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GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The following Observations respecting the Port of Iloilo, received from Her Majesty's Consul at Manila, are published for general information.

By Order,

W. H. RENNIE,
for the Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 13th October, 1864.

PORT ILOILO, PANAY ISLAND, PHILIPPINES.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NAVIGATION OF THE COAST AND PORT OF ILOILO, ISLAND OF PANAY,

BY NICOLAS LONEY, Esq., HER MAJESTY'S VICE CONSUL.

Vessels bound from Manila, or from ports to the Northwards, may, during the N. E. monsoon, safely proceed towards Iloilo by the Maricaban passage between Luzon and Mindoro and through the chain of islands off the N. E. coast of Panay. For this route, the charts of the Spanish "*Comision Hidrografica*," compiled by Don Claudio Montero in 1857, would be useful. After passing Tablas and Romblon (which latter island possesses an excellent harbour much frequented by coasting vessels as a port of refuge and for obtaining supplies,) steer for the group of small islands, called collectively the "*Silanga*," lying off the N. E. of Panay, a good mark for which is the high conical island called Pan de Azucar, or Sugar-leaf, which is visible from a great distance. In approaching these islands during the N. E. monsoon, vessels should pass between the islets of Jintotolo and Zapato-mayor, and during the S. W. monsoon more in towards the Panay shore, between Olutaya and Zapato-menor. After leaving the Zapatos, the course is to the south of the Gigantes, and the channel through the group of islands is generally entered between Sicogon and Calagnan, from whence the route is continued between Culebra and the main, Pan de Azucar and Malangaban, inside Ygbon, Bulubadiargan and Tagubanhan islands. Throughout the passage between these islands there is safe anchorage. The Estancia affords excellent anchorage and shelter at all times, and at Apiton, opposite Yagubanhan, there is also good anchorage in both monsoons. In the S. W. monsoon there is safe anchorage between Pan de Azucar and Sombrero islands, and in the bay of Malagabones. In the N. E. monsoon in addition to the Estancia and Apiton, there is good anchorage under Pan de Azucar, in the small bay or indent looking S. E. At Bacauan, or La Concepcion, is the residence of the Commandant of the district, and from hence assistance and supplies may be had, if needed, and at the place marked Apiton (Aguada) on the charts, good water is easily obtainable.

The broader channel between the islands, Panay and Negros, although apparently good, and though formerly adopted by several ships bound to Iloilo, is now found not to be safe, there being large patches of shoal water, with coral, imperfectly surveyed, extending off the Bantayan and Negros shore. Vessels have occasionally touched in coming through this passage, and it should not therefore be taken.

After passing Tagubanhan and Apiton, and emerging into the broad channel between Panay and Negros, the best course is to steer direct for the highest land visible on the island of Guimaras, care being taken to clear the Pepitas rocks, which lie some distance off the shore and are awash.

Leaving the Calabazas islets and Pepitas, the route, after making the small block house near Barate, is due South until a group of seven remarkable rocks which lie between the N. E. end of Guimaras and Panay shore, called the Siete Pecados, are sighted. On opening the channel between Guimaras and Panay and getting the Siete Pecados to bear W. $\frac{1}{4}$ N., steer direct for them, passing between these rocks and the Panay shore. This course will clear the *Iguana Bank*, lying to the S. E. of the Pecados, with 1 to 2 fathoms of water on it and Point Dumangas to the N. E., the shoal water off which extends to a considerable distance.

The lead is a good guide through the Siete Pecados channel, giving 6, $4\frac{1}{2}$, 7, 8, 11 and 15 fathoms until the Pecados are passed to the Southward, when the water deepens to 18 and 19 fathoms. The channel between these rocks and Guimaras is not good. On passing the Pecados, the south shore should be kept on board, to avoid the shoal water on the Panay side. When the fort, which is half a mile to the west of the entrance of the river Iloilo, bears W. S. W., steer for it, anchoring as convenient in 10 to 12 fathoms, a little more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile off shore, to the Eastward of the river.

Though the Northern passage just described is safe and convenient in the Northerly Monsoon, and is always used by coasters in both seasons, strangers will probably prefer the route along the West Coast of Panay, making Iloilo from the South. This route should always be adopted during the S. W. monsoon. Making the Western Coast of Panay from the Mindoro Strait, this coast, comprising the province of Antique, should be closed, as the Westerly monsoon is not very regular and does not often blow strongly between the Cuyos Islands and Panay, or to the North of Basilan. It may be approached with safety any where to the Southward of the islands of Barbatan and Maralison, which latter has a reef to the East and West. Barbatan, which is very steep, affords with Lipata (under this latter point), the only available anchorage on the Antique coast during the S. W. monsoon, but in the N. E. monsoon the harbour of San Jose de Buenavista, is quite safe and affords good supplies of provisions and water, being not unfrequently visited by whalers for that purpose.

The south Coast of Panay is free from dangers till near the town of Otong. The coast of Guimaras to the north of Point Balingasag, or to the north of Port St. Ana is likewise safe. This Port is capable of admitting vessels of large tonnage and affords shelter under almost any circumstances. The Bights along the coast have deep water and vessels can work close in shore, or from point to point, with perfect safety; but generally there is no good anchorage, as the coast is steep and the holding-ground not good.

In passing the S.W. point of Panay during the night the islands of Juraojurao and Nogas should not be closed, as both have reefs round them to the southward. When clear of these islands, on rounding the S. W. point of Panay, vessels may safely steer N. E. b. E 32 miles without any danger, but after running that distance they should heave to during the night, or if the night is very clear, run towards the Panay shore, keeping the lead going, and when the water shoals, anchoring till daylight, as by keeping over to the Guimaras shore (particularly in the N. E. monsoon,) they will find no anchorage and will lose ground.

It is necessary to follow the above instructions carefully, because the Otong Bank extends more to the West and South West than is shown on the present published chart, and is yearly increasing, and also because the tide runs very strongly on both sides of it. With the flood tide (against the N. E. monsoon), vessels can easily work up in short tacks under Guimaras shore.

The Otong Bank is eight miles in length N. E. & S. W., by 2½ miles N. W. b W., and S. E. b E, at its broadest part. It is of fine sand with depths varying from ½ to 3 fathoms. The edges in some places are steep to, and others shoal gradually. To avoid this danger, vessels should, after closing Guimaras, keep that shore on board and be careful in beating up not to close the Panay side to less than four fathoms, and not to stand further from the Guimaras shore than half-a-mile until point Cabalig bears S. b. W. ¼ W. 2¾ miles when they should stand across and open the fort of Iloilo clear of Point Bondulan, which kept open will clear the Guimaras Bank lying between Points Cabalig and Bondulan. Care should be taken in standing across towards the Otong bank, to tack as soon as the water shoals to 6 fathoms, as the bank there is steep to. After passing Point Bondulan, the fort should not be brought to the Eastward of N. E. b E.

Guimaras Bank, with 11 feet on its shoalest part, extends in a N. E. b N., and S. W. b S. direction a little over a mile, and about three Cables East and West, with deep water all round. The S. W. head bears from Point Bondulan N. N. E. ½ E. 1½ miles. Iloilo fort kept open of Point Bondulan will clear this danger.

These banks have been recently surveyed in May 1864, by the officers of the Spanish "*Hydrographical Commission*," but the charts have not yet been published. At foot is a note of the positions in which it is intended to place two lights which will greatly facilitate the entrance from the South.

ANCHORAGE.—The island of Guimaras forms in front of Iloilo a sheltered passage running nearly N. & S., about 2½ miles broad, with deep water and good holding ground except, immediately to the eastward of the fort where the sand is loose. In mid channel the depths exceed 20 fathoms. The best anchorage, least exposed to the sweep of the tides, is to bring the Bantay (guard house,) on the south point of the river to bear N. W. ¼ N., with the Fort bearing S. W. ½ W. Here a ship is out of the strongest currents, with the advantage that cargo-boats can easily reach her and return.

TO ENTER THE RIVER AND INNER PORT OF ILOILO.—Although the land is low at the entrance, the mouth of the river is distinctly seen, being marked by beacons on the port and starboard sides. On entering, keep the port beacon close on board, after passing which and the watch house, steer for the second point on the starboard hand, giving it a berth of forty feet. The east bank, with 16 to 40 feet, should be closed to this distance until after the first sharp bend of the creek is passed, and then the port side to the wharf or anchorage. Vessels usually bring up at jetties, about ½ a mile to one mile from the entrance, and have the advantage, if of moderate size, of discharging and loading at the stores without employing boats. The creek or rather tidal river varies in breadth from a quarter to half a mile, and reaches beyond the town of Molo, meeting the sea again near Iloilo; and another branch continues as far as Otong.

DEPTH OF WATER.—The depth at the entrance to the river is nearly 5 fms. at low water, but at a short distance within it decreases to 15 feet, and then deepens again. The rise of tide being 6½ feet, vessels drawing 16 to 18 feet can easily enter and leave; and when, as is proposed, a dredging-machine is employed to clear away the mud which has been allowed to accumulate, vessels of almost any draught will be able to complete their cargo inside. Ships of 1,000 tons register have loaded part cargoes alongside the jetties. The custom is to load to 14½ or 15 feet in the river and complete lading outside.

TIDES.—It is high water at Iloilo, full and change, at noon. Springs rise 6½ feet. The stream runs at springs quite 3 to 4 knots through Iloilo channel. The flood sets to the northward. The ebb tide to the north of the Pepitas rocks runs to the Eastward, but to the south of these rocks to the westward.

VARIATION OF THE COMPASS.—1° 15' E.

PROVISIONS AND WATER.—Fresh Beef is cheap and good. Good water can always be got a little to the north and south of the village of Pilat or Buenavista, on Guimaras. It is best to take up the casks at high water on the beach and with the aid of the Natives fill them so as to be ready to go off with the following tide, taking care to leave a little before high water so as to be sure of reaching the ship, as the tide changes suddenly, and runs down with great strength.

REPAIRS.—The river of Iloilo affords considerable facilities for heaving vessels down. At the fine port of Santa Ana, on the island of Guimaras, is a building-yard.

In 1863 twenty-five ships loaded Sugar at Iloilo, mostly for China and Australia. During this year (1864) the direct exports of Sugar are chiefly to Great Britain.

PORT-DUES.—On foreign vessels arriving and leaving in ballast, 12½ cents per ton; with cargo inwards or outwards or both, 25 cents per ton. Payment at one port clears for the other open ports of the Philippines in a proportional extent.

MANIFEST.—This document must be certified by the Spanish Consul at the port from which the vessels arrive, under penalty of a fine of \$200. This also applies to vessels in ballast.

MONEY.—The currency is confined to Spanish and South American dollars and their subdivisions, and to the \$1, \$2, and \$4, gold pieces coined in Manila.

WAGES.—The wages of labourers for shipping average from 25 to 30 cents a day; Carpenters $31\frac{3}{4}$ to 50 cents; Caulkers $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.—The picul of 100 catties, or 140lbs. English, the quintal of 4 arrobas or 100lbs. Spanish, equal to $101\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. English; the arroba, of 25lbs. Spanish.

PRODUCE.—The country round Iloilo, and in the province and island generally, is very fertile and extensively cultivated. It is well peopled, and there are towns of 18, 20, 30, and 40 thousand inhabitants in the vicinity and interior and on the coast. Nearly all the tropical productions can be grown on the island, but the chief articles of export are: Sugar, which is at present the most important, Tobacco, Sapanwood, Rice, Hides, Hemp (imported coastwise) Cattle, and a large quantity of valuable native textures made of the fibre of the pine-apple leaf, silk, hemp and other fibres. These textures are mostly for native consumption in the Archipelago. The quantity of Sugar has increased rapidly since the opening of the port to direct foreign trade, and next season (1865), may amount to 21,000 tons, including arrivals from the contiguous island of Negros.

At the fine island of Negros the planting of cane is being much extended. The bulk of the plantations are owned by natives, but a number of Europeans have formed estates there and several steam mills for crushing cane have recently been erected. Very productive land in good positions, is to be had; labour is not scarce; conveyance of produce by sea to the Iloilo market is safe and expeditious, and intending planters could scarcely find a more eligible district.

COFFEE.—Thrives well, but is not yet cultivated on a scale to allow of export.

The population of the province of Iloilo is now 595,000; that of the island of Panay 863,000; Negros 140,000.

Direct Imports from Europe have recently taken place at Iloilo and the amount of European goods consumed is becoming important.

Iloilo, 1st July, 1864.

Additional Note, regarding light-houses to be erected at Iloilo.

Two lights are to be placed by the Spanish Government in the South western entrance of the port of Iloilo. One, a third class light, is to be situated at the point marked G. in the plan of the recently made survey, a mile S. 30° W. of Point Cabalig. The other will be of the fourth class and placed at the Fort in the Port of Iloilo. The point marked G. is of rock, about 160 feet high and quite clear, as is also the shore running to the south of it. From this point (G.) the south part of the Otong bank bears N. 85° W., consequently any vessel entering the port from the South, by keeping well in to the Light before taking up that course towards the North, will completely clear the bank.

The South point of Panay bears from the Point G., S. 70° W. The light on the Iloilo Fort determines by its position all the S. E. edge of the Otong Bank and by it vessels can pass safely through all the channel formed by the Bank and the Guimaras coast with the advantage that it (the light,) gives also the N. W. edge of the Guimaras Bank, to the South of Point Bondulan. On this account a vessel beating up should not lose sight of the Fort light.

No. 157.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

A Godown of from 3 to 500 Tons Capacity is required by the Colonial Government for the storage of Materials expected from England for the Mint.

The Godown will be taken for 6 months certain, and a power of renewal by Government for a further period of 6 months will be retained.

Possession to be given on the 1st Proximo.

Tenders for the above, stating situation, price per month and capacity, will be received at the Surveyor General's Office up to noon of Saturday, the 22nd Instant.

By Order,

W. H. RENNIE,
for the Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 8th October, 1864.

No. 146.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

Tenders will be received at the Surveyor General's Office on or before Monday the 17th Proximo, for the erection of the Hongkong Mint. Plans and Specification may be seen on application between the hours of 11 A. M. and 3 P. M.

By Order,

W. H. RENNIE,
for the Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 17th September, 1864.