

1. Number of
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M.R.O. 1-32,400-22-11-30

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	555	Press ~~Mis.~~
Dated	4-6-	1866

Not to be folded or roughly handled

25/9/34

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
4th June 1866.

Read the following papers :—

No. 5. From J. W. B. DYKES, Esq., Collector of Nellore, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Viruru, 15th March 1866, No. 12.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Order of Government, of the 7th instant, No. 234, and submit the remarks that occur to me on the question raised by the Memorial of the Calcutta Trades' Association.

2. The Trades' Association having recommended certain changes in the present scale of letter postage, and that, instead of a quarter tolah, letters not exceeding half a tolah should be allowed to go for half an Anna, it has been urged by others that the thin paper required for the quarter tolah standard is not readily procurable by the rural classes; and this is a point that, in the opinion of the Governor General in Council, demands careful consideration.

3. The thin Goa paper supplied for common use in the Cutcheries can be procured in this District wherever a letter is likely to be written. Half a sheet, folded in the shape of a letter, is within the quarter tolah standard. And as the District is not exceptional, I believe, in regard to the paper marked, the thinness of the paper required for the quarter tolah standard is not apparently in this Presidency what would justify a modification of the postage scale in the direction advocated by the Calcutta Trades' Association.

4. As a rule Native letters are short. They are written shorter still, as regards space, in comparison with English letters; and it would probably be found, if inquiry were made, that the quarter tolah letters sent by Natives are, as a rule, considerably within the prescribed weight—a further indication that the direction pointed out by the Trades' Association for postal improvement is not the right direction, if it be to an increase of Native correspondence that Government must look for the support of the Post Office, which is the position taken by the Post Office Commissioners, and affirmed by the Governor General as unquestionably sound.

5. And in expressing my opinion that there is no good reason for increasing the weight that can be sent by post according to the present scale, I would respectfully suggest that it is worthy of consideration whether the minimum rate at which a letter can be sent from one place to another might not be lowered with advantage. It is a question that has to be viewed in many aspects, and half an Anna does not seem much. But the bulk of the trading population in the rural Districts regard half an Anna in a very different light to that in which it is seen by others. They do not probably, on an average, pay more than two Annas for a dinner. When four letters are the prices of a dinner, it is likely that an increase in Native correspondence would take place were it found practicable to lower the minimum rate of postage from half an Anna to a quarter of an Anna. And, using the principal meal in the day as a means of comparison, the proposed reduction would not place those who carry on the bulk of the Native correspondence in India in a more favorable position as regards postal communications than has been found advisable elsewhere.

No. 6. From D. F. CARMICHAEL, Esq., Collector, Magistrate, and Agent to the Governor of Fort Saint George in Vizagapatam, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Vizagapatam, 15th March 1866, No. 235.

In reply to G. O., Public Department, 7th March instant, No. 234, I have the honor to state that, so far as my experience goes, there is no grounds whatever for the statement that the thin paper required by the present postal system is not commonly and readily procurable. There are, of course, many parts of this District where the people never write at all, much less have occasion to transmit letters by the post; but wherever the post is used, there thin paper is sold in the bazaars.

No. 7. From V. RAMIENGAR, Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 27th March 1866.

I have had the honor to receive the Order of Government noted in the margin, giving cover to a letter from the Government of India, relative to a proposal of the Calcutta Trades' Association to revise the existing scale of letter postage.

7th March 1866, No. 234.

2. The point on which information is called for is whether the present low unit of weight, viz., quarter of a tolah, operates practically as a bar to the use of the post by some classes of the population, on account of the very thin paper which it is necessary to use not being commonly and readily procurable.

3. The question must, I think, be answered in the affirmative. The present low unit *does* operate as a check to domestic correspondence in the interior. There are no facilities for procuring paper of any kind in the rural Districts, and thin paper, such as the existing unit of weight necessitates the use of, is beyond the reach of the mass of the population. The use of the Cadjan, therefore, as writing material, and the employment of the Village Toty and Taliary in conveying letters, and the practice of sending verbal messages through friends, though no longer the rule, have by no means yet given way to the post, to the extent that could be wished, notwithstanding the rapid development of Native correspondence since 1854, the starting point of the present postal system.

4. That the very thin paper required to be used, to keep within the minimum weight allowed by the law, is not generally available may, in some degree, be inferred from the number of insufficiently stamped letters that annually pass through the Post Office. The published Reports do not afford any information on this point; but I find that no less than 1,286,382 letters were sent to the Dead Letter Office during 1863-64. I have no doubt that a large proportion of this consisted of letters "refused" from being insufficiently stamped. It appears, also, that out of the letters sent to the District Post for delivery, 413,198, or 10½ per cent., were letters undelivered. These facts appear to me to afford some indication of the extent to which correspondence must be checked by the low unit of weight now allowed.

5. It is true, as stated in the 6th paragraph of the letter from the Government of India, that the amount of correspondence since the introduction of the present

postal system has nearly doubled; but the following figures appear to me to convey some idea as to how great a margin exists for the extension of Native correspondence in India, compared with the United Kingdom.

	Number of letters in 1861.	Population.	Proportion of letters to Population.
England.....	487,000,000		24 to each person.
Ireland.....	50,000,000		9 to do.
Scotland.....	56,000,000		18 to do.
United Kingdom.....	593,000,000		20 to do.
	Total Number of letters delivered in 1863-64.	Population.	Proportion of letters to Population.
Bengal.....	8,791,061	35,000,000	} Not 1 to each person.
Madras.....	7,812,675	24,656,509	
Bombay.....	11,951,477	11,000,000	
North-Western Provinces.....	12,149,613	28,264,888	
Punjab.....	5,838,842	14,794,617	
British Burmah.....	363,986	2,029,331	
Total.....	46,907,654	115,735,345	

No. 8. From the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 29th March 1866.

With reference to the Proceedings, Madras Government, Public Department, 7th instant, I am desired to state that this Chamber endorses the opinion of the Calcutta Trades' Association that a revision of the present scale of letter postage in India is now expedient, and agrees with it in suggesting that the unit of weight be increased to half a tolah, in place of quarter tolah as at present. It is observed that if this increase were adopted, Government calculate that there will be a loss of revenue of six lakhs of Rupees; but the Chamber is of opinion that a very great increase would in a very short time be shewn in the Native correspondence passing through the post, and that, in course of time, the revenue would be found to be in as good a position as before, while there is no doubt the public would be greatly benefited. The quarter tolah limit induces the use for letters and hoondies of a flimsy paper, quite unfit for the purposes of business, and although it may be said to be optional for the writers to use better material if they please, still it were well to remove the inducement which, trifling as it is, weighs with a Native beyond its real importance.

No. 9. From C. RUNGACHARLOO, Calicut, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Calicut, 3rd April 1866.

In acknowledging the receipt of the Order of Government, dated 7th ultimo, No. 234, I have the honor to submit the following remarks upon the question therein referred to.

2. I don't believe the postal unit of a quarter of a tolah operates as a bar to the use of the post by the rural or any other classes of the population. A half sheet of the French Foolscap, which is the description of paper most generally available to them, sent as it is without a separate cover, weighs just quarter of a tolah, so that it is possible with care to send letters at the minimum rate of postage. The real impediment to an extension of postal correspondence amongst the rural classes is the insufficiency of existing arrangements to ensure the safe and speedy delivery of letters by the District Post.

3. I must, however, mention that the above low unit of weight is a practical inconvenience to the rural classes, and to a much larger extent to the Town population, who, it must be remembered, chiefly contribute to the postal revenue, and from whom a further increase of correspondence is more immediately to be expected from improvements in the postal management. The inconvenience does not merely consist in the use of paper of flimsy texture; but the people at large not having at hand the means of ascertaining the weight, their letters frequently exceed the too nicely fixed minimum, and, being charged with double postage as insufficiently stamped, are often refused by the addressees, occasioning considerable inconvenience to the public and labor to the Department. If a return of insufficiently stamped letters can be obtained, it will be found that the extent of this inconvenience is not inconsiderable. It is a bad system which ever places the people on the point of committing an error.

4. While, therefore, the present low unit of weight is not a bar to postal communication, I consider it to be a defect which urgently calls for a remedy, and I venture to express my belief that any loss of revenue which may be occasioned by the proposed measure of improvement will be rapidly made up, though not as a direct consequence, by the progressive increase of correspondence amongst the mercantile and other classes of the town population, by whom the inconvenience is at present seriously felt.

No. 10. From the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 5th April 1866, No. 2276.

In reply to Government Order, dated 7th March 1866, No. 234, Public Department, I am directed by the Board of Revenue to express their opinion that the suggested measure of raising the unit of weight for letters from quarter to half tolah may have the effect of increasing the number of letters passing through the post. They believe that a good deal of correspondence still goes through private hands, and that this is owing, in part, to the present unit of weight being so small, but they are not in a position to adduce any facts in support of their opinion.

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No. 11. From G. A. BALLARD, Esq., Collector of Malabar, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Calicut, 6th April 1866, No. 43.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of Government Order, dated 7th March 1866, No. 234, in which the question is put whether "the low unit of a quarter of a tolah does operate practically as a bar to the use of the post by the

"rural classes, on account of the very thin paper which it is necessary to use not being commonly and readily procurable?"

I have consulted several persons, official, and non-official on this subject, and though opinions seem to vary somewhat, I think I may say that the majority decidedly support my own opinion, which I now beg to submit.

2. Perhaps to some extent an increase of the unit of weight would lead to an increase in the number of letters generally, but I doubt exceedingly whether the effect would be really appreciable on the rural population.

The lowness in the unit of weight does not now, in my opinion, debar to any great extent the rural population from using the Post Office.

Unless there is what he considers real occasion to write by post, such as a complaint to the Collector or Magistrate, the communication of some important domestic occurrence to a friend at a distance, or such like, the idea of writing does not enter a Ryot's head.

Such occasions for the present social economy of the rural classes are few and far between in proportion to their numbers. If occasion arises, the Ryot is probably unable to write himself on paper. He seeks a scribe. The present rates of postage (though, of course, the value of a half Anna or Anna label is greatly higher in the Ryot's eyes than in our's) do not act as any appreciable hinderance.

3. I feel very sure, at any rate, that the lowness of the present unit of postage is not the primary reason of the little use made of the Post Office by the rural population.

It does not check an existent desire to correspond. Leave other things as they are, and increase the unit of weight, and but little or no change will be wrought—nay, leave things as they are, and carry for nothing, and the increase of rural correspondence will be but small; for, supposing the desire to correspond to exist, the cost of writing materials, the fee to the letter writer, and the cost or the trouble of carriage to the nearest Post Office, would continue to be, as they are, greater hinderances than the actual postal charge. As things are, it would require free carriage, and a boon to boot, to produce an appreciable increase.

4. To extend the benefits of postal communication to the classes who now benefit little thereby, we must increase the number of our Post Offices in the rural Districts, give greater facilities for posting letters, and improve the Agency for distributing them. We must arrange that postage labels are easily procurable, and label vendors might be encouraged to undertake the sale of light paper.

In these ways the benefits of the Post Office may, indeed, be brought more within the reach of our rural classes, whilst the indirect, but vitally important, aid of our rapidly increasing rate schools, will enable the people to make use of its advantages.

5. From the reason given above, I see no grounds to expect that at all commensurate advantages would follow the adoption of the proposal of the Calcutta Trades' Association. The classes who now almost exclusively use the Post Office can well afford to pay the present rates, and reduction of those rates at present would, I fear, be a positively retrograde step; for, the loss of revenue might cripple

the operations of the Postal Department. It is to the intelligent and vigorous extension of its agency, and not to the reduction of rates, that I would look with confidence to an extension of the great benefits it confers.

No. 12. From W. ROBINSON, Esq., Inspector General of Police, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 19th April 1866, No. 626.

With reference to G. O., dated 7th March 1866, No. 234, Public Department, I offer an opinion with diffidence, in absence of any statistical information.

2. I fail to see how the anticipation of the Calcutta Trades' Association can be realized, viz., that the certain loss of one half of postage on all letters above quarter of a tolah, and the increased cost of carrying a heavier description of paper, will be met even in part by any large increase of correspondence consequent on the use of more substantial paper. The minimum rate of half Anna is retained. This is the matter which really influences the extension of correspondence.

3. I do not think that correspondence is checked by any greater difficulty in procuring thin paper than thick. In fact, the former is, as things now stand, more readily procurable than the other in the towns of this Presidency.

4. An increased allowance in weight will, with respect to Native correspondence, lead, I think, to more clubbing, but not to an increased number of letters sent.

No. 13. From the Chairman of the Madras Trades' Association, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 20th April 1866.

I have the honor to acknowledge the Order of Government, No. 234, of the 7th March last, on the letter to your address from the Secretary to the Government of India, dated 8th February, on the subject of the revision of the present scale of letter postage.

The question referred by the Government for the opinion of the Trades' Association, whether "the low unit of a quarter of a tolah does operate practically as a bar to the use of the post by some classes of the population, and especially by the rural classes, on account of the very thin paper which it is necessary to use not being commonly and readily procurable," is one on which, I regret to state, the Association have failed to obtain any satisfactory information, notwithstanding their inquiries in every direction within their reach. It does not appear, however, that any very great difficulty exists in the way of procuring the thin paper commonly in use, as large quantities of the note paper of foreign manufacture, a sheet of which is equal to a quarter of tolah in weight, are regularly imported, and supplies are procurable at every town in the Mofussil. The paper referred to is that known as the T. D. note paper, a sheet of which only, as being of full weight, can be sent through the Post, but without the protection of an envelope of even the thinnest description. This is doubtless a very great inconvenience, and, in the opinion of the Association, cannot but "operate practically as a bar to the use of the post" in a variety of instances. The superior kind of note paper of both foreign and English manufacture, a sheet of which together with the envelope does not weigh more

than a quarter of a tolah, is, from its higher price (notwithstanding that it furnishes fully a page more than the commoner kind, three sides of which only can be written upon), beyond the reach of the great mass of the people.

The Association have no hesitation in expressing their conviction, in confirmation of the statement in the Memorial of the Calcutta Trades' Association, that the unit of weight now allowed is insufficient for most purposes, and the greatest inconvenience is experienced by the commercial public in being restricted to a weight which involves the use of a paper so flimsy as to be quite unsuited for business correspondence, even when the superior kind of paper is used, and which quite precludes the possibility of an enclosure, should it consist even of a Hoondee, which is invariably written upon the very thinnest paper procurable.

In conclusion, the Association would respectfully submit that, whilst the revision of the present scale of letter postage, by charging half an Anna for a letter not exceeding half a tolah, and so on, would be a concession which would prove a decided boon to the public, it would, as may reasonably be inferred, tend also very considerably to the extension of correspondence by the post, inasmuch as precisely the same result was produced in England when a larger weight was conceded, after a fair trial of the penny postage system as first organized.

No. 14. To the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated Fort Saint George, 4th June 1866, No. 555.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th February last, calling for information as to the correctness, or otherwise, of a statement which has been made, to the effect that the low unit of a quarter of a tolah operates practically as a bar to the use of the post by some classes of the population, and especially by the rural classes, on account of the very thin paper which it is necessary to use not being commonly and readily procurable.

2. Copies of your letter were furnished to the Board of Revenue, to the Madras Chamber of Commerce, to the Madras Trades' Association, and to the Officers named in the margin, and I am now directed to submit, for the consideration of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council, the annexed copies of their replies. The Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Revenue, and Mr. Ballard, have omitted to furnish any definite information as to whether paper of the requisite texture is generally and readily procurable. Mr. Dykes, Mr. Carmichael, C. Runga Charloo, Mr. Robinson, and the Trades' Association are all of opinion, on the other hand, that paper of the requisite texture is procurable in sufficient quantities wherever the post is used, and the Governor in Council is disposed to concur in this opinion.

(Signed) J. D. SIM,
Acting Chief Secretary.

Exd. J. H. Burns.

desp 27/6.

Public Department.

No. 555.

To

The Secretary to the Government
of India,

Home Department.

Sir,

India

I am directed to
acknowledge the receipt of
your letter of the 8th February
last, calling for information
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W. H.

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2 Copies of your letter
were furnished to the
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Madras Chamber of Com-
merce, to the Madras Trade
Association and to the ~~person~~^{officers}
named in the margin, and
I am now directed to submit
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the Viceroi and Governor General
in Council, the annexed copies
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Mr. Dykes, Mr. Carmichael,
C.

Mr. D. F. Carmichael.
" W. Robinson.
" G. A. Ballard.
" J. W. B. Dykes.
V. Rama Niyangar.
C. Runga Charloo.

C. Runga Charloo, Mr. Robinson
and the Trade Association
are all of opinion on the
other hand that paper of
the requisite texture is pro-
curable in sufficient
quantities wherever the post
is used, and the Governor in
Council is disposed to
concur in this opinion.
His Excellency in Council,
also thinks it very doubtful
whether any increase in the
unit of weight would be
followed by a great increase
of correspondence.

lyh.

Fort St George.
4 June 1866

Public Works Deptt.

N^o 555.

To
The Secy to the Govt
of India

Dated 4 June 1866.

Submitting the
views of certain officers
on the proposed
revision of the present
scale of letter postage.

21/11/66

26 May
1866