M.R.O. 14—15,000—27-9-24

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1202 Press ~~MIS.~~

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Dated 12-7-1884

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 12th July 1864.

No. 190. Read the following letter from T. CLARKE, Esq., Member of the Board of Revenue, to J. D. SIM, Esq., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Cocanada, 21st April 1864 ;—

SIR,

1. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Order of Government dated 11th April 1864, No. 608, on my Report of the results of my inspection of the Salt works in the Southern parts of the Madras District.

2. I could obtain no satisfactory explanation of the variations noticed in the 6th paragraph of the Government Order.

3. When I enquired, the first answer I received was that the servants were new to the place then ; that fewer merchants came because of bad roads, or rain, or sickness.

4. I have always found it very difficult to obtain any explanation which would satisfy me in regard to such discrepancies.

5. It will be seen that they occur chiefly in the inland sales.

6. The increase in the price of salt and epidemics among men and cattle I usually found affected home sales.

7. It has been much more difficult to account for variations in the sales to markets foreign to the District, especially when the explanation was sought for periods beyond the current year.

8. By close observation and consulting European merchants and officers, I have found that a change in the current of trade, or in the production of or demand for a single article of produce, or the opening up of a new line of road by transferring the means of transit from one part of the country or district to another, affects these sales.

9. Again; a good or bad season causes them to rise or fall. When the rains are abundant and the cultivating stock is employed in agriculture, the sales of salt fall off. When employment for the stock cannot be found in agriculture, they are often used in the carriage of salt. I also found that often in such seasons the markets get overstocked, I fear, with both legitimately purchased and illicitly obtained salt, a dry season affording great facilities for the production of salt.

10. The lowness or entire failure of the supply of salt in some stations sometimes leads to merchants resorting to other sations where the sales rapidly and extraordinarily increase.

11. Owing also to the existence of a large quantity of badly made or old salt, Collectors and Superintendents close a neighbouring store for a season. Further, epidemics and the state of the roads are elements which tend to disturb the sales and cause variations ; lastly, touting for buyers prevails in some parts of the country.

12. I have said before I could not obtain any reliable or satisfactory explanation of the extent to which any of the above stated causes operated in increasing or diminishing the sales at Chunambet and Cheyur.

13. It will be in the recollection of Government that there long has existed a jealousy between the officials at the Chunambet and Cheyur Stores and those at Mercanum and that practices of a very doubtful character were alleged by the Collector of Chingleput to have been resorted to in the District of South Arcot, in order to obtain purchases. In 1859 and 1860 Mr. Shubrick complained that parties coming to Chunambet and Cheyur were made prisoners of by the officials in the South Arcot District and carried into Mercanum on the pretence that being Koravers it was not prudent to allow them to wander unwatched through the District, and that they were made to buy salt at Mercanum, and therefore, that the sales at Cheyur and Chunambet had greatly fallen off.

14. I believe the variations in the sales at Chunambet and Cheyur are chiefly owing to this last stated cause, though the other causes enumerated above have no doubt to some extent more or less affected them.

15. In regard to the Order given in paragraph 8, though the merchants' statements of the places to which they intend to take the salt they purchase, are not always to be implicitly relied on, I believe they are sufficiently correct to afford a means of judging of the progress and course of our salt trade, and that it will be matter of much regret hereafter should the specifications referred to by Government be done away with. From the statistics which these statements afford, a Collector sees and is able to trace the cause of any great falling off or increase in the trade in any particular direction, and if he will apply himself to the subject, to remove impediments or correct abuses, affecting the interests of Government and the welfare of the people, as was done lately in Ganjam in regard to salt carried into the Central Provinces.

16. It is more than merely interesting to trace through a series of years from these returns the course of trade through the inland parts of the country, and to have some means of drawing a comparison in regard to the existence and extension of it in different parts.

17. It will be seen from the reports I am submitting to Government, how much our salt is finding its way into Nagpore and Hyderabad, and how the opening of good lines of roads increases our revenue derived from the sales of salt. I do not believe our returns are perfectly correct, and it will be seen from what I have written in my report on the District of Ganjam, that there is reason to suppose that salt carried across the Bengal frontier is stated to be required for the Central Provinces. However, making all allowances for much error, the information contained in these specifications is still very valuable, as affording statistical data and means of comparison, sufficiently correct to arrive at very important conclusions.

18. Our Salt returns are as useful as our Customs returns, and are, I believe, very nearly as correct. The specifications in the latter are not always to be relied on, since weather and other circumstances affect the final destination of a vessel; but though in the one instance the specification may not be a whit more reliable than in the other, it would never be urged that the failure to attain perfection in the trade returns would justify the blotting out from the Statements the column which shows the ports to which the commerce is carried. I would, therefore, request to be permitted to urge a re-consideration of the order in question.

Paragraph 8, Proceedings of Government.

19. I did not find anything to lead me to suppose that the transfers of purchases from Cheyur to Chunambet were owing to improper inducements held out by the Salt servants at these stations. The interests of the manufacturers at the two places are so intimately allied and connected, that I see no cause to apprehend that such inducements were had recourse to. I believe the sales are at one place occasionally suspended when the salt in store at the other is considered to be excessive.

Paragraph 9, Proceedings of Government.

20. The failure of the manufacture of salt at the stations of Cuddalore and the closing of the sales at these places on account of there being no salt, caused a run on the stores at Chunambet and Cheyur. There is no doubt that the stock in hand at Chunambet would be exhausted before new salt could be sold; the merchants would be compelled to go to Cheyur or Mercanum for salt, the one ten miles north and the other two miles south of Chunambet.

21. Sufficient attention is not paid to the apportioning the Dittum, and to the keeping a sufficient stock of salt in store at each station, though even the greatest care may be rendered nugatory by circumstances which cannot be controlled. Last year was throughout the country a very adverse one for the manufacture of salt, owing to the large and constant rain-falls. The demand for salt too has been large this year, owing probably to the low state of the stock in hand, and partially perhaps to the dry character of the season.

22. In regard to paragraph 14, I may mention that the Covelong and Keelambakam Salts are the same. The platform at Covelong is reserved wholly for salt assigned for exportation; those at Keelambakam for salt sold for use in the country. On the Keelambakam platform there were several heaps of salt transferred from the Pyanur closed works. This salt was good and heavy.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
12th July 1864.

No. 191. ORDER THEREON, 12th July 1864, No. 1,212.

Separate Revenue, No. 36.
Salt.

1. The Government believe that the compulsion alluded to in paragraph 14 of the above Report has been entirely removed; if not, this should be done at once.

2. The Government retain their opinion of the untrustworthiness and uselessness of the specifications referred to in paragraphs 15 to 18.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.
To T. Clarke, Esq.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

Pro. 11th April 1864 No. 155

Rev.
Proc. of Govt. for No. 1099
from J. Clarke Esqre
Member B.d of Rev.

To J. D. Sim Esqre
Secy to Govt. R. D.

Dated
Despd } 21st April 1864.
Received 27th do

Pro. of the Board of Rev. of 24 July 1864
No. 2020

Replying to points noticed by Govt. in their Pro. of 11th April 1864 No. 508, on the Report on the inspection of the Salt works to the South of Madras.

No. 190 & 191.

No. 1212 - 12 July

With an order

11 Decr 1864

Orders requested as to paras 15 to 18 - My own opinion is that these Specifications are useless but Mr Clarke should know best. A ship does not change her destination so easily as a Country man -

J. D. S.

- In my opinion the specifications are untrustworthy & useless - more likely to mislead than do good & as they were stated to "complicate the accounts" I would not continue them.

What are these specifications? a statement of the place to which the Merchant intends to take the Salt? I go I concur with the Nobility & the Privilege

there were several heaps of salt transferred from the Pyaung closed works. This salt was good and heavy.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obedt Servant

Clerke
Member of the
Board of Rev.

To

J. D. Sim Esqre
Secretary to Government
No 1212 Revenue Department.

The Government believe that the contrivance alluded to in paras 14 of the above report has been entirely removed — if not, this should be done at once.

The Government retain their opinion of the contrivance mentioned and recommended in the specification referred to in paras 15 to 18.

Fort St. George
12th July 1864