

DOC 1834 7 MAY

At Dundee the seventh day of May eighteen hundred and thirty four years;

At a meeting of the Committee of the Fraternity of Masters and Seamen in Dundee.

Present:

The Boxmaster,
Depute Boxmaster,
Messrs. William Ogilvie;
Thomas McGregor;
Thomas Erskine;
The Boxmaster in the Chair.

The Boxmaster laid before the meeting a communication addressed "To the Directors of the Light House "Dundee Ferry" dated "May 1834" requiring a Statement "showing the date "when the Lighthouse was erected, by what authority erected, the description of the light ; "how paid for with an estimate of the expense of maintaining the same for the year 1833 – or "an average for the last two or three years."

The meeting directed the clerk to forward to Mr. Hume in name of the Fraternity for whom the communication is obviously intended a statement of which a draught was now ready and a copy of which is directed to be inserted in the Sederunt Book at the end of this minute.

(Signed) John Calman Boxmaster

Statement in regard to the Lighthouses on the River Tay belonging to the "Fraternity of Masters and Seamen in Dundee", made up in reference to a communication from Joseph Hume Esqr., M. P. as chairman of the Select Committee on Lighthouses appointed by the House of Commons.

The communication above referred to is addressed "to the Director of Lighthouse Dundee Ferry". It is presumed the communication was so addressed by mistake and was intended for the Director of Lighthouses of the River Tay who are the Seamens Fraternity.

The Statement is required to show "the date when the lighthouse was erected, "the description of the light, how paid for with an Estimate of the expense of maintaining the "same for the year 2833, or an average for the last two or three years."

I. Date of erection of Lighthouse.

There are in all four Lighthouses Two were erected on the Northside of the River Tay near its embouchure at a place called Buddonness, upwards of 150 years ago and two new lighthouses were erected in their stead, the one about 50 years ago, and the other within these last 25 years. The two Lighthouses further up the River on the Southside nearly opposite Broughty Ferry were erected in the years 1823 and 1824.

II. By what authority erected.

The Shipmasters and Seamen who have their residences in the Burgh of Dundee have for time immemorial been united into a Society known by the name of "The Fraternity of Masters and Seamen in "Dundee," and by that name have been acknowledged in several Acts of the Privy Council of

Scotland, particularly in one dated the 24th of February 1687, granting warrant to and allowing the said Society to erect Lights and Beacons at the entry of the River and Frith of Tay and to levy and exact on account of their Lights a duty of 12 pennies Scots or one penny Sterling for every Ton of all the ships or other vessels either going out of or coming into the river and Firth of Tay between Fifeness and the Redhead inclusive, and to levy and exact the double of the said duty from Foreigners. Subsequently the Fraternity obtained a Royal Charter from His late Majesty George III dated 19th September 1774 containing all the usual clauses and in particular confirming the powers conferred upon them by the foresaid Act of the Privy Council. By the immemorial practice of the Fraternity the free yearly produce of the Society's estate and Funds after payment of necessary charges are payable for the relief of reduced or decayed members of the Society and their near relations and the said Royal Charter contains a direction to the like effect.

III Description of the Lights

The Lights belonging to the Trinity House Dundee may be described as exhibited from four Towers of Masonry ; Two of which are called the "Buttonness Lights" are situate upon the left bank of the Tay in the County of Forfar and form Leading Lights for the Gaa and Abertay sands at the entrance of the Frith.

The other two called "The South Ferry Lights" are situate higher uop the River, upon its right bank, in the county of Fife and are also leading lights for the Abertay sands and fairway or navigable tract of the River. The lights are from oil with Reflectors and are technically described at pages 85 and 86 of Stevenson's British Pharos.

IV How paid for

The expense of erecting the Lighthouses and keeping up the Lights and Buoys at the entrance of the River is defrayed out of the duty Exigible under the foresaid act of the Privy Council and Royal Charter. But it is proper to state, that although by these warrants they have a right to exact one penny Sterling per Ton, both on the outward and homeward voyage, the sum they have been in the practice of exacting is only one penny and four twentieths per registered Ton, on both voyages, and this duty is only exacted on vessels entering or going out of the River Tay above the Lighthouses at Buttonness.

V Estimate of expense

The expense of maintaining the Lights for the year 1833 was £381.2/-. But the sum does not include any part of the general expense of Managing the Society's affairs; and the Boxmaster and a special Committee of their number, who regularly visit the Lights perform this duty and all other duties connected with the Lights and business of the Society gratis. The Lights are likewise periodically inspected at the expense of the Society by Mr. Stephenson the Super-intendent of the Northen Lights. It is proper further to explain, that the sum before stated is altogether exclusive of extraordinary expenditure such as the erection of new Lighthouses, no part of which is included in the Estimate and on account of which duty no additional duty is levied on vessels.

The statement now made up exhausts the subject of the requisition , but all other particulars connected with the Society's revenue and Expenditure are contained in a Return made to the Lords of the Treasury on the 9th March 1833, a copy of which will be forwarded if desired.

Copy letter to Mr. Hume:

Dundee 17th May 1834

Sir,

In compliance with your request as chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Lighthouses I now beg leave to transmit to you the statement which you have required.

I have the honour to be &c.,

The preceeding letter sent to Mr. Hume enclosed in a blank cover addressed to Sir Francis Freeling Bart. Secretary to the General Post Office.

By J. C. Boxmaster

END

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