M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-22.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1449 Press ~~Mis.~~

47-48.

Dated 26-10- 1859.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, from 22d to 31st October 1859.

No. 47. Read the following letter from W. FISHER, Esq., Collector of Canara; to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq., Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Mangalore, 17th October 1859, No. 47.

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter, No. 1292, dated 24th September 1859, and to submit my opinion on the Bill for the licensing of Trades and Professions, now before the Legislative Council.

2. It certainly provides for taxing a class of people, who have not hitherto contributed directly to the income of the State, but it appears to me that industry is taxed under circumstances which will render the apportioning of the impost a most difficult and probably an expensive undertaking, whilst it cannot but be observed, that funded and house property on which a tax could be levied without much trouble or expense has been omitted in arranging this scheme for replenishing the public purse.

3. The proposed tax must prove unpopular, as the Agents of Government have to learn not only the extent of each man's dealings, but his actual profits thereon, and this will involve an inquisitorial examination and open exposure of every man's affairs, that must prove irritating to a degree.

4. No Native has any idea of the duty of contributing to the resources of the Government from which he receives protection, and merely considers that taxes are imposed according to the pleasure and power of Government, and that his business is to avoid them. Hence such an enquiry as must be made under this Act will open a wide door to corrupt practices, and will stir up all sorts of ill-feeling between man and man.

5. The provisions of this Act appear to me to be cumbersome to an extent which would seriously impede its working, and render an annual settlement, a matter of the greatest difficulty.

6. To determine the class in which a man is to be placed, the Collector must have recourse to his fellow tradesmen and neighbours for information; and can only reach them through various agencies, as all enquiry must be local.

7. His work would be enormously increased by his being obliged to settle each case on its recorded merits, (for there is an appeal) whilst an amount of extra labour which they are quite unequal to, would be thrown on the Revenue establishments. Some difficulties may, I think, be avoided, by going at once to the source of information which under the Act the Collector must approach indirectly.

8. The entries in each man's Schedule might be examined, allowed or rejected by those best informed as to his circumstances, the Collector when satisfied acting on their recommendation.

9. The Schedules of all considered liable to this tax in each talook, town, or parish, having been received, the value of each entry could be determined by the tax payers at a meeting to be held on a specified date at the Cusbah of each Talook.

10. The only objection which I see to this course, and I hope it is not fatal to its success, is that the sum to be paid by the community at large not being fixed beforehand, there might be some hestitation on the part of the Assessors, but as the Schedules would be presented singly for consideration, and Assessors would not have the means of knowing in what order they would be placed before them, each must, to a certain extent stand or fall according to its merits or demerits.

11. It is comparatively easy to ascertain a man's position, and the extent of his dealings, but where a large majority of the tax payers keep no books, and are themselves unable perhaps even to read, it will be impossible to determine the amount of their annual net profits.

12. The tax must really be imposed on estimated, not on ascertained wealth, but this would not be objectionable in native eyes, and a tax so levied is more likely to be fairly apportioned by the tax payers themselves than by any one else.

13. The Bill has the appearance of being drawn up with reference to the circumstances of large and Semi-Europeanised Indian Communities, and its provisions are hardly suitable to an agricultural District like Canara, where wealth is not so much in the hands of the merchants and shopkeepers, as in those of the land owners.

14. The surplus income of this class is, to a considerable extent, employed (when desirable land investments are not in view) in what may be termed pawn-broking, or a crude kind of banking, but I doubt whether the Act could be brought to bear on this trade, in which all, high and low, rich and poor are more or less concerned; as no accounts are kept and these dealings are necessarily of a private character, valuable security in the shape of precious stones or gold ornaments being deposited by borrowers.

15. The special licensing of pawn-brokers as in England would not only return a considerable revenue, but would give the new Police useful allies, and by creating regular establishments for carrying on this business might lead to the future introduction of a Banking system, one of the great wants of the country.

No. 48. ORDER THEREON, 26th October 1859, No. 1449.

Ordered to lie over.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.

Collectors Letters 2/

No 47. Bangalore 17th October 1859

From

W. Fisher Esqre
Collector of Canara

To

J. D. Bourdillon Esqre
Secretary to Government
Fort St George

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter No 1292 dated 24th September 1859, & to submit my opinion on the Bill for the licensing of Trades & Professions, now before the Legislative Council

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this scheme for replenishing the public purse.

3 The proposed tax must be very unpopular, as the Agents of Government have to learn not only the extent of each Man's dealings, but the actual profits thereon, & this will involve an inquisitorial examination & open exposure of every Man's affairs, that must prove irritating to a degree.

4 No Person having any idea of his duty of contributing to the necessities of the Government from which he receives protection, & merely Considers that Taxes are imposed according to the pleasure & power of Government, & that his business is to avoid them. Hence such an inquiry as must be made under this Act will open a wide door to Corrupt practices, & will stir up all sorts of ill-feeling between man & man.

5. The provisions of this Act appear to me to be Cumbersome to an extent which would seriously impede the working, & render an annual Collection a matter of the greatest difficulty.

6. To determine the Class in which a man is to be placed, the Collector must have recourse to his fellow Townsmen & neighbours for information, & can only check them through various agencies, as all inquiry must be local

7. This work would be enormously increased by his being obliged to settle each case on its recorded merits, for there is an appeal, whilst an amount of extra labour which they are quite unequal to, would be thrown on the normal establishments. Some difficulties may, I think, be avoided, by going at once to the Source of information which under this Act the Collector must approach indirectly -

8. The entries in each Man's Schedule might be examined, allowed or rejected by those best informed as to his Circumstances, the Collector when satisfied acting on their recommendation -

9. The Schedules of all Considered liable to this Tax in each Townland, or Parish, having been received, the value of each Unit Could be determined by the Tax payers at a meeting to be held on a specified date at the Church of each Townland.

10. The only Objection which I see

to this Course, & I hope it is not fatal to its success, is that the sum to be paid by the Community at large not being fixed before hand, there might be some hesitation on the part of the assessors, but as the schedules would be presented singly for consideration, & assessors would not have the means of knowing in what order they would be placed before them, each must, to a certain extent stand or fall according to its merits or demerits.

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14. The Surplus income of this Class is to a Considerable extent employed (when described) and investments are not in what may be termed pawn-broking, or a Crude kind of banking, but I doubt whether the Act Could be brought to bear on this trade, in which all, high & low, rich & poor are more or less Concerned, as no accounts are kept & these dealings are necessarily of a private Character, valuable security in the shape of precious stones or gold ornaments being deposited by borrowers.

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introduction of a Banking System, one of the
great wants of the Country.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obed.t Serv.t

J.no Forbes
Collector

Revenue 1859 Dec.
Sec.y of Govt. Madras
from
No. 1918.
Collector of Canara.
&c
Secretary to
Government
~~Fort St. George~~
Dated 17th October 1859.
Rec.d 22d
No. 47.
No. 1149 - 26th Oct.r
N.

Acknowledges Letter No 1292
of 24th Sept.r 59 and submits
his opinion on the Bill for
the licensing of Trade and
Professions now before the
Legislative Council.

Written order.

Copy in our Letter to Sec.
of 10th Dec.r 1859 - No. 79

No 1149
Ordered to be sent.

No 47 + 48
Fort St. Geo.
26 October 1859