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## **Political No. 91 of 1874, Forwarding for Information a Copy of Papers Regarding the Proceedings at Bahrein in Connection with the Turkish Steamer**

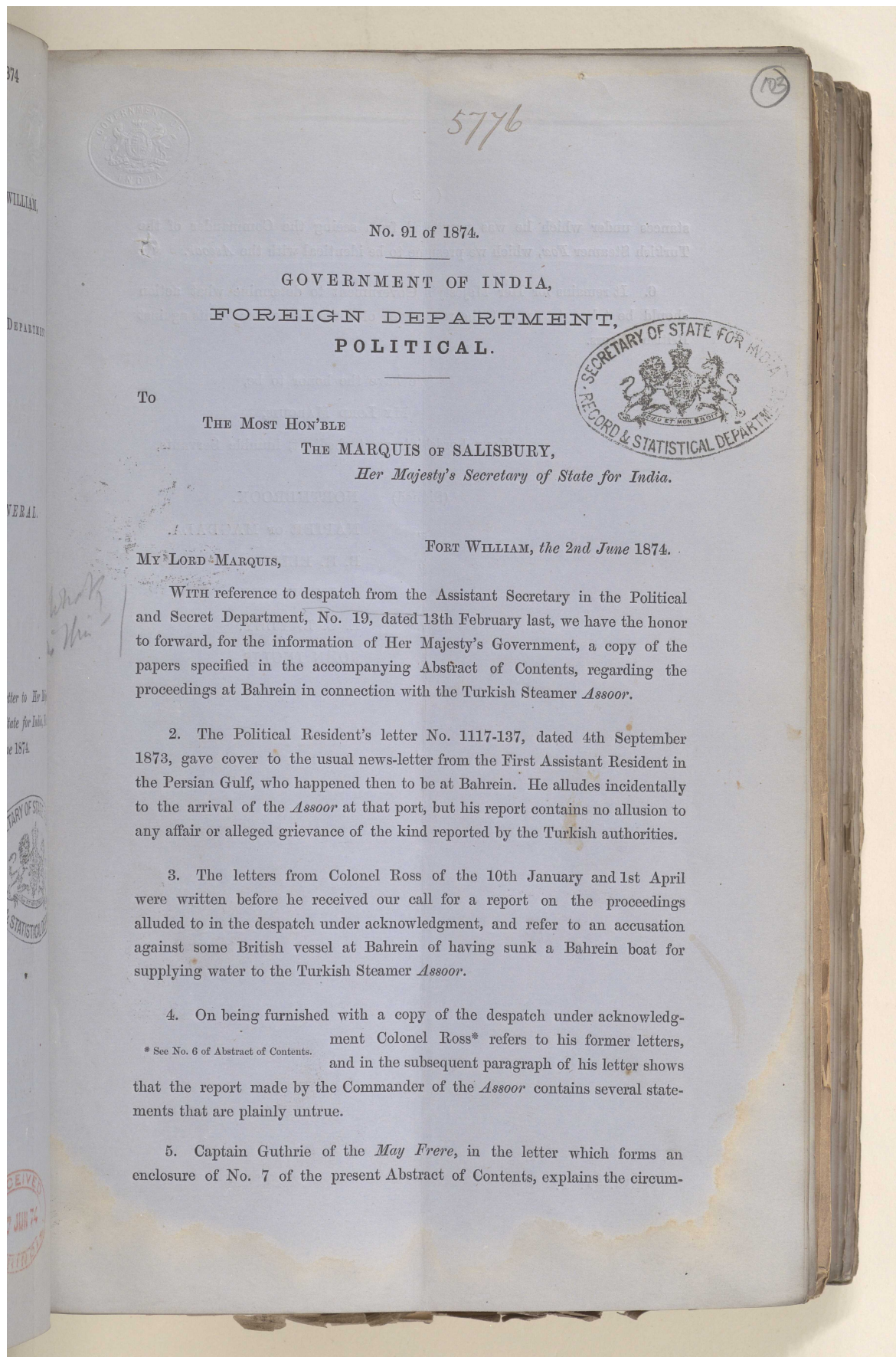
<b>Holding Institution</b>	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
<b>Reference</b>	IOR/L/PS/6/118, ff 103-107a
<b>Date(s)</b>	2 Jun 1874-27 Jun 1874 (CE, Gregorian)
<b>Written in</b>	English in Latin
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### **About this record**

This item consists of copies of a Political Despatch from the Government of India Foreign Department to the Secretary of State for India, dated 2 June 1874 and received via Brindisi on 27 June 1874, forwarding for information a copy of papers regarding the proceedings at Bahrein [Bahrain] in connection with the Turkish steamer *Assoor*, with reference to a despatch from the Assistant Secretary, Political and Secret Department, No. 19, dated 13 February 1874.

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the Proceedings at Bahrein in Connection with the Turkish Steamer *Assoor* [103r]  
(1/14)



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the Proceedings at Bahrein in Connection with the Turkish Steamer *Assoor* [103v]  
(2/14)

( 2 )

Yes  
apparently so

stances under which he was prevented from seeing the Commander of the Turkish Steamer *Fox*, which we presume to be identical with the *Assoor*.

6. It remains for Her Majesty's Government to determine what action should be taken to prevent the recurrence of similar false complaints against British officers.

We have the honor to be,

MY LORD MARQUIS,

Your Lordship's most obedient, humble Servants,

(Signed) NORTHBROOK.

„ NAPIER OF MAGDALA.

„ B. H. ELLIS.

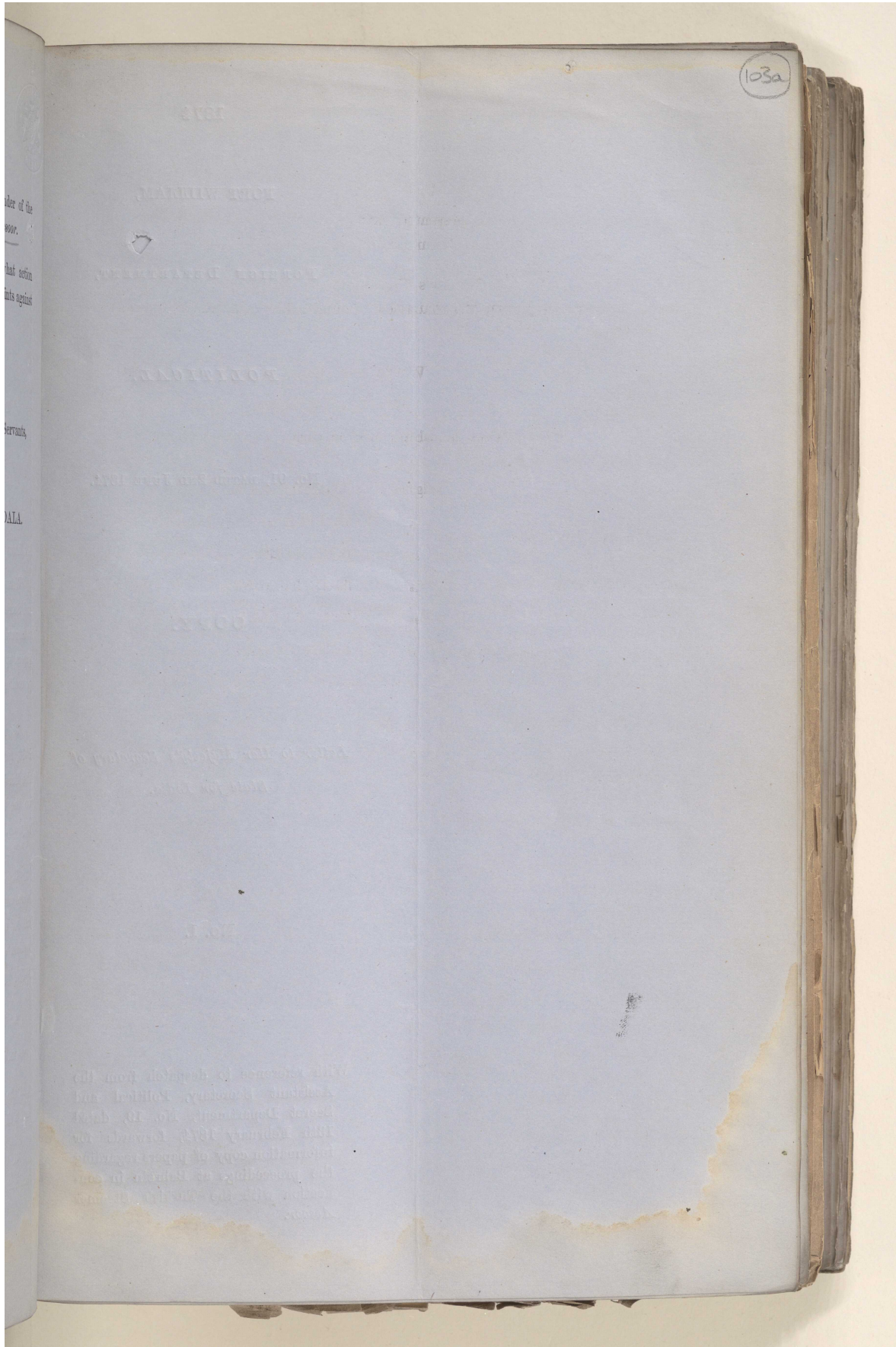
„ A. HOBHOUSE.

„ E. C. BAYLEY.

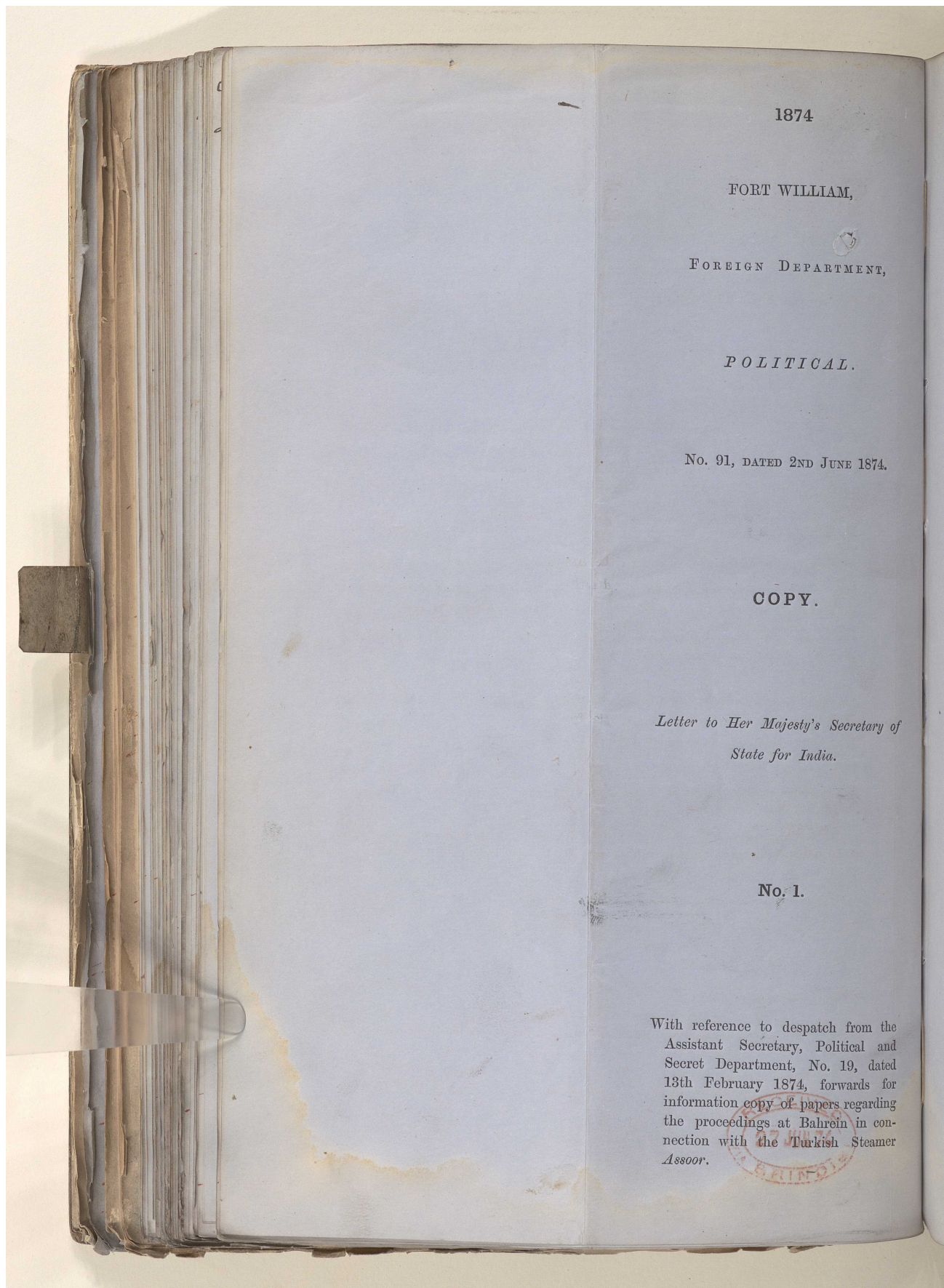
„ JOHN INGLIS.

Exd.—T. Y.

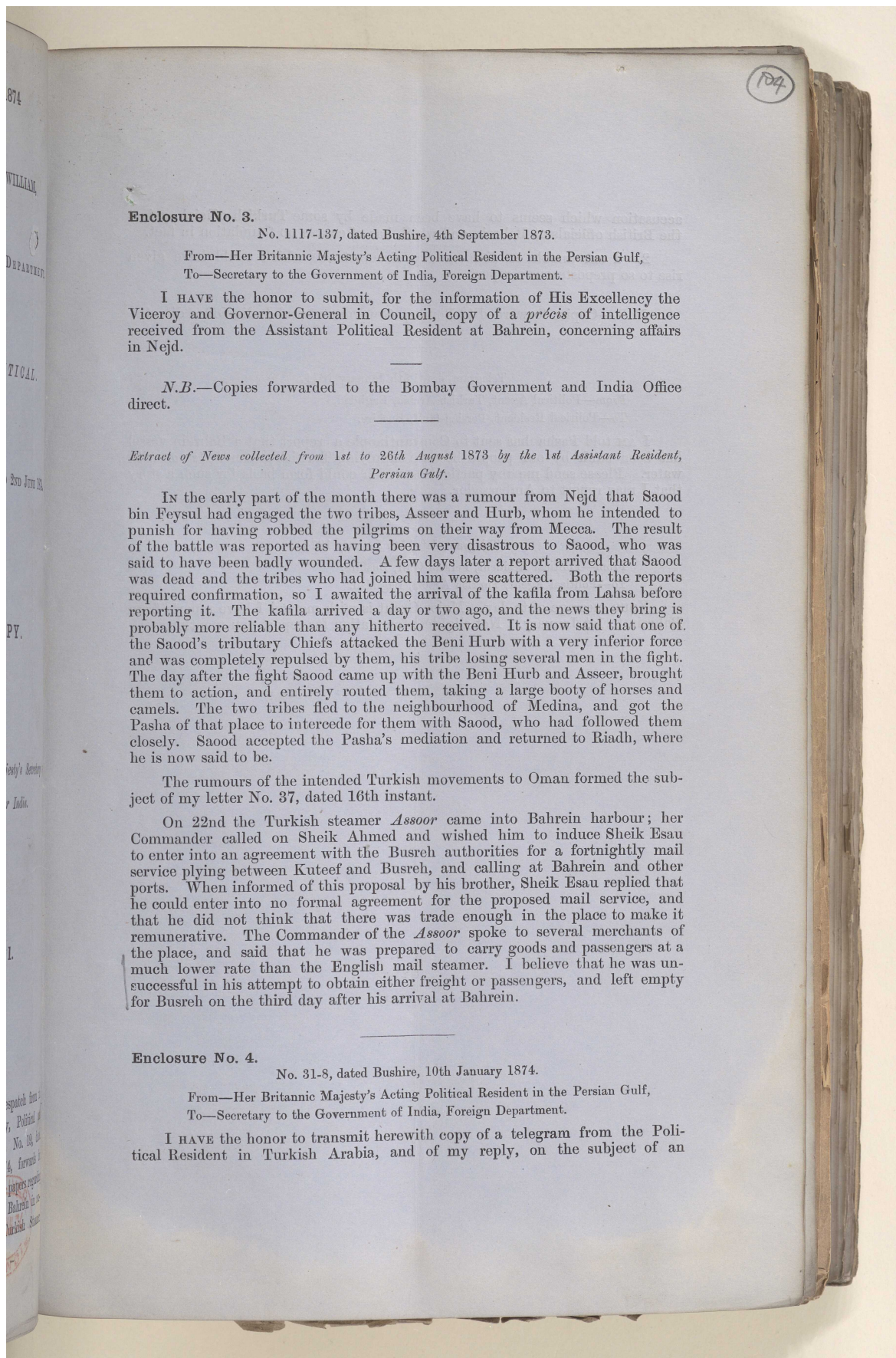
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the Proceedings at Bahrein in Connection with the Turkish Steamer Assoor [104r]  
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Enclosure No. 3.

No. 1117-137, dated Bushire, 4th September 1873.

From—Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

To—Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honor to submit, for the information of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council, copy of a *précis* of intelligence received from the Assistant Political Resident at Bahrein, concerning affairs in Nejd.

N.B.—Copies forwarded to the Bombay Government and India Office direct.

*Extract of News collected from 1st to 26th August 1873 by the 1st Assistant Resident, Persian Gulf.*

In the early part of the month there was a rumour from Nejd that Saood bin Feysul had engaged the two tribes, Asseer and Hurb, whom he intended to punish for having robbed the pilgrims on their way from Mecca. The result of the battle was reported as having been very disastrous to Saood, who was said to have been badly wounded. A few days later a report arrived that Saood was dead and the tribes who had joined him were scattered. Both the reports required confirmation, so I awaited the arrival of the kafila from Lahsa before reporting it. The kafila arrived a day or two ago, and the news they bring is probably more reliable than any hitherto received. It is now said that one of the Saood's tributary Chiefs attacked the Beni Hurb with a very inferior force and was completely repulsed by them, his tribe losing several men in the fight. The day after the fight Saood came up with the Beni Hurb and Asseer, brought them to action, and entirely routed them, taking a large booty of horses and camels. The two tribes fled to the neighbourhood of Medina, and got the Pasha of that place to intercede for them with Saood, who had followed them closely. Saood accepted the Pasha's mediation and returned to Riyadh, where he is now said to be.

The rumours of the intended Turkish movements to Oman formed the subject of my letter No. 37, dated 16th instant.

On 22nd the Turkish steamer *Assoor* came into Bahrein harbour; her Commander called on Sheik Ahmed and wished him to induce Sheik Esau to enter into an agreement with the Busreh authorities for a fortnightly mail service plying between Kuteef and Busreh, and calling at Bahrein and other ports. When informed of this proposal by his brother, Sheik Esau replied that he could enter into no formal agreement for the proposed mail service, and that he did not think that there was trade enough in the place to make it remunerative. The Commander of the *Assoor* spoke to several merchants of the place, and said that he was prepared to carry goods and passengers at a much lower rate than the English mail steamer. I believe that he was unsuccessful in his attempt to obtain either freight or passengers, and left empty for Busreh on the third day after his arrival at Bahrein.

Enclosure No. 4.

No. 31-8, dated Bushire, 10th January 1874.

From—Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

To—Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honor to transmit herewith copy of a telegram from the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, and of my reply, on the subject of an

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accusation which seems to have been made by some Turkish official against the British officials at Bahrein and which has of course no foundation in fact.

2. I am unable to discover any circumstance which could have given rise to so preposterous a report.

*N.B.*—Copies forwarded to Bombay Government and India Office direct.

Telegram, dated 5th January 1874.

From—Political Agent, Turkish Arabia, Baghdad,  
To—Political Resident, Persian Gulf, Bushire.

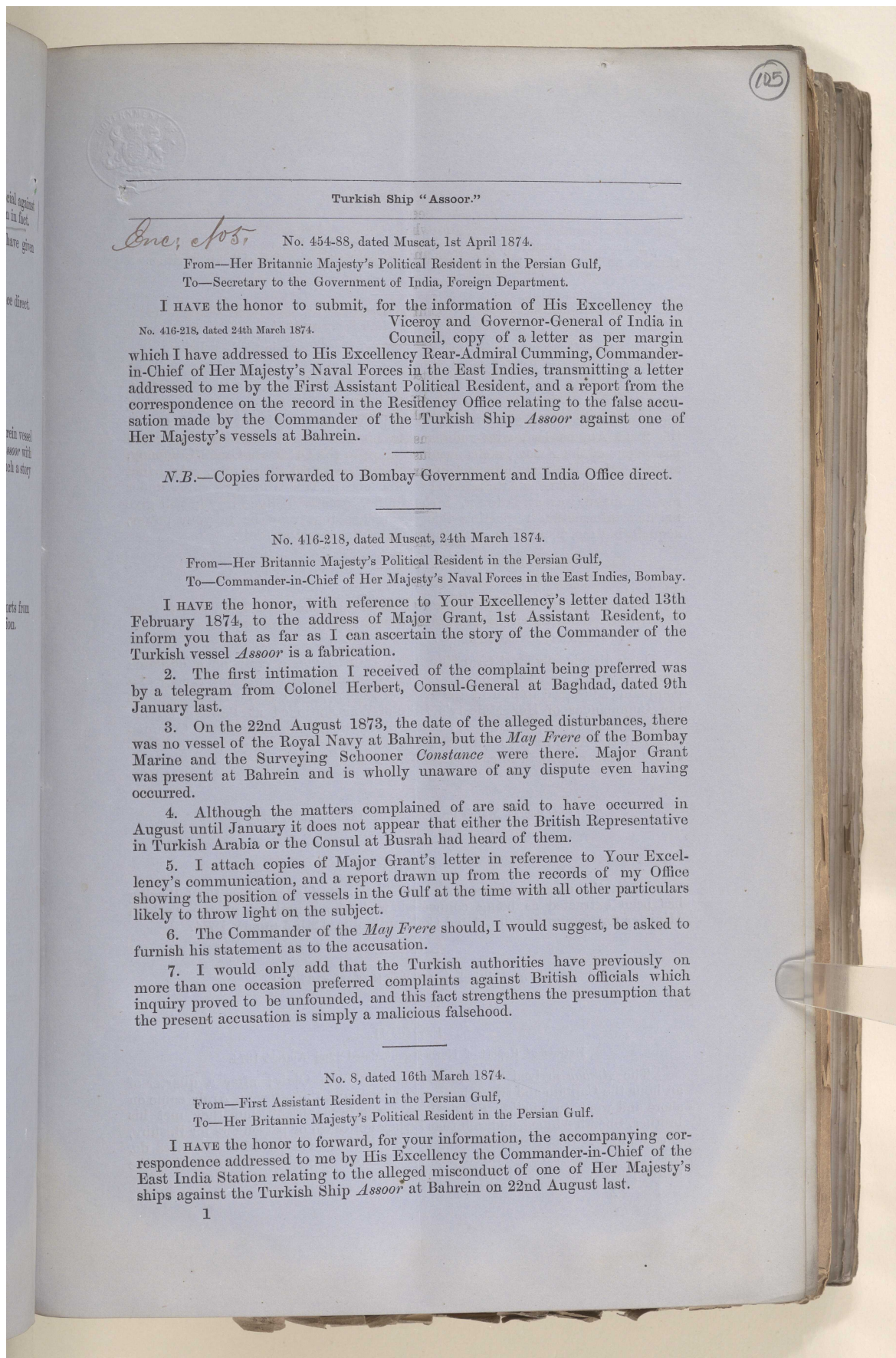
I AM told Pasha has sent to Constantinople a report that a Bahrein vessel has been sunk by our people because supplying Turkish steamer *Assoor* with water. Please send me any particulars which could form basis for such a story that I may report to Ambassador.

Telegram, dated 5th January 1874.

From—Political Resident, Persian Gulf, Bushire,  
To—Political Agent, Turkish Arabia, Baghdad.

YOUR message of to-day. Major Grant is with me and I have reports from Bahrein to 1st January. Not slightest foundation for report you mention.

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the Proceedings at Bahrein in Connection with the Turkish Steamer *Assoor* [105r]  
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Turkish Ship "Assoor."

*Enc. 4/5,*

No. 454-88, dated Muscat, 1st April 1874.

From—Her Britannic Majesty's Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,  
To—Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honor to submit, for the information of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council, copy of a letter as per margin which I have addressed to His Excellency Rear-Admiral Cumming, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Naval Forces in the East Indies, transmitting a letter addressed to me by the First Assistant Political Resident, and a report from the correspondence on the record in the Residency Office relating to the false accusation made by the Commander of the Turkish Ship *Assoor* against one of Her Majesty's vessels at Bahrein.

N.B.—Copies forwarded to Bombay Government and India Office direct.

No. 416-218, dated Muscat, 24th March 1874.

From—Her Britannic Majesty's Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,  
To—Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Naval Forces in the East Indies, Bombay.

I HAVE the honor, with reference to Your Excellency's letter dated 13th February 1874, to the address of Major Grant, 1st Assistant Resident, to inform you that as far as I can ascertain the story of the Commander of the Turkish vessel *Assoor* is a fabrication.

2. The first intimation I received of the complaint being preferred was by a telegram from Colonel Herbert, Consul-General at Baghdad, dated 9th January last.

3. On the 22nd August 1873, the date of the alleged disturbances, there was no vessel of the Royal Navy at Bahrein, but the *May Frere* of the Bombay Marine and the Surveying Schooner *Constance* were there. Major Grant was present at Bahrein and is wholly unaware of any dispute even having occurred.

4. Although the matters complained of are said to have occurred in August until January it does not appear that either the British Representative in Turkish Arabia or the Consul at Busrah had heard of them.

5. I attach copies of Major Grant's letter in reference to Your Excellency's communication, and a report drawn up from the records of my Office showing the position of vessels in the Gulf at the time with all other particulars likely to throw light on the subject.

6. The Commander of the *May Frere* should, I would suggest, be asked to furnish his statement as to the accusation.

7. I would only add that the Turkish authorities have previously on more than one occasion preferred complaints against British officials which inquiry proved to be unfounded, and this fact strengthens the presumption that the present accusation is simply a malicious falsehood.

No. 8, dated 16th March 1874.

From—First Assistant Resident in the Persian Gulf,  
To—Her Britannic Majesty's Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

I HAVE the honor to forward, for your information, the accompanying correspondence addressed to me by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief of the East India Station relating to the alleged misconduct of one of Her Majesty's ships against the Turkish Ship *Assoor* at Bahrein on 22nd August last.



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Turkish Ship "Assoor."

I have the honor to bring to your notice that I have already stated that there is no foundation for the accusation brought by the Turkish authorities.

Dated *Glasgow*, at Aden, 13th February 1874.

From—Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Naval Forces in the East Indies,  
To—Assistant Political Agent, Bahrein.

I HAVE the honor to enclose copies of correspondence I have received, relative to a complaint made by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs against the Commanding Officer of one of Her Majesty's ships stationed at Bahrein on the 22nd August last, with reference to his conduct towards the Master and passengers of the *Assoor*, a steamer belonging to the Ottoman Oman Company, and towards a boatman engaged in supplying the vessel with water. As I find by the logs that on the date referred to not one of Her Majesty's ships under my command was at Bahrein, I should feel greatly obliged if you will give me any information respecting this occurrence that may be in your power, acquainting me, if possible, with the name of the vessel at fault.

Dated Foreign Office, London, 28th January 1874.

From—Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,  
To—Secretary of the Admiralty.

I AM directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires* at Constantinople, forwarding a copy of a complaint addressed to him by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs against the Commander of Her Majesty's Ship-of-War stationed at Bahrein on the 22nd August last; and I am to request that you will move the Lords Commissioner of the Admiralty to take the necessary steps for enquiry into the particulars of this case, and to cause Lord Granville to be informed of the result.

[*Vide* Secret, March Proceedings of 1874, Nos. 174-175.]

REPORT.

FROM the correspondence on record in the Residency Office the following has been extracted as being connected with the complaint of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, dated Constantinople, 12th January 1874.

[*Vide* Political A., October 1873, Nos. 65-66.]

EXTRACT II.

Extract of Report of News Agent, dated 22nd August 1874.

The *Assoor* arrived at Bahrein this day from Ojair; after a quarter of an hour the Captain and two others, one a Turk and the other an Arab, came on shore and went to Sheikh Esau's house who was absent, but they met his brother, Sheikh Ahmed, and said that if they get cargo or passengers for Bushire, Busreh, and Kuteef they would engage to take less than the Mail Steamers do. That their ship will be three days at Bahrein when she will proceed to the above places; on the 24th she left for Kuteef.

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Turkish Ship "Assoor."

EXTRACTS III. and IV.

Letters from Resident, Persian Gulf, to Secretary to the Government of India, No. 1033-121, dated 20th August 1873, and No. 1118-133, dated 4th September 1873.

THE position of Her Majesty's vessels on service in the Persian Gulf are as follows according to latest received reports:—

- |                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| On 20th August 1873.   | { | Her Majesty's Ship <i>Columbine</i> , Royal Navy, at Muscat.<br>Her Majesty's Ship <i>Riflemen</i> , Royal Navy, at Gwadar.<br>Despatch Vessel <i>May Frere</i> , Bombay Marine, at Bahrein.<br>Surveying Schooner <i>Constance</i> , Bombay Marine, at Bahrein. |
| On 4th September 1873. | { | Her Majesty's Ship <i>Riflemen</i> , Royal Navy, at Gwadar.<br>Her Majesty's Ship <i>Columbine</i> , Royal Navy, Muscat Coast.<br>Despatch Vessel <i>May Frere</i> , Bombay Marine, Bahrein.<br>Surveying Schooner <i>Constance</i> , Bombay Marine, Bahrein.    |

From the above extracts it will be seen that although daily reports of the news current at Bahrein had been received from *two* independent sources from Bahrein, no mention whatever is made of any collision between the Commander of any British vessel of war and the master and passengers of the *Assoor* or with any boatman of Bahrein.

From the reports of the movements of vessels sent fortnightly to Government it is certain that no vessel of the Royal Navy was at Bahrein on the 22nd August, or for some days prior to and after that date, the only vessels at Bahrein at that period being the *May Frere*, Bombay Marine Despatch vessel, and the *Constance*, Bombay Marine Surveying Schooner.

Colonel Herbert having requested information on this subject on 5th January last, Resident replied by telegram as follows:—

"Major Grant is with me and I have reports from Bahrein to 1st January. Not slightest foundation for report you mention."

On the 10th January 1874 Resident, in letter No. 31-8 of that date, to Government of India, states in paragraph 2:—

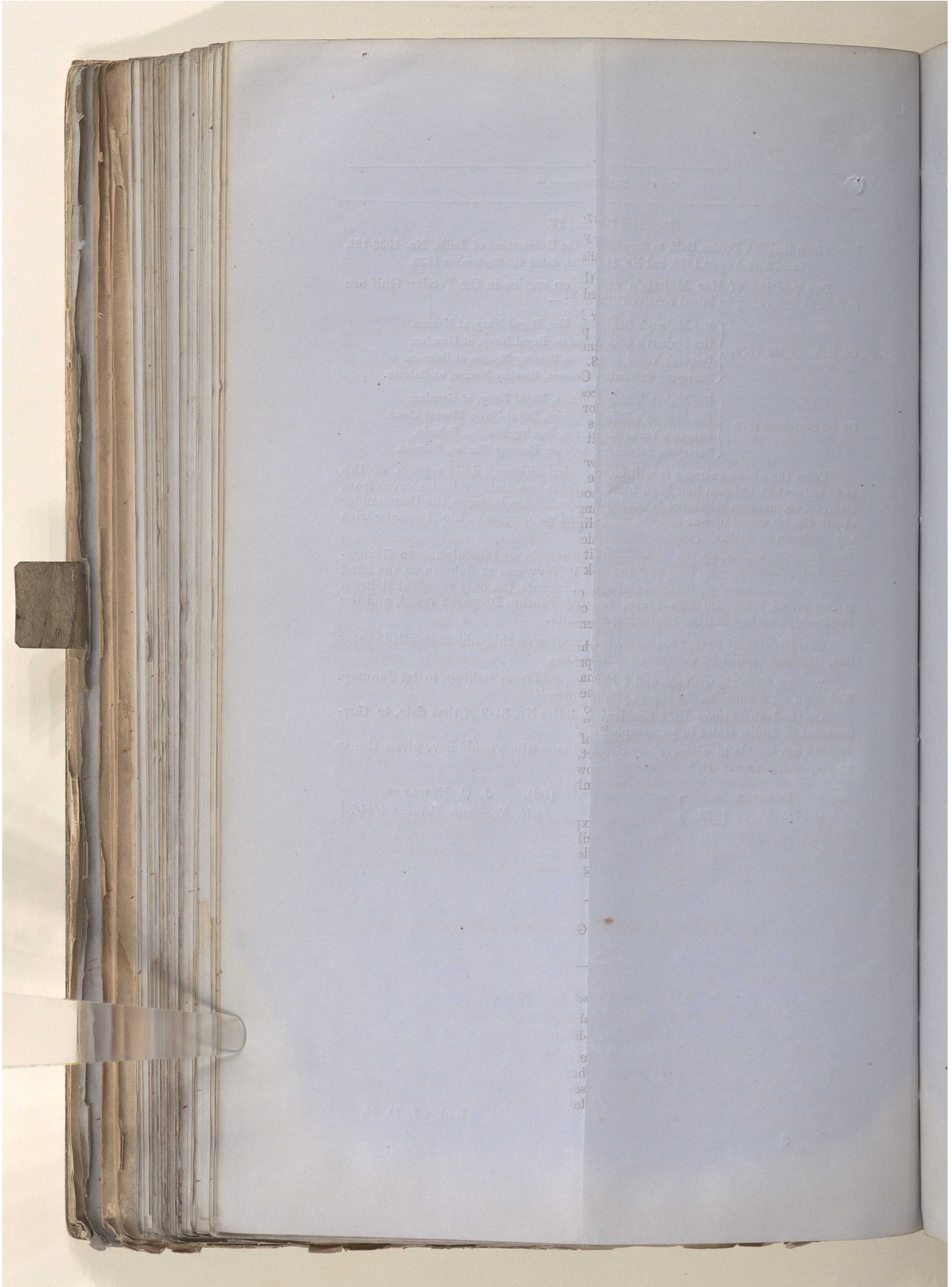
"I am unable to discover any circumstance which could have given rise to so preposterous a report."

BUSHIRE, }  
The 17th March 1874. }

(Sd). J. C. EDWARDS,  
Asstt. Resident, Persian Gulf.

Exd.—J. D. G.

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Enclosure No. 6.

No. 507-105, dated 17th April 1874.

From—Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,  
To—Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the correspondence forwarded under your docket No. 727P., dated 21st March 1874, for report.

2. I would beg to refer to my letter No. 454-88, dated 1st April last, and the papers accompanying that letter as enumerated in the margin.

No. 8 of 1874, from Major Grant, 1st Assistant Resident at Bahrein, to Colonel Ross.

Letter dated 13th February 1874, from Rear Admiral Cumming to Major Grant, with enclosures.

Report of 2nd Assistant Resident, Bushire, dated 3rd March 1874.

No. 416-218, dated 24th March, from Colonel Ross to Rear Admiral Arthur Cumming, C.B.

3. Since addressing His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief of the Naval Forces on this subject I have learnt from Major Grant, 1st Assistant Resident, that he recollects some further circumstances connected with the arrival of the *Assoor* at Bahrein in August last, which it may be useful to mention.

4. On the Commander of the *Assoor* informing the Chief of Bahrein that he wished to publish in the town that he was ready to take passengers at less rates than the mail steamers the Chief thought it courteous to consult Major Grant as to the propriety of his sanctioning this step. Major Grant at once assured the Chief that there was not the slightest objection, and indeed advised him to give the Turkish Officer all facilities. The notice was then proclaimed by sound of tom-tom in the bazaar, but it appears the inhabitants placed little faith in the Turkish steamer and none took passages.

5. It has been the invariable rule of the Political Officers in the Gulf to counsel the Chief of Bahrein and any other friendly Chiefs who seek advice to be particular to show civility and politeness to Turkish officials.

6. The report of M. Dominici (to which no date is affixed) contains such very manifest absurdities that it is surprising his extraordinary statements should have been accepted by the Ottoman authorities without the slightest investigation apparently. For instance he appears to be under the belief that Bahrein is ruled by a British Officer who inflicts the most arbitrary punishments on the inhabitants at will. The "British Commandant of Bahrein" is represented as issuing orders to a Consul of Bushire, an official who exists only in the brains of the writer of this report, and the Agent of the "Company Oman" at Bushire is cited as having a knowledge of these orders, which if acted on by the mythical Consul would certainly have caused considerable amazement to the Persian authorities.

7. I venture most respectfully to express a hope that His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council will be pleased to decide that such notice should be accorded to this unfounded complaint as may tend to prevent a recurrence of such extremely insulting accusations on the part of Turkish officials against British Officers.

N.B.—Copies forwarded to Bombay Government and India Office direct.

Enclosure No. 7.

No. 584-118, dated Kurrachee, 6th May 1874.

From—Her Britannic Majesty's Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,  
To—Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

WITH reference to the correspondence ending with my letter No. 507-105, dated 17th April 1874, to your address, I have the honor to transmit herewith a report by the Commander of the B. M. Vessel *May Frere*, from which it is evident that the Turkish Commander alluded to the *May Frere* when speaking of the British guard-ship at Bahrein.

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2. From perusal of Captain Guthrie's letter it is evident that the perversion of facts on the part of the Turk was wilful rather than from ignorance.

N. B.—Copy forwarded direct to Government of Bombay.

No. 11, dated Muscat, 30th April 1874.

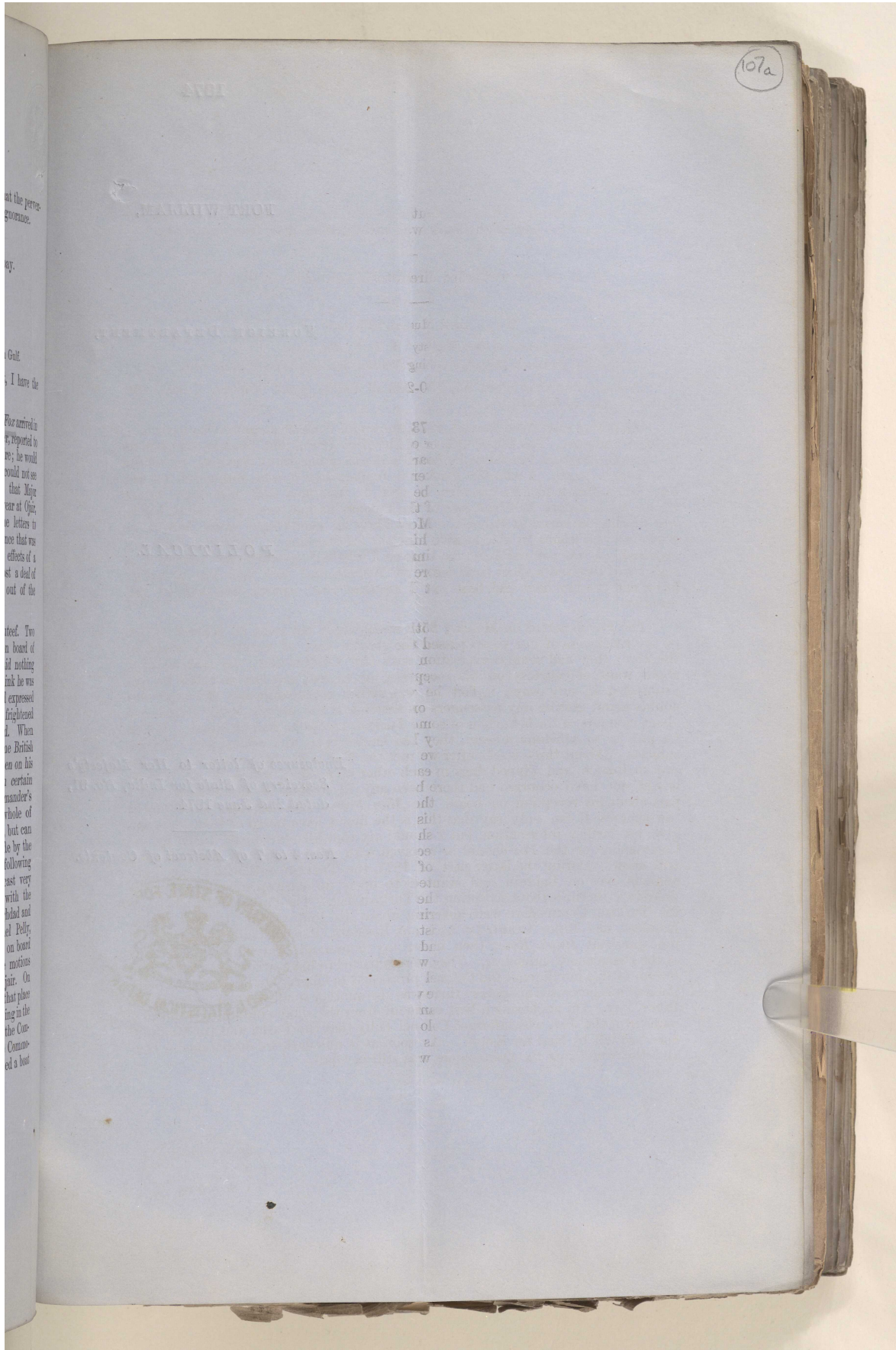
From—Commander of Her Majesty's S. D. V. *May Freve*,  
To—Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

In answer to your letter No. 570-280 of 1874, dated Muscat, I have the honor to state as follows:—

On Friday p.m., 22nd August 1873, the small Turkish steamer *Fox* arrived in Bahrein harbour. The Chief Officer of the *May Freve*, Mr. Booker, reported to me that the Captain had come on board and was going on to Bushire; he would take letters for us. I told Mr. Booker to explain how I was and could not see him, but to thank him for his offer, be civil to him and tell him that Major Grant, 1st Assistant Resident, one of the Officers he had seen last year at Ojair, was residing on shore at Bahrein. Most likely he would have some letters to send; also he would be able to give him any information or assistance that was required. I was not visible at the time as I was laid up from the effects of a stab I had received a short time before at Bushire, and as I had lost a deal of blood and the jaw bone had been cut I required rest: speech was out of the question.

The *Fox* departed on Monday 25th at day-light but went to Kuteef. Two of the Engineers of our vessel passed the greater part of Sunday on board of the *Fox*; they had some conversation with the Commander; he said nothing about want of courtesy on his reception, or to lead any one to think he was dissatisfied in any way; in fact he was rather communicative and expressed doubts about getting any passengers on account of the people being frightened about rumours of the behaviour of some Turkish troops he had on board. When he put in to Albidha it seems they had landed there and robbed some British subjects. About three weeks after we met the *Fox* in Bushire roads then on his way to Busreh, and dipped flags to each other in passing, which I am certain would not have occurred had there been any ill feeling in the Commander's part about his reception on board the *May Freve*. As regards the whole of the charges I can only say that this is the first I have heard of them, but can give no further information, but I should say that all statements made by the Commander of the *Fox* should be received with great caution as the following will show. During the latter part of 1871 the Turkish authorities cast very anxious eyes on Bahrein and wanted to open up correspondence with the Bahrein authorities about accepting the Turkish flag. The Pasha of Baghdad and the Turkish Commodore were hovering about to that effect. Colonel Pelly, Resident, and Major Grant, 1st Assistant Resident, Persian Gulf, were on board the gun-boat *Hugh Rose*, then under my command, watching the motions of the Pasha and Commodore. They were reported to have arrived at Ojair. On receipt of this intelligence the Colonel proceeded to Ojair. On nearing that place the *Fox* was perceived at anchor: there was also another small steamer laying in the Inner Bay. On anchoring a boat came off from the shore containing the Commander of the *Fox*, who informed Colonel Pelly that the Pasha and the Commodore had left by land for Kuteef. As soon as it was dark we despatched a boat and discovered that the Commodore was still in Ojair.

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