M.R. D. 1—89,000—16-10-89

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 237 Press Mis.

115-76
Dated 18-2-1870 19

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 18th February 1870.

No. 175. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 2nd December 1869, No. 8,874:—

Read the following letter from the Collector of Sea Customs, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Madras, 26th October 1869, No. 1,086.

From Collector of Sea Customs, Madras, dated 20th October 1868, No. 1,129, *vide* Board's Proceedings, dated 5th November 1868, No. 7,852.

With reference to the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue of the 20th October 1869, No. 7,799, regarding the smuggling of Opium from villages and small ports on the coast, I beg again respectfully to call the attention of the Board to the letter noted in the margin and the following remarks.

2. Information of intended smuggling of Opium has been frequently given to this department, but the smugglers almost always succeed in evading the vigilance of the Customs Officers on the watch to seize the Opium in transit or on board.

3. I have had occasion lately to telegraph to Rangoon and Ceylon that Opium was smuggled from Madras to those ports, and recent cases reported to the Board, afford ample proof that smuggling is extensively carried on in Madras and elsewhere on the coast.

4. Customs Officers are now on the track of Opium which has been sent to an outport for shipment, I much fear, however, that the smuggler will safely ship his venture.

5. The profits of Opium smuggling are enormous, always the case with goods of which the import and export are entirely prohibited. No examples are required to prove such an admitted fact, and as long as persons are allowed to keep any quantity of Opium in their possession without a license, so long will smuggling go on.

6. No one is allowed to export or send Opium by land* to a foreign State without a pass from an Opium Agent, nor can it be sent by post,† why, therefore, should persons be allowed to sell or keep any quantity without a license?

* Section 6, Act VI. of 1844, Schedule B.

† *Vide Fort Saint George Gazette*, 5th October 1869, page 461.

7. Opium is so portable and also valuable for its bulk that it is easily concealed in air-tight cases in barrels, boxes, or bales containing other goods.

8. When the last seizure was made, the tins of Opium were concealed in barrels filled up with tar, and unless the examiner of the barrels had known they contained Opium and had simply opened them on suspicion, he would most probably have never discovered the Opium at all.

9. The contrivances for eluding detection are endless, and as fast as one system, (which perhaps has been a success for years,) is discovered, another is invented, and the Opium passed with impunity under the very eyes of Custom-house Officers.

10. As regards the statement* of the Collector of Tinnevelly, that Opium is manufactured in Mysore, I have reason to believe that much of the Opium prepared in Madras is made from poppies grown in the Mysore territories; whether the cultivation of poppy has been legalized there or not I am not aware, but there is no restriction on its import into British India.

* Board's Proceedings, dated 20th October 1869, No. 7,793.

11. It is a well known and recognized fact that there has already been this season an extraordinary and unaccountable increase in the quantity of Opium "reserved for local consumption in Malwa." I have myself not the slightest doubt that the greater part of the "reserved" Opium is transported to the coast, and smuggled on board vessels bound for Ceylon, Rangoon, Mauritius, China, etc.

Vide Indian Economist of August 10, 1869, page 27, also same paper, September 10, page 45, Articles 4 and 6.

12. I trust the Board will pardon my again urging on their notice and that of Government a subject which has been so recently under consideration, but the interests at stake are so great, and the loss of revenue to the State so enormous that I consider it my duty, in the present financial crisis, again to bring the matter forward.

13. Until the sale and possession of Opium without a license (like Arrack) is made illegal, it will be, in my humble belief, impossible to prevent the enormous amount of smuggling now going on.

SUBMITTED for the consideration of Government.

2. The Board are not disposed to recommend the introduction of Penal Laws for regulating the possession and sale of Opium in this Presidency.

3. Most liberal rewards are given to informers.

No. 176. ORDER THEREON, 18th February 1870, No. 237.

Separate Revenue, No. 12.
Customs.

THE Right Honourable the Governor in Council is not prepared to pass orders on the question referred to in the foregoing Proceedings without further and more definite information as to whether the smuggling of Opium is really a common offence. He will, therefore, await the Board's reply to the Order of Government, under date 19th November 1869, No. 2,992, which should be submitted with as little delay as possible.

2. In the meantime the Board of Revenue should ascertain and report whether the Collectors of Coast Districts are of opinion that the smuggling of the drug is generally prevalent. The number of cases in which smuggled Opium has been seized by the Collector of Sea Customs during the last five years with the quantity confiscated in each case should also be reported.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18*th February* 1870.

3. Mr. Hunter Blair deserves the acknowledgments of Government for having brought this matter prominently to notice.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
" J. H. Blair, Esq.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Revenue Department

No. 237.

Proceedings of the Madras Government
Under date the 18th January 1870.

Read the following
Proceedings of the Board of
Revenue.

(R. & A. Dept. 69 No. 8874

Submitting for consideration with remarks Letter from Collector of Sea Customs, Madras, reiterating his proposal that sale and possession of Opium without a license, should be made illegal.

I think we might communicate the fuller information asked for by the Supreme Govt. for their opinion

The Right Honble the Governor in Council is not prepared to pass orders on the question referred to in the foregoing Proceedings without further and more definite information

Govt. of Madras.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

&c., &c.,

Dated February, 18th.

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 18th February 1870, No. 237.

FEBRUARY.
Nos. 175-176.

Opium.—Board of Revenue to report particulars in connection with its smuggling.

as to whether the smuggling of opium is really a common offence. He will, therefore, await the Board's reply to the order of Government under date 19th November 1869 N: 2992 which should be submitted with as little delay as possible.

2. In the meantime the Board of Revenue should ascertain and report whether the Collectors of Coast Districts are of opinion that the smuggling of the drug is generally prevalent. The number of cases in which smuggled opium has been seized by the Collector of Sea Customs during during the last five years with the quantity confiscated in each case should also be reported.

3. Mr. Hunter Blair deserves the acknowledgment of Government for having brought this matter prominently to notice.—

To Fitts Bros Rev Dept 19
— J. H. Blair Esqre

Ed. H. Hall