M.R.O. 1—77,000—8-6-37.

(1) Number of pages 18

(2) Date of repair 7-7-39

(3) Initials of the Referencer

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Financial **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 322. Press / Mis.

68-69.

Dated 24-6- 1861.

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Financial Department,
24th June 1861.

No. 68. Read the following Extract from a letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal; to the Financial Secretary, dated 4th May 1861, No. 117.

Paragraph 1. I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential letter, dated 16th March last, explaining the Financial condition of the Government of India, and communicating a scheme for making over to the Local Governments, certain subjects for local taxation; and to reply as follows:

2. The increase of the salt duties alluded to in your letter has been carried into effect. In Bengal the duty has been raised to Rupees 3, Annas 4 a maund, the highest rate allowed by existing Law; and in the North West Provinces, Oude, and the Punjab, it has been raised to Rupees 3 a maund. In Madras and Bombay the duty is even now only Rupee 1-4-0 a maund; and presuming that it is the intention of the Government of India to raise that rate to Rupee 1-8-0, even so the Lieutenant Governor, in justice to the Bengal Provinces, and to the other Provinces on this side of India, earnestly requests attention to this great disparity.

3. The salt tax is substantially the tax upon labourers; the one tax imposed upon the great mass of the population. The wages of labor are not represented to be lower in Madras and Bombay, than on this side of India; there seems therefore no justification, on general principles, for inequality *in respect to this particular impost.* Differences in regard to landed and commercial wealth have been remarked upon, when it has been found necessary to say something in relation to this unequal system of taxation; but it is obvious that though this consideration might, or might not, be applicable to any tax falling upon those who have some property of some sort, it cannot possibly have any applicability to a tax which is, purely, an indirect poll tax. Another equally inapplicable remark is also sometimes made on this subject, viz., that boiled sea salt is dearer than solar evaporation salt (which is true); and that much of the former sort of salt is consumed in Bengal, but none of it is consumed in Bombay or Madras (which is true); therefore it is reasonable that all sorts of salt, whether boiled sea salt, or solar-evaporation salt, or rock salt, or Cheshire salt, consumed in Bengal, should be charged in Bengal a higher duty by the maund than any salt is charged in Madras or Bombay. The logical fallacy of this argument is too palpable to require pointing out. It is only necessary to say that, practically, a very large quantity of solar-evaporation salt (Kurkutch) is consumed in Bengal, whilst about half the remainder is Cheshire salt; and that all the salt consumed in the Punjab is rock salt. Moreover, what is purely a poll tax, has no more economical relation to the cost price of salt, than it has to the cost price of corn or tobacco. The special consideration of the necessity of limiting the rate of duty, out of respect to the smuggler, so far as it applies at all, applies only in favor of Bengal proper, where, from its extensive delta, the extensive smuggling of salt is very much more easy than it is in any other part of India.

4. The Lieutenant Governor, with all respect for all former Governments, observes that it is a practice handed down from the beginning of the British Empire in India, to make Bengal pay much more than its share of the Imperial Revenue, and to give it back in return not a quarter of its share of the Imperial funds granted for such objects as Military protection, Police, Roads, and other Public Works. He does not know what may be in contemplation, but he sees this inveterate practice still in operation. He trusts, therefore, that it will be admitted to be no more than the duty of any one in his position, never to miss a fair opportunity of attempting to attract notice to systematic inequalities so injurious to the Provinces with which it is connected.

No. 5,674.

Forwarded to the Government of Madras with a request that cause may be shown, why there should not be an increase of salt duty in that Presidency.

By order of the Governor General of India in Council,

FORT WILLIAM,
FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT,
The 17th May 1861.

(Signed) C. HUGH LUSHINGTON,
Secretary to the Government of India.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Financial Department,
24th June 1861.

No. 69. ORDER THEREON, 24th June 1861, No. 322.

With the above Order, the Government of India forward an extract from a letter from the Government of Bengal, and request that cause may be shown why there should not be an increase of salt duty in the Madras Presidency.

2. Resolved that the Government of India be informed in reply, that as has been already intimated, this Government perceive no objection to the monopoly price of salt being raised from Rupee 1-6-0 to Rupee 1-8-0 per Indian maund or to the highest rate which can be imposed under Act VI, 1844—the Revenue derived from the enhancement of the tax being applied towards making good the sum of 8 lacs, which the Madras Government are expected to contribute for the current year.

See Minutes of Members of Government forwarded with letter of 22nd April last, No. 4.

3. Resolved that immediate measures be taken for carrying out the increase of price above alluded to, and that they be reported to the Government of India in the reply which is about to be sent to their letter of the 8th ultimo, No. 5,278.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd, F. Cartledge,

Extract from a letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Financial Secretary
No 117 dated 4th may 1861.

Para 1. I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your Confidential letter dated 16th march last, explaining the financial Condition of the Government of India, and communicating a scheme for making over to the Local Governments certain subjects for local taxation; and to reply as follows.

2. The increase of the Salt duties alluded to in your letter has been carried into effect. In Bengal the duty has been raised to Rupees 3 annas 4 a maund, the highest rate allowed by existing Law. And in the N. W. Provinces, Oude, and the Punjab, it has been raised to Rs 3 a maund. In Madras and Bombay the duty is even now only Rupee 1. 4 — a

mands; and presuming that it is the intention of the Government of India to raise that rate to Rupees 1-8-- even so the Lieut. Governd, in justice to the Bengal Provinces, and to the other Provinces on this side of India, earnestly requests attention to this great disparity.

3 The Salt Tax is substantially the Tax upon labourers; the one Tax imposed upon the great mass of the population. The wages of labor are not represented to be lower in madras and Bombay, than on this side of India; there seems therefore no justification, on general principles, for inequality in respect to this particular impost. Differences in regard to landed and commercial wealth have been remarked upon, when it has been found necessary to say something in

Relation

relation to this unequal system of taxation; but it is obvious that though this consideration might, or might not, be applicable to any Tax falling upon those who have some property of some sort, it cannot possibly have any applicability to a Tax which is, purely, an indirect poll Tax. Another equally inapplicable remark is also sometimes made on this subject, viz.: that boiled sea salt is dearer than solar-evaporation salt (which is true); and that much of the former sort of salt is consumed in Bengal, but none of it is consumed in Bombay or madras (which is true); therefore it is reasonable that All sorts of salt, whether boiled sea salt, or solar-evaporation salt, or rock salt, or Cheshire salt, consumed in Bengal, should be charged in Bengal a higher duty by the maund than any salt is charged in

in Madras or Bombay. The logical fallacy of this argument is too palpable to require pointing out. It is only necessary to say that, practically, a very large quantity of Solar-evaporation Salt (Kurkutah) is consumed in Bengal, whilst about half the remainder is Cheshire salt; and that all the Salt consumed in the Punjab is rock Salt. Moreover, what is purely a poll tax, has no more economical relation to the cost price of Salt, than it has to the cost price of Corn or Tobacco. The special consideration of the necessity of limiting the rate of duty, out of respect to the smuggler, so far as it applies at all, applies only in favor of Bengal Proper, where, from its extensive delta, the extensive smuggling of Salt is very much more easy than it is in any other part of India.

The

H. The Lieutenant Governor, with all respect for all former Governments, observes that it is a practice handed down from the beginning of the British Empire in India, to make Bengal pay much more than its share of the Imperial Revenue, and to give it back in return not a quarter of its share of the Imperial funds granted for such objects as military protection, police, roads and other Public Works. He does not know what may be in contemplation, but he sees this inveterate practice still in operation. He trusts, therefore, that it will be admitted to be no more than the duty of any one in his position, never to miss a fair opportunity of attempting to attract notice to systematic inequalities so injurious to the Provinces with which it is connected.

№ 5674

Forwarded to the Government of Madras with a request that cause may be shewn why there should not be an increase of Salt Duty in that Presidency.

By Order of the Governor General of India in Council.

Fort William
Financial Deptt.
The 17th May
1861

Secy: to the Government of India

Finl 1861 Dept.

From
The Secy to the Govt of India. Fl. Dt. 5674

C.O. No 322

Dt 17th May
Rd 28th June } 1861.

No. 353.

Relative to the disparity of the salt duties in Madras & Bombay on the one side & Bengal N.W. Provinces, Oude &c on the other.

It appears to me that the argument, if such it can be called, of the letter could only lead to the reduction of duty upon salt in Bengal - certainly not to the enhancement of the duty in Madras

[illegible]

Financial Dept.

Pros: of the Madras Govt.

Read order of the Govt of India Financial Dept. No 5674 dated 17 May 1861.

Order thereon 24 June 1861. No. 322.

With the above Order the Govt of India forward an extract from a letter from the Govt of Bengal - and regard that cause may be shown why there should not be an increase of salt duty in the Madras Presidency.

2 Resolved that the Govt of India be informed in reply, that as has been already intimated, this Government perceive no objection to the monopoly price of salt being raised from R 1 : 6 to

See Minutes of Members of Govt prevented with letter of 22 April last No 4

R 1.8 per Indian Maund
or to the highest rate wh.
can be imposed
under Act XI. 1844 —
the revenue derived
from the enhancement
of the tax being applied
towards making
good the sum of 8
Lacs, which the Madras
Govt are expected to
contribute ~~by local~~
~~taxation~~ for the current
year —

3 Resolved that imme-
-diate measures be
taken for carrying
out the increase of
price above alluded
to — and that they
be reported to the Govt
of India in the reply
which ~~will shortly~~ is about to
be sent to their letter
of the 8th ult. No 5278 Jp

To Dove Dept
To the Rev Dept — dispd 24

Financial 1861 Sept

No 322.

Proceedings of the
Madras Govt

of 24 June 1861

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