

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 829	Press Mis.
Dated 11-4-	1866.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
11th April 1866.*

No. 111. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Public Department:—

Requesting the views and remarks of the Officers
mentioned within, with reference to a question
from the Government of India respecting the
expediency of revising the present scale of letter
postage. (Here enter 7th March 1863, No. 234.)

No. 112. ORDER THEREON, 11th April 1866, No. 829.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. GROSE,

Acting Under Secretary to Government.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
7th March 1866.*

No. 23. Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, to the Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Fort William, 8th February 1866, No. 1357.

Home Department.
Post Office.

Since the publication of the Bill for the management of the Post Office, a Memorial has been received from the Calcutta Trades' Association, representing the expediency of revising the present scale of letter postage, by charging half an anna for a letter not exceeding half a tolah, one anna for a letter not exceeding one tolah, and so on, adding half an anna for every additional half tolah, or fraction thereof.

2. The general effect of this revision would be to reduce by one-half the postage on all letters above a quarter of a tolah in weight; and it is estimated that this would entail an immediate loss of revenue of probably not less than six lakhs.

3. It is stated by the Trades' Association that the unit of weight now in operation, viz., a quarter of a tolah, "is a source of great practical inconvenience to the commercial public, inasmuch as it necessitates the use of a paper of the most flimsy texture * * *, the only alternative being the payment of a higher rate of postage, which is felt to be oppressive." And the Association urge, as a further argument in favor of remedying this practical inconvenience, that "they believe an increased allowance in the weight will result in a great increase of correspondence."

4. If the belief of the Calcutta Trades' Association on this point could be accepted without question, there could be little doubt as to the propriety of adopting their suggestion for increasing the unit of weight to half a tolah, whatever immediate loss of revenue the measure might entail; for a great increase of correspondence would imply an extension of postal communication to new classes of the population who are now, from some cause or other, debarred from availing themselves of its great advantages.

5. The Director General of the Post Office has expressed an opinion that the proposed measure "will involve a serious loss of revenue, without adding a single inducement to an extension of correspondence," because, he says, "the extension of correspondence is influenced mainly by the minimum rate at which a letter can be sent from one place to another." This, as a general proposition, seems to the Governor General in Council to be correct; and, as applicable to the population of India, it is supported by the view taken by the Post Office Commissioners in their Report of 1851, for, after strongly insisting on the position—unquestionably a sound position—that it was "to the increase of Native correspondence that the Government must look for the support of the Post Office, and the provision of means to promote its efficiency and extend its usefulness, and for all the beneficial results that have attended the establishment of a practically unrestricted communication by Post in the United Kingdom," the Commissioners went on to say that, after full consideration, while they thought "it would be inadvisable to reduce the unit of weight below a quarter of a tolah, it seems clear, on the other hand, that that weight is sufficient to meet the wants of the Native public."

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
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6. It is, however, stated by some persons, notwithstanding the very great extension* of correspondence which has actually taken place since the introduction of the present postal system,

* Viz., 93 per cent. increase in the number of letters.

that 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. As this statement appears to the Governor General in Council to demand careful consideration, I am desirous to request that, under the orders of the Governor in Council, information regarding it may be sought for from any persons, official or unofficial, whose positions may be likely to afford them the means of obtaining correct information and forming a correct conclusion on the point, and that the result may be communicated to this Government, with an expression of His Excellency's own opinion on the question.

No. 29. ORDER THEREON, 7th March 1866, No. 234.

Resolved that the Madras Chamber of Commerce and the Madras Trades' Association be requested to favor Government with their views on the question referred to in the foregoing letter.

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

2. Resolved that the letter from the Government of India be, also, communicated to the Board of Revenue, and to the Officers named in the margin, for

any remarks that they may have to offer.

(True Extract).

G. J. Cantelmo
Chief Secretary.

To the Chairman of the Madras Chamber of Commerce.

„ Chairman of the Madras Trades' Association.

„ Board of Revenue.

„ Revenue Department. ✓

To D. F. Carmichael, Esq.

„ W. Robinson, Esq.

„ G. A. Ballard, Esq.

„ J. W. B. Dykes, Esq.

„ V. Rama Aiyangar.

„ C. Runga Charloo.

Exd. J. H. Burns.

Rev. 1866 Departs
Dep. of Govt. of India

Gov. of the Madras Govt.
Public Departs

Dated 7th } March 1866
Bills 12th }
M. J. 1866

Requesting
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