

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1436	Press Mis.
3-4	
Dated	1-8-1918

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
1st August 1863.*

No. 3. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 29th June 1863, No. 3,938:—

Read the following letter from C. W. READE, Esq., Collector of South Arcot, to W. HUDLESTON, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Cuddalore, 8th June 1863, No. 147.

SIR,

1. I am reminded by a Memorandum from the Sub-Secretary that a reply is still due from my Office in explanation of the low rate of consumption of salt in South Arcot for the last seven months of Fasli 1270, noticed by Government in paragraph 2 of their orders of the 11th February 1862, No. 262.

2. I had not lost sight of the subject, although I have not reported on it. I have looked into the causes which had induced the falling off in the Home consumption for the particular period under review; but consequent on the subsequently improved state of things and to the press of other matters I had put off writing.

3. The annexed statement gives the sales Home and Inland for the entire Fasli year of 1270. The Board, in the 11th paragraph of their Proceedings of the 21st November 1862, No. 6,435, estimate the average Home consumption per head of the population on the sales only for the last seven months of the year, i.e., from December to June both inclusive and, as they remark, this makes the consumption by each person about 5 lbs. only. Such calculation I conceive to be hardly fair. On the whole year the consumption would average above 10 lbs. per person, the sales for the first five months of the year nearly equalling those of the last seven months. The causes operating to bring about the falling off in the sales for the latter half of the year are easily explained. The enhanced price* of salt was introduced in the month of February of the very year under notice, and was again raised in June;†

this increase was expected and no doubt gave a considerable impetus to the sales of salt during the few months preceding the change, and it is probable that many laid in a stock of salt to last them for a lengthened period; again it is in those months which were marked by large sales that the demand for salt is usually the greatest, while in the hot months, or in the present season of the year, the sales are invariably lower; so that it is hardly a just computation to take the recognized worst half of the year by which to judge of the sales and of the ratio of consumption. I may observe also that there is another cause which, I fancy, must greatly affect our sales of salt in certain localities. I allude to the establishment by the French Government of two or more depôts for selling salt in villages on the immediate frontier of the two territories. The convenience to the public is obviously so great that the purchases by our Ryots from those depôts must be considerable. They would hardly go to Merkanum for salt which was selling almost at their very doors for the same price.

4. The only remedy is by forming depôts within our own limits adequate to the wants of our people, and the question arises how far this is desirable, and would it repay the heavy cost of sea and land carriage with all the other attendant expenses of depôts and establishments. It might possibly be worth a trial, and for some time I have had it in contemplation to bring the subject to the Board's notice; but in view of the heavy preliminary expenses I have not felt prepared with any definite proposal; there is no doubt, however, that we are considerable present losers by the French depôts, but whether the expensive measures necessary to obviate this loss would, in the end, prove any real gain appears to me very problematical. In last year I looked into the subject, and obtained information from the Pondicherry authorities, which fully confirmed the belief that their consumption of salt was quite out of proportion to the population of the settlement. While the ratio of our Home consumption may be taken at 10 lbs. to each person, their

	Home.	Inland.
July	4,110	25,299
August	10,984	30,886
September	15,829	21,390
October	15,297	13,608
November	19,571	13,290
December	11,105	11,710
January	8,108	12,411
February	9,430	12,019
March	9,401	17,034
April	11,819	15,086
May	9,069	13,489
June	9,683	11,881
	<u>1,34,405</u>	<u>1,98,709</u>

* From Rupees 135 to 155.

† To Rupees 180.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
1st August 1863.*

returns exhibit an average of 19 French measures, which are equal to 27½ lbs. English, a quantity which far exceeds what any single person could possibly consume; and I imagine this excess must be the result of the purchases by our Ryots who reside within easy reach of Pondicherry and of the District depôts.

5. Other causes are not without their influence in producing fluctuations in our sales for Home consumption. My inquiries show that large quantities of salt are sold within the District by traders who professedly purchase it for the inland markets, but who often find as profitable a return for it on their route; and in like manner many who buy salt at the Chunampet pans in the Madras District, frequently, I believe, dispose of it in passing through the larger towns and villages situated in the Northern and Western Talooks of South Arcot; and therefore, unless we are prepared to establish fixed depôts in different localities, these causes will probably ever exist; and may possibly increase, and hence the returns of sales for Home consumption will always be liable to fluctuation.

Fasli 1267	...	...	...	94,653
" 1268	...	...	...	89,544
" 1269	...	...	...	1,12,996
" 1270	...	...	...	1,34,405

6. A comparison of the marginal statement will at once show the average consumption on the entire year of Fasli 1270 to have been considerably above that of former years, taking the whole year, and not, as the Board have done, a portion

only, while for the subsequent Fasli 1271 there was a slight decrease as compared with its predecessor.

7. It is impossible wholly to reject the belief that illicit salt is manufactured, but not I think, to an extent sufficient to materially influence the revenue, and I am not of opinion that it had ought to do with the falling off on the sales for the period noticed in Fasli 1270. I trust the causes which I have now dwelt on will satisfactorily account for that falling off, and the Board may be assured that no efforts are omitted by the Deputy Collector and those working under him to check and detect illicit manufacture; and I think the foregoing comparative returns attest a very marked and satisfactory increase in the Salt revenue but which must ever be subject to fluctuation from the causes to which I have now referred. I may add that the sales of the present Fasli promise to exceed those of the past.

8. The supposed average consumption of salt by an adult man is computed in round numbers at 15 lbs., and accepting this estimate, the present proved Home consumption in the District of 10 lbs. to each of the entire population must be viewed as satisfactory. It is to be remembered that the population thus estimated for includes women and children of all ages, and if this, with the other continued causes, operating to the apparent injury of our Home sales, could be severally analyzed, and the proportion due to each be duly ascertained, it is probable we should find that strictly the Home consumption according to the returns scarcely fell short of the allotted average for each individual, and any fractional difference to complete the prescribed amount we might then fairly place to the account of illicit manufacture, in the absence of any other ostensible cause.

9. It is only just to Mahomed Esuff Saib to bear my testimony to his unceasing vigilance in looking after the interests of the Department over which he immediately presides, and the Board only do the Deputy Collector justice in ascribing to his "efficient superintendence the good results" which they are pleased to observe upon in the concluding paragraph of their Proceedings under acknowledgment.

1. Resolved that the above letter be submitted to Government, with reference to paragraph 2 of their Order, dated 11th February 1862, No. 262, Revenue Department.

2. The Board do not consider the Collector's explanations are sufficient to account for the low rate of Home consumption in South Arcot.

3. The Collector objects to the Board having taken the Home consumption of the last seven months in Fasli 1270, as fixing the average consumption of the whole Fasli; but their estimate, though perhaps too low for that particular year, was certainly not below the average Home consumption, which it appears has not exceeded 9 lbs. per head of the population.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
1st August 1863.*

4. It is observed that the Home consumption in the past Fasli fell below that of the previous year by Maunds 4,000; and that, if even half the salt imported by the French Government were added to these sales, it would not bring the rate up to 11 lbs. of Salt per head of the population.

5. The Board cannot suppose that the vicinity of the French depôts materially affects these sales, nor ought there to be no more difficulty in checking illicit transport than illicit manufacture; but on this point the Collector is requested to submit further information.

6. Every other cause adduced by the Collector as tending to decrease sales for Home consumption in South Arcot must operate equally in the Districts of Nellore and Tanjore, but in these last two Districts the average rate of domestic consumption per head of the population is 19 lbs.

7. The Board, therefore, think it probable, that illicit manufacture is practised in South Arcot to a considerable extent. The Collector should direct his Deputy to turn his special attention to this point, and he will also be good enough to report for how many months of the year this Officer makes his head quarters at Mercanum, and for what period he is on tour at the other Salt stations.

No. 4.

ORDER THEREON, 1st August 1863, No. 1,436

The Board will continue to watch the sales of Salt in South Arcot.

(True Extract.)

Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

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(A true Copy and Extract.)

W. A. Gell
Sub-Secretary.

To J. D. Sim, Esq., Secretary to Government, R. D.

Exd. J. Wright.

11-51
11-51

11-51 1863. Department.
No. of Gen. Fund 11-51.

No. 1580.
PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Dated 29th June 1863.
Despatched 29th June
Received 30th June

No. 3,338.

Submitting with the Board's remarks a letter
from the Collector of South Arcot explaining the
causes of the low rate of consumption of Salt in
the district for the last seven months of Fash 1270.

11-51 1863. 1st Aug.

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