M R.O. 1—99,000—18-10-29.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. Letter No. 1499 Press Mis.

648

Dated 27th May 1869

Not to be folded or roughly handled

REVENUE DEPARTMENT,
FORT SAINT GEORGE,
27th May, 1869.

No. 1,499.

No. 648.

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

SIR,

Separate Revenue, No. 24.
Customs.

THE Board of Revenue have recently brought to the notice of Government that advantage has been taken of the facilities afforded by the Pattern-Post to obtain from England consignments of jewellery without payment of Import Duty, and that the ordinary Post has been similarly used for the purpose of transmitting gold thread from Pondicherry, which is a free port, to Madras.

2. The Advocate-General is of opinion that goods so received are contraband, and liable to confiscation; and he advised that the Customs authorities should apply to the Postmaster-General to act under Section 60 of the Postal Act, which gives the Officer in charge of a Post Office authority, whenever he suspects that any packet contains a contraband article, or any article on which Duty is owing to Government, to summon the party to whom the packet is addressed, and to open it in his presence.

3. The Collector of Sea Customs acting on this advice has, with the aid of the Postal authorities, made several seizures of goods addressed to a Trading Firm, and the Board of Revenue have approved of his proceedings, being of opinion that, though a systematic examination of Postal parcels and letters is to be deprecated, such occasional examinations as have recently been undertaken, at the instance of the Collector of Sea Customs, are absolutely necessary in the interests of the public revenue.

4. The Board drew attention to the fact that, unless the provisions of Section 60 of the Postal Act, under which the Officer in charge of a Post Office is authorised to refuse to receive a packet for transmission beyond Indian limits, unless accompanied by a Custom-house Pass, are occasionally acted upon, an easy opportunity would be afforded for the smuggling of Opium from Madras—a practice which the recent seizures by the Custom-house Officers had only lately been the means of checking.

5. The Board also submitted certain correspondence, which passed some time back between the Director-General of the Post Office and the Chief Commissioner of Customs at Bombay, from which it appeared that the Government of India are decidedly averse to a frequent resort to the procedure authorised by Section 60 of the Postal Act; and they also referred to a telegram which has lately been received by the Postmaster-General, to the effect that the Government of India do not approve of any systematic interference with the contents of the Mails.

6. This Government are of opinion that it is essentially necessary that some steps should be taken to stop the practice of sending by Post dutiable articles without payment of Duty. As evidence of the urgency of action in this direction, they may point to the fact brought to notice by the Board in paragraph 4 of their letter, that a shipper of jewellery in London actually proposed to his constituent at Madras to forward batches of watches, from time to time, by Post in order to escape Duty. If the contents of the Mails are never to be examined for the purpose of checking this practice, a most dangerous opening will be given for contraband traffic, and advantage will be taken of the liberal policy of Government in Postal matters to evade their fair demands for Customs Duty.

7. I am accordingly directed to submit the papers* to the Government of India, and to request that His Excellency the Viceroy in Council will pass such orders on the matter as to him may seem proper.

* Proceedings of Government, dated 15th May 1869, Nos. 367 and 368.

8. In the meantime the Government, concurring in the views of the Board of Revenue as expressed in paragraph 15 of their letter† have approved of the orders which they have issued to the Collector of Sea Customs alluded to in paragraph 8, and have authorised that Officer to make occasional application to the Postal authorities for an examination of the Mails.

† Dated 3rd April 1869.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant.

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,

Acting Secretary to Government.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

J. P. Pickett & Co's Patent Ruling Machine

No 1499
27 May 69

To

The Secretary to the Government
of Fort St George. —
Financial Department.

Sir,

The Board of Revenue
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&c.

Financial 1869 Department.

[ ]

From Government of

Fort St. George.

Dated 27th May. } No. 1,499.
R. } *Enclosures.*
6 *spare copies.*

D. No. Progs. { *D.*
L. No. { *No.*

MAY.

No. 648.

Submitting for the orders of the Governor General papers relating to the importation of dutiable goods through Overland Post.

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to [illegible]

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(7) No. of Gov. 415 May 1867
Nos. 367 & 368.

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× 2/33 April 1869.

21/3

E. C. Bell