

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
5th May 1871.*

No. 47. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 14th March 1871, No. 1,113.

Read the following letter—

From the Commissioner of the Nilgiris, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Ootacamund, 25th January 1871, No. 7.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for the orders of the Board of Revenue, a petition to their address from Mr. Samuel Honeywell, Brewer and Maltster, Aravan Ghaut, Nilgiris, praying to be freed from the restriction placed as regards alcoholic strength on the Beer manufactured by him.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.—Petition.

From the same officer, dated Ootacamund, 28th February 1871, No. 21.

Your telegram was received at half past 5 P.M. yesterday.

The Abkarry renter paid his January instalment (due 31st January) in full before noon yesterday.

I have served him with notice that if the February instalment (due to-day) be not paid by the 11th of March, I shall attach.

In the meantime, in connection with Proceedings of the Board, No. 250, 18th January 1871, declining the grant of a remission to the renter, I forward, for the Board's consideration and orders, a further petition from the renter and my endorsement thereon.

2. When the renter's first petition for remission was sent up, I was glad to learn that Mr. Davidson could see circumstances which, in his opinion, entitled the petition to favourable consideration.

I am quite satisfied that the renter has lost money by the Farm, and I have no doubt his instalments have been met "at much personal inconvenience;" I am, nevertheless, strongly averse on principle to remission under any circumstances whatever, and to any material departure from the terms of the contract.

3. Paragraph 16 of the conditions under which the renter purchased the Farm is as follows:—

"That in the event of any default in the payment of the rent, it shall be open to the Commissioner to take the Farm under Government management at the renter's risk, or to declare the lease forfeited, and resell it at the renter's risk; and that in every case all arrears shall be recoverable by attachment and sale under Madras Act II. of 1864, Arrears of Revenue Recovery Act."

4. The renter, in his petition now forwarded, prays—

(1). That he may be allowed to hold the contract for the remaining period at a reduced amount, namely, Rs. 55,000 per annum.

This, in my opinion, is out of the question.

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(2). That if No. 1 cannot be granted, he may be released *unconditionally* from his contract from the time he receives order on the petition.

I am not disposed to recommend this. But if the renter will pay his February and March instalments, the Board might allow him to throw up his contract from the 31st of March, retaining his deposit* money to meet a portion of the loss which the resale of the Farm will certainly entail.

* Rs. 14,166-10-8, two months' instalments.

In the meantime the Farm could be advertised and put up to auction on the 23rd March for the period remaining of the original lease, namely, from 1st April 1871 to 30th June 1872.

5. When the Farm is resold there will, I apprehend, be a heavy fall in the price. I question whether it will fetch over Rs. 60,000 a-year. The present renter pays Rs. 85,000 a-year.

As far as I can now learn, the renter has no property that can be got at to recoup Government the loss expected.

6. I may perhaps be permitted here to remark that the present system of Abkarry auction sale seems to me most objectionable.

The farming out of our liquor traffic has, under any circumstances, a tendency to encourage drinking and the sale of the Farm by public auction to the highest bidder; although perhaps it brings in a larger revenue than any other mode of sale, yet increases this tendency to a considerable extent.

The successful bidder necessarily gives a very high price, often beyond the real value of the Farm, and is compelled on that account to use every means in his power, legitimate and illegitimate, in order to stimulate the sale of his liquor in every nook and cranny of the district. The result is the most indiscriminate drinking at all hours in out-of-the-way places, despite the vigilance of the Police.

7. Moreover, sale by auction stimulates to the utmost the gambling spirit inherent in the native character. Men traverse the country while these sales are going on, bidding against each other. Rivalry and enmity arise amongst them, and when to these feelings are added the excitement of a public scene and the temptation to the display of wealth irresistible to the vanity of a native, the consideration of "contingencies" recommended by the Board is naturally forgotten.

8. Under the present system, too, any effective inquiry into the bidder's character and resources is impossible.

Twenty or thirty bidders from different parts of the country appear on the day of sale, and the Collector has *then and there* to satisfy himself of their eligibility. It would be far better to call for sealed tenders above a fixed minimum to be opened in public on a certain day, and published afterwards in the Gazette, the Collector not being bound to accept the highest tender.

A few only out of the most promising tenders could then be selected for inquiry, and the means and character of the tenders could be satisfactorily ascertained, whilst the latter would escape the temptation of bidding too high in a moment of excitement.

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ENCLOSURE No. 1.—Petition.

THE Board will consent to relieve the renter from his engagement at the end of the present month, provided that he pays his instalments due up to that date, and leaves his deposit with the Commissioner to meet the loss by resale; otherwise the law must take its course.

2. The objections to the present Abkarry system as offering a great inducement to renters to encourage the consumption of liquor are more apparent than real. The love of gain would lead distillers to do the same under any system.

3. Open auctions have been deliberately preferred to tenders by Government, because the secrecy which attends on the disposal of tenders leads to uncertainty and to fear of the influence of the subordinates of the officers who make the selection. This injures the revenue.

4. The best remedy for the evils which the Commissioner describes is to insist upon the terms of the auctions and destroy the hope of indulgence which makes bidders careless of the amount of their bids.

5. As the present lease is drawing to a close, it becomes a subject for consideration whether the restrictions imposed by Board's Proceedings, 12th April 1869, No. 2,503, on the strength of Beer manufactured by Mr. Honeywell, shall be modified. At present the percentage of alcohol is not allowed to exceed 5. In a petition, dated the 13th January 1871, Mr. Honeywell states that this restriction has caused him great loss and ruined his business. He points out truly enough that there is no restriction on the strength of Beer brewed in Great Britain, but the stringent Excise laws sufficiently provide that the article brewed shall be a Beer and not a Spirit.

6. In the letter recorded in Board's Proceedings, 12th April 1869, No. 2,503, the late Sanitary Commissioner gives a table framed by Brande which shows that the percentage of alcohol in English Beers varies from 1 to 9. In a letter recorded in Board's Proceedings, 28th February 1871, No. 883, the Chemical Examiner gives the percentage of alcohol in a Beer manufactured by Messrs. Hodson & Co. as 5.3 and 6.5; and he mentions some Beer brewed by Mr. Honeywell for the Commissioner of Mysore as containing 10.5 per cent. Mr. Honeywell represents his London Agents as stating that the average export strength of Bass and Allsopp's Ale is from 10.15 to 10.60, and that some is brewed for the cold regions at 10.85.

7. On the whole, the Board think that Mr. Honeywell may be allowed to brew Beer containing 10 per cent. of alcohol, and with the consent of Government they propose to authorize the Commissioner to make this known when the Abkarry lease is resold. The Commissioner will report whether it is desirable to charge higher license fees than those now prescribed for the manufacture and sale of Beer.

8. These Proceedings will be submitted to Government, with reference to Government Order, 27th June 1870, No. 954. As the Commissioner proposes that the sale should take place soon, early orders will be requested.

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No. 48.

ORDER THEREON, 5th May 1871, No. 783.

Separate Revenue, No. 4.
<i>Abkarry.</i>

THE Government are not disposed to go beyond their Order of 27th June 1870, No. 954, permitting Mr. Honeywell to brew Beer up to the average

alcoholic strength of English brands, namely, 6½ per cent. of alcohol.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

FOR ORDERS.

Proc. — March 1871. R. D.

orders are requested whether the enclosed proceedings may go out.

They have been detained in order to procure a statement showing the alcoholic strength of the malt liquor served out to the English Troops.

A statement has been sent in of the Commissary General. ~~It is not known why it was not sent in for the Chemical Ex. & Mr. Broughton, or suggested by him. It was called for by the~~
~~Department.~~

The statement shows that in 1869 there were six importations of Beer & five of Porter. The alcoholic strength varied from 7.33 in the former to 3.9. and in Porter from 7.25 to 5.

Wm

In 1870. there were ten importations of beer and
 eight of Porter. The alcoholic strength of the beer
 varied from 8.75 to 5.8, and of the Porter
 from 7.25 to 5.8.

F. B.

1/5/71.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Under date the 5th ^{May} March 1871.

Read the following letter *Proceedings*

of the Board of Revenue

Informing Com missioner that Board will Consent to relieve Abkarry Center of Mail gherries from his engagement at end of March 1871 on certain Conditions, and requesting Government to allow Mr Honeywell to brew beer containing 10 per cent of alcohol.

H. E. 14th March 1871 No. 1113.

I agree with you that we have a lot of the alcoholic strength of the English beer served up to the natives. It is much weaker than the English beer. I have no objection to Mr Honeywell's proposal.

The Government are not disposed to go beyond their order of 27th June 1870, No. 954, permitting Mr Honeywell to brew beer up to the average alcoholic strength of English brands, viz 6 1/2 per cent of alcohol.

now as contained in the Government's memo. H. E. 14th March 1871.

14. For the Board of Revenue with 2 Rupees 20 paise

Year	Number of Importation Gallons	Percentage of Duty	Number of Importation Gallons	Percentage of Duty
1869.	6	1292 733 39	5	2364 725 5
1870.	10	2402 875 58	8	3657 725 58

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Letto 1910