

CONFIDENTIAL.

G.O., No. 4252

Confidential No. 618.

DATED 18 November '93

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[Despatch Abstract.]

*Communicating to the Board of Revenue  
Mr R-M. Dance's suggestions in regard to  
the preparation of lists of witnesses for the  
Royal Commission on opium.*

# BACK PAPERS.

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*Confidential*

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ABSTRACT.

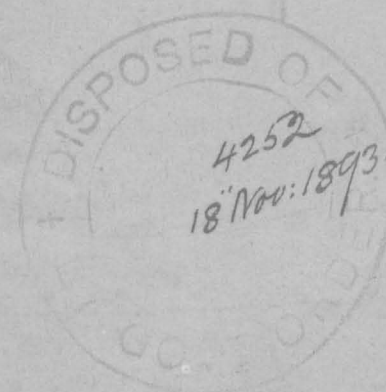
( 1893. )

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

*D.O.*  
Current Number.  $\frac{52}{88}$

From

*Rm. Doney Esq*  
*Calcutta*



Dated 13 }  
Received 18 } November 1893

Enclosures

No.

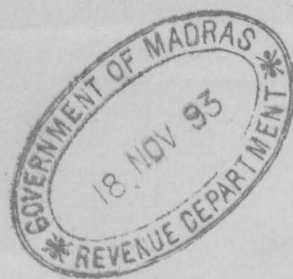
SUBJECT.

*Suggestions for the preparation  
of lists of witnesses for the  
Royal Commission on opium*

Private and Confidential.

United Service Club Calcutta

18<sup>th</sup> November 1893.



Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 17<sup>th</sup> October did not reach me until my arrival from Bombay at Allahabad on 31<sup>st</sup> October, and before replying, I thought it better to telegraph and ascertain how the case then stood. I have sent the following reply to your urgent telegram of 10<sup>th</sup> November: "Wire received. Am writing. Address Calcutta, United Service Club. Have wired Simla not to press for list Witnesses." I gather from your telegram that no witnesses' names have yet been officially communicated either to the Govt of India or to the Secy. to the Opium Commission. I venture therefore to put forward the following suggestions in regard to the selection of witnesses. I have unfortunately been unable to visit Madras and discuss the question of the evidence to be adduced before the Royal Commission personally with yourself or with the member of the Board of Revenue in charge of the subject.

It appears from the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 430 dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1893 and

N<sup>o</sup> 4115 Dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 1893, that persons in favor of or opposed to the use of Opium have been invited to come forward and offer themselves as witnesses and that Collectors have been directed to consult Missionaries and Chairmen of local Temperance Associations before making their nominations. I do not know whether the Temperance Associations in the Presidency devote their energies to Opium as well as to alcohol, but it may be assumed that the Missionaries are enthusiastic Coadjutors of the Anti-Opium Society, and it is probable that many of the Temperance Associations will contain workers in the same cause. The Memorial presented to His Excellency the Viceroy by the Calcutta Missionary Conference has no doubt come under your notice. It may be taken as certain therefore that the lists of witnesses prepared by Collectors in accordance with the Board's instructions, will contain a number of Anti-Opiumists.

As to the principles on which the list of Government witnesses, Official and non-Official, should be prepared, I would respectfully invite attention to paragraphs 7 & 8 of the Res<sup>n</sup> issued by the Govt of India in the Finance

and Commerce Department on 8<sup>th</sup> September. Until the Commission meets in Calcutta, we cannot say with certainty what procedure will be adopted, but I think we may safely assume that the Commission will, as indicated in para. 7 of the Res<sup>n</sup>, invite all persons possessing information regarding the matters referred to in the Resolution of the House of Commons to come forward & offer themselves as witnesses, and that in addition to the witnesses nominated by Government, persons thus tendering themselves for examination, will be examined at each Centre of examination. It is I respectfully submit, incumbent on the assailants of the policy of Government to produce evidence in support of their views & allegations, and there is no necessity to specially search out such evidence on the part of Govt. as evidence entitled in the opinion of Govt. to special value. - The Secretary to the Anti-Opium Society, Mr. Alexander, is now in India as Private Secretary to the Anti-Opium Members of the Royal Commission, and the Agents of the Society, the Missionaries and other friends are no doubt actively engaged in the collection of evidence. -

It is easy, as we know, to work up a plausible case against Opium, and Government should I think allow the Agents of the Anti-Opium Society to search for evidence against Opium, and should content itself with placing the best evidence available before the Commission regarding the extent to which Opium is consumed in the Presidency as a medicine, as a stimulant, and as a sedative, the effects of Opium physical and moral, the possibility of prohibiting its consumption, and the probable social and political results of such prohibition, and the readiness of the people of the Presidency to bear in whole or in part the cost of prohibition. The Govt of India have officially told the Secy of State for the information of the Commission that they cannot undertake to search specially for persons who will give evidence in favor of prohibition, & that they presume the members of the Anti-Opium Society will exert themselves in this direction.

As soon as Lord Brassey arrives in Calcutta, probably on the 18<sup>th</sup> Instant, the Commission will determine the route to be followed. Two programmes have already been prepared, but it is not probable that either of them will be finally adopted. In both of

of them however, the time allowed to the Madras Presidency is very short, and it is proposed to visit the Presidency Town only, and to take there the evidence adduced both by the Govt and by the Anti-Opiumists. In one programme the time allowed for the Presidency is 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> February, and in the other 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Feby. The Chairman and Members of the Commission have I believe quite decided to finish the enquiry before the hot weather, and under these circumstances it is obvious that the time available for allotment to each Presidency or Province must necessarily be short. All things considered, I do not myself expect that more than ten days, or at the outside, a fortnight will be devoted to the Presidency.

I venture, therefore, with deference to suggest that the lists of witnesses sent up by the Board should be scrutinised and cut down, and that only those witnesses should be retained on the list officially submitted to the Govt of India or to the Secretary to the Commission, to whose evidence His Excellency the Governor and the Govt of Madras attach special value, and that other persons desirous of giving evidence before the Commission should be directed to apply themselves to the Secretary. In view of the orders issued

issued by the Board regarding the nature of the evidence  
to be adduced, His Excellency in Council will doubtless  
think it advisable to retain on the Presidency list  
a certain number of witnesses holding views un-  
favorable to the use of Opium for other than  
Medicinal purposes, but it seems unnecessary  
to send up the names of any witnesses, whether  
favorable or unfavorable to the use of Opium, other  
than those of persons whose position & character as  
well as knowledge of the subject entitle their views  
to special consideration.

I would suggest also the advisability of  
nominating some representatives of the Madras  
Chamber of Commerce, and of any other important  
European or Eurasian Associations in the  
Presidency, to give evidence as to the possibility  
of the imposition of taxation to meet the deficit  
that would be caused by the abolition of the  
Opium revenue.

The Medical evidence put forward  
should also as far as possible be that of men  
who have had experience of the use as well as  
of the abuse of Opium.

As so much time has elapsed, you  
will probably think it advisable to complete  
it send in the list on receipt of this letter.

without

without further reference to me. I shall, however,  
be glad (if there be no objection on the part of  
His Excellency's Government) to receive a copy of  
the list when complete with a very brief indication  
of the nature of the evidence which each witness  
may be expected to give, and I shall also of course be  
ready to assist further in any way that may  
be required either in the selection of witnesses  
or in the marshalling of the evidence.

My address will be Calcutta, United  
Service Club, until the end of the month at  
any rate.

There is one other point upon which some  
remarks from me may be useful. The Govt of  
India will put in evidence, a brief account of the  
Madras system of Excise on Opium, and this  
account has, it is understood, been sent from  
Calcutta to the Govt of Madras for criticism and  
remarks.

This account however, should be supplemented  
by evidence on the subject from the Madras Presy.  
(vide para 6 of the Resn of the Govt of India No. 3910  
dated 2. Sept. 1893). It will probably be more  
convenient for the Commission & for the Officer  
or Officers selected to give evidence regarding  
the system, to embody the information which

it

it is proposed to give in a written statement accompanied by statistics showing consumption by races and districts, the number of shops for the sale of Opium and its preparations, particulars of Opium smuggling, if such exists to any extent, and other matters material to the Enquiry; & this statement would form the basis of the Officer's examination. The statement should I think be to some extent historical as well as descriptive. As the opinion was for sometime held that there was practically no consumption of Opium in the Madras Presy, it will be important to show how this opinion was found to be erroneous & to trace the growth of the existing Excise arrangements.

Apologising for the length of this letter & trusting that His Excy: in Council will pardon me for the freedom with which I have expressed my views.

I remain

Yours truly

J. H. Dane.

G. C. Misc: No. 4252 of 18 Nov: 1893.

Communicated to the Commissioner, Separate Revenue.

L. H. 18/11

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