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DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS TRADE.

REPORT

ON THE

CONDITIONS AND PROSPECTS OF
BRITISH TRADE

IN

INDIA

1924-5

BY

MR. THOMAS M. AINSCOUGH, C.B.E., M.Com., F.R.G.S.
(*H.M. Senior Trade Commissioner in India and Ceylon.*)



LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses
Austral House, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2; 28, Abingdon Street, London, S.W. 1;
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DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS TRADE.

COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION ABROAD.

To foster British overseas trade, the Department has developed and controls the following Services of Commercial Intelligence Officers :—

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At the present time there are 13 Trade Commissioners' offices. These are situated, four in Canada (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg); two in South Africa (Johannesburg, Cape Town); two in Australia (Melbourne, Sydney); two in India (Calcutta and Bombay—to cover also Burma and Ceylon); and one each in New Zealand (Wellington), British East Africa (Nairobi) and British West Indies (Trinidad).

The Trade Commissioners in the Dominions have the assistance of Imperial Trade Correspondents at a number of important centres.

In various parts of the Empire in which at present there are no commissioners, there are correspondents with whom the Department deals direct.

The Department is represented in India by Mr. T. M. Ainscough, C.B.E., H.M. Senior Trade Commissioner; Mr. W. D. Montgomery Clarke, H.M. Trade Commissioner, Fairlie House, Fairlie Place, Calcutta; and Major R. W. Clarke, H.M. Trade Commissioner, Exchange Buildings, Sprott Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay.

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This service consists of between thirty and forty posts in all, and the officers of the service are stationed in all the more important foreign markets of the world. The members of the Commercial Diplomatic Service are styled "Commercial Counsellors" in the highest grade, and "Commercial Secretaries" in the three lower grades. They are members of the staff of the British Embassy or Legation in which they serve.

The Commercial Diplomatic Officer has general supervision over the commercial work of the consular officers in his area, and, with the co-operation of these two services, a complete network of Government commercial representatives is thrown over foreign countries.

(b) *The British Consular Service.*

This service has been re-organised. Particular attention has been given to the commercial side of consular work.

Members of British firms are urged to call upon the Department's representative abroad when they visit an overseas country. It is also important that they should make a point of their representatives abroad keeping in close touch with the Department's officers.

A handbook giving fuller details of the overseas organization of the Department can be obtained on application at the Department of Overseas Trade, 35, Old Queen Street, S.W.1.

NOTE.

It should be understood that the views expressed in annual reports are the views of the officers themselves, and are not necessarily in all respects the views of the Department.

COVERING DESPATCH.

To

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR PHILIP CUNLIFFE-LISTER, K.B.E., M.P.,
President of the Board of Trade.

OFFICE OF H.M. SENIOR TRADE COMMISSIONER
 IN INDIA,
 11, CLIVE STREET,
 CALCUTTA,

July 16th, 1925.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for your information a report on the conditions and prospects of British trade in India during the Indian fiscal year 1924-25.

The period under review has been such a colourless one in the import trade of this great market and the future is still so obscure, that it has not been possible to treat the subject in quite such an exhaustive manner as has been the practice in former years. I have therefore devoted more attention to the general economic situation in India and to the major schemes of works such as irrigation, harbour, hydro-electric and transportation projects.

Once again I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Officials of the Commerce Industries and Finance Departments of the Government of India for their unfailing courtesy and assistance during the year. I am particularly indebted to the Chief Controller and the officers of the Indian Stores Department and to the Collectors of Customs for their help and co-operation which has always been so willingly rendered. Special thanks are also due to the Chief Engineers and Officers in charge of important Public Works throughout India for the notes on their projects which, in many cases, have been incorporated in the Report.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THOMAS M. AINSCOUGH,

H.M. Senior Trade Commissioner in India

PREFATORY TABLES.

NOTE.—The author desires to express his indebtedness to the Director of Statistics for the particulars given in these tables.

I.—TRADE DISTRIBUTION : PRINCIPAL ARTICLES.

TABLE SHOWING VARIATIONS IN THE SHARES OF THE PRINCIPAL ARTICLES IN THE IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE OF BRITISH INDIA DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS, AS COMPARED WITH AVERAGES OF THE PRE-WAR AND WAR PERIODS.

IMPORTS (*in percentages*).

(Sea borne : exclusive of treasure and of imports on Government account.)

	1909-14. <i>Average.</i>	1914-19. <i>Average.</i>	1922-23.	1923-24.	1924-25.
Cotton Manufactures ..	36	35	30	30	33
Iron and Steel	7	6	8	8	8
Machinery	4	4	10	8	6
Sugar	9	10	6	7	8
Railway Plant	4	5	5	5	2
Hardware	2	2	2	2	3
Mineral Oil	3	3	3	4	4
Silk	3	2	2	2	2
Other articles	32	33	34	34	34

EXPORTS (*in percentages*).

(Sea borne : exclusive of treasure and of exports on Government account.)

	1909-14. <i>Average.</i>	1914-19. <i>Average.</i>	1922-23.	1923-24.	1924-25.
Jute, raw and manufac- tures	19	25	20	18	21
Cotton, raw and manufac- tures	15	16	29	32	27
Food-grains	21	17	13	15	17
Seeds	11	6	9	9	9
Tea	6	8	7	9	9
Hides and skins	7	8	4	4	4
Other articles	21	20	18	18	13

II.—TRADE DISTRIBUTION: PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES.

TABLE SHOWING VARIATIONS IN THE SHARE OF THE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES IN THE IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE OF BRITISH INDIA DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS, AS COMPARED WITH AVERAGES OF THE PRE-WAR AND WAR PERIODS.

IMPORTS (*in percentages*).

(Sea borne : exclusive of treasure and of imports on Government account.)

	1909-14. <i>Average.</i>	1914-19. <i>Average.</i>	1922-23.	1923-24.	1924-25.
United Kingdom	63	56	60	58	54
Other parts of the British Empire	7	9	7	7	8
United States of America	3	7	6	6	6
Japan	2	10	6	6	7
Java	6	8	6	6	6
Germany	6	1	5	5	6
Other Foreign Countries ..	13	9	10	12	13

NOTE.—Imports from Germany during the quinquennium, 1914-19 consisted mostly of receipts in the early part of the official year 1914-15, and the residue of cargoes of prize vessels imported during the war period.

EXPORTS* (*in percentages*).

(Sea borne : exclusive of treasure and of exports on Government account.)

	1909-14. <i>Average.</i>	1914-19. <i>Average.</i>	1922-23.	1923-24.	1924-25.
United Kingdom	25	31	22	25	26
Other parts of the British Empire	16	21	19	14	13
United States of America..	8	12	11	9	9
Japan	8	11	13	14	14
France	7	4	5	5	5
Germany	10	1	7	7	7
Other Foreign countries ..	26	20	23	26	26

NOTE.—Exports to Germany during the quinquennium 1914-19 were confined to the early part of the official year 1914-15.

* Including re-exports.

COMMERCIAL SUMMARY

Area.—	sq. miles.
British India	1,094,300
Native States	711,032
Total	1,805,332

Population, Census of 1921.—	
British India	247,003,293
Native States	71,939,187
Total	318,942,480

Language (Commercial use of English, &c.).—English.

Monetary unit(s).—

3 pie	= 1 pice.	} e.g., Rs. 1,45,67,200 = 1 crore, 45 lakhs, 67,200 rupees.
4 pice	= 1 anna.	
16 annas	= 1 rupee.	
1 lakh	= Rs. 1,00,000.	
1 crore	= 100 lakhs.	

Rate of Exchange (pre-war and current average quotations).—

Pre-War	1s. 4d.
Current 30.6.25	1s. 6½d.

Index Numbers.—July, 1914 = 100.

Wholesale prices, Bombay	April, 1925 = 165
Retail prices (food), Bombay	April, 1925 = 151
Cost of Living	May, 1925 = 156

PRINCIPAL WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (OTHER THAN ORDINARY METRIC OR BRITISH) WITH BRITISH EQUIVALENTS.

Weights and measures in India vary not only from district to district but also for different commodities within the same district, and though the railways have given a lead to the adoption of a uniform system, the country is so vast that the differences are likely to persist for many years to come. The principal units in all the scales of weights are the maund, seer and the tola, and the standard weights for each of these are 82.28 lbs., 2.057 lbs., and 180 grains troy. The tola is the same weight as the rupee. In addition to these weights, there is the viss of 3.60 lbs. or 140 tolas and the candy of 500 to 840 lbs. It is not necessary for the purposes of this volume to detail any variation of the weight of the maund, except those which enter into the export trade. It will be sufficient to say that in any particular city there are probably as many different maunds as there are articles to weigh. The only varieties which need be considered in connection with the foreign trade are the Bengal or railway maund already specified, the factory maund of 74 lbs. 10 ozs. 11 drs., the Bombay maund of 28 lbs. and the Madras maund of 25 lbs. In October, 1913, the Government of India appointed a Committee to inquire into the whole question, and their majority report, which was presented in the following year, recommended the extension of the railway system based on the 180 grains tola, while the minority report advocated the adoption of the metric system. The views of the Provincial Governments on these reports were obtained, and the Government of India in their Resolution dated the 3rd January, 1922, declared themselves in favour of the ultimate adoption in India, excluding Burma, of a uniform system of weights based on the scale now in use on the railways. It has been decided that no new measures prescribing all-India measures of weight or capacity should be introduced at present, but that the Local Governments should take such executive action as they can to educate public opinion in favour of the standard maund and seer.

In the table below an attempt has been made to present within a small compass the principal weights and measures employed in the Indian export trade.

Principal weights and measures in use in the export trade.

Name of Unit. *British Imperial Value.*

General.

Tola	180 grains troy.
Seer (Standard or Railway or Indian) ..	2.057 lbs.
Seer (Factory)	1 lb. 13.5 oz
Viss	3.60 lbs.
Maund (Standard or 40 seers Railway or Indian)	82 lbs. 4 oz. 9 dr.
Maund (Factory)	74 lbs. 10 oz. 11 dr.

NOTE.—For local variations consult "Handbook of Commercial Information for India," by C. W. E. Cotton, C.I.E., I.C.S., 2nd Edition, 1924.

Total Imports. 1st April, 1924, to 31st March, 1925.—

	Rs.
Merchandise	2,46,64,88,815
Government Stores	6,73,82,777
Treasure	99,04,69,707
Total	Rs. 3,52,43,41,299

Principal Imports.—Cotton manufactures,
Sugar,
Iron and Steel,
Machinery.

Imports of merchandise from United Kingdom	Rs. 1,33,43,38,014
Imports of merchandise from Japan	17,12,92,739
Imports of merchandise from Germany	15,47,86,217
Imports of merchandise from Java	15,46,09,569
Imports of merchandise from United States of America	14,08,62,771

Total Exports. (Indian merchandise.) 1st April, 1924, to 31st March, 1925, Rs. 3,84,84,68,151.

Principal Exports.—Cotton,
Jute,
Grain,
Pulse,
Tea.

Exports of Indian merchandise to United Kingdom	Rs. 92,52,12,783
" " " Japan	55,14,34,443
" " " United States of America	34,23,83,643
" " " Germany	25,98,50,829

Railway mileage.—31st March, 1924.

Railways owned by the State	27,078
Other Railways	10,961
Total route mileage opened for traffic	38,039

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