, a total of £ 113 430

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1. Return of the total cost of breakwater and harbour works to 31st December, 1870; Annexures to Votes and Proceedings House of Assembly, C 1 - 1871.
  2. From the time of annexation only.
  3. Expenses up to annexation, £ 20 560.
  4. Report of the Table Bay Harbour Board; Annexures to Votes and Proceedings; House of Assembly, G 24/25 - 1871.

had been collected from harbour dues from which the very small amount of £ 33 294 had been outlaid on interest payments.<sup>1</sup> The reason for this was that up to that date, very little had been spent on harbour works and only a small amount had been raised by loans.<sup>2</sup>

With the completion of the works in Table Bay in 1872, the Cape Government turned its attention to the problems of the harbours of the Eastern Province with the result that between 1873 and 1883, considerably enlarged sums were spent on the works at Port Elizabeth and East London. At the same time, increased sums were spent in Table Bay on harbour extension. A sum of £ 1 292 507 was spent on Table Bay; at Port Elizabeth from the commencement of works in 1878 to 1883, a sum of £ 392 549 was laid out,<sup>3</sup> and at East London from 1872 until 1883, £ 533 676.

From the greatly increased sums that were outlaid on harbour works after 1873, shown in the tables below, the conclusion can be drawn that this aspect of the infrastructure of the colony gained its greatest

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1. Report of the Algoa Bay Harbour Board, 1873; Annexures to Votes and Proceedings, House of Assembly; G 36 - 1874

2. Ibid. G 36 - 1874.

3. For a discussion on the reasons for the smaller amount spent on Port Elizabeth in this period, see above section on the dispute over the viability of Sir John Coode's plan for the harbour, 1876 - 1884.

impetus after the discovery of diamonds and the increased revenues consequent to this as well as the gaining of responsible government by the Cape in 1872: All of which enabled the necessary loan funds to be more easily raised.

TABLE XXI

TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON HARBOUR WORKS 1861 - 1883

TABLE BAY

Income	1861 - 1872	1873 - 1883	Total
Loans raised	299 950	448 700	748 650
Revenue	345 073	763 302	1 108 375
Premiums	-	5 653	5 653
Temporary loans	-	65 000	65 000
	645 023	1 282 685	1 927 708
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Loans repaid	-	119 500	119 500
Works, construction	498 483	938 724	1 437 207
Interest	135 416	220 007	355 423
Discount on loans	-	5 639	5 639
Interest on temp. loans	-	8 637	8 637
	633 899	1 292 507	1 926 406
Balance on hand			1 302
	633 899	1 292 507	1 927 708

Annexures to Votes and Proceedings, House of Assembly,  
Report of the Controller and Auditor-General, G 61 - 1884,  
p.7.

p.7.

FORT ELIZABETH

TABLE XXII

Income	1878 - 1883
Balance b/forward	20 311
Loans raised	217 000
Revenue	155 238
	392 549
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Loans repaid	13 500
Works	291 988
Interest	77 776
Balance c/down	9 285
	392 549

Report of the Controller and Auditor-General, 1883.  
Annexures to Votes and Proceedings, House of Assembly, G 61-1883, p.8.

TABLE XXIIIEAST LONDON<sup>1</sup>

	<u>1872 - 1883</u>
<u>Income</u>	
Net payments from revenue or loans	465 477
Wharfage	<u>68 199</u>
	<u>533 676</u>
 <u>Expenditure</u>	
Works	438 753
Discount on loans and interest	<u>94 923</u>
	<u>533 676</u>

Ibid. p.5.

Further examination of the figures given in Tables XXI, XXII and XXIII above reveals the fact that by 1883, at Table Bay, total loans granted were £ 748 650. Of this, only £ 119 500 had been redeemed. At Algoa Bay total loans granted were £ 217 000 but only £ 13 500 had been repaid and at East London, no redemptions had taken place for total loans of £ 465 477.

This means, that by 1883, a sum of £ 1 298 127 was still outstanding - indicating that harbour works were an important contributor to the public debt.

Notwithstanding the large number of loans raised

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1. The Report of the Controller and Auditor-General mentions discrepancies in the annual balances and further notes that no accounts for 1871 and 1872 were ever prepared for East London. The figures given reflect the position as was able to ascertained at the end of 1883 when the report was drawn up;  
Ibid, p.3.

by 1882, Government credit was not unlimited. This naturally meant that certain public works would have to wait their turn. A letter written by the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works to the Algoa Bay Harbour Board is particularly instructive in this regard:<sup>1</sup>

"The Revenues of the Colony are pledged to a very large amount for Railway works, and still further sums will be required to complete, even partially, the system of internal communication. As it is evident that the credit of the Colony will not suffice for unlimited loans, it becomes the duty of Government to consider which is the most important purpose to which borrowed capital can be applied; and they have little hesitation in placing internal communication before Harbour Works."

Because of these circumstances, the Government found it impossible to enter the market for a loan for harbour works in Algoa Bay.

Nevertheless the beginning in 1860 of construction of ports by the Cape Government as part of the creation of the infrastructure of the colony, was the culmination of a long struggle against financial troubles, Imperial Government disinterest and the unsuitability of harbour plans proposed, rather than a fortuitous undertaking of capital construction just prior to the discovery of diamonds; an unforeseeable event that was to change

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1. Report of the Algoa Bay Harbour Board, 1882; enclosure 3= Annexures: G 31 - 1883, p.8.

substantially the basic structure of the economy of the colony.

And it was fortunate that the Cape Government did not defer until later, the harbour works that had been started prior to the depression and consequent financial troubles that developed during the 1860's. The diamond discoveries that ended the slump brought in their wake a massive upsurge in traffic and trade at all the ports of the colony. It is obvious that had the ports, particularly Cape Town, not been there, a difficult situation would have arisen through increasing congestion on both land and sea. As it was all of the major ports were subjected to a severe amount of strain after 1870 which revealed the inadequacies of the constructions up to that time. But nevertheless, those port facilities that had been built considerably eased what could have become an intolerable burden on the capacity of the ports to handle expeditiously, the rapidly growing numbers of calling ships and greatly increased import and export cargo volumes after 1870.

By the end of 1884, the Cape Colony was in a fairly advantageous position. The railway line from Cape Town was nearing Kimberley and the Diamond Fields. The harbours of Table Bay and East London had been completed though pressure of traffic and trade was underlining their

short-comings.<sup>1</sup> The question of a harbour for Port Elizabeth however, was to remain unresolved until a viable scheme was designed in the 1890's but some jetties had been constructed which had considerably eased the problems of trade movements between land and sea at Algoa Bay.

But within a very short time, the entire picture was to alter again with the gold discoveries of the Transvaal influencing the economies of all the territories of Southern Africa, leading to far-reaching changes which soon brought about an even greater expansion in trade and shipping traffic than that which resulted from the diamonds; a factor that would exacerbate the difficulties that existed at the ports.

Eventually, however, the main streams of traffic that developed after the gold discoveries would bypass

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1. For example, the Report of the Table Bay Harbour Board for 1883, contains mention of:
    - a) increased traffic exacerbating congestion,
    - b) lengthy delays caused by merely re-fuelling ships preventing cargo carrying ships from using the quay facilities to offload and embark cargoes,
    - c) the basic lack of lineal quayage space which resulted in calling cargo ships having to lie at anchor in the open roadstead until they were able to enter port, often many days after their arrival in Table Bay.
- Report of the Table Bay Harbour Board, 1883, Annexures, G 81 - 1883, p.2.

Cape ports to a certain extent since the ports of Natal and Delagoa Bay offered closer import points to the Transvaal but while the Cape held the advantage of rail routes that were nearer to the Witwatersrand, her ports brought a growing prosperity from greater revenues gained from increased customs dues, increased general harbour revenues and an increased income from rail transport charges.

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APPENDIX I

A great deal of difficulty was encountered when trying to get information on the tonnages of goods handled at the three ports. Documentation on the subject is sparse since the Cape Government seems to have been more interested in the money value of imported and exported goods.

In view of this fact, exports of wool seemed to be able to give a small amount of information since these were one of the few colony exports where physical weights were given. However, although they served to give an idea of the volume of wool cargo handled at the ports, by themselves they were obviously unable to provide a complete picture.

Table Bay

Wool exported from Table Bay rose from £ 87 190 in 1851 to £ 243 528 in 1871 to reach £ 339 172 by 1880. Some idea of the weight and volume of wool handled in Table Bay in this period can be gained from the following table:

TABLE BAY WOOL EXPORTS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>WEIGHT (LBS)</u>	<u>WEIGHT (TONS)</u>	<u>VALUE (£)</u>
1851	1 773 343	791	87 190
1855	2 326 165	1 038	125 847
+	+	+	+
1868	3 737 303	1 668	185 077
1871	5 144 101	2 296	243 528
1875	5 519 783	2 464	390 806
1880	5 929 967	2 647	339 172

(source: CBL for years given).

Port Elizabeth

Compared with Table Bay, wool exports from Algoa Bay were considerably greater over the corresponding period:

PORT ELIZABETH WOOL EXPORTS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>WEIGHT (LBS)</u>	<u>WEIGHT (TONS)</u>	<u>VALUE (£)</u>
1851	3 669 909	1 638	194 420
1855	12 016 415	5 364	508 283
+	+	+	+
1868	27 310 470	12 192	1 352 543
1871	37 837 516	16 981	1 791 336
1875	30 803 837	13 751	2 180 868
1880	30 475 966	13 605	1 743 105

+) Exports statistics of wool for the individual ports of the Cape Colony were discontinued in the Cape Blue Books between 1857 and 1867. Only the total amount of wool exported from the colony as a whole was given for the period 1857 - 1867.

The fall in wool exports between 1871 and 1880 can be attributed to two causes:

- 1) The greater amounts of wool that began to be shipped from East London in place of being sent to Port Elizabeth.
- 2) The outbreak of the 9th Kaffir War in August 1877 which led to stock losses and general disruption in the Eastern Province until its end in July 1878.

Total exports from Port Elizabeth progressed sharply from £ 268 241 in 1851 to £ 1 282 648 in 1861. They then doubled in ten years to £ 2 262 704 in 1871 but then steadied, only reaching £ 2 583 737 by 1881. Wool continued to form more than 65 % of the total over the whole period.

#### East London

Although the Blue Book records of imports and exports from East London only begin in 1866, a similar rapid growth trend in wool exports can be observed between 1866 and 1882.

LAST LONDON WOOL EXPORTS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>WEIGHT (LBS)</u>	<u>WEIGHT (TONS)</u>	<u>VALUE (£)</u>
1866	+	+	+
1868	2,088,371	930	103,161
1870	765,568 =	341	32,311
1872	2,060,067	919	138,182
1874	1,340,579	598	92,787
1876	2,591,737	1,157	167,449
1878	3,580,905	1,598	186,555
1880	5,253,650	2,345	300,507
1882	8,117,159	3,623	401,478

Remarkably, the 9th Kaffir War does not seem to have had any effect upon Last London's exports even though the port was closer to the scene of the war than was Port Elizabeth. Exporting and importing maintained an upward trend, only imports falling back in one year (1877) which may have been caused by war uncertainty. Possibly the presence of the military forces in East London contributed to a measure of safety that enabled foreign trade generally to carry on and increase.

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+ No figures given in the Blue Books for 1866.

= There is no indication in the Blue Books of the reason for wool exports undergoing such a massive fall in the amount exported between 1868 and 1869. No reasons have been found for the fall.

1868	2,083,371 lbs	£ 103,161
1869	671,179 lbs	£ 26,898

APPENDIX II

The reports of the harbour boards since the time of their inception contain very few references (and even then start very late) to the actual tonnages of goods handled at the various ports of the Cape Colony. The published accounts deal principally with the activities of the boards in providing better harbour facilities for the handling of goods between ship and shore.

Some statistics were published during the 1870's by the Table Bay Harbour Board which give some idea of the volume of goods handled but no comparisons can be made with any of the previous periods.

YEAR	<u>Table Bay</u> <sup>1</sup>	
	TONNAGES LANDED AND SHIPPED	
1875	232	715
1876	199	960
1877		+
1878	354	753
1879	426	503
1880	592	529
1881	723	132

Nor do the various reports of the Port Captains of the colony harbours have such information on harbour

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1. Annexures to Votes and Proceedings, House of Assembly. Reports of the Harbour Board of Table Bay. G 59 - 1877; G 48-1879; G 48-1881; G 84-1882.

traffic other than the number of ships that called together with their various tonnages.<sup>1</sup> This latter information provides a useful indication of the increasing size of ships especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century but gives no help in assessing how heavily used were the loading facilities of the ports.

Nevertheless, when the numbers of calling ships together with their tonnages, are combined with the growth of trade from each of the ports, a reasonably clear idea can be gained of the amount of activity taking place at the ports. Furthermore, it gives some idea of the amount of congestion that must have existed both in the roadstead and in the land area of the harbours as ships waited to make use of the very rudimentary facilities at each of the three ports.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Published annually in the Cape of Good Hope Blue Books in the statistical section on shipping traffic.
  2. For example: in 1868, at Fort Elizabeth, "the landing and shipping of cargo is conducted by the following boating establishments, with large flat-bottom surf-boats or lighters, carrying from 25 to 60 tons of cargo, most of them being sailing boats or are towed by a Screw Tug":

<u>Name of boating Company</u>	<u>Number of Boats</u>
Port Elizabeth	11
Eastern Province	9
Union	5
Algoa Bay	8
	<u>33</u>
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Fleming, W.: Algoa Bay as a Harbour of Refuge  
 E. Wilson, London, 1868  
 in South African Pamphlets, 99 (3),  
 South African Public Library.

NUMBER OF SHIPS, TONNAGES, VOLUME OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTSTABLE BAY:

YEAR	SHIPS	TONNAGE	IMPORTS (E)	EXPORTS (E)
1851	688	203 911	1 344 270	382 357
1855	642	160 076	742 922	492 287
1860	724	215 150	+	+
1865	528	184 562	884 563	524 572
1870	559	167 546	986 357	448 066
1875	797	429 139	2 144 750	690 454
1880	914	843 607	2 801 463	861 027
1882	926	1 039 230	3 186 912	887 143

ALGOA BAY:

1851	163	29 875	317 921	268 241
1855	163	26 752	376 638	580 911
1860	228	64 576	+	+
1865	249	94 992	1 148 762	1 574 032
1870	222	99 404	1 214 254	1 858 185
1875	360	264 467	2 681 333	2 832 523
1880	516	643 574	3 382 378	2 653 729
1882	551	725 157	3 760 650	2 442 051

EAST LONDON: \*)

1866	34	13 818	26 957	77 720
1870	55	26 599	51 117	33 169
1875	172	85 855	552 033	131 800
1880	287	351 927	1 152 610	303 991
1882	362	557 247	2 115 930	438 736

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

+ There are no separate import and export statistics for individual ports given in the Blue Books between 1857 and 1860.

\*) Prior to 1866, there are no statistics in the Blue Books for East London.

APPENDIX III

The harboursboards, as constituted by Ordinance 21 of 1847 were required to finance their activities and the interest on loans raised for development, on the security of revenue from wharfage dues. As can be seen from the tables below, wharfage dues accounted for a very small portion of the revenue collected at the ports in the period before 1855, particularly in the Eastern Province.

WHARFAGE DUES (E)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TABLE BAY</u>	<u>ALGOA BAY</u>	<u>EAST LONDON</u>
1830	1 175	nil	38
1835	3 401	135	-
1840	7 159	185	-
1845	6 049	266	-
1850	7 153	426	-
1855	7 089	67	38

CUSTOMS DUTY COLLECTED (E)

1830	25 945	nil	-
1835	18 244	1 369	-
1840	30 332	3 954	-
1845	64 243	13 543	-
1850	64 934	27 190	-
1855	82 433	41 374	25

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

Between 1861 and 1872, customs duties increased considerably at Table Bay, while Algoa Bay and East London began to account for large sums after 1865, but generally the amounts received for wharfage remained small.

WHARFAGE DUES (E)

YEAR	TABLE BAY	ALCOA BAY	EAST LONDON
1861	8 334	5 838	nil
1865	9 074	6 692	nil
1869	14 033	6 850	+
1872	21 948	9 133	+

CUSTOMS DUTY COLLECTED (E)

1861	144 018	135 546	nil
1865	119 352	147 338	nil
1869	114 175	160 813	4 100
1872	194 433	344 374	38 585

(Source: Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers).

It is clear from the above figures that until 1865, neither the Table Bay nor the Algoa Bay Harbour Board was in a financially strong position. Although greater amounts from wharfage dues were collected at Table Bay after 1865, the sums received were not very great, even by the late date of 1872 when the collection of wharfage dues was changed to a divided series of charges<sup>1</sup> paid directly into the revenue account of the government.

The significant comment by the harbour board contained in the annual report of 1883, that had the Government not taken over the charges for convict labour, the board would have been hopelessly insolvent, is a clear

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1. The charges instituted after 1872 were dock dues, demurrage, lighterage and quayage.

indication of the parlous state of the board's finances.<sup>1</sup>

Table Bay was nevertheless, in a better position than Algoa Bay and East London largely as a result of the harbour being completed long before the others, but more importantly, the greater numbers of ships that were using Table Bay and its facilities meant that revenues were greater than that at the two other ports.

Port Elizabeth on the other hand had great problems with its earning capacity because there were so few wharves controlled by the Harbour Board. Each of the boating companies<sup>2</sup> which contracted to carry cargoes to and from ships lying at anchor in the roadstead seem to have used as far as possible, the wharf belonging to the Port Elizabeth Boating Company. Money received for the use of this wharf did not go to the Harbour Board. It was only after the supplementary wharves were built by the Public Works Department between 1880 and 1882, that the harbour board began to receive greater funds. In addition, the board had lost a great deal of money over the construction of the first breakwater, which instead of providing the intended facilities, had to be demolished, the work on which the board had to pay. A further indication of the precarious financial position of the Algoa

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1. Report of the Table Bay Harbour Board, Annexures, G 81 - 1883, p.2.

2. See footnote above, Appendix II, p. 187.

Bay Harbour Board can be seen from the financial difficulties that arose in 1874/5 which led to the Government attaching wharfage dues paid at Algoa Bay (above, chapter IV).

East London had no elected harbour board in the period of this study. All loans, interest payments and loan redemptions were undertaken by the Cape Government itself after 1872 when the Cape gained responsible government and took over the liability for all debts incurred on capital construction in the colony. Security for loans raised for the construction of the harbour at East London remained the charge of the government during the period that building took place, i.e. from 1872 to 1882.

Corroboration of the relatively better position of Table Bay compared with that of Algoa Bay can be gained from the fact that whereas growing customs duties implied an increasing volume of foreign trade, growing wharfage dues implied a harbour, or at least, fair facilities, the use of which not only by trading ships but also merely calling ones, resulted in more revenue for the harbour board. As has been shown, the demands placed upon Table Bay by ever-growing numbers of calling ships were far greater than that placed upon either Port Elizabeth or East London in the period following the discovery of diamonds, as well as in the decade prior to that important event.

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