

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES,
Manchester, November 19th, 1853.

My Lord,—The last Mail from China will no doubt have brought to Your Lordship fuller details than have reached this Chamber of the occurrences which took place at Shanghai on the 7th of September.

As British interests and property have been thereby placed in an unfortunate position, I take the liberty, on behalf of this Chamber, of directing Your Lordship's attention to the Notification published by Mr. Consul Alcock on the 9th of September—not for the purpose of impugning the preliminary reasoning on which his "Provisional Rules for the clearing of Ships" are grounded, but to suggest that in the fifth of those Rules the Consul has adopted a term for the required Security Bills much too short for the circumstances which must inevitably rise hereafter. Under any aspect forty days' sight is too short a term; but when the immense accumulation of duties which will have become payable before any Government that would be recognised by Her Majesty's Government can be established, is considered, and, combining with that consideration, the incalculable increase of an already long felt scarcity of silver which the subversion of established order must occasion, a prolongation of the term for Security Bills is absolutely necessary for the protection and safety of the parties from whom they are enforced. Your Lordship will not fail to remember that Mr. Consul Alcock's Provisional Rules compel the payment of duties on the arrival of Ships in port—that Vessels cannot be detained in harbour for an indefinite time—that the impoverishment which attends revolutionary movements will seriously affect sales of Merchandise, and that consequently Imports may remain unsold in the hands of consignees for an incalculable period—that these Security Bills are required for Exports as well as Imports, so that neither mercantile Capital nor foresight will be able to withstand a double pressure of this nature, if suddenly called upon to find silver whilst Imports remain unsold on the one hand, and on the other, returns for Exports cannot possibly be received. Your Lordship, though approving in its general character of the course adopted by Mr. Consul Alcock, may yet see sufficient grounds to direct that the date of the Security Bills required for Chinese duties may be extended to twelve Months' sight.

The Chamber ventures also to suggest another point. The Consul compels the payment of duties on behalf of a Government in *posse*; the insurrection in China has been in progress for several years, and many more may elapse before any kind of order, or, at least, before any such Government as would be recognized by Her Majesty, shall be established. In the mean time, the accumulation of monies and securities lodged with the Consul, or with any authority appointed by Her Majesty's Government, may become enormous, and so, at any moment, present an irresistible temptation to robbery and violence, to people so faithless, treacherous, and dishonest, as the Chinese. The British Government, if it sanction the course adopted by Mr. Consul Alcock, ought in justice to those British subjects from whom it exacts payments, openly to publish and declare, that having undertaken to collect revenues for any future government that may be established in China, it alone, and not individual merchants, shall be held responsible.

Your Lordship will pardon the expression of a hope that the first Mail may carry out to China definite instructions so necessary to the protection and eventual security of British merchants at Shanghai, or at any of the five ports of China which may fall into the same position.

I have, &c.,
(Signed)

THOMAS BOOTHMAN.

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 24, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Earl of Clarendon to acknowledge the receipt of the letter dated the 19th instant, and signed by you on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce &c., of Manchester, in which you call His Lordship's attention to the term required by Her Majesty's Consul at Shanghai, in his notification of September 9th last, for the Bills to be paid into his Custody, on account of duties accruing to the Chinese Government, during the present disturbance of the fiscal arrangements of the Chinese Government at that Port.

I am to state to you in reply that, as the original obligation to pay Customs' duties involves payment in ready money, and as the Consul receiving bills for the relief of trade under circumstances of embarrassment puts himself into the very difficult and invidious position of judging of the solvency of the parties, it seems impossible to fetter his discretion as to the terms on which these bills are to be received; but the attention of Sir George Bonham has been called to this subject, with a view to every practicable facility being afforded.

With respect to the general observations, as to the course pursued by Mr. Alcock in your letter, I am directed by Lord Clarendon to state to you, that Her Majesty's Government have provisionally sanctioned the regulations which he has promulgated at Shanghai, and that all practicable precautions will be taken, as to the safe custody and future appropriation of the duties paid by British Merchants.

Her Majesty's Government, however, cannot hold themselves responsible for the safety of the sums collected under these provisional arrangements.

I am, &c.,

(Signed)

WODEHOUSE.

J. BOOTHMAN, Esq.

True Copies,

W. H. WEDHURST.

NOTICE the Next sitting of the SUPREME COURT, under its Summary Jurisdiction, will be held on Friday the 3rd day of February, 1854, at 12 o'clock, noon. All Plaints must be filed before 4 P.M. on Monday the 30th instant.

By Order of the Court,
WILLIAM HASTINGS ALEXANDER,
Acting Registrar.

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Copartnership heretofore subsisting between YORICK JONES MURROW and JAMES STEPHENSON under the Style or Firm of MURROW, STEPHENSON & Co, has been this day dissolved. The undersigned, assuming the responsibilities of the said Firm, will in future conduct the business on his own account and in his own name.

Y. J. MURROW.

Hongkong, January 2d, 1854.