

*Correspondence respecting the Rifle Practice of the Civil Police,
and the supply of Ammunition.*

*Presented to the Legislative Council by Command of
His Excellency the Governor.*

(1.)

Major-General Cameron, C.B. to Governor Sir G. F. Bowen, G.C.M.G.

HEAD QUARTERS,
HONGKONG, 13th April, 1885.

SIR,

I have the honour to inform you that, with your permission, I saw the Civil Police at Rifle Practice at Kowloon, on Saturday, the 4th instant, and I candidly confess that, without the slightest desire to flatter, I was exceedingly pleased at their performance, and more especially considering the small amount of ammunition allowed them.

I understand that the arming of the Civil Police with the MARTINI-HENRY Carbine as also their Musketry training are entirely due to your Excellency; and I must say that both for the suppression of civil revolt, or for the protection of the Colony in case of attack by an enemy, such an armed and well trained Police Force is of the highest importance.

To render, however, this force thoroughly efficient in Musketry, it is very important (as has been found in regard to the Military), to practise such rapid firing at close quarters as would be necessary in the field, and in clearing the streets in cases of disturbance.

For such practice the present allowance of ammunition, at the rate of 50 rounds per man, is quite insufficient; and I strongly recommend, considering the value of this Police Force, as an important factor in the defences of the Colony, that the annual allowance be increased to 150 rounds per man, and that the ammunition sent out through error and ordered to be returned, *vide* correspondence (marginally noted) between the Military and Colonial Authorities, be retained for the aforesaid purpose, instead of the useless expense being incurred of returning it all to England as directed.

I have, &c.,

W. G. CAMERON,
*Major-General,
Commanding in China and Straits Settlements.*

His Excellency

Sir G. F. BOWEN, G.C.M.G.,

&c.,

&c.,

&c.

HONGKONG.

P.S.—Since the above was written, I have received the Inspection report of the Shanghai Volunteers, who appear to have been unable to complete their musketry course owing to want of ammunition; will your Excellency therefore permit the Municipal Council at Shanghai to purchase from this Colony the ammunition required to the extent of 50,000 rounds, out of the supply overdrawn for the Police?

W. G. CAMERON.

C.S.O. No. 1685 of Nov. 25th, 1885.
A.M.S. " 484 " 27th, 1885.
C.S.O. " 1706 " 28th, 1885.
A.M.S. " 442 " 29th, 1885.

(2.)

*Governor Sir G. F. Bowen, G.C.M.G. to Major-General Cameron, C.B.*GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HONGKONG, 21st April, 1885.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, and to state that your Excellency's testimony to the efficiency of the Civil Police in their Rifle Practice is very satisfactory to myself and to the Government of this Colony.

2. With the advice of the Executive Council, I have authorised the increased allowance of 150 rounds per man to the Police, as you recommend; and I have decided to retain the whole of the MARTINI-HENRY Carbine Ammunition, recently sent out from home, looking to possible contingencies in the present critical state of public affairs, and with the view to be in a position to meet the above, and other demands, such as those of the Hongkong Volunteers; and also of the Shanghai Volunteers (referred to in your letter).

3. You state: "I understand that the arming of the Civil Police with the MARTINI-HENRY Carbine, as also their Musketry training, are entirely due to your Excellency; and I must say that both for the suppression of Civil Revolt, or for the protection of the Colony in case of attack by an enemy, such an armed and well-trained Police Force is of the highest importance."

4. I will explain, for your information, what has taken place in this matter. Soon after my arrival in this Colony, I found that the Civil Office of Deputy Superintendent of Police, the pay and allowances of which amounted to £800 a year, was then vacant, and was deemed to be unnecessary;—when, after consultation with the Captain-Superintendent, and with the advice of the Executive Council, I determined to appoint a Military Officer as Adjutant, with pay and allowances at the rate of only £300 a year; whose duties should be, to assist the Captain-Superintendent generally in the discharge of his duties, and especially in the drill and discipline of the three hundred (300) armed English and Sikh Constables. It was felt that greater efficiency would thus be secured, together with a saving of £500 a year to the Colonial revenue.

5. I found, moreover, that the carbines formerly supplied to the Police were of an obsolete pattern, worn out, and practically useless; so I procured from Her Majesty's Government for both the Police and the Volunteers, MARTINI-HENRY Rifles of the best type (the same as those used by the Royal Artillery,) with an ample supply of ammunition.

6. As I have already said above, your testimony to the present efficiency of the Police in their rifle practice is very satisfactory to myself and to the Colonial Government. A force of three hundred (300) effective men, equal to one-fourth of the whole, has practically been added, in the event of war, or of internal disturbance, to our Garrison of some twelve hundred men (1,200) of all arms; and that not only without increase to the expenditure, but with a positive saving of £500 a year to the Revenue of the Colony.

7. In conclusion, I would observe that I know that you agree with me in the opinion that the drill of the Police, and their rifle practice must not be allowed to interfere with the full and diligent discharge of their civil duties in time of peace. On this point, I will quote a passage from my despatch of June 29th, 1883, in which I reported to Her Majesty's Government the arrangements which I had made for the improved efficiency of the Police:—

"I desire it to be understood that nothing can be further from my wish or intention than to invest a Civil Police Corps with too Military a character. But seeing that the English and Sikh portion of the Police Force at Hongkong is regularly armed with rifles and sword-bayonets; that it is analogous in many respects to the Royal Irish Constabulary; and that it is expected to give efficient support to our weak garrison in the event of foreign attack, or of serious internal disturbance,—it is obvious that it should have the advantage of being drilled by a Military Officer as Adjutant. All experience shows that nothing is more useless, and that nothing may become more dangerous than an armed force under imperfect discipline."

I have, &c.,

G. F. BOWEN.

His Excellency

Major-General CAMERON, C.B.,

&c.,

&c.,

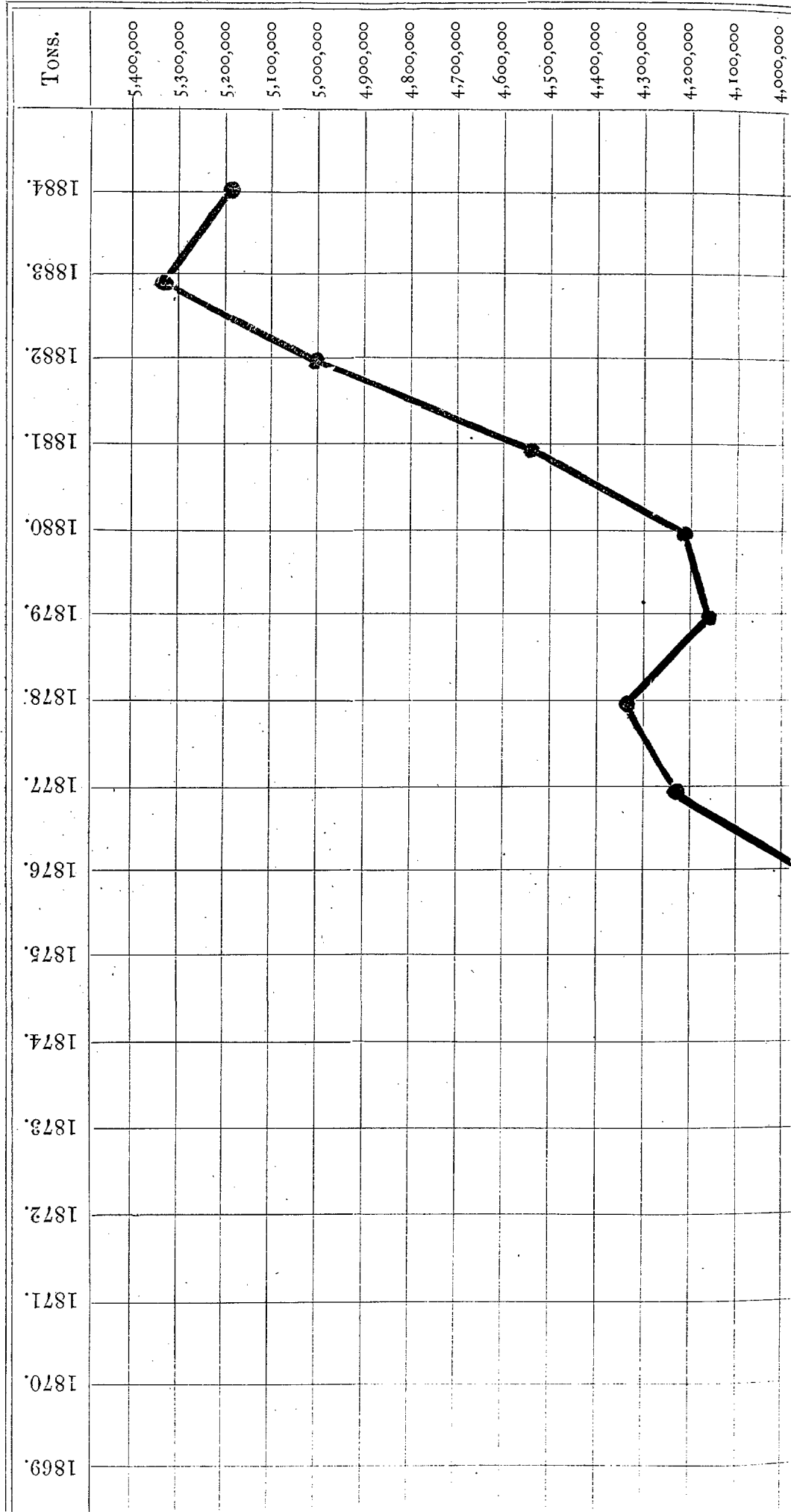
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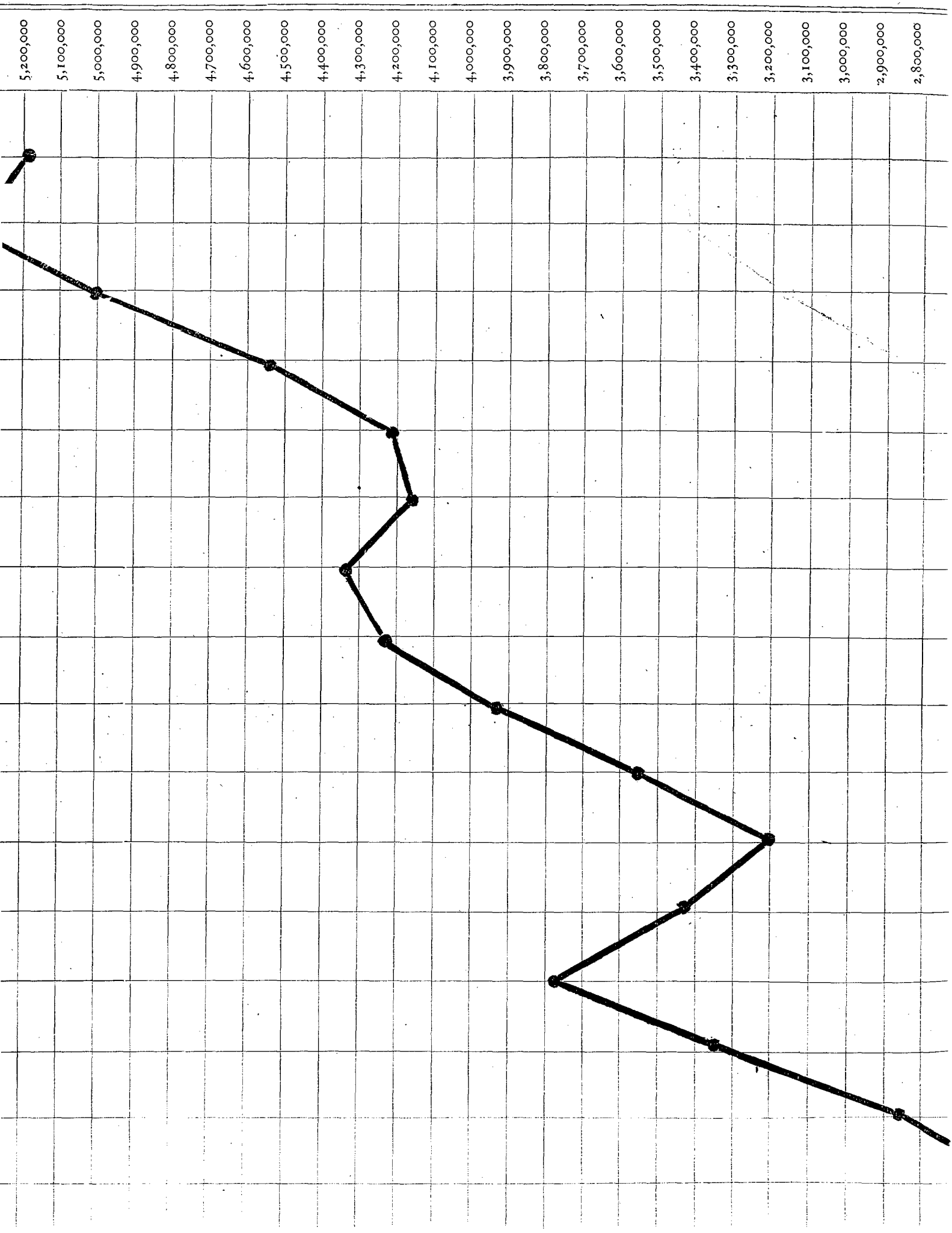
I.—DIAGRAM of Tonnage entered at Hongkong, from 1867 to 1884 inclusive.

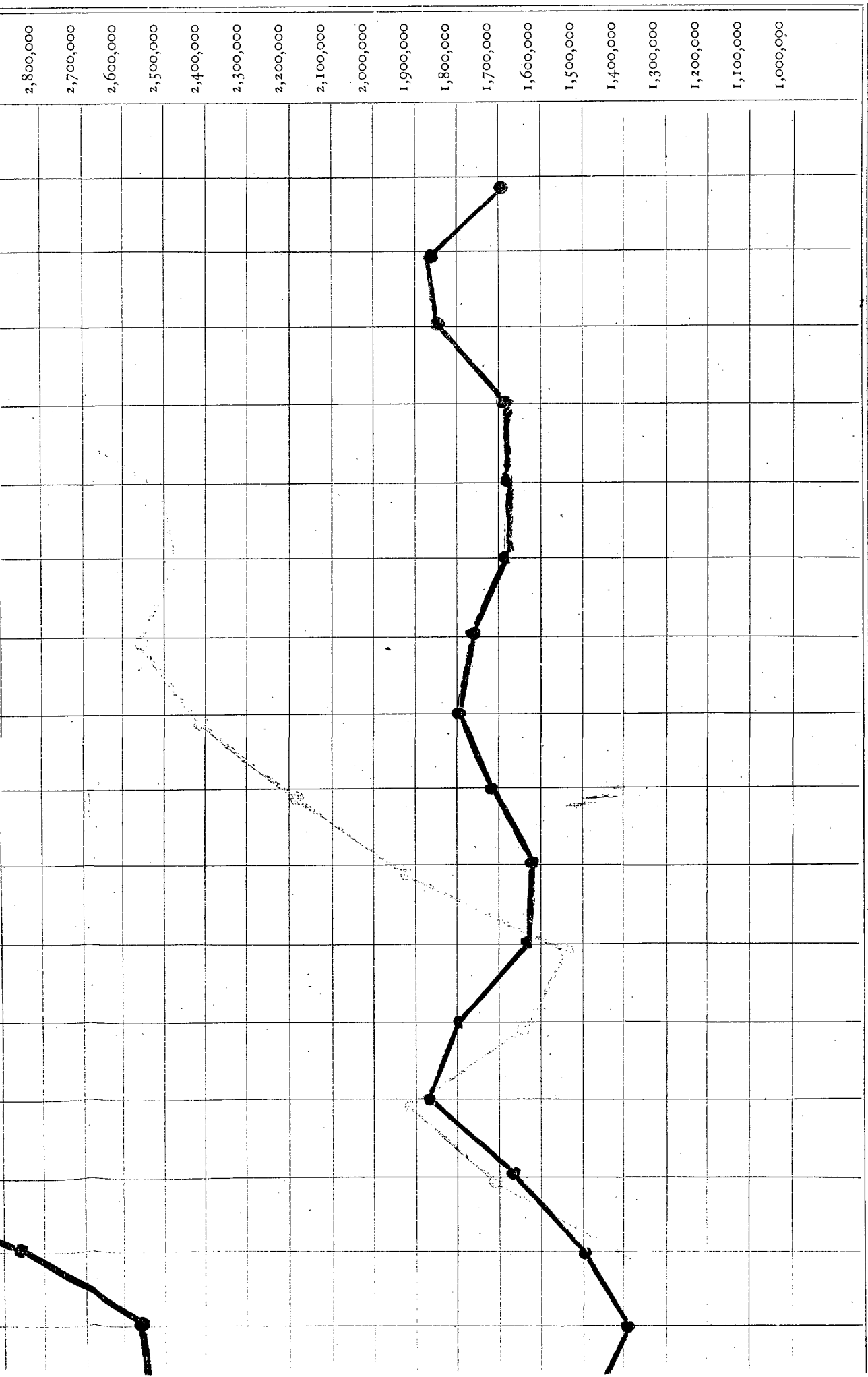
BLUE LINE represents Junk Tonnage only.

RED LINE represents Foreign Shipping Tonnage only.

THICK BLACK LINE represents entire trade in Foreign Ships and Junks.







kong, 21st January, 1885.

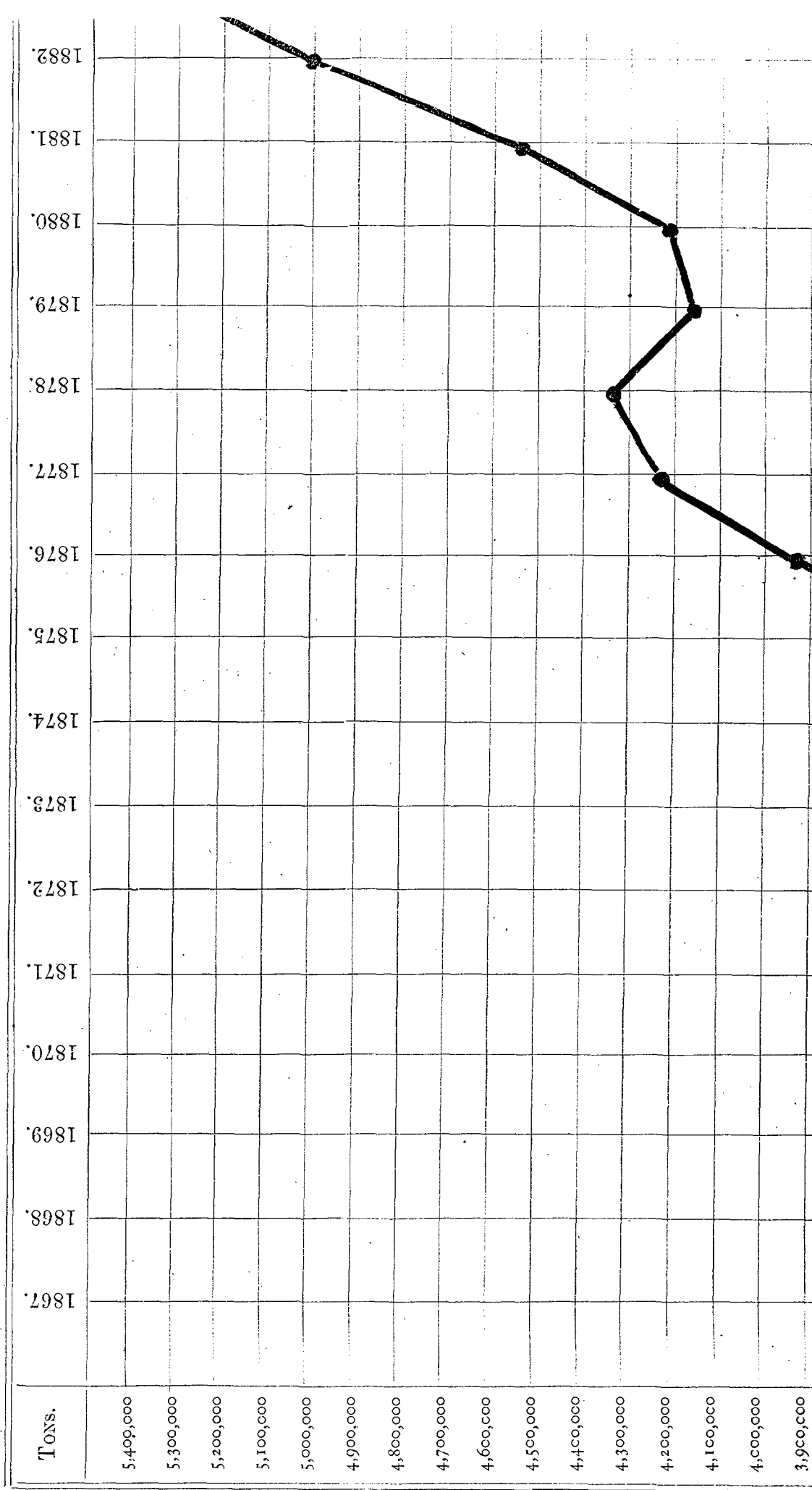
H. G. THOMSETT, R.N.,
Harbour Master, &c.

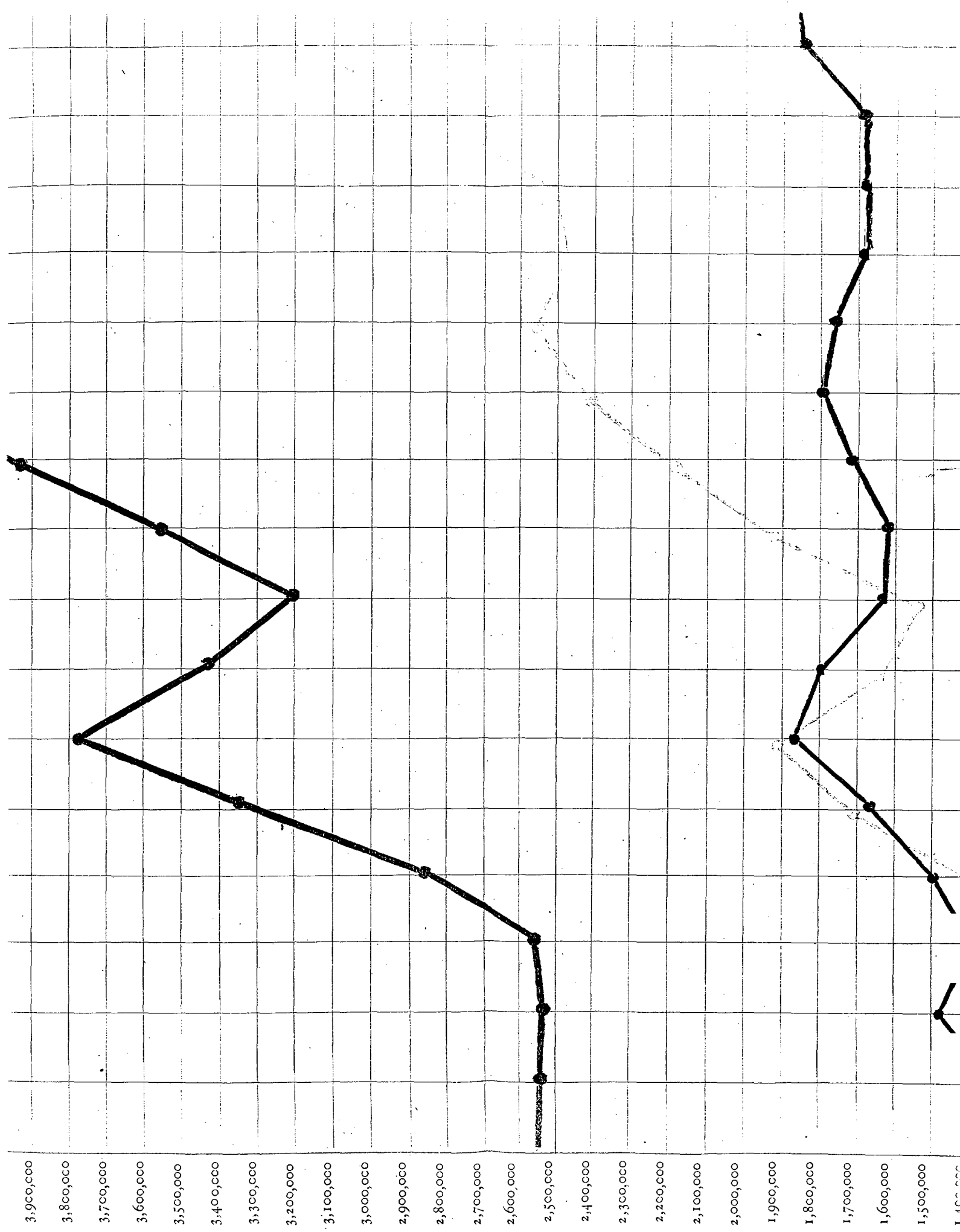
XIII.—DIAGRAM of Tonnage entered at Hongkong, from 1867 to 1884 incl

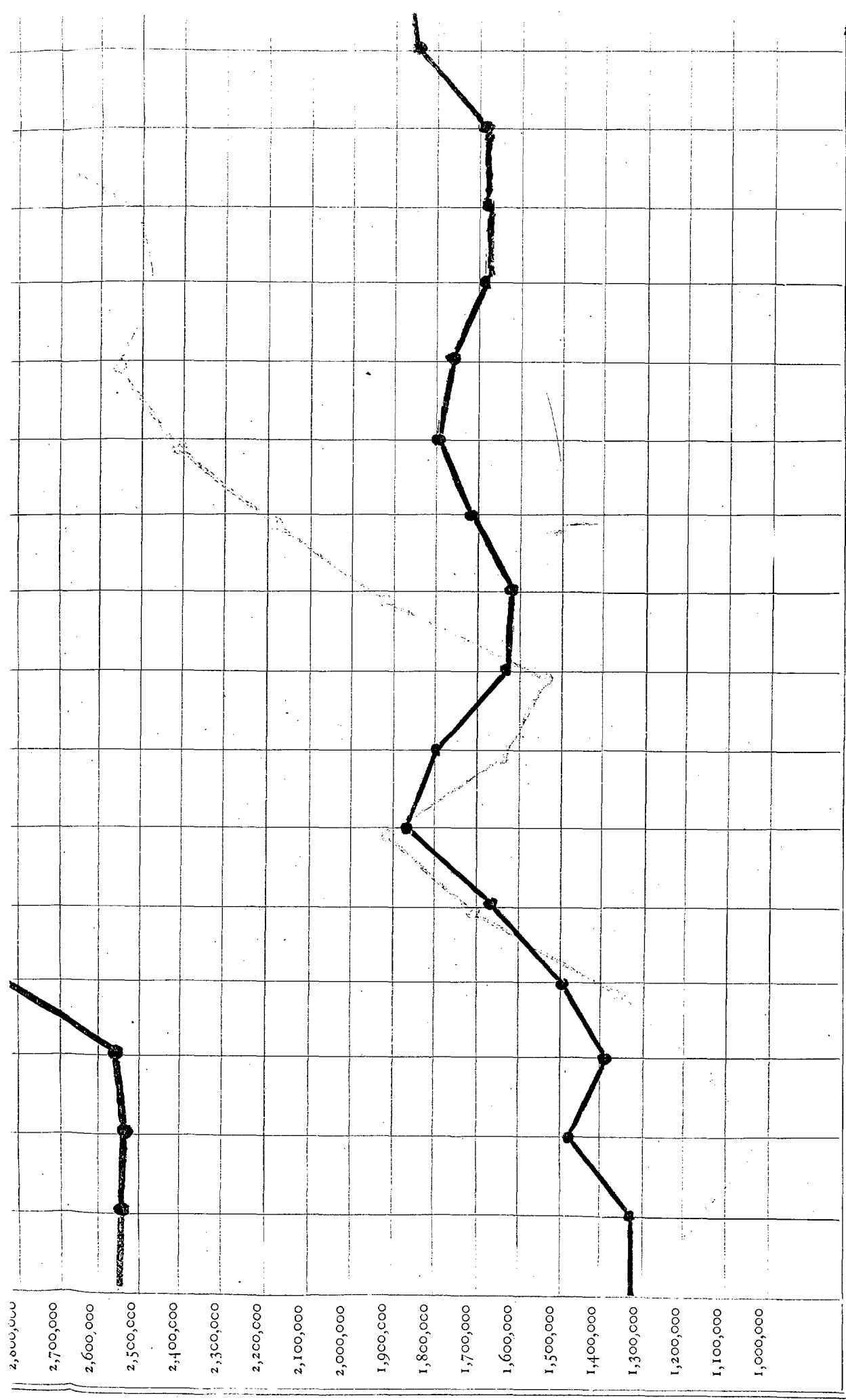
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Harbour Department, Hongkong, 21st January, 1885.

Minute by His Excellency the Governor.

G. F. BOWEN.

The Governor recommends the Council to vote the sum of three thousand dollars for an additional supply of about 200,000 rounds of MARTINI-HENRY Carbine Ammunition, required for the Police and Volunteers, under the circumstances stated in the annexed correspondence.

Government House, 22nd April, 1885.