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Marine (1899) Department.

G.O., No. 407 Marine

DATED 11 May 1899.

R

[Despatch Abstract.]

Light-Weight Coins. Proc: Financial Dept Comptg: with remarks
Govt of India Resolution modifying the rules hitherto
in force for receiving in Government Treasuries
Coins & the Charnian, M.C. Board.

[M.—6 500—7-1-99.]

Indexed. 15/5/99

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Marine Cho. 590

Government {1899} of Madras.

FINANCIAL.

Gr No 277 Mar dy 23-3-99
1[illegible] Mar dy 27-3-99
180 Mar dy 27-3-99

Recd. 5-5- 1899.
Regd.

Enclosures

Spare copies

G.O., No. 536, 21st April 1899.

B No 40 Mar dy 4 May 99

Communicated to

APRIL. the Chairman, Harbour Trust Board.

APR
To R[illegible] 10.5.99.
Mr Ch: H.T. Bd.

D 15/5/99

Light-weight Coins.

Communicating, with remarks, to the Revenue and Local and Municipal Departments, to the Board of Revenue, and to certain officers resolution of the Government of India modifying the rules hitherto in force for receiving — in Government treasuries, and directing the publication of the same in the *Fort St. George Gazette* and the application of the ruling to certain cases that had arisen in the Public Works and Revenue Departments.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

Read—again the following paper :—

G.O., No. 204, Financial, dated 21st March 1891.

Abstract.—Communicating notification of the Government of India authorizing certain officers to cut or break silver coin under section 16 of the Indian Coinage Act, 1870 in supersession of certain previous notifications.

Read—also the following papers :—

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 2618, dated 21st September 1898.

Read—the following papers :—

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 973, dated 5th April 1898.

Read—the following papers :—

From R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, Ref. on C. No. 265-A—Accts., dated 2nd February 1898.

I have the honour to state, for the information of the Board, that, some time ago, the officer in charge of the Branch Reserve Treasury in Madras cut and returned to my Treasury Deputy Collector a number of light whole rupees, on the ground that they had been fraudulently reduced in weight. Mr. Batten and I have both examined these coins and could see no indication of fraudulent ill usage on them. Mr. Batten, while still in charge, sent one of the cut coins to the Accountant-General, asking for instructions as to the method of detecting such fraudulent reduction. In reply, the Accountant-General states, in his letter, dated 5th November 1897, No. 3432—Resource Department, that the coin sent to him had lost $16\frac{1}{2}$ grains in weight since 1874, and as, on the average, a rupee loses only 2 per cent. or 3·6 grains in 55 years, it must be assumed that the reduction must be due to fraudulent usage, even though subsequent wear and tear while the coin is in circulation will obliterate all marks of ill-treatment. Unfortunately, the coin does not seem to have been accurately weighed before it was cut, and although it must have been light, it may very well have been the case that a portion of the $16\frac{1}{2}$ grains was lost in the operation of cutting.

2. I do not think the Accountant-General's argument is altogether sound. A great deal must depend upon the wear which a coin has. If passed from hand to hand constantly in the bazaar it will be very much more quickly worn than if it spends most of its time in a hoard or in a treasure bag in some treasury. I have seen silver coins of the United Kingdom of the same age as the rupee in question which have lost quite as much in proportion to their weight, and in regard to which the question of fraudulent usage was never likely to be raised. And it is a known fact that coins, which have circulated most of their existence in the East end of London, suffer very much more by wear and tear than those circulating in the west end.

3. On receipt of the Accountant-General's letter quoted above, orders were issued by my Deputy Collector to taluk officers and to the head-quarter treasury shroffs that all coins received must be very carefully examined, and that all coins found to

have lost more of weight than what the Accountant-General stated was proper to expect, must be treated as reduced by fraudulent means and must be cut and returned to the tenderer under article 579, Civil Account Code. All such coin found in remittances from taluks has been cut and returned to the taluk shroffs who had passed them as good. I may add that ten rupees found reduced in weight in a remittance from the Branch Reserve Treasury at Madras were similarly treated.

4. Now the receipts at the various taluk treasuries during the months of December, January, February and March run from 15 to 25 lakhs each month. In some taluks there are two shroffs, but in the majority there is only one. It is the duty of these shroffs to examine coins received, to see that they are good and current coins, and, in performing this duty, the shroff must not detain the person paying in the coinlonger than is absolutely necessary. Formerly the practice was to accept as good all coins which bore no evident signs of having been tampered with, all rupees and half rupees found later on to have lost more than 2 per cent. being treated under article 583 of the Civil Account Code as coin which had been reduced by fair wear and tear. The shroff was thus able to examine coin rapidly and persons paying in were not detained. But now if a shroff does this he runs the risk of having to replace any coins which the head-quarter shroffs may find to be below the minimum weight and class under the Accountant-General's instructions as fraudulently reduced, or else he must weigh every rupee and keep persons bringing remittances waiting for a very long while. As a matter of fact both these things happen. Last month 57 light coins were found in a remittance of Rs. 1,30,000 from Tenali, the value of which had to be made good by the shroff of that taluk. It is true he got the cut light coins back. But owing to the fall in the value of silver the loss must be considerable, and his pay is only Rs. 15 a month.

5. In a similar case in regard to Bandur, the Tahsildar writes :—

"It appears that no less than Rs. 27 were cut and returned to the shroff in the month of January and that he was ordered to make good the amount. It is, I need hardly submit, hard upon these ill-paid men to be ordered to pay such large sums month after month, as it is impossible for them to weigh each rupee that they receive. The matter of cutting such rupees is creating a panic in rural tracts, as village officials are refusing to receive rupees freely from ryots for fear that they may be rejected in the taluk treasury."

6. The panic among shroffs is even greater. The Bandur shroff says that if he must weigh each rupee he cannot examine more than Rs. 2,000 a day. This, in a taluk with receipts of over Rs. 1,60,000 a month at this season must mean an enormous delay. A shroff is expected to examine Rs. 15,000 a day under the rules in force.

7. In my treasury remittances from taluks have to be examined on receipt. In taluk treasuries the shroff has to make payments as well as receive money. At head-quarters it is however possible to arrange that only one of the four shroffs shall receive and pay out money, and that the others shall do nothing but examine remittances. It has been found that they can examine each Rs. 10,000 a day, taking care to exclude all fraudulently reduced coin. At 24 working days to a month these three men can get through Rs. 7,20,000. The remittances, however, amount to over Rs. 10,50,000 at this season, and there is thus an accumulating unshroffed balance. If extra men are entertained on daily wages, it will be impossible to recover the value of light coin passed by these temporary men, and the practice of entertaining them is in any case open to objection.

8. Since the passing of the Currency Act of 1893 the rupee is no longer worth exactly its weight in silver. Silver has been constantly depreciating and is worth now only about Rs. 72 per 100 tolas. India has become one of the countries whose standard of currency is gold, and the rupee has, in fact, become a token in the same way as the British silver coinage or as over our copper coinage. There is, therefore, not the same necessity for insisting on a minimum weight for rupees in ordinary circulation, any more than there is for insisting on a minimum weight for copper coins. I do not propose to go as far as to suggest that, as is the case with copper, all silver coin shall continue to be current so long as they continue to show any signs of Government mintage, but I think that the strictness of the existing rules may very

well be modified. The old rule might very well be reverted to, that so long as the appearance of the coin showed no signs of having been fraudulently tampered with, it should be accepted as current at full value and, if found light, it should be dealt with under article 583, Civil Account Code, and withdrawn from circulation. This is, I believe, the rule in regard to light gold in Britain. I am unable to say what is the rule in regard to silver, but it must, of course, be quite as favourable to the public.

9. If the Accountant-General cannot see his way to modifying his orders on the subject, I would suggest that the Government of India be addressed in view to an alteration of the Civil Account Code, the circumstances having altered since 1893.

10. I would also respectfully suggest that the sums collected from the various shroffs, namely, Rs. 57 from Tenali, Rs. 35 from Gudivada, Rs. 27 from Bandur, and Rs. 21 from the Nandigama shroff be, in the circumstances refunded to them, as it is impossible for them to perform the examination expected of them and yet to avoid detaining for long periods persons who bring remittances.

Reference No. 135, dated 8th February 1898.

Forwarded to the Accountant-General for favour of early remarks.

From R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Masulipatam, 18th February 1898, R. C. No. 265-A.—Accts.

In continuation of my letter, Ref. on C. No. 265-A—Accounts, dated 2nd February 1898, in which I brought to the notice of the Board the effects of the ruling of the Accountant-General that all rupees, which have lost more than a certain weight, must be regarded as fraudulently reduced in weight, however free from cause of suspicion the appearance of the coin may be, I have the honour to state that, in the case of the Tenali taluk, the number of coins returned by my treasury officer was 88 out of the first remittance of Rs. 1,40,000 during January. Fifty-nine of these 88 coins are described as light by misuse. The second remittance of Rs. 2,62,500 has not yet been completely shroffed. The total receipts at this taluk treasury during the month amounted to Rs. 4,22,340–7–2; there are two shroffs on Rs. 15 and Rs. 10, and the number of working days was 23. Each shroff had therefore to examine on the average, Rs. 9,181 a day. Transactions were heaviest between the 10th and 25th. If this period be considered, which contained twelve working days, and during which Rs. 3,93,191 were received, the daily average for each shroff was Rs. 16,383. Making allowance for their other work and taking every precaution to exclude light and counterfeit coin, each shroff cannot manage to examine more than Rs. 7,500 a day. If he examines only this quantity he gets into trouble for keeping the parties waiting and for not examining the number the Civil Account Code expects of him, and if he attempts more he is liable to have to replace the light coins he has admitted.

2. The value of silver in Masulipatam is only Rs. 72 for 100 tolas, and at this rate the loss to the two shroffs on Rs. 59, assuming that the coins were full weight, is Rs. 16–8–4 for January, against their united pay of Rs. 25. I am told, however, that, in Tenali, silversmiths will not allow more than As. 8 for a cut rupee. The loss to the two shroffs would, therefore, be Rs. 29–8–0. They have not yet been able to replace the coins returned to them.

3. It is utterly impossible to expect men to work on these terms, and I have therefore directed that, pending the receipt of orders on my letter of the 4th instant quoted above, the value of such coins shall not be collected from the shroffs. I trust the Board will be pleased to approve of my action.

4. The remaining 29 coins were returned for other faults than lightness, and I do not make any recommendation in the shroff's favour in regard to them.

Reference No. 216, dated 1st March 1898.

The Collector's letter of the 4th instant was referred to the Accountant-General for favour of remarks and has not yet been returned.

2. In the meantime the Board approves of the Collector's action.

From F. C. HARRISON, Esq., Accountant-General, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Fort St. George, 4th March 1898, No. 835.

In reply to your reference, No. 135, dated the 8th of February 1898, on the accompanying letter from the Collector of Kistna, suggesting that the strictness of the existing rule with regard to the cutting of greatly underweight rupees may be modified, I have the honour to state that the rule to which Mr. Morris refers is an old one now observed more strictly.

2. The rate of wear and tear has been arrived at after the examination of a very large number of rupees (more than 50 lakhs) and may be taken as fairly accurate.

3. My currency office allows a considerable margin over this rate before rejecting coin for fraudulent reduction when it bears no evident signs of the same. More potdars, as provided for in the Civil Account Code, can be employed when necessary.

4. The enclosure received with the Board's Reference No. 216, dated 1st March 1898, is also returned.

5. If the Board proposes to uphold the Collector in remitting the sum to be made good by the shroff, I request that the papers be sent to Government with an intimation. I shall be glad if Government will permit me to indicate the views of the Government of India upon the subject before confirming the Board's action.

From R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Masulipatam, 14th March 1898, No. B 774-Accts.

I have already brought to the notice of the Board in my letters of 4th January 1898 and 10th January 1898, Ref. on C. No. 265–Acc., the great hardship and inconvenience that result from the recent ruling of the Accountant-General in the matter of coins presumed to have been rendered light by misuse. Complaints on this subject continue to be received from the sub-treasuries. The shroffs that have been frightened by the heavy loss they are likely to incur in making good the coin rejected by my treasury officer are naturally very slow in receiving money into the treasury to the great annoyance of the public. It is impossible to avoid delay when the diminution in weight is alone considered, sufficient cause of the presumption of the coin having been rendered light by misuse. Consequently every suspicious coin has, in his own interests, to be weighed by the shroff. A very undesirable effect of this is the large accumulation of unshroffed balances in the various sub-treasuries, so much as over Rs. 1,80,000 being reported to be kept unshroffed in Tenali alone.

2. Another cause that increases the work of the shroffs is that the sub-treasury officers are incapable of effectually withdrawing from circulation such coins on their first presentation, not being empowered by the Coinage Act to cut them. It happens, therefore, that every such coin has a chance of being presented a number of times, until at one time or other the shroff is taken in. One of my Tahsildars reports, and it stands to reason it should be so that the village officers, when they find certain coins rejected from their remittance, do not easily give up presenting them again, determined evidently not to be losers themselves.

3. Under the above circumstances, I fully understand the reasonableness of the arzis from some of my Tahsildars requesting to get additional shroffs appointed. The Tahsildar of Tenali reports that he is almost in despair as to how the work can be gone through at all without additional help to his shroffs. His taluk is the heaviest

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2. Another cause that increases the work of the shroffs is that the sub-treasury officers are incapable of effectually withdrawing from circulation such coins on their first presentation, not being empowered by the Coinage Act to cut them. It happens, therefore, that every such coin has a chance of being presented a number of times, until at one time or other the shroff is taken in. One of my Tahsildars reports, and it stands to reason it should be so that the village officers, when they find certain coins rejected from their remittance, do not easily give up presenting them again, determined evidently not to be losers themselves.

3. Under the above circumstances, I fully understand the reasonableness of the arzis from some of my Tahsildars requesting to get additional shroffs appointed. The Tahsildar of Tenali reports that he is almost in despair as to how the work can be gone through at all without additional help to his shroffs. His taluk is the heaviest

in the district, so much as over eleven lakhs being collected in the four months of December, January, February and March. Similar reports have also reached from other taluks. I herewith subjoin a list of the collections made in the three taluks—Tenali, Gudivada and Bápatla—with regard to which alone I make a recommendation, showing also the number of shroffs at present employed :—

Taluks.	December 1896.	January 1897.	February 1897.	March 1897.	Total.	Number of shroffs at present.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
Tenali	79,849	5,42,167	3,43,434	4,10,966	11,76,416	2
Bápatla	1,29,598	2,55,168	3,28,015	3,05,128	10,17,909	2
Gudivada	30,711	2,32,708	3,13,050	3,93,394	9,69,863	2

I would draw the attention of the Board in this connection to its Proceedings No. 63, dated 6th February 1894, from which it appears that a receipt of three lakhs of rupees has been considered to be as much as a shroff might be expected to cope with in the course of the year. The income of the Tenali taluk approaches twelve lakhs, while that of Bápatla exceeds ten lakhs. There are only two shroffs in each of these taluks, and it is submitted that, in the face of the above proceedings, the appointment of one more additional shroff to each of these taluks would be justifiable, even when the necessity for it should not be so accentuated as it is at present, by the difficulties thrown upon the shroff.

4. I consider that, in the case of Gudivada, the difficulty may be met by the appointment of a temporary shroff during the kist months alone. There is always this objection to the appointment of temporary shroffs that while it does relieve the permanent incumbent of some work, it relieves him of no responsiblity whatever in the matter of subsequently replacing coins when so ordered. As, however, the income of this taluk would not justify the entertaining of a permanent shroff, I have had to recommend a temporary appointment on Rs. 10 a month.

From R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Masulipatam, 14th March 1898, R. C. N. No. 265-A.—Accts.

In continuation of my letter, dated 4th February 1898, Ref. on Cur. No. 265-A.—Accts., in which I brought to notice the effect of the Accountant-General's order that coins below a certain weight must be treated as reduced by fraudulent means, I have the honour to state that I have received from the Accountant-General a letter, dated 5th March 1898, No. 842, in which he says that it is the practice of the currency department—and I infer also of the reserve treasury—to treat as fraudulently reduced rupees of 1840 which have lost 10 grains or upwards, and rupees of 1862 and subsequent mintages which have lost 5 grains and upwards. To some extent this is a relaxation of his previous dictum that as coins 60 years old had been found to have lost not more than 2 per cent. of their weight by fair wear and tear, coins which have lost more must be regarded as having been reduced by fraudulent means.

2. I have however to point out that neither in my head-quarter treasury nor in sub-treasuries are there any weights by which it may be determined what the exact weight of any coin is. The only weights supplied are of 176·4 grains for whole rupees, 88·2 grains for half-rupees and 122·5 grains for sovereigns and 61·125 grains for half-sovereigns. These weights are only for testing whether or not coins still remain legal tender and fit for re-issue. If rupees are to be rejected as reduced by fraudulent means, whether or not they show any visible signs of such treatment, if they fall below 170 or 175 grains, according to circumstances, all shroffs ought to be provided also with weights of 85 and 87½ grains for half-rupees and 170 and 175 grains for whole rupees. Otherwise they must in self-protection continue to reject all coins which fall below the present minimum circulation weights; a taluk shroff cannot say that a coin a little below 176·4 grains will not be rejected by the head-quarter shroffs, nor the latter that such a coin will not be cut and returned them by the currency department or the reserve treasury.

3. I still think that while rupees below the 176·4 grain standard should be withdrawn from circulation and classed as uncurrent, all light coin which does not to the eye appear to have been tampered with should be received without question in payment of Government demands.

From F. C. HARRISON, Esq., Accountant-General, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated 29th March 1898, No. 1274.

With reference to the letter to your address from the Collector of Kistna, No. 265-A., dated the 14th March 1898, a copy of which has been sent to me, and in continuation of my letter, No. 835 of the 4th idem, I have the honour to state that I have not in any way changed my attitude as implied in paragraph 1 of the Collector's present letter. In my letter to him I merely told him my actual practice.

2. It is the custom here for the shroff to first set apart all coins which are less than minimum weights and then ascertain their exact weight by using the grain weights. The latter can be purchased locally.

From R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Masulipatam, 24th March 1898, R. C. No. 265—Accts.

In my letter, Ref. on Cur. No. 265-A.—Accts., dated 18th February 1898, I proposed that, pending final orders on the question raised in an earlier reference on the same current, dated 4th February 1898, the value of light-weight rupees should not be collected from taluk shroffs, and in its Proceedings, No. 216, dated 1st March 1898, the Board approved of my action.

2. I mentioned only the case of the Tenali taluk—my letter was drafted at Tenali —, but my proposals had reference to all taluks. I think it right to inform the Board of the total involved in each taluk up to the date of despatch of this letter.

Taluk.	January.	February.	March.	Total.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Bandur	25 8 0	..	..	25 8 0
Gudiváda	37 0 0	15 0 0	11 0 0	63 0 0
Bezwada	..	..	..	..
Nuzvid	..	27 0 0	..	27 0 0
Nandigáma	21 0 0	12 0 0	4 0 0	37 0 0
Tenali	59 0 0	32 0 0	55 0 0	146 0 0
Bápatla	..	70 0 0	60 0 0	130 0 0
Sattenapalle	..	..	..	..
Narasaraopet	..	..	..	..
Vinukonda	..	..	..	..
Palnad	..	..	..	..
Tiruvúr	..	2 0 0	..	2 0 0
Total of the district ..	142 8 0	158 0 0	130 0 0	430 8 0

The Board will see how impossible it is to expect taluk shroffs to replace some of these sums without getting very seriously into debt.

3. As I am not supplied with weights to enable me to determine whether rupees of 1840 are less than 170 and those of 1862 onwards than 175 grains in weight, the figures mentioned by the Accountant-General in his letter of the 5th March 1898, No. 842, and as they were cut with reference to his previous declaration that a rupee which had lost more than 2 per cent. of its weight must have lost it by fraudulent misusage, I cannot say definitely how many of these coins should have been cut and how many should have been merely withdrawn from circulation.

4. In Gudiváda, before the receipt of my orders, the shroffs had made good Rs. 52 by borrowing from their friends. I do not propose now to refund this amount to them, but if my proposals in my first reference to the Board are approved I shall apply for sanction to do so.

Resolution—Mis. No. 973, dated 5th April 1898.

The Accountant-General's letter, No. 1274, dated 29th ultimo, will be communicated to the Collector of Kistna with reference to his R. C. No. 265-A.—Accts., dated 14th idem. In case there is special difficulty or inconvenience in following the method now indicated by the Accountant-General, the Collector is requested to report the same for the Board's orders.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) R. C. C. CARR,
Acting Secretary.

To the Collector of Kistna.
" Accountant-General.

From R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Masulipatam, 9th May 1898, R. C. No. 265-A.—Accts.

Replying to the Board's Proceedings, Mis. No. 973, dated 5th April 1898, calling upon me to state whether there is any special difficulty or inconvenience in following the method of examining coin indicated by the Accountant-General, I have the honour to state as follows.

2. In the Accountant-General's reserve treasury coin is received only from district treasuries and from the mints. These remittances are accompanied by a potdar whose services can be spared from the despatching treasury for a considerable period, and the shroffs can examine the coin at some leisure. The shroffs engaged in this work are also free from interruption during the time they are engaged in this work. The taluk shroffs on the other hand, who are the principal sufferers under the existing arrangements, have to receive money from village talayaries and vettics, who must not be kept waiting in the taluk treasuries longer than can possibly be helped, as they have other important duties to perform in their own villages. The taluk shroffs are also liable to interruption as upon them devolves the duty of issuing coin in payment of Government demands, stamps to vendors and stationery to clerks and karnams. And this issue of coin they may not do from the unshroffed village remittances. The work of shroffing has to be carried on as rapidly as possible under disadvantages from which the Accountant-General's shroffs are free. And even more care is expected of taluk shroffs in so much as no taluk officer is authorized to cut coin. The taluk shroffs may only refuse it. They must therefore be on the look out to see that coin which they have rejected one day is not brought up again for addmission by them the next. This is an inconvenience the Accountant-General's shroffs are entirely free from.

3. The Accountant-General's shroffs apparently first examine the coin and put aside all such coins as seem suspicious, then weigh these with the minimum weights, and finally ascertain with grain weights the exact weight of those coins which are below the weight fixed for legal tender. If this procedure is to be adopted in taluks, the staff of shroffs must be largely increased. The existing staff simply has not got time to do more than put aside coins whose appearance is suspicious and weigh these with minimum weights. And in the hurry with which their work has to be done, they often omit to notice anything suspicious about coins which may really be light in weight. Draughts may also affect the weighing they make, and they cannot spend much time over weighing any one coin. Grain weights are not, with deference to the Accountant-General, to be got locally, and if they could, their accuracy cannot be relied upon. If they are to be used, they must be supplied from Madras. I doubt, however, whether they could be used properly in taluk offices where the shroffs work in places into which gusts of wind enter, which must affect delicate weighings. In the vaults of Fort St. George there are no such draughts.

4. In these circumstances I consider it is impossible to adopt the Accountant-General's procedure with our present establishments.

5. If, however, it is determined that taluk shroffs must attempt at least to follow this procedure, I would request that they should be furnished with weights of 170 and

175 grains besides the present minimum 88·2 and 176·4 grain weights. I would also suggest that Tahsildars and Taluk Head Accountants be given the power of cutting light coin. Such powers would protect shroffs from the risk of having coins they had refused being again tendered to them later on.

6. This subject has opened up another connected with it. Under the Coinage Act of 1870 full discretion rests with the Treasury officer to decide whether coins tendered to him shall be dealt with as having been reduced in weight by unfair means. It seems to me that each Treasury officer must decide this for himself, and that his discretion is not subject to any control by the Accountant-General, to whom he is not as a matter of fact subordinate. If a Treasury officer decides that a coin has not been subjected to unfair treatment, it is not open to the Accountant-General to over rule him. I would submit for the Board's consideration that all the Accountant-General should do is under section 18 of the Act to allow the Treasury officer credit at one rupee per tola for such coins as may be remitted to him by that Treasury officer, which prove to have been reduced in weight more than 2 per cent. The loss to the Treasury officer and his shroffs would then be much less than what it is now with silver at Rs. 72 per 100 tolas. If any Treasury officer appears to be habitually careless, I submit that the Accountant-General should only bring the matter to the Board's notice.

7. I have already indicated my opinion that a change in the rules in regard to light silver is necessary as the standard of the Indian currency is now gold. I would also urge that it is to the public interest that light coins should be withdrawn from circulation as early as possible by natural means, and this can best be done by receiving it at par except where it has been visibly tampered with, the light coin being separated and not re-issued. What the Accountant-General requires amounts to insisting on light coin remaining in circulation, as to return a light coin to the tenderer as has to be done in taluks does not ensure its passing out of circulation.

8. I beg at this stage to solicit what final orders have to be passed in the case of those shroffs from whom the recovery of the value of the coins returned cut as having been misused has been postponed pending the final orders of the Board.

9. In conclusion, with reference to the first paragraph of the Accountant-General's letter under reference, I beg to state that the present correspondence arose in connection with a certain number of coins that were returned cut as coins that had been rendered light by misuse from the reserve treasury at Madras out of a remittance sent from this district. One of the coins so cut and returned was sent back to the Accountant-General, and he was requested to state what marks of misuse there were on the coin and whether, in the absence of such marks, a mere diminution in weight below the allowed depreciation of 2 per cent. in itself constituted the ground for the rejection of the coin as having been misused. In his letter, No. 2982, dated 24th September 1897, he wrote "I cannot lay down any specific reduction in weight as a proof of fraud. *A rupee loses on the average 2 per cent. in weight by ordinary wear and tear in about 55 to 58 years.* A consideration of this fact, together with a consideration of the age and appearance of a coin, should enable you to decide whether a rupee has been undoubtedly lightened by fraudulent means." Subsequently in his letter, No. 842, dated 5th March 1898, he gave information of the practice that obtained in his office of cutting, as having been misused, all coins of 1810 which had lost *10* grains or more, and of 1862 and later mintages when they had lost *5* grains or more. I think I was justified in describing as a change of attitude the difference between his first description of coins which had lost more than 2 per cent. (3·6 grains) as probably reduced by fraudulent means, a definition which was presumably meant to be acted upon by my treasury, and his later position that certain coins which had not lost more than 5 and others not more than 10 grains might be allowed to pass.

From R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Masulipatam, 11th June 1898, R. C. No. 265-A.—Accts.

I have the honour to request that Government may be moved to confirm Board's Proceedings, No. 216, dated 1st March 1898, directing that pending disposal of my reference in regard to light coins, no recovery should be made from shroffs.

This confirmation is deemed necessary, as the orders of the Accountant-General who has directed the recovery of the nominal value of these coins, must under article 16, Civil Account Code, prevail over those of every authority subordinate to the Local Government.

2. I append a statement of sums outstanding on this account in the objection books of this office up to end of May 1898:—

Name of taluk.	Value of light misused rupees to be recovered from shroffs up to end of May 1898. Rs.	A.	P.
Bandur	18	8	0
Nandigáma	44	0	0
Tenali	216	0	0
Nuzvid	55	0	0
Bápatla	141	0	0
Gudiváda	*188	0	0
Total ..	662	8	0

* Includes Rs. 52 recovered from the shroff prior to the tentative postponement of collection of the value of such rupees.

Reference, No. 679, dated 21st June 1898.

Before addressing Government as desired in the second of the letters read above, the Board resolves to request the Accountant-General, with advertence to paragraph 5 of his letter No. 835, dated 4th March 1898, to indicate his views in the matter both generally and with special reference to Mr. Morris' letter of 9th May.

From T. HESKETH BIGGS, Esq., Accountant-General, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated Fort St. George, 22nd July 1898, No. 3726.

With reference to your No. 679, dated 21st ultimo, asking me, with advertence to paragraph 5 of Mr. Harrison's letter, No. 835, dated 4th March 1898, to indicate my views in the matter of light-weight coin generally and with special reference to Mr. Morris' letter of 9th May, I have the honour to state that the following are the orders laid down by the Comptroller-General for my guidance in his No. 642, dated 28th June 1897:—

"The principle which should be observed in determining whether the Treasury officers from whom the remittances were received should be required to make good the value of such coin or not is, I think, whether the deficiency in weight and the general appearance of the coin is such as might or should not ordinarily escape detection at the hands of a shroff performing his work with proper care, but it would appear undoubtedly reasonable to expect a shroff to be able to detect deficiencies of more than 10 grains in a rupee."

This order is being acted on by me in the currency office and reserve treasury.

2. With reference to Mr. Morris' letter, I have the honour to state that the difficulty of wind and weights are manifestly trivial. The chief point to be considered is whether the shroffs are able to do the work when it is required to be done carefully. To judge of this, it will be necessary to ascertain the number of coins received. Article 664 of the Civil Account Code lays down that 10,000 whole rupees should be examined daily and this is the number examined by each of my shroffs. In taluk treasuries, other duties may prevent this number being done, but payments occur chiefly at the commencement of a month and they are not particularly heavy.

3. With regard to paragraph 5 of Mr. Morris' letter, I have the honour to state that the question of Tahsildars being given the power of cutting coin was discussed in 1882 (*vide* G.O., No. 1136, Financial, dated 6th September 1882). The question was again raised in 1884 by the Collector of Trichinopoly (*vide* Board's Proceedings, No. 1808, dated 29th May 1884). The fear then was that, if Tahsildars were entrusted with the power, the cutting of coins would be carried too far; this might still take place and cause widespread discontent. I have had more than one

complaint about Treasury officers cutting coins unnecessarily, and there can be no question that the more strict enforcement of the rules regarding light-weight coins is causing some dissatisfaction. I think, therefore, the power should not be given to Tahsildars, but I see no objection to their being permitted to withdraw light-weight coins, which they are satisfied have only been reduced in weight by reasonable wear, and remitting them to the huzur treasury to be cut and sent to the mint. Coins, which they considered had been fraudulently reduced in weight, would have to be returned to the presenters, and they would remain in circulation and be liable to be presented again. This is, of course, not desirable, but I regard it as a lesser evil than that of cutting coins at the risk of causing general discontent and disbelief in the Government rupee amongst those who are quite incapable of understanding the reasons for it.

4. The question of cutting light-weight coin is, in my opinion, one of considerable difficulty and danger, as those who receive rupees in good faith and then have them cut when they present them at a Government treasury naturally feel aggrieved, and the rules on the subject require to be worked with the very greatest discretion.

5. With regard to Mr. Morris' paragraph 6, I have the honour to state that, in cutting light-weight coins received from other treasuries, my office does not cut them as Accountant-General but as a Treasury officer; there is no question of the discretion of the Treasury officer being overruled, it is simply that the opinion of two officers equally responsible for the receipt and issue of coin does not agree, though they both act under the general instructions of the Comptroller-General.

Reference thereon, No. 848, dated 29th July 1898.

From the Accountant-General, No. 3839, dated 1st August 1898.

From W. O. HORNE, Esq., Collector, Vizagapatam District, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated 1st August 1898, Ref. C. No. 712-Acc.

Messrs. Martin & Co., salt merchants, Vizagapatam, complain that my Treasury Deputy Collector has cut and returned one rupee and nine half-rupees sent by them to the treasury on the ground that the coins have lost more than 2 per cent. in weight. They contend that the Treasury officer can only reject coins reduced in weight by maltreatment and that their coins bear no marks of such treatment. They therefore claim that the coins be received into the treasury and good coins issued in their place.

2. The Treasury Deputy Collector says that he cannot receive the coins as they have lost in weight much more than 2 per cent., viz., from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 19 grains, as shown in margin, which he takes to be an indication of fraud.

One rupee of 1840	19 grains.
Two half-rupees of 1840 ..	$5\frac{1}{2}$ grains each.
Three half-rupees of 1840 ..	6 grains each.
One half-rupee of 1840 ..	$6\frac{1}{2}$ grains.
Two half-rupees of 1862 ..	6 grains each.
One half-rupee of 1886 ..	$11\frac{3}{4}$ grains.

3. It would appear from the correspondence between the Treasury Deputy Collector and the Accountant-General, copies of which are enclosed for the information of the Board, that the Assay Master, Calcutta, considers the average life of a rupee to be $55\frac{1}{2}$ years and that during that period it should only lose 2 per cent. in weight by fair wear and tear, a much larger loss being probably a sign of fraud.

4. Mere loss in weight is not, in my opinion, a sufficient sign of fraud. It may be due to reasonable wear. Coins buried in a pot lose nothing in weight, while those which are continuously in circulation lose much. Under article 579 of the Civil Account Code a silver coin should be cut and returned to the tenderer if the Treasury officer "has reason to believe" that it has been reduced in weight "otherwise than by reasonable wearing." If, on the other hand, he has reason to believe that it has lost "by reasonable wearing more than 2 per cent. in weight," he should receive it

at its full nominal value. It seems to me that when a coin is reduced in weight by filing, scraping or scooping or by chemical action, it should be treated as having been reduced in weight by fraudulent means. Such coins show visible signs of maltreatment.

5. The coins tendered by Messrs. Martin & Co. bear no such marks, and I see no reason to believe that the loss in their weight is due to any other cause than reasonable wear and tear.

6. As this is an important matter affecting the public, I have the honour to solicit the orders of the Board.

———

Resolution—Mis. No. 2618, dated 21st September 1898.

In his letter, Ref. on No. 265-A, dated 2nd February last, Mr. Morris, Acting Collector of Kistna, reported that the officer in charge of the branch reserve treasury, Madras, had some time before cut and returned to his Treasury Deputy Collector a number of light whole rupees on the ground that they had been fraudulently reduced in weight. Mr. Morris did not state the actual weight of the coins returned, but mentioned that he had sent one of them to the Accountant-General for instructions as to the method of detecting such fraudulent reductions. The Accountant-General appears to have replied that the coin sent to him had lost 16½ grains in weight since 1874, and that as on the average a rupee loses only 2 per cent. of its weight or 3·6 grains in 55 years, the reduction in the case in question must be due to fraudulent usage.

2. Upon this the Treasury Deputy Collector, Kistna, issued instructions to all taluk officers and to the head-quarter shroffs that all coins found in remittances from taluks which had lost more weight than the amount described by the Accountant-General as normal must be treated as reduced by fraudulent means, and accordingly cut and returned to the tenderer *i.e.*, the remitting Treasury officer under article 579, Civil Account Code. This was, however, beyond the Accountant-General's instructions, and that officer proceeded to make his meaning clear in his letter to the Collector, No. 842, dated 5th March 1898, in which he explained that the practice of the Currency department was to treat as fraudulently reduced such rupees of 1840 as had lost 10 grains or upwards in weight and such rupees of 1862 and subsequent mintages as had lost 5 grains or upwards. Before the receipt of this explanation the Treasury Deputy Collector, Kistna, had cut and returned to several taluk shroffs a considerable number of coins of light weight of which the normal value is shown in the margin, and Mr. Morris in his letter to the Board, dated 18th February 1898, reported that he had directed that pending the receipt of the orders of the Board, the value of the coins should not be collected from the taluk shroffs concerned. The Board in its Ref. No. 216, dated 1st March 1898 forwarded this letter to the Accountant-General for his remarks and in the meantime approved of the Collector's action. The Accountant-General's reply, which was dated 4th March 1898, was to the effect that his Currency office allowed a considerable margin over the initial 2 per cent. before rejecting coin for fraudulent reduction.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Bandur	25	8	0
Gudiváda	63	0	0
Nuzvid	27	0	0
Nandigáma	37	0	0
Tenáli	146	0	0
Bápatla	130	0	0
Tiruvur	2	0	0
Total ..	430	8	0

3 This remark was in accordance with the definite instructions issued by the Accountant-General about the same time to the Collector of Kistna (*vide* paragraph 1 *supra*); but Mr. Morris, in his letter, dated 14th March 1898, raised a further objection, namely, that the only weights supplied to taluks were those of 176·4 grains and 88·2 grains for whole and half-rupees, respectively, and that if the Accountant-General's practice in the matter was to be followed, all shroffs should be provided

with weights of 175 and 170 grains for whole rupees and 87½ and 85 grains for half-rupees. This letter having been referred to the Accountant-General for his remarks, that officer observed that special grain weights were unnecessary as a shroff could first set apart all coins of less than the minimum legal weight (176·4 grains and 88·2 grains, respectively) and afterwards ascertain their exact weight by using ordinary grain weights which can be purchased locally. The Board in its Proceedings, No. 973, dated 5th April 1898, communicated this letter to the Collector of Kistna and requested him in case there was special difficulty or inconvenience in following the method indicated by the Accountant-General to report the fact for the Board's orders.

4. In his letter, dated 9th May 1898, Mr. Morris has reported that the Accountant-General's method is impracticable for the following reasons:—

(i) Taluk shroffs have no time to carry out minutely the initial and the subsequent weighment prescribed by the Accountant-General in respect of each doubtful coin, because the shroffing of coin is not the only duty of taluk shroffs as it is in the case of the shroffs at the reserve treasury, Madras, from whose practice the Accountant-General has adopted the rule in question. Taluk shroffs have also to issue coin in payment of Government demands, stamps to vendors, and stationery to clerks and kurnams. At present they have just time to lay aside a suspicious coin and test it by minimum weights.

(ii) Grain weights are not procurable locally, and if they are to be used, they must be supplied from Madras.

(iii) Draughts of wind interfere with the work of taluk shroffs and the weighment is thus liable to be retarded and rendered ineffectual.

(iv) So long as Tahsildars and taluk head accountants are not given the power of cutting and breaking light coin, the shroff will always be exposed to the risk of having a coin which he has rejected one day presented to him again the next day.

For these reasons Mr. Morris is of opinion that it is impossible to carry out the Accountant-General's plan unless (*a*) taluk shroffs are furnished with weights of 170 and 175 grains and corresponding weights for half-rupees, besides the present minimum weights of 88·2 and 176·4 grains; and (*b*) Tahsildars and taluk head accountants are given the power to cut and break light coin which they may consider to have been fraudulently reduced in weight.

Mr. Morris also questions the authority of the Accountant-General to set numerical limits to the discretion of district Treasury officers who are required by section 17 of the Coinage Act XXIII of 1870 to return to the tenderer only such coin as they consider to have been worn by maltreatment and are authorized by the same section and the rules framed thereunder to receive at their full value coins which have lost more than 2 per cent. in weight, but which they may consider to have been worn by lawful usage.

5. The Accountant-General, to whom Mr. Morris' letter was referred for remarks, considers that that officer's objections as to wind and weights are manifestly trivial and that the chief point to be attended to is whether the taluk shroffs are able to perform the minimum task imposed on them by article 664, Civil Account Code, Vol. I, viz., to shroff Rs. 10,000 per diem. The Accountant-General states that the shroffs in his office work up to this limit and he thinks that the task in question is within the powers of a taluk shroff: the latter, he observes, has to make payments, and those not very heavy ones, only at the beginning of a month, his duties at other times being mainly confined to the shroffing of coin.

6. As regards Mr. Morris' proposal that Tahsildars should be empowered to cut and break coin, the Accountant-General remarks that the same proposal was made in 1882, but was rejected by Government. He considers that such a rule would be peculiarly unwelcome at the present time when the public is already loud in its complaints against the exercise by district Treasury officers of the power of cutting and breaking coin vested in them by the rules made under Act XXIII of 1870. He has, however, no objection to Tahsildars being permitted to withdraw light-weight coins which they are satisfied have only reduced in weight by reasonable wear and remitting them to the huzur treasury to be cut and sent to the mint. He adds that in this case coins which

are considered by the taluk Treasury officer to have been fraudulently reduced in weight should be returned to the tenderers, and that the risk of such coin being presented again at a taluk treasury must be accepted as being a lesser evil than the discontent which might be caused if coin were liable to be cut and broken at every taluk treasury.

7. The Accountant-General's recommendations recited in the last paragraph are as reasonable as is compatible with the arbitrary rule laid down by the Currency department which he is apparently unable to alter, viz., that coin must be presumed to have been fraudulently reduced in weight if it belongs to the mintage of 1840 and has lost more than 10 grains in weight, or if it belongs to the mintage of 1862 and subsequent years and has lost more than 5 grains in weight.

8. It is possible that by providing adequate weights which may be supplied from district head-quarters if they are not available at taluk stations, this rule may be so worked as to reduce the hardship on shroffs to a tolerable degree. The Comptroller-General is apparently prepared further to mitigate the application of this rule to shroffs inasmuch as he has declared in an order quoted by the Accountant-General that "it would appear undoubtedly reasonable to expect a shroff to be able to detect deficiencies of more than 10 grains in a rupee." If this declaration is intended to relieve shroffs of the liability to make good light coins accepted by them, so long as the lightness is 10 grains in weight or less, then it will follow that the taluk shroffs of Kistna, who have had all coins returned to them that had lost more than 36 grains in weight per rupee should be excused from making good the value of all but a small proportion of such coins. As, however, no account has apparently been maintained of the exact weight of the coins cut and returned to the taluk shroffs in question, the Board recommends that the whole of the coins cut and returned to them be taken back by Government and full value allowed therefor. The following is the account submitted by Mr. Morris as to the amounts outstanding against the various shroffs up to the end of May 1898:—

	Rs.	A.	P.	
Bandur	18	8	0	[*I.e.*, less than amount outstanding up to March 1898 (*vide* paragraph 2 of this resolution)].
Nandigáma	44	0	0	
Tenáli	216	0	0	
Nuzvid	55	0	0	
Tápatla	141	0	0	
Gudiváda	188	0	0	
Total ..	662	8	0	

For the future the Board requests the definite instructions of Government as to the limit beyond which taluk shroffs should be required to make good light-weight coins accepted by them.

9. There remains the much larger question of the effect which may be produced on the public by the rigid enforcement, in connection with the present coinage, of the arbitrary rules framed by the Currency department for a coinage issuing from open mints. So long as the mints were open there was no great harm in cutting and returning a light rupee to the tenderer, as the silver returned to him would ordinarily fetch in the open market only a few pies less than the full value of the rupee. If it fetched much less it must have been much under weight and the tenderer would be conscious that he must have been careless in receiving it. Now when the cut silver of a light-weight rupee is put into the market by a tenderer to whom it has been returned, it fetches some $9\frac{1}{2}$ annas if 9 grains under weight, the market price for the silver in a full-weight rupee being 10 annas. The tenderer thus loses 6 pies as a punishment for his own carelessness and 6 annas as a consequence of the currency policy of Government.

10. Lest it be thought that the margin allowed by the Currency department is large enough to protect all but fraudulent tenderers, the Board wishes to draw the attention of Government to a case in point, to wit, a letter from Mr. Horne, dated 1st August 1898, in which he mentions that Messrs. Martin & Co., salt merchants,

Vizagapatam, have complained to him against the action of the Treasury Deputy Collector in cutting and returning to them the following coins on the ground that they had lost more than 2 per cent. in weight:—

	Loss of weight.
One rupee of 1840	19 grains
Two half-rupee of 1840	$5\frac{1}{2}$ grains each
Three half-rupee of 1840	6 grains each
One half-rupee of 1840	$6\frac{1}{2}$ grains
Two half-rupee of 1862	6 grains each
One half-rupee of 1886	$11\frac{3}{4}$ grains

Although the Treasury Deputy Collector, Vizagapatam, erred in respect of the numerical limit upon which he based his action, yet it will be seen from the Accountant-General's instructions quoted in paragraph 2 above that according to the practice of the Currency department all the above-mentioned coins must be presumed to have been fraudulently reduced in weight. Messrs. Martin & Co. contend that none of the coins bore visible marks of maltreatment and their contention deserves the serious consideration of Government, as it is likely that the same hardship is felt by many an other honest tenderer upon whom the above-mentioned loss of 6 annas in the rupee is at present undeservedly inflicted.

11. Another serious disadvantage of the rules prescribing numerical limits to the discretion of Treasury officers is that shroffs who are in hourly dread of infringing the said limits are sure to return many coins which are well within the limits, and this will soon re-act on the general public who will scan with distrust every rupee that is tendered to them.

12. At a time when the new currency policy of Government is subject to so much adverse criticism in the indigenous press, it is important that every effort should be made to avoid increasing unnecessarily the abnoxious features of that policy. Accordingly, it would, in the Board's opinion, be well if Government could direct that all light coins not bearing visible marks of maltreatment should be received freely by its Treasury officers whether at district or at taluk treasuries, and irrespective of numerical limits, and that the loss arising from this cause should be borne by Government itself. This is the sum total of Mr. Morris' contentions, as will be seen from paragraph 7 of his letter, dated 9th May 1898, and the Board fully supports him in this view. Both the law and the rules framed thereunder by the Government of India allow of this wholesome policy, and it is scarcely possible to find a justification for maintaining at the present crisis the arbitrary rules of the Currency department, however, necessary those rules may have been during the period of free coinage of silver. No doubt it is still important to take special measures against attempts to tamper with the coinage, but the uttering of false full weight rupees, not the sweating of existing coins, is the danger at present to be guarded against.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Note.

On the 27th instant, Rs. 60 were sent to the Deputy Collector's office for purchase of service labels. Out of this amount, they issued stamps for Rs. 59 and rejected the accompanying rupee and have cut and split it. The rules governing the case are to be found in sections 573 to 590 of the Civil Account Code, Volume I. The coin has apparently been rejected under section 579, although there seems to be nothing in the coin to suggest either that it is counterfeit or that it has been reduced in weight otherwise than by reasonable wearing. The coin was received from the Bank of Madras and the loss of weight, if any, must be presumed to be due to reasonable wear. If so, under section 583 of the Code, the officer rejecting may receive it at its full nominal value; this course might have been adopted.

For orders whether the Deputy Collector may be asked to receive it under section 583. If it is decided not to address him, the only alternative is to sell the uncurrent coin and to charge any loss to establishment contingencies.

I understand that a similar case occurred in the Consulting Architect's division in January 1898 and they charged off the loss to establishment contingencies.

30*th September* 1898.

(Signed) T. N. SUBBRAMANIAM,
Cash Keeper, P.W.D.

From the Under Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, to the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, No. 4309 C., dated 3rd October 1898.

From J. S. WILSON, Esq., Executive Engineer, Kistna Eastern Division, to the Superintending Engineer, II Circle, dated 20th September 1898, No. 427 S. E.

I have the honour to report that in the month of August last of a remittance of toll fees sent to treasury by the tidal lock superintendent, Masulipatam, one rupee was returned by the treasury officer defaced as *light*. The rupee is to all appearance a good one except for its weight. It cannot now be ascertained from whom the coin was received. I request to be informed whether the action of the treasury officer is legal or not and, if so, who is to bear the loss. It is a practical impossibility for a lock superintendent to detect small deficiencies in the weight of the coins received, and as far as I know, no attempt has ever been made to do so. The coin being to all appearance good, the lock superintendent does not appear to have shown any want of care, and it would be hardly just to saddle him with the responsibility for the weight of the coins received by him. I have always been under the impression that a good coin, though light, was legal tender and should be glad of any authentative decision on the point.

No. 3027-K.E.

Forwarded to the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department.

2. I believe the Treasury officer's action was quite legal, but I should be glad of formal intimation.

3. I am afraid that the only possible ruling to give is that the man who has the rupee is personally liable.

29*th September* 1898.

(Signed) W. C. LEWIS,
Offg. Suptg. Engineer, II Circle.

From the Under Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, to the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, No. 4370 C., dated 5th October 1898.

Office-note from the Deputy Examiner in charge, Public Works Accounts, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated 8th October 1898, No. 3436 B./E.

The rupee coin sent by you is no doubt light and if it can be shown that the cashier, who is the receiver of the light coin, failed to detect the defect, he has to make good the loss, *vide* paragraph 2 of Examiner's office-note No. 646 S.A., dated 5th May 1892, disposed of in G.O., No. 1511 W., dated 16th May 1892.

2. Should, however, it be considered that the coin has lost its weight by reasonable wearing, the Deputy Collector should apparently be asked to take it back at its full nominal value and deal with it as prescribed in article 583 of volume I, Civil Account Code.

3. It will perhaps be difficult to definitely decide in each case that the coin has lost its weight by reasonable wearing. The only alternative in such circumstances would be to sell the coin and debit the loss to "Establishment contingencies."

4. Owing to the strict enforcement of the rule, of late, there may be many such cases coming up for disposal. It would therefore be advisable for Government to issue specific orders for guidance in future.

5. This also disposes of your office-note No. 4370 C., dated 5th October 1898, which is herewith returned.

From the Under Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, to the Deputy Collector in charge of Treasury, Madras, dated 14th October 1898, No. 4541 C.

On the 27th ultimo, Rs. 60 were sent to your office for purchase of service labels. Out of this amount stamps were issued by you for Rs. 59, while Re. 1 (Rupee one) was rejected and cut.

2. As the rejected rupee was received from the Bank of Madras and appears to have lost its weight by reasonable wearing, I have the honour to inquire why it should not be received at the treasury at its full nominal value under section 583 of the Civil Account Code, Volume. I.

From J. R. COOMBES, Esq., Deputy Collector of Madras, to the Under Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated 18th October 1898, No. 1737-D.

With reference to your letter No. 4541 C., dated the 14th instant, I have the honour to inform you that I personally examined the rupee and found it of light weight. It did not appear to me to have lost its weight by reasonable wear and tear. It was therefore dealt with under article 579 of the Civil Account Code.

From the Under Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, to the Chief Secretary to Government, No. 4839 C., dated 4th November 1898.

From the Chief Secretary to Government, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, No. 2472, dated 14th November 1898.

From the Under Secretary to Government, Public Works Deapartment, to the Chief Secretary, No. 5058 dated C., 15th November 1898.

From the Chief Secretary to Government, to the Accountant-General, No. 2597 C., dated 22nd November 1898.

Endorsement.

In the present case the cashier is an official specially appointed to look after coins, it is his duty not to receive light-weight coins either from the Bank of Madras or any one else, and he should therefore, in my opinion, be made to take over the cut coin in the present case and made good the rupee to Government.

The proposal of the Examiner to charge such losses to Government would, in the Civil department, be inadmissible. I should require in each case, in which it was proposed that Government should bear the loss, the special orders of Government.

Fort St. George,
29*th November* 1898.

(Signed) T. HESKETH BIGGS,
Accountant-General.

From the Chief Secretary to Government, to the Accountant-General, No. 2746, dated 7th December 1898.

Endorsement.

The tidal lock superintendent is a Public Works Department officer and I am not aware of the conditions of his appointment. If he is an officer specially appointed to receive coin his case would be similar to that of the cashier referred to in my note of 29th ultimo. If not, it is for Government to decide how the charge for the light-weight coin should be treated.

Fort St. George,
12*th December* 1898.

(Signed) T. HESKETH BIGGS,
Accountant-General.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 3477, dated 7th December 1898.

Read—letter from the Acting Collector of Kistna, dated 28th November 1899, R.C. No. B. 774/Accts.

Abstract.—Soliciting orders for the entertainment of three taluk shroffs temporarily in the district.

Resolution—Mis. No. 3477, dated 7th December 1898.

With reference to his letter R.C. No. 774, dated 14th March 1898, submitted to Government, in original, with Board's Resolution, No. 2618, dated 21st September 1898, the Collector of Kistna requests sanction for the temporary entertainment during the ensuing kist months of a third shroff in the taluks of Tenali, Bápatla and Gudiváda, each of which has already two permanent shroffs on its establishment. The reason alleged by Mr. Morris for this application is that last year there was great delay in crediting the collections to accounts owing to money remaining unshroffed and that unless some help is afforded to the shroffs during the approaching kist season there is every reason to fear that the same state of things will recur.

2. Under G.O., No. 824, Revenue, dated 19th November 1894, the three taluks in question are not entitled to an additional shroff as the Board's recommendation in paragraph 6 of its Proceedings, No. 63, dated 6th February 1894, which was approved in that Government Order, was to the effect that a temporary shroff might be entertained in those taluks where the revenue exceeded three lakhs and only one shroff was provided in the permanent establishment. The taluks now in question fulfil the first of these conditions but not the second. The total collections * in these taluks during fasli 1307 are shown below :—

* According to Jamabandy statement No. 9.

	Lakhs.
Tenáli	13
Bápatla	10
Gudivada	9

3. If a third shroff is to be sanctioned for these taluks, it must be for the reasons already dwelt on at length by the Collector in the correspondence submitted to Government, and summarised in Board's Proceedings, No. 2618, dated 21st September 1898, viz., that the rules regarding coins lightened in weight by presumably fraudulent means render the process of shroffing much slower than was formerly the case and that this difficulty is enhanced by the liability of taluk shroffs to make good the full value of coins received by them in contravention of the rules. Mr. Morris points out that last year this liability amounted to the sum of Rs. 750—a figure somewhat in excess of that already reported in paragraph 8 of the Board's Proceedings referred to.

4. In case Government is prepared to support the recommendation made by the Board in paragraph 12 of its Proceedings, dated 21st September 1898, all delay in the process of shroffing due to the causes above mentioned will be effectually obviated and

there will be no need to entertain extra hands in the taluks in question. If, on the other hand, the orders of Government on the above reference are likely to be delayed owing to the necessity of making a reference to the Government of India or some other cause, the Board suggests that the Collector may be authorized to restrict the recovery of the value of light-weight coins from shroffs to those cases where the Comptroller-General's rule referred to in paragraph 8 of Board's Proceedings, No. 2618, dated 21st September 1898, contemplates that the responsibility of shroffs should be enforced in the matter of detecting deficiencies of weight, *i.e.*, to cases where the deficiency exceeds 10 grains in the rupee. Such a relaxation of the rule would probably tend to smooth the difficulties which have been created in the Kistna district, owing to the misapprehension of the Accountant-General's instructions referred to in paragraph 2 of the above Board's Proceedings and thus indirectly ensure the prompt despatch of work on the part of taluk shroffs.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 3596, dated 16th December 1898.

Read—again :—

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 2618, dated 21st September 1898.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 3477, dated 7th December 1898.

Read—also letter from J. TWIGG, Esq., Acting Collector of Tanjore, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated 4th December 1898, Ref. on Cur. No. 1571 H-Acct.

I have the honour to state that, out of remittances of twenty-five lakhs (whole rupees) sent to the Currency offices at Madras and Calcutta as detailed in the margin, coins of the nominal value of Rs. 1,027 were returned rejected to this office for recovery from the shroffs concerned of good coins in their stead. The above sum of Rs. 1,027 consists of the following items :—

Currency Office, Madras.

	Lakhs.
4th April 1898	10
20th June „	5
	15

Currency Office, Calcutta.

20th August 1898	10

	No.
1. Foreign coins	6
2. Counterfeit	27
3. Soldered	233
4. Light by misuse	761
Total ..	1,027

The shroffs have paid the amounts covered by items Nos. 1, 2 and 3, and as regards the balance of Rs. 761, they represent that in the absence of any definite rules for distinguishing the loss in weight by reasonable wear and tear from that by misuse, they should not be held responsible for the whole amount and request reconsideration of the orders.

2. I personally examined a large number of the 655 light-weight coins returned by the Currency office, Madras. There was evidently very gross carelessness on the part of the shroffs in many cases, but in many others there seemed to me to be no sign of misuse, and it was a very pardonable error of judgment to pass them. The only instructions on the subject are those contained in article 579 of the Civil Account Code and Accountant-General's Circulars Nos. 25 and 32 of 1897, which are not very explicit; indeed it would be impossible to lay down any definite rule for distinguishing between misuse and fair wear and tear.

The shroffs who are paid Rs. 15 a month are expected to shroff in this district at least Rs. 50,000 a day each and even more during kist months. What I wish to urge on behalf of the two shroffs responsible for the coins now in question, as well as on behalf of shroffs in general, is that in case of coins rejected as light weight owing to misuse which is often merely a matter of opinion, these low-paid hard-worked servants should be held liable only to the extent of the deficiency in weight. This is practically what the penalty amounted to till the last few years, but now the artificial value of the rupee turns the order to substitute full-weight coins for the rejected uncurrent coins, into a very heavy sentence of fine.

I request that the Board will be pleased to pass orders relieving the shroffs of this heavy penalty.

Resolution—Mis. No. 3596, dated 16th December 1898.

The Collector will be informed that, on a similar representation made by the Collector of Kistna, the Board has addressed the Government on the subject. The orders of Government will be communicated as soon as they are received.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Collector of Tanjore.
Copy to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 230, dated 19th January 1899.

Read—letter from L. M. WYNCH, Esq., Acting Collector of South Arcot, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, Madras, dated 8th January 1899, Ref. on. No. 1620-Acc. Sup. of 1898.

I have the honour to submit the following for the orders of the Board.

2. A remittance of 20 lakhs (whole rupees) was sent from this office on 10th March 1898, 5th April 1898 and 3rd June 1898 to the Currency office, Madras, the examination of which was made in November and December 1898 with the following result:—

	Rs.
Coins found deficient in sale	20
„ soldered	105
„ counterfeit	18
„ light (by misuse)	428
Total	571

A sum of Rs. 19,99,429 was accepted. The shroffs responsible have made good the deficient, soldered and counterfeit coins, but submit that some consideration might be shown in the case of light-weight coins (428) which have been cut and returned to

this office by the Currency officer. These coins, they complain, not without sufficient ground, do not bear any mark of having been "clipped, filed or defaced" or having been "reduced in weight otherwise than by reasonable wearing" as laid down in articles 573 and 579 of the Civil Account Code, Volume I, since most of them, if not all, bear the impressions on both sides and do not appear to have been fraudulently reduced in weight by any chemical or mechanical process. The words "to have been reduced in weight otherwise than by reasonable wearing" used in article 579 indicate some fraudulent act on another's part in so doing; but these coins do not bear any such mark. They are however lighter than the minimum weight, which is 176·4 grains (Troy) and since they do not bear any marks of having been clipped, filed or defaced, they must either have lost their weight by wear whether reasonable or otherwise or have been coined as such.

3. There is no hard and fast rule to distinguish a coin which has lost weight by reasonable wear from one reduced in weight by misuse. Under article 573 (1), no coin which has lost more than 2 per cent. in weight can be accepted, but under article 583 a coin which has lost by reasonable wear and tear even more than 2 per cent. in weight may be received. In the case of coins reduced otherwise than by reasonable wear and tear, however, there is no such minimum fixed under article 579 and the proviso to article 573 (1). Thus the determination whether a coin has lost weight by fair wear and tear or not is left very much to the discretion of the individual, and the shroffs of a remitting treasury are absolutely at the mercy of those of the receiving treasury. In the present instance Rs. 4,159, though below minimum weight, have been accepted as having been reduced by fair wear and tear and there is no apparent reason why Rs. 428 were held to be light weight owing to misuse.

4. In the beginning of the last year, when large remittances were received from the taluks amounting to nearly 38 lakhs between February and June, no extra shroff was engaged and the ordinary establishment of four shroffs had to examine the whole sum in addition to current work, while the reward for their extra work is a heavy fine, since pure silver is now sold at 25 per cent. discount, so that the shroffs will be unable to realize much more than a moiety of the nominal value of the 428 coins cut and returned.

5. I request therefore that, under these circumstances, the Board will be pleased to have these coins treated as uncurrent at the actual value at which they have been received and transferred to the mint as is the case with coins found light by reasonable wear and cut under orders, *vide* articles 583 and 588, Civil Account Code, and that definite instructions may be issued for the future guidance of the shroffs.

Resolution—Mis. No. 230, dated 19th January 1899.

The Collector will be informed that, on a similar representation made by the Collector of Kistna, the Board has addressed the Government on the subject. The orders of Government will be communicated as soon as they are received.

(True Extract.)

LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Collector of South Arcot.
„ Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 824, dated 7th March 1899.

Read—letter from R. H. SHIPLEY, Esq., Collector of Trichinopoly, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated 28th February 1899, C. No. 479, Treasury (Sup. Officer).

Out of two remittances amounting to Rs. 22,00,000 remitted from this district treasury to the Currency office, Madras, in March and April last, Rs. 568 have been cut and returned to be made good by the shroffs, as having been rendered light by misuse. The shroffs have to take the cut rupees and to substitute good rupees for them. This involves a loss of Rs. 230, as the cut rupees have to be disposed of in the market as old silver, at the rate of about 9½ annas per rupee. The shroffs naturally complain of the hardship to which they will thereby be subjected, nor does it seem quite equitable that they should be held liable for all those light rupees.

2. Most of these rupees have been rejected, not for any defects discoverable by sight or touch, but because they happen to have lost considerably more than 2 per cent. in weight, presumably by misuse, *e.g.*, by being steeped in acid in the process of electroplating. It is easy to detect and reject coins which bear evident marks of misuse, but it is not possible to tell by sight or touch whether coins have lost more than 2 per cent. in weight, nor is it always possible to say whether they have been misused. It is also impossible to estimate the loss of weight by handling the coin, when the difference is only a few grains. The treasury has indeed been supplied with test scales, but their use was limited to the testing of the coin suspected to have lost weight. Thus the shroffs mainly depended upon their instinct for the detection of light coin. Formerly light coins were rarely rejected by the Currency office, but of late the rules have been very strictly worked, a mere lightness which cannot be detected, except by the scales, being taken to be evidence of misuse. And to add to this severity, the Currency office will not lay down what is the exact amount of lightness for which coins should be rejected.

3. The rules are these—

(*a*) Rupees and half rupees are legal tender, if they have not lost more than 2 per cent. in weight, and if they have not been clipped or filed or defaced or diminished otherwise than by use. (Article 573, Civil Account Code.)

(*b*) If they have lost by reasonable wear more than 2 per cent. in weight, they should be received at the treasuries at their nominal value, but they should at the same time be cut and sent to the mint. (Article 583, Civil Account Code.)

(*c*) Counterfeit silver coins and such as have been reduced in weight otherwise than by reasonable wear should not be received, but should be cut and returned to the tenderer. (Article 579, Civil Account Code.)

4. As stated above, the rule in clause (*c*) cannot always be applied according to the recognised methods of shroffing, nor did the Currency office insist hitherto upon its strict application. But in his circular letter No. 2085, dated 31st March 1896, the Comptroller-General remarked that recent remittances of shroff-marked coin to the Calcutta Mint had shown instances of coins, which had lost as much as 14 per cent. of their original weight by fraudulent means, and yet had been received at certain Government treasuries at their full value. This was communicated to Treasury officers in Accountant-General's circular memorandum No. 4, dated 16th April 1896, with general instructions to exercise greater care in rejecting short-weight coin.

5. In his circular No. XXV, dated the 11th August 1897, the Accountant-General directed Treasury officers to impress upon shroffs that they were expected to exercise "reasonable care in the examination of coins received, and that when coins very largely under weight or bearing manifest signs of reduction were tendered, they should not be received, but be cut and returned to the tenderers as fraudulently reduced."

6. On a reference from the Treasury Deputy Collector, the Accountant-General stated that he could not lay down any specific reduction in weight as proof of fraud, but observed that the rupee, on the average, loses 2 per cent. of its weight by ordinary wear and tear in about 55 to 58 years, and that this fact, having regard to the age

and appearance of the coin, should be sufficient to decide whether a rupee had been undoubtedly lightened by fraudulent means. The above calculation does not, however, seem to be correct: large numbers of coins of the mintage of 1835 have not lost more than 2 per cent. in weight, and on the other hand large numbers of coins of 1840 and subsequent years have lost more than 2 per cent. in weight, not necessarily by fraudulent means. Thus the shroffs and Treasury officers have been at a loss to decide what loss of weight entails rejection of light coin. The following scale was adopted here in the beginning of 1898:—Rupees of 1840 are cut and returned if they have lost 53 per cent in weight or 6 grains over the minimum weight which is itself 2 per cent. or 3·6 grains less than the standard weight (180 grains), and rupees of subsequent years are so treated if they have lost 3·6 per cent. or 3 grains over the minimum weight. But as the system of shroffing was necessarily defective as stated above, several light rupees escaped the test.

7. So long as loss of weight cannot be detected by sight or by handling, it is obviously necessary to test every rupee in the small scales, if light rupees are to be eliminated altogether. This is not an impossible task, and is indispensable in the interests of the shroffs. I have accordingly given the system a trial. The shroffs found it rather irksome at first, but they have since taken to it. The outturn of work was poor in the beginning, but has improved by practice. Each shroff is able to do Rs. 5,000 a day single-handed and goes home satisfied that he will not have to pay for light rupees. This outturn is but half of what is prescribed in the Account Code. I thought at first that I should have to apply for double the number of shroffs. This, however, will not be necessary in the slack season. I have been getting through the work in this kist season by the employment of cooly shroffs under article 664 (2) of the Civil Account Code, and a judicious exercise of this privilege will ordinarily be sufficient.

8. Since the experiment was started, about Rs. 1,700 have been cut as too light, and the pay of the cooly shroffs has come to about Rs. 200. If the shroffs had had to make good these rupees, they would have sustained a loss of Rs. 680. Besides the sum of Rs. 1,700, Rs. 16,250 have been withdrawn from circulation as having lost more than 2 per cent. in weight by ordinary wear and tear.

Out of a remittance of Rs. 16,00,000 sent to Bombay Currency office in November last Rs. 9 only were so cut. But this remittance contained some coins shroffed under the former system. The result has so far been very satisfactory and has been achieved at very moderate cost.

9. The bulk of the receipts of this treasury consists of the earnings of the South Indian Railway. The railway shroffs do not make any attempt to separate light rupees, nor does the company call on them to make good the light rupees which are cut at this treasury and returned. This is because the company does not consider that the shroffs can be held responsible for defects in the currency. The cut rupees are sent to the mint and the difference between their full value and that admitted by the mint is written off. One lot of Rs. 800 so sent realized Rs. 457-7-0 or only 57 per cent. Neither do the banks pick out light rupees.

10. If the coins have been rendered light by fraudulent means, the perpetrator of the fraud and the thousand and one persons who pass them on go scot-free, and only the unfortunate Government shroff suffers. The number of light rupees in the two remittances mentioned above was only ·026 per cent. and the amount of Rs. 230 to be made good by the shroffs is only ·01 per cent. This loss is nothing to the Government, but it represents five months' pay of the shroffs concerned. It seems to me unworthy of a great Government to be so rigorous in exacting its pound of flesh.

"*Aquila non captat muscas*". The railways, the banks and other large commercial concerns are content to write off the loss consequent upon their acceptance of light rupees, sooner than undergo the trouble and loss of time spent in shroffing each one, and it is hard to see why the Government should be, I will not say less generous, but at any rate more particular.

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"*Aquila non captat muscas*". The railways, the banks and other large commercial concerns are content to write off the loss consequent upon their acceptance of light rupees, sooner than undergo the trouble and loss of time spent in shroffing each one, and it is hard to see why the Government should be, I will not say less generous, but at any rate more particular.

11. The public interests involved are, I am aware, very great; but it would surely be better that a minute scrutiny of light rupees should take place in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta than that it should be exacted at local treasuries, at great expense of time and very considerable inconvenience to the public. It is by no means certain that the man who pays in the light rupees is the man responsible for their lightness; and if the rupees do not show signs of misuse and are not so light as to be noticed by an ordinary sense of touch, it seems unfair that the private individual should be mulcted. It is, I submit, a loss that should fall upon the Government. It is a loss consequent on the fall in exchange, and the public have in so many other ways to make good that loss, that it should not be called upon to bear this increased burden.

12. The position in this district is this. I have, in consequence of the rigorous working of the Account Rules, to employ a larger number of cooly shroffs than I should otherwise. Their wages have to be paid by Government: against this extra expense must be set off the savings effected to Government (at the expense of an innocent public) by the rejection of light rupees. These savings do not amount to the sum spent in shroffs' wages, and therefore the Government is in the long run a loser. For it must be borne in mind that the Government only loses the actual weight of silver worn off the rupees.

13. I would submit then—

(1) That the Account department is acting *ultra vires* in recovering such losses from the shroffs. I maintain that unless the rupee shows signs of misuse, or if so obviously under weight, that the fault can be detected by touch, it has no right to recover the deficit from the shroffs.

(2) Even admitting that it has this right, the Government would be justified in waiving it.

Resolution—Mis. No. 824, dated 7th March 1899.

Mr. Shipley's letter will be submitted to Government in continuation of Board's Proceedings, No. 2618, dated 21st September 1898, and with the request that very early orders may be passed on this very important subject.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
Copy to the Collector of Trichinopoly.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 852, dated 9th March 1899.

Read—the following letter from C. M. MULLALY, Esq., Collector of Nellore, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated 1st March 1899, No. 647—Acc.:—

	Rs.
Whole rupees	6,00,000
Do. (1835)	9,500
Do. („), shroff-marked ..	660
Half rupees, shroff-marked (1835).	632
Total ..	6,10,792

A remittance of Rs. 6,10,792 was sent in April 1898 to the Commissioner of Paper Currency, Madras, as particularized in the margin, and, after examining it in November 1898, that officer placed a sum of Rs. 245 under "Advances Recoverable" on account of the following:—

	Rs.
(*a*) Coin, light (by misuse), cut and returned	204
(*b*) Deficiency of pieces in tale	6
(*c*) Portuguese coin	1
(*d*) Coin, soldered	30
(*e*) Coin, counterfeit, cut and returned	4
Total ..	245

Of the above, the shroffs have credited into the treasury Rs. 41, being the amount of items (*b*), (*c*), (*d*) and (*e*).

2. In November last another remittance of Rs. 5,50,000 in whole rupees was sent to the officer in charge of the Currency agency at Bombay, out of which Rs. 116 were rejected by that officer for the following reasons:—

	Rs.
(*a*) Coins, light (by misuse), cut and returned	40
(*b*) Deficiency of pieces in tale	1
(*c*) Coins, defaced	25
(*d*) Coins, soldered	42
(*e*) Coins, counterfeit, cut and returned	2
(*f*) Coins, marked P.M.	5
(*g*) Coins, foreign	1
Total ..	116

The shroffs have paid into the treasury the whole of the above amount, except item (*a*), Rs. 40, which was paid under protest.

3. The reasons for their protest are—

(*a*) That the coins are light not by misuse but by the ordinary wear;

(*b*) That this is the first time that such a large number of coins has been rejected as light;

(*c*) That the rejection of the coins cannot be due to the remittances containing an abnormally large number of bad coins but to the unusual method of treating them in the Currency office;

(*d*) That unless they weigh each rupee in the scale with the minimum weight, it will not be possible for them to detect such coins as have now been rejected as light, but which were hithertofore accepted as good;

(*e*) That if they are to weigh each rupee they will not be able to examine more than Rs. 4,000 each a day in addition to their other work; and

(*f*) At this rate it would take 187 days for the four shroffs to weigh the 30 lakhs of silver which is approximately received.

4. This is a purely currency question and I hesitate to offer an opinion, but as I understand that similar difficulties were experienced in the Kistna district and, on the representation of the Collector of that district, the Board have been pleased to postpone the recoveries from the shroffs pending the orders of Government, I request that a similar concession may be sanctioned in the case of my shroffs.

Resolution—Mis. No. 852, dated 9th March 1899.

Submitted to Government in continuation of Board's Proceedings, No. 824, dated 7th March 1899.

2. The Collector has been authorized to defer effecting the recovery until the orders of Government are received.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
„ Collector of Nellore.

Resolution of the Government of India in the Finance and Commerce Department (Accounts and Finance—Mint), dated Calcutta, the 24th March 1899, No. 1404-A.

Read—

Notification by the Government of India in the Finance and Commerce Department, No. 664, dated the 13th February 1891.

Resolution.—In paragraph 2 (3) of the notification read in the preamble, it is laid down that when any rupee or half-rupee purporting to be coined and issued under the authority of the Government of India is tendered to any officer authorised to act under section 16 of the Indian Coinage Act, 1870, and the officer has reason to believe it to have lost by reasonable wearing more than 2 per cent. in weight, he shall receive such rupee or half-rupee at its full nominal value, but shall immediately cut or break it.

It has, however, in practice been found difficult to decide whether a loss exceeding 2 per cent. has been caused by fraud or by reasonable wear. A series of experiments conducted at the Indian mints has proved that, during a period of 55 years, the normal life of a coin, reasonable wear will ordinarily reduce the weight of a rupee by 2 per cent., that is, 3·6 grains, and that a loss amounting to so much as 10 grains has always been the result of fraud.

2. In order to secure the withdrawal from circulation of light-weight coins, the Government of India will in future refrain from presuming the existence of fraud in all cases where the loss does not exceed $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., that is, $11\frac{1}{4}$ grains in the case of a rupee and $5\frac{5}{8}$ grains in the case of a half-rupee, but any loss in excess of that will be taken to indicate with certainty that the coin has been fraudulently reduced.

3. Under paragraph 2 (1) of the notification of the 13th February 1891, silver coins reduced in weight otherwise than by reasonable wear must be cut and returned to the tenderer, who, in the present circumstances of the currency, would sustain a considerable loss, though often innocent of the fraud and ignorant of it. In order to minimise this loss, His Excellency the Governor-General in Council is pleased to rule that officers who are authorized to cut coin shall, if the tenderer prefers it, instead of returning the cut coin, pay for it at the following rates:—

Rupees and half-rupees weighing not less than $\frac{15}{16}$ths of their proper weight shall be accepted at their nominal value and withdrawn from circulation at Government cost; those weighing between $\frac{15}{16}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$ shall be accepted, respectively, at 14 annas and 7 annas each; those between $\frac{7}{8}$ and $\frac{13}{16}$ at 13 annas and $6\frac{1}{2}$ annas each, respectively; and those between $\frac{13}{16}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ at 12 annas and 6 annas each, respectively.

4. Where, however, the deficiency in weight amounts to more than 25 per cent., the tenderer will be held to have been so culpably careless that no concession will be made, and he will be left to bear the loss arising from the cutting of the coin which is imposed upon him by the law.

5. The above ruling will apply to dealings with the public who tender individual short-weight rupees and half-rupees. Light-weight coins found in remittances from Treasuries and Presidency Banks will be accepted on the same conditions as regards loss of weight, that is to say, coins which have lost not more than $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. will be accepted at their full nominal value and those which have lost more than 25 per cent. will be cut and rejected. But the allowance for loss of weight within those limits will be at the rate of one rupee a tola on the total weight of all such coins found in the remittance, and not at a fixed rate for each coin.

6. Minimum weights of $\frac{15}{16}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, $\frac{13}{16}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{15}{32}$, $\frac{7}{16}$, $\frac{13}{32}$ and $\frac{3}{8}$ tola a piece will be supplied by the mints to the Treasury officers through the Accountant-General, the cost being charged as contingent expenditure of the mints.

Order.—Ordered that this resolution be communicated to all Local Governments and Administrations; to the Comptroller and Auditor General; and to the Mint Masters, Calcutta and Bombay.

Ordered, also, that the Resolution be published in the *Gazette of India* for general information.

(Signed) H. H. RISLEY,
Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

Order—No. 536, Financial, dated 21st April 1899.

The resolution of the Government of India, Finance and Commerce Department, No. 1404-A, dated the 24th March 1899, read above, will be communicated to the Board of Revenue, to all Collectors, to the President of the Municipal Commission, Madras, to the Secretary and Treasurer, Bank of Madras, to the Accountant-General, to the Chairman, Harbour Trust Board, to the Local and Municipal Department, and to the Revenue Department in continuation of G O., No. 204, Financial, dated 21st March 1891. It will also be published in the *Fort St. George Gazette.*

2. The ruling contained in this resolution will now be applied to the cases which have arisen in the Public Works Department and to those referred to by the Board of Revenue in its proceedings read above. Where, however, no account has been maintained of the exact weight of the coins cut and returned, the recommendation of the Board of Revenue that such coins should be taken back by Government and full value allowed therefor is approved.

(True Extract.)

for *Chief Secretary.*

To the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue).
" all Collectors.
" the President, Municipal Commission, Madras.
" the Secretary and Treasurer, Bank of Madras.
" the Accountant-General.
" the Chairman, Harbour Trust Board, through the Marine Department.
" the Local and Municipal Department.
" the Revenue Department.
" the Public Works Department.
Gazette.

Exd. C. M. Thumbusawmy.