Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,

29th November 1872.

No. 217. From the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Fort St. George, dated Simla, 10th August 1871, No. 2,737.

With reference to your letter No. 1,226 dated 15th July 1871, I am directed to request that, with the permission of His Excellency in Council, you will be good enough to favour the Government of India with some particulars of the grounds upon which the Government of Madras has come to the conclusion that the use of the various intoxicating and narcotic drugs; preparation of Hemp and Opium is so little known in Madras that the imposition of a duty or license on retailers must be considered altogether inexpedient.

2. Such a conclusion, if arrived at after careful inquiry, would show a striking contrast in the habits of the people of Madras to those of the people in other parts of India.

(True Copy.)

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

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT,
FORT ST. GEORGE,
29th November 1872.

No. 1,6[illegible]9.

No. 218.
To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOV[illegible]NMENT OF INDIA,
FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

Separate Revenue, No. 18.

Abkari.

SIR,—I am now directed to reply to your letter No. 2,737 of 10th August last, inquiring what grounds exist for the opinion recently expressed by this Government, that the use of drugs prepared from Hemp and Opium is so little known in this Presidency as to render inexpedient the imposition of a duty or license on retail vendors. Such a conclusion, it is added, shows a striking contrast in the habits of the people of Madras to those of the people in other parts of India.

2. The old Abkári Regulations of this Presidency took notice of intoxicating drugs as well as of spirituous and fermented liquors; but the sale was so small that for many years these items were omitted from the leases, and when the Abkári law was revised about eight years ago (Madras Act III. of 1864) the same consideration led to their omission from the new enactment.

3. The subject has been frequently discussed during the last eighteen or twenty years.

(*a.*) In the year 1854 the Government of India requested the opinion of this Government as to the expediency of suppressing the cultivation of Poppy, and of levying an Excise-revenue on Opium and other intoxicating drugs as in Bengal. Returns were called for from every district, and the opinion of the Board of Revenue and the Collectors was carefully considered. It appeared clear that the cultivation both of Opium and Hemp was extremely limited, and that in regard to the levy of an Excise-duty, the proceeds would be small, the realization of the tax difficult and expensive, and affording opportunities of oppression and fraud. It was known that considerable quantities of Opium were imported from the territories of Mysore and Hyderabad, but not to such an extent as to make it, in the opinion of the Madras Government, worthwhile to maintain an establishment to put it down.

No. 543, Home Department, 12th May 1854.

To Government of India, No. 584, Revenue Department, 15th May 1855.

(*b.*) Five years afterwards the Government of India requested the attention of this Government to a Circular issued with a view to the increase of the Excise-duty on spirits and drugs. The subject was again attentively considered, and with the same result. "The production and use of Ganjah and other intoxicating substances are," it was reported, "very limited in this Presidency; and the revenue to be derived from their special taxation would be too insignificant to be worth attention."

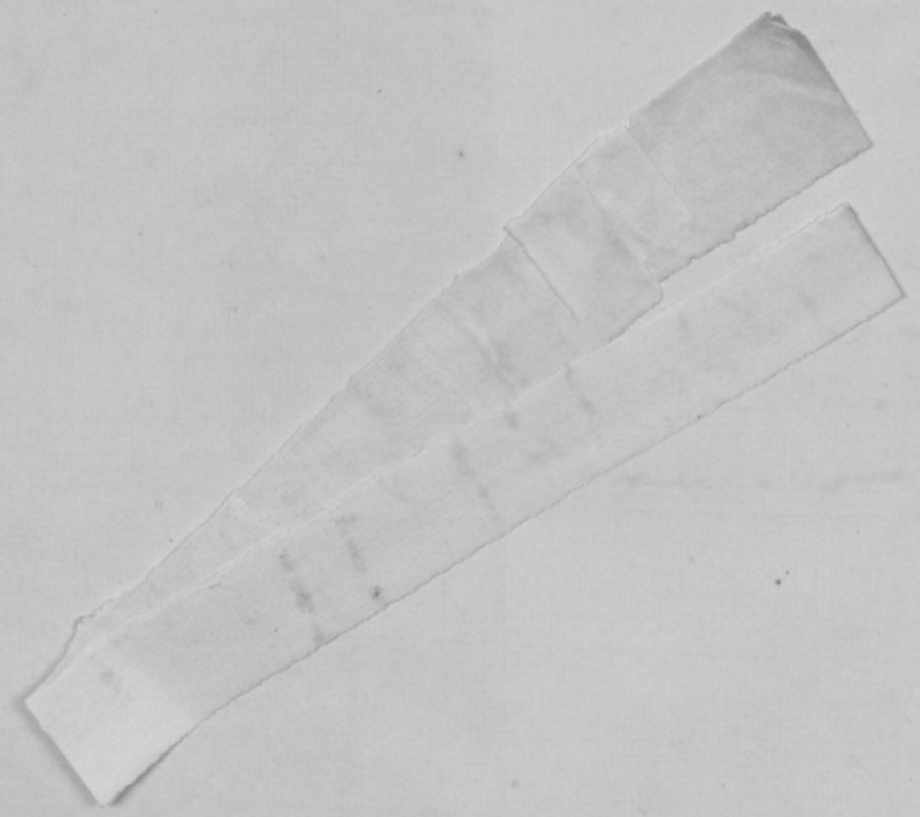
Home Department, No. 519, 18th March 1859.

To Government of India, No. 1,716, Revenue Department, 17th December 1859.

(c.) Lastly, in 1869, some correspondence took place which seemed to indicate that the consumption of stimulating and narcotic drugs was on the increase, not in rural districts, but among the population of certain large towns. Some Cantonments were specified, but the Commander-in-Chief considered that it was unnecessary to strengthen further the power lodged in the Military authorities over vendors of such articles, and the Governor in Council was not of opinion that sufficient grounds were shown for any legislative action in the matter.

3. The explanation of the general abstinence of the people of the Madras Provinces from these drugs lies in the fact that they have always been greatly addicted to *Toddy*. The Abkári revenue of this Presidency touches the amount raised from a population twice as numerous in the Lower Provinces of Bengal; yet, with the exception of a few shop-licenses for the sale of Beer and Wine, and for distilleries conducted on the European system, it is entirely derived from farming out the right to manufacture and sell country spirits and Toddy; whereas in Bengal these two items produce little more than a third of the entire revenue under Excise; Opium and Ganjah contributing as much as one-half.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.



G.C. No 2 Dec 72

29 Dec 72.

To the Secy to Govt of India
Financial Dept.

No 1629.

Sir,

I am now directed briefly to refer to your letter No 2737 of 10th August last, requiring what grounds exist for the opinion recently expressed by this Govt, that the use of drugs prepared from Hemp and Opium is so little known in this Presy as to render new predients the imposition of a duty or license on retail vendors. Such a conclusion, it is added, shows a striking contrast in the habits of the people of Madras to those of the people in other parts of India.

The old Abkary Regulations, took notice of intoxicating drugs as well as of spirituous & fermented liquors; but the sale was so small that for many years these items were omitted from the accounts, and when the Abkary law was revised about six years ago (Madras Act III of 1864) the same consideration led to their omission from the new enactment.

3. The subject has been frequently discussed during the last 18 or 20 years.

In

No 543
Home Dept
12th May '54

(a) In the year 1854, the Govt of India requested the opinion of H.M.'s Govt as to the expediency of suppressing the Cultivation of poppy, and of levying an Excise Revenue on Opium & other intoxicating drugs as in Bengal. Returns were called for from every district, and the opinion of the Bd of Revenue & the Collectors was carefully considered. [redacted] It appeared clear that the cultivation & use of Opium & Hemp was extremely limited, and that in regard to the levy of an Excise duty, the proceeds would be small, the realization of the tax difficult & expensive, and affording opportunities of oppression & fraud. It was known that smuggled the quantities of Opium was imported from the territories of Mysore and Hyderabad, but not to such an extent as to make it, in the opinion of the Madras Govt, worth while to maintain an Establt to put it down.

To Govt of India
No 586
Rev. dept
15th May '55.

Home dept
No 519
18 March '59.

(B) Five years afterwards, the Govt of India requested the attention of the Govt to a Circular issued with a view to the

To Govt of India
No 1716
Revenue dept
17 Dec 1859.

increase of the Excise duty on Spirits and Drugs. The subject was again attentively considered, and with the same result - "The production "and use of Ganjah & other intoxicat "-ing substances are" it was reported "very limited in this Presy; and "the revenue to be derived from them "if special taxation were to be imposed "would be too unimportant to merit "much attention."

(C) Lastly in 1869 some correspon -dence took place which seemed to indicate that the consumption of stimulating & narcotic drugs was on the increase, not in rural districts but among the population of certain large towns. Some [redacted] Cau -tionments were specified, but the Commander in Chief considered that it was unnecessary to strengthen further the power lodged in the Military authorities over vendors of such articles, and the Govt of Madras was not of opinion that sufficient grounds were shown for any legislative action in the matter.

3. The explanation of the general abstinence of the people of the Madras Provinces from these drugs lies not in the fact that they have always been greatly addicted to toddy. The use of

Revenue of this Presidency bears
the amount raised from a population
twice as numerous in the Lower
Provinces of Bengal; yet, with the
exception of a few shop licences for
the sale of Beer & Wine & for distil-
-leries conducted on the European system,
it is entirely derived from farming
out the right to manufacture & sell
Country Spirits and Toddy; whereas
in Bengal these two items produce
little more than a third of the entire
revenue under Salt, Opium and
Ganjah contributing as much as
one half.

D.E. 21/11/72.

No. 217-218

To
Govt. of India
Commercial Dept.
Fort St. George

July 71 No. 177-178
185-186.

Revenue 1871 Dept.
No 2647.

From
The Secy. Govt. of Inde
Financial Depart.

Dated 10 Sept. 71.
Recd. 19 " No 2737

Requesting to know the
particulars of the grounds upo
which the Madras Govt has co
to the conclusion that the use
of intoxicating & narcotic dru
is little known in Madras.

S. L. No. 1629 - 29th Nov 71

To
The Secretary to Govt
R. D.

Rec

No 217