

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SUB-COMMITTEE,
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

SALT DEPARTMENT.

NORTHERN INDIA.

PART I.

INDIA:

SECTION I.—NOTE BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE.

„ II.—NOTE BY THE DEPARTMENTAL MEMBER.

„ III.—ORAL EVIDENCE.

„ IV.—WRITTEN EVIDENCE.

Members of the Sub-Committee.

SIMLA :

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A. B. PATTERSON, ESQ., *Departmental Member.*

~~**THE HON'BLE SIR CHARLES A. TURNER, KT., C.I.E.,**~~ *President.*

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
SECTION I.—NOTE BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE	1
SECTION II.—NOTE BY THE DEPARTMENTAL MEMBER	9
LETTER No. 22C., DATED AGRA, THE 13TH APRIL 1887, FROM THE COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN INDIA SALT REVENUE, AGRA, TO THE SECRETARY, PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION	<i>ib.</i>
TABULAR STATEMENT SHOWING THE EXISTING ORGANIZATION AND CONSTITUTION OF THE NORTHERN INDIA SALT REVENUE DEPARTMENT	11
LETTER No. 40, DATED SIMLA, THE 1ST MAY 1886, FROM THE SECRETARY, FINANCE COMMITTEE, TO THE COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN INDIA SALT REVENUE	12
LETTER No. 34C., DATED AGRA, THE 3RD JUNE 1886, FROM THE OFFICIATING COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN INDIA SALT REVENUE, TO THE SECRETARY, FINANCE COMMITTEE	<i>ib.</i>
EXTRACT PARAGRAPHS 2, 3 AND 5 FROM A LETTER No. 56C., DATED 4TH AUGUST 1884, FROM THE COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN INDIA SALT REVENUE DEPARTMENT, TO THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT	13
EXTRACT PARAGRAPH 147 FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER, A. O. HUME, ESQ., C.S., C.B., ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE IMPERIAL CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT FOR THE OFFICIAL YEAR 1867-68	14
FURTHER NOTE BY THE DEPARTMENTAL MEMBER, DATED 26TH JUNE 1887	15
NOTE BY A. D. CAREY, ESQ., C. S., COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN INDIA SALT REVENUE, DATED 29TH OCTOBER 1887	<i>ib.</i>
SECTION III.—SITTINGS AT SIMLA—	
WITNESS No. I.—EXAMINATION OF SHAIK ASSADULLAH KHAN, SUPERINTENDENT, SALT REVENUE DEPARTMENT, INTERNAL BRANCH	17
WITNESS No. II.—EXAMINATION OF R. J. WHITTEN, ESQ., DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN INDIA SALT REVENUE DEPARTMENT	18
WITNESS No. III.—EXAMINATION OF A. F. ASHTON, ESQ., ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, SALT DEPARTMENT, SAMBHAR	21
WITNESS No. IV.—EXAMINATION OF J. BOLSTER, ESQ., SUPERINTENDENT, 1ST GRADE, MAYO MINES, PUNJAB SALT RANGE	22
SECTION IV.—WRITTEN EVIDENCE—	
No. 1.—NOTE BY A. O. HUME, ESQ., C.B., FORMERLY COMMISSIONER OF SALT AND INLAND CUSTOMS AND SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, REVENUE AND AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT, DATED SIMLA, THE 18TH JUNE 1887	24
No. 2.—FURTHER MEMORANDUM, DATED 22ND SEPTEMBER 1887, BY THE ABOVE	27

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SUB-COMMITTEE,
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

INDIA.
Salt.

Section I.—Note by the Sub-Committee.

The Salt Department in Northern India is charged with the collection of the Salt revenue and the production of salt in the Punjab, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, one-third of the Central Provinces, the whole of the Rajputana and Central India Agencies, and Behar. Prior to 1869 large quantities of salt were supplied to Northern and Central India from the Sambhar Lake and from other Salt sources and Salt works in Native States. In order to protect the Salt revenue, a Customs line was maintained extending across the Peninsula, from the Indus to the Mahanadi, 2,300 miles in length, guarded by nearly 12,000 men, at a cost of upwards of 16 lakhs of rupees a year. At this barrier duty was levied upon ~~the import of salt from Native States, and upon the export of sugar from British territory.~~ In 1869, under the Government of Lord Mayo, the Sambhar Lake was taken on lease; and as a step towards the ultimate equalization of the Salt duty throughout India, the rates were raised in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. In 1877, under Lord Northbrook, arrangements were made which rendered possible the abolition of about 800 miles of the Customs line. In 1878, under the Government of Lord Lytton, Sir John Strachey, then Financial Member of Council, again raised the rates of duty in Madras and Bombay, and reduced those in Northern India and Bengal, thus making a further approximation to uniformity. In the same year treaties were made with no less than 31 Native States, and a monopoly obtained of the remaining Salt sources in Rajputana; and from the commencement of the financial year 1879-80 the entire Customs line ~~(Salt and sugar duties, was abandoned.~~ In 1882, under Lord Ripon, ~~the duty on salt was rendered uniform throughout all India, except the Kohat District)~~ *a uniform*

The number of distinct sources of salt supply farmed or leased by the British Government, and worked under the management of the Northern India Salt Department, is eight—the Punjab Mines, the Delhi Salt Sources, the Sambhar Lake, the Didwana Salt Lake, the Pachbadra Salt Source, the Phalodi Salt Source, and the Luni Tract.

The Kohat Mines beyond the Indus are not under the Salt Department, but are managed by the Deputy Commissioner of the Kohat District. The Department, however, maintains a Preventive line along the river Indus in order to check smuggling from Kohat. This line is 325 miles in length, and is guarded by upwards of 500 officers and men. A large quantity of salt from this source is exported across the frontier, and for political reasons the duty is maintained at a nominal rate.

The Mandi Mines, situated in the State of that name, which is one of the Kangra Hill States, are managed by the Department on behalf of the Maharaja, who is entitled to the duty subject to the payment of one-third to the British Government.

The Northern India Salt Department maintains a strong Preventive Establishment, known as the "Internal Branch" in the North-Western Provinces and Behar, in order to supervise the manufacture of crude saltpetre, sulphate of soda, and different forms of carbonate of soda, which is carried on under licenses issued by the Department, so as to secure that all salt educed in the processes of manufacture should be either destroyed or removed after payment of duty, as the refiners may prefer. The area under supervision, covering 116,189 square miles, includes numerous saline tracts affording facilities for the clandestine manufacture of salt, and it is a part of the duty of the Internal Branch to prevent this manufacture.

The staff of the Department comprises the following Gazetted Officers: the Commissioner, with a salary of Rs. 2,500, who is a member of the Covenanted Civil Service; the Deputy Commissioner, stationed at the head-quarters at Agra, whose salary is Rs. 1,000 rising to 1,200; and seven Assistant Commissioners distributed as follows—one in charge of the Punjab Mines Division, with head-quarters at Khewra, in the Jhelam District; one in charge of the Upper Division, Internal Branch, with head-quarters at Agra; one in charge of the Lower Division, Internal Branch, with head-quarters at Benares; one in charge of the Sambhar Lake Division, with head-quarters at Sambhar; one in charge of the Pachbadra Salt Source, with head-quarters at Pachbadra; one in charge of the Didwana Salt Sources, with head-quarters at Didwana; and one, as Personal Assistant to the Commissioner, employed in the Commissioner's office at Agra.

The Assistant Commissioners receive salaries of Rs. 500 for five years, after which their pay increases annually by Rs. 50, until the maximum monthly salary of Rs. 800 is reached. Of the Deputy and Assistant Commissioners, 5 are Europeans and 3 are domiciled Europeans.

India.
Salt.
Section I.

The Finance Committee has recommended that as soon as the establishment can be reduced, the number of Gazetted Officers shall be limited to six, the number of Assistant Commissioners being reduced to five, of whom one shall take charge of the whole of the Internal Branch; while the post of Personal Attendant will be filled by an officer of a lower grade.

In addition to the Gazetted Officers, there are three grades of Superintendents; 12 are in the 1st grade, with salaries of Rs. 400 rising to Rs. 500; 21 in the 2nd grade, with salaries of Rs. 300 rising to Rs. 400; and 20 in the 3rd grade, with salaries of Rs. 200 rising to Rs. 300.

Of the Superintendents in the 1st grade, 4 are Europeans, 6 are domiciled Europeans, and 2 are Eurasians. Of the Superintendents in the 2nd grade, 5 are Europeans, 10 are domiciled Europeans, 8 are Eurasians, and 1 is a Mahomedan. Of the Superintendents in the 3rd grade, 11 are domiciled Europeans, 8 are Eurasians, and 1 is a Mahomedan.

The Finance Committee has proposed, and the Commissioner has agreed, that the number of Superintendents shall be reduced to 42. This reduction is to be effected gradually by absorption as vacancies occur; and the Commissioner consequently anticipates that no fresh appointments can be made to the upper grades of the Department for at least 7 or 8 years.

The scale of salary now enjoyed by Superintendents was sanctioned by the Secretary of State in 1836; but the Finance Committee has recommended that in the case of all officers appointed in future to the Department, the scale of pay in force previously to 1836 shall be reverted to; that on first appointment an officer shall enter as Assistant Superintendent of the 2nd grade on a salary of Rs. 150, and after examination, and on the occurrence of a vacancy, be appointed to the 1st grade of Assistant Superintendents on Rs. 175; that there shall be five grades of Superintendents, on salaries of Rs. 200, Rs. 250, Rs. 300, Rs. 350, and Rs. 400 respectively; and that promotion shall be regulated ordinarily by seniority, but that consideration shall also be given to merit.

The Deputy Commissioner is selected by the Government of India on the nomination of the Commissioner from the Assistant Commissioners on the ground of superior ability and fitness for the post.

The Assistant Commissioners are on similar grounds selected by the Commissioner from any grade of Superintendents.

First appointments of officers of the Superior Staff are made only to the lowest grade of Superintendents. A list is kept of approved candidates possessing the following qualifications:—The candidate must be under 25 years of age; he must never have been dismissed from, nor forced to resign, the Military or Civil Service of the Government; he must produce sufficient evidence of his sobriety, honesty, and moral character; he must also furnish a medical certificate of physical fitness in the form prescribed in section 102, rule 2, of the Civil Pension Code.

Candidates are appointed on probation for a year, and are not confirmed until they have passed a searching departmental examination.

The highest paid officers of the Subordinate Staff are the Inspectors, whose salaries range from Rs. 30 to Rs. 70 per mensem. These salaries are insufficient to attract Europeans of good character or sufficient ability; and although such appointments have, on one or two occasions, been held by Europeans, the men obtained were not efficient. Only Asiatic Natives of India are now appointed to offices in the Department below the rank of Superintendent.

At the request of the President of the Sub-Committee, Mr. A. O. Hume, whose connection with the Department as Commissioner, and subsequently as Secretary to the Government of India in the Agricultural and Revenue Department, extended over the period when the most important changes in the administration of the Salt Laws were inaugurated and carried out, has favored the Sub-Committee with a note on the points into which it is commissioned to inquire. On the question of appointments to the higher grades, Mr. Hume observes:

“The first point on which I would insist is that the existing system of recruiting the upper grades of the Department by nomination, which with every care involves much risk, should be modified. At present the Commissioner, rarely an officer of much experience in the Department (the appointment not being good enough to keep at all able members of the Civil Service many years), appoints just whom he pleases. I would change this. I would allow him to nominate as many candidates as he pleased, but I would also allow all District Officers, Commissioners, and other responsible officials the Government might empower in that behalf to nominate as many candidates as they saw fit. Nominating officers to be responsible to the Government that the candidates put forward by them were youths or young men not above 24 years* of age, of good character, and belonging to respectable, but not necessarily rich, or even (so-called) good families. From all these candidates the required recruits to be selected first by a series of physical tests, and then by a competitive examination. As regards the former, the men would be carefully examined by a Committee of Medical Officers, and only those with good sight and sound in wind and limb approved. Those thus approved would have to show that they could ride horses and camels well, and could ride and walk considerable distances without much fatigue, and, in such other way as might be deemed desirable, prove that they were active and hardy. Candidates thus far approved would then go into a competitive examination. This examination should embrace only three subjects—English, Urdu, and Arithmetic; but should be so far as exhaustive as to prove that those who passed satisfactorily were good Arithmeticians and Accountants, and either thoroughly good English scholars and fair Urdu scholars, able to converse fluently and write easily and fairly well in this latter language; or thoroughly good Urdu scholars and fair English scholars, able to converse fluently and write easily and fairly well in English. Examinations might be held once in 2 or 3 years at Agra, the foremost men getting any vacancies

*An exception to this rule being made in favor of men already in the Department in the subordinate grades, whose age might be allowed to exceed 24 by one-fourth less than the number of years they had served in such grades.

open at the moment; and others who, though not foremost, came up to the required standard, being employed at once as extra officers* of the higher subordinate grades, to be absorbed as vacancies occurred, provided that they in the *interim* conducted themselves to their superior's satisfaction.

"Of course, after entry into the Department, they would have to pass the required examinations in Departmental Law and Practice, and in what, for want of a better word, I may term the Chemistry of Salines. I lay stress upon this: there ought not to be a single officer in the Department ignorant of the rudiments of Chemistry and destitute of a complete practical knowledge of the Chemistry of the Saline substances with which he is brought in contact."

The second point in connection with the constitution of the Department on which Mr. Hume insists is the desirability of abolishing the Internal Branch, whereby he believes a saving of at least Rs. 2,00,000 yearly might be effected, and the people, especially of Oudh, Behar, and the North-Western Provinces, relieved of annoyance and extortions. "The Internal Branch," he observes, "has done excellent service, and, * * * when created, it was a necessity; but times and circumstances have changed, and it has now become an anachronism. It was designed to prevent the illicit extraction of edible salt in the process of manufacturing other salts, such as saltpetre, *khari*, *sajji*, &c. Now, when the retail price of salt, in many places where salt earth abounded, fell little below the rate of Rs. 10 a maund, and when the people habituated to the use of this duty and small-grained illicit earth-salt liked it quite as well, if they did not prefer it to the purer cleaner duty-paying salts, there was an enormous temptation to do that which the Internal Branch was specially organized to prevent; but now at the same places the retail rate of salt does not exceed Rs. 4 a maund; now that it pays the crude saltpetre-maker better to leave the salt in along with the products of his pans than to separate it; now that by a quarter of a century's disuse of this inferior, and use of a superior, article the people have become so particular that they will not even take the blue Sambhar (in old days the best salt that could be got), but insist on perfectly pure white salt, the Internal Branch is little more than an instrument for annoying the people at a yearly net cost of at least 2 lakhs of rupees. The officers of the Internal Branch are mostly very good men, and I am sure they do their best to keep their under-paid subordinates in good order; but these are perpetually on the move far away from them, and their real and most essential occupation is the extortion of money from the peasantry on pretence of preferring charges of illicit manufacture against them * * *. I admit at once that on the abolition of the Department some scores of old starving widows will each make a few tolas full of filthy brine or a few pennyweights of dirty earthlike salt. * * * If 50,000 did so even, the clear saving to Government by the abolition of the branch would still considerably exceed 2 lakhs a year. For, setting aside the fact that the amount consumed by these 50,000 would be small (and no one will nowadays buy such stuff), those who would resort to the process would be only those so poor that they now go without any salt at all, except when charitable neighbours give it them; and so long as anyone gave them better salt, they would never fall back upon this last repulsive resort of the saltless. * * * In all these fiscal arrangements too the maxim *de minimis non curat lex* should be borne in mind. I can give a practical illustration of this to the point. When I took charge of the Department in, I think, 1867, the Internal Branch was worked with a vigour and thoroughness worthy of a better cause. Every man in whose possession, or on whose premises or works, a grain of earth salt was found was prosecuted. At this distance of time I cannot be sure of figures, but I believe that at that time yearly close on 5,000 persons were prosecuted in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. It seemed to me monstrous, the more so that I believed half the cases to be false. * * * I applied to Government for permission not to prosecute where less than a seer of salt was found in one place. This being sanctioned, the prosecutions fell to less than 1,000 during the second year. But the revenue never suffered in the slightest." Mr. Hume proposes, if the Internal Branch is abolished, that recognizances should be taken from the zemindars of all places where there are extensive saline efflorescences or crude works to the effect that they will see that salt is not made nor separated thereat; that in all such villages chowkidars should also be made responsible for reporting every overt breach of the law; and that a tahsil list having been prepared for each district of places that might be most readily utilized for manufacturing salt, the Tahsildars should be required to keep an eye on these, and, if the duty were at any time raised, to exercise special vigilance.

The third point in reference to the constitution of the Department to which Mr. Hume desires to draw attention is the feasibility of substituting for the Covenanted Commissioner on a salary of Rs. 2,500 a month an Uncovenanted Deputy Commissioner on Rs. 1,200 rising to Rs. 1,500 a month with reduced travelling allowances. Mr. Hume observes that if the present salary would insure keeping the same officer a 1st class Covenanted Civilian for, say, not less than 5 years, there would be something to say in its favor; but that it does not and cannot cause this. He points out that if his proposal respecting the abolition of the Internal Branch were adopted, the work of the Superior Controlling Officers could be considerably reduced; and he gives it as his opinion that a 1st class Covenanted Civilian is not now really required for the Department, and that by the appointment of an Uncovenanted Officer the work would in a series of years be done better, because there would be less frequent changes in the head of the Department.

The Departmental Member expresses his dissent from Mr. Hume's views as to the expediency of abolishing the Internal Branch. He observes: "This establishment, of which the net cost is only about Rs. 1,40,000, and not 2 lakhs as stated by Mr. Hume, is the agency by which (1) the illicit manufacture of salt in the Punjab, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and Behar is suppressed; (2) the frontiers of the Sirsa, Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Muttra, Etawah, Jalaun, Jhansi, and Lalitpur

* So as not to interfere with the promotion in these grades.

India.
Salt.
Section I.

districts are guarded to keep out salt which has not paid duty; (3) yearly enquiries are made in the Rajputana and Central India States to ensure the observance of the Treaty engagements; and (4) the refinement and eduction of salt in 532 saltpetre refineries and the processes in 43,549 crude saltpetre and sulphate and carbonate of soda manufactories are supervised and regulated; in fact, the expenditure on the Internal Branch of Rs. 1,40,000 constitutes an insurance charge on a revenue of about Rs. 1,55,00,000." He also points out that in 1885 the present Commissioner, Mr. Carey, reduced the expenditure on this branch by about a lakh of rupees (a reduction which may have been unknown to Mr. Hume), and that, when acting for Mr. Carey, he himself recently arranged with the Finance Commissioners for the reduction of the two Assistant Commissioners in charge of the Internal Branch, although the Madras Member, Mr. Bliss, who is the head of the Salt Department in that Presidency, was averse to the reduction as involving danger to the revenue.

The Departmental Member, who has had many years' experience in important districts in the North-Western Provinces, pronounces Mr. Hume's assumption that any oppression to the people is now involved in the retention of the Internal Branch baseless. He admits that such was the case when he was an Assistant Magistrate 20 years ago; but he asserts, from his experience as a District and Settlement Officer, that for a long time the Department has been so administered that there is no oppression nor any extortion from the people; that no prosecutions are instituted unless more than a seer of salt illicitly manufactured is seized; and that cases of causeless arrest or seizures on the part of subordinates are always punished by dismissal; that prosecutions are very rare; and that the duties of the establishment may be now said to be purely Preventive. If, however, the Internal Branch were abolished, he apprehends that illicit manufacture would at once revive. Combating Mr. Hume's argument that the evolution of salt by manufacturers of other saline products is no longer profitable, he mentions that saltpetre refiners now pay the full duty on about 60,000 maunds of salt evolved in the manufacture of saltpetre, and that in some parts of the country this salt is much liked. He apprehends that in case the duty were raised (a course he considers very probable in the event of a war), the temptation to illicit manufacture would be enormously increased if there were no Preventive establishment.

Of Mr. Hume's proposal to substitute an Uncovenanted Deputy Commissioner who had risen through the lower grades of the Department for a Commissioner selected from the Covenanted Civil Service, the Departmental Member expresses his strong disapproval. He considers it most important that there should be at the head of the Department an officer who is familiar with the general administration, and possesses the knowledge of, and sympathy with, the people, which is best obtained by training as a District Officer. He asserts that it is chiefly because the officers at the head of the Department have for many years had such training and such experience, that they have been able to introduce reforms which have freed the people from the old system of extortion and oppression to which Mr. Hume refers. He further points out that the Commissioner exercises all the powers of a Local Government; that he is empowered to suspend, reduce, and even dismiss highly-paid European Officers on his own responsibility; and he argues that it would be unwise and invidious to entrust such powers to an officer brought up in the Department, who would be called on to exercise them over his late brother officers.

Moreover, Mr. Patterson observes the Commissioner has frequently to discuss important questions with officers of high standing in the service, with Agents of the Governor General in Central India and Rajputana, and with Residents and Political Agents; and in such cases business is facilitated by the fact that the Commissioner is a senior member of the Civil Service—a position which also enhances his influence with the officials of Native States.

In reply to Mr. Hume's argument that the office of Commissioner does not present such attractions as to induce a Covenanted Civilian to hold it for any time, Mr. Patterson points out that for the last 25 years the average duration of the tenure of the appointment by a Civilian has been at least five years—a period which Mr. Hume admitted would be reasonable. Mr. Wigram Money, he states, held the appointment for nearly ten years; Mr. Hume, his successor, held it for about five years; Mr. Batten, who succeeded him, for about the same period, as did also Mr. Halsey, who was followed by Mr. Carey, the present permanent Commissioner, whose service in the Department already amounts to five years.

From 1867, when Mr. Hume assumed charge, till 1887, only four officers have held the substantive appointment of Commissioner, though three others have acted in the office.

With respect to the proposals by the Finance Commission for the reduction of the salaries and regrading of the Superior Establishment, Mr. Hume observes:—"As regards pay, I consider that the pay now drawn in the several grades is as near perfection as possible. It has been arrived at after a long series of gradual modifications as the result of protracted experience, and I have been very much disturbed to hear that * * * a reduction in the present initial salary in the superior grades is to be made. If I am correctly informed on this point, all I can say is that this proposed reduction would be an error of the greatest magnitude. You cannot nowadays get the class of Europeans, and *a fortiori* not the class of either Eurasians or Natives, at lower initial rates than now obtain."

The pension and furlough rule applicable to officers in the Department other than the Commissioner are those prescribed by the Civil Pension and Civil Leave Codes for Uncovenanted Officers. Mr. Hume is of opinion that the rules should be identical for the superior grades of all branches of service, Covenanted and Uncovenanted; and that whatever rules are finally accepted for the Revenue, Judicial, Public Works, Forest, and Police Department, might properly be accepted for the Northern India Salt Revenue Department.

The Internal Branch is divided into 14 circles, comprising an aggregate area of 160,000 square miles, within which there are 503 saltpetre refineries at work, 38,000 crude saltpetre works, and nearly 9,000 carbonate of soda and sulphate of soda works. The object of the Department is, while protecting the Salt revenue as far as possible, to promote rather than impede the manufacture of these substances. Consequently the restrictions imposed on manufactures are as little onerous as is consistent with fiscal interests. The reduction of the duty on salt and the improvement of the manufacture, with the increased facilities of transport, has so greatly reduced its price in Upper India that none but the poorest of the population would expose themselves to the risk of manufacturing salt in their own homes. Prosecutions for petty infringements of the Salt Act in saline districts are now rare in Upper India; and for many years the Department has refrained from prosecuting persons found in possession of less than one seer of illicit salt.

At the head of each of the 14 circles of the Internal Branch is a Superintendent. The circles are divided into sub-circles, each of which is in charge of an Inspector who has an establishment of petty officers to patrol the saline parts in the different pergunnahs of his sub-circle, and to supervise the manufacture of the products of salt soils.

The Superintendents are required to be moving actively about their circles for eight months of the year. During the rains no manufacture is possible.

The Assistant Commissioners in charge of the Internal Branch are required to see that the Superintendents do their work and properly supervise the Inspectors and their establishments. They dispose of all fines for misconduct, questions of leave, promotion, and all other questions which fall to an Administrative Officer in charge of a Division. It is also their duty, by testing saline soils of all kinds, to decide on the fitness of any locality for the establishment of licensed works for saline manufactures. They are consequently required to make frequent tours through their divisions, and to remain in camp for many months of the year. The duties of the Assistant Commissioners and Superintendents of the Internal Branch call for the exercise of much tact and discretion.

At the Sambhar Lake salt is manufactured by the admission of the brine into shallow pans; after evaporation has taken place, the salt which is formed in the pans is taken to the edge of the lake and stored. As the season advances, deeper pans are used; and, finally, when the water of the lake has to a considerable extent evaporated, the salt crystals which have been formed naturally are gathered and stored.

The Superintendent in charge of the manufacture of the salt has to collect labour and prepare the pans; and when the manufacture has commenced, it is his duty to attend daily and supervise the extraction and the cubical measurement of the salt in bulk. He has also to supervise its storage and to keep an account of the advances made to the petty contractors by whom the work is undertaken, and to settle their claims. Inasmuch as the collection of salt takes place principally at the hottest period of the year, his duties entail on him considerable exposure to the sun.

The Pachbadra Salt Source is situated in the midst of a desert in Rajputana to which Banjaras with pack bullocks resort only during three months in the year. The Phalodi Salt Source, also in Rajputana, is 14 miles distant from the nearest town or village; and drinking-water has to be brought from a distance of 10 miles. So unpopular is the duty at this source that the Superintendents are transferred every two years.

The Superintendent in charge of a Mine in a Salt Range is required to make plans for the working of the mine, to survey and lay out bridges and tunnels, to supervise the excavation of the salt and the measurement of the spaces excavated, and to lay down and work tramways inside and outside the mine.

The Superintendent in charge of a Beat in a Salt Range has even more arduous duties than other officers in the Department. The physical features of the country expose him to considerable danger, as well as to extremes of heat and cold. The roads are little more than pathways, and very steep; the salt outcrops are scattered about, some of them in places almost inaccessible, and much of the work has to be done at night when the Superintendent visits his guard-posts or lies in wait for smugglers.

The duties of the Superintendents on the Indus Preventive line also expose them to considerable variations of temperature and to other hardships.

An enumeration of the duties of the different officers in the Department suggests the qualities required for efficient service; while the difficulties under which these duties are discharged, and the comparatively meagre prospects in the matter of pay and promotion, explain the reluctance which, in the opinion of competent judges, is exhibited by many educated Natives to seek employment in the Department.

The technical requirements of the Department are a knowledge of salt manufacture, ability to test the progress of manufacture by means of the hydrometer, and to measure the cubical contents of the salt heaps; a sufficient acquaintance with practical Chemistry to understand the various processes in the manufacture of saline products, and to test saline soils; and at the mines in the Salt Range sufficient knowledge of engineering and surveying to conduct operations connected with the excavation of salt.

The Superintending Officers must be capable of controlling a numerous body of subordinates, and exercise such discretion in dealing with persons unconnected with the Department as may render the enforcement of the restrictive provisions of the Salt Acts as little as possible detrimental to commerce or productive of inconvenience to private persons.

The persons who seek employment in the upper grades of the Department are chiefly sons of Military, Civil, and Uncovenanted Officers, both European and Eurasian.

India,
Salt,
Section I.

Some of the applicants have been educated in England and some in India. The Departmental Member observes that the service is not a popular one among Native gentlemen; and that there is so little demand on their part for appointments in it, that during the past year he has received only two applications from candidates of this class, both of which he has entertained by entering the names of the applicants on the list of accepted candidates.

The Departmental Member considers that there are Native gentlemen of the right class well suited for the Department, but that, as a rule, the attractions offered by it are not sufficient to secure them. He observes that a well-educated young man, with the knowledge of English essential to this Department, would much prefer a Tahsildarship, with a prospect of a Deputy Collectorship in a few years; for he would have more to look forward to than in the Salt Department, and in the meantime his life would be passed under far more pleasant conditions. In a letter addressed by him to the Finance Commissioners, in which he deprecated a suggestion for the application to the Salt Department of the rule that Natives should receive only two-thirds of the salary assigned to an appointment when held by a European, he pointed out that only Natives with a peculiar and at present unusual combination of qualifications are fitted for employment in the Department in the superior grades. "A good education," he observed, "and good knowledge of English are absolutely necessary, and this must be combined with a good physique, active habits, and capability of undergoing out-door work and more exposure than is required, I believe, in any other branch of Government service. In addition to this, the officer must be of a class from whom integrity and a high standard of devotion to duty may be with confidence expected. He must also have the faculty of controlling subordinates, which is only found among Natives of a good social class, and which by no means necessarily accompanies education." Mr. Patterson at the same time bears witness that the two Native Superintendents already in the Department are excellent officers—hard-working, energetic, and honorable.

In his Report on the Administration of the Imperial Customs Department for the year 1867-68, Mr. A. O. Hume entered at some length into the question of the suitability of Natives for employment in the Department as Preventive Officers, and reluctantly came to the same conclusions as his predecessor that, with rare exceptions, the Natives who could be tempted into the Service by the salary offered were unfit for the position of Patrols and Assistant Patrols.

These views were expressed by Mr. A. O. Hume when higher education had made but little progress in Northern India. In the note with which he has favored the President of the Sub-Committee, he thus expressed himself as to the relative qualifications of the several classes which seek employment in the upper grades: "There can be no doubt that of those who seek this employment, the best men that we get, all round, are pure Europeans; but this is not because there are not equally good Eurasians and Natives to be found, but because, with rare exceptions, the equally good men of these classes can find other, and to them more congenial, careers. For the first 15 to 20 years of a Customs Officer's service, his life is one of constant bodily exertion and exposure during even the worst and hottest periods of the year; and the pay during this period is not better than is to be obtained in the Revenue, Police, Judicial, and even merely Clerical lines. There are many fine young men, pure Europeans, to whom, at the outset of their career, this out-door life of constant bodily exertion, with plenty of opportunities for sport, is infinitely preferable to one involving in-door desk work, even though the latter may carry a somewhat larger stipend. But this is less often the case with Eurasians, and scarcely ever so with Natives. That there are Natives fully competent for the work, men like Khan Nizam-uddin Khan, of the old Sirsa Line Division, and ~~the Babu I forgot his name now~~ who was for many years in supreme charge of the Sultanpur Works, sufficiently prove, but Natives of the required calibre have seldom hitherto applied for service in the Department; and though we have had some very good Eurasians, as a rule the Eurasians who apply are not first class. On the other hand, of the young pure Europeans, many of the very smartest lads seek employment in the Customs; and men like Messrs. Adams, Whitten, Ashton, and Lyons would have made names for themselves and taken high places in any branch of the Service, Covenanted or Uncovenanted, Civil or Military. But, as will have been observed, I do not consider that the admissions to the Department should be restricted to any class or race; it is an Imperial Department, and therefore no Provincial rule in regard to the candidates is required; and the only restriction and care needful is that they should be domiciled in India. I do not myself doubt that as time runs on even the best classes amongst the Eurasians and Natives will compete, and compete with a fair measure of success, for service in this branch; and the rules for the admission into the Service should leave the door as widely open for them as for the pure Europeans, who hitherto have undoubtedly been, as a body, our best officers; and this because the nature of the life involved being congenial to many young Englishmen, to much fewer Eurasians, to very few Natives, many of the smartest Europeans, much fewer of the smartest Eurasians, and scarcely any of the smartest Natives seek employment in the Department."

It will be remembered that the Salt and Customs Department was one of the Departments excluded from the operation of the rule promulgated in the order of 18th April 1879, requiring the special sanction of the Government of India to the appointment of any person other than a Native of India to an office carrying a salary of Rs. 200 or upwards.

In a letter No. 15-99, dated 13th June 1884, the Government of India called upon the Commissioner of the Northern India Salt Department for his opinion whether it was necessary to permit any longer the unrestricted employment of persons not being Statutory Natives of India in the Salt Department, and whether that Department might not be removed from the list of Departments excluded from the operation of the rule of April 1879.

In reply to that letter, the Commissioner, Mr. A. D. Carey, referred to the opinion expressed by Mr. Hume in the Administration Report for 1867-68; and observed that Mr. Hume's remarks, in which Mr.

G. H. M. Batten, his successor, afterwards cordially concurred, were as true then as on the day on which they were penned. Mr. Carey observed that few Natives qualified in all respects for the superior appointments would be attracted by a career in the Department; that the work would be thoroughly uncongenial to young educated Native gentlemen; and that, if it were decided to appoint Natives to vacancies, the Government would have to be contented with men not of the highest class. Seeing that the officers of the Department did not constitute a highly-paid English service, and that their duties were severe and unattractive, while any want of efficiency in the discharge of these duties would quickly result in heavy loss of revenue, he was of opinion that the best men whose services could be secured should be entertained, irrespective of race or domicile; and he accordingly recommended that no restrictions should be placed on the employment in the Salt Department of persons who were not Statutory Natives of India.

India.
Salt.
Section I.

The Departmental Member, in his letter to the Finance Committee already quoted, expressed his opinion that it was not possible to introduce a rule requiring that a fixed number of appointments or a fixed proportion of vacancies should be given annually to Native candidates. While he professed himself strongly in favor of appointing Native gentlemen with the necessary qualifications, and of giving such candidates the preference over European candidates, he considered the interests involved so great, and the possible results to Government from any deterioration in the tone of the officers so disastrous, that he could not recommend the adoption of any rule which would limit the field from which candidates might be selected.

Four witnesses were produced for examination by the Sub-Committee.

Shaik Assadullah Khan, a Superintendent in the Department in the Internal Branch, the son of a gentleman who enjoyed the title of Nawab under a *sanad* from the Emperor of Delhi—a title which has recently been recognized by the British Government as a personal distinction—stated that after 20 years in the Department, the salary he enjoyed amounted to no more than Rs. 320. He considered that the Natives of India did not generally possess the combined qualifications of an English education, bodily activity and endurance, and that the Department had no attractions to offer the educated Native. He was of opinion that in a few years' time, when English education had been more generally accepted by the Mahomedans and other energetic races of the north, Government would find a larger number of educated Natives qualified for service in the Salt Department. He admitted that there was no reason to complain of any reluctance on the part of Government to employ Natives of the North-West in the Department, and that a fair percentage of the educated Mahomedans with whom he was acquainted were employed in the public service. He stated that he was the first Native who had held the appointment of Superintendent in the Internal Branch; that he had always been received with cordiality by the European officers with whom he had been brought in contact; and that his business relations with them had been satisfactory.

Mr. Whitten, the Deputy Commissioner, stated that, looking at the question from the point of view of an Administrative Officer, he considered that Europeans were, as a class, more valuable than Natives in the Department. He allowed that Natives were quite as honest as Europeans, but he maintained they had neither the same power of controlling their subordinates nor the same physical endurance as the European. He stated that the Service was unpopular with educated Natives on account of the night work and of the few attractions it offered in the way of pay, promotion, and society. He added that Natives objected to being posted to places at a distance from towns where they could educate their children; and that although he had many Native friends, none had applied to him for appointments in the Department. Of the three classes, domiciled and non-domiciled Europeans and Eurasians, he had found the non-domiciled Europeans, as a rule, the more energetic and stronger men all round, though, generally speaking, they might be regarded as fairly equal; and he admitted that some boys who had been educated at the Hill Schools had made very excellent officers. He considered that an educational qualification equivalent to the F. A. Examination at the University should be required of all candidates for appointments, and he expressed no objection to the appointments being thrown open to competition among nominated candidates. He advocated the introduction of graded pensions as calculated to increase the efficiency of the Service, because it would enable men whose health had been impaired by the exposure and hardships incident to it to retire without incurring great sacrifices.

Mr. Ashton, Assistant Commissioner, in charge of the Sambhar Salt Source, expressed his concurrence in the views of Mr. Whitten regarding the employment of Natives in the Department. He observed that if a Native could be found to stand the hard work and exposure, it would be as well to employ him as the European. But he thought that a Native who, by his education and in other respects was qualified to do the work, would scarcely think it worth his while to enter the Department. He mentioned that when a really well educated man was obtained for the Inspector's grade, he would not remain in the Department if he could possibly obtain other employment. He had seen no reason to doubt the honesty of the educated Natives employed in the Department, and had found them sufficiently careful of the interests of Government. He also expressed his belief that they did not take advantage of their position to make illegal exactions; and he observed that with education the Native improves also in official morality. As between pure Europeans as compared with domiciled Europeans and Eurasians, he considered that the Europeans born and educated in England had more liberal views about work, by which he explained his meaning to be that such Europeans did not care to what they turned their hands.

Mr. Bolster, the Superintendent, in charge of the Mayo Mines in the Punjab Salt Range, stated that he had had three Native supervisors under him, of whom one, who was still in the Department, was a good man, and two had failed; but he admitted that they had been employed on beats in the Salt Range, where the work was particularly hard. He stated that he had no objection to the employment of

India.Salt.

Section I.

Natives who possessed the requisite qualifications, but that ordinarily he preferred non-domiciled Europeans to any other class. Mr. Bolster had originally been a Master in Bishop Cotton's School, where he had assisted in educating from 120 to 130 boys. He stated that some of them were in all respects as good as English boys of the same class, and had found employment as Executive Engineers in the Public Works Department, and as Assistant District Superintendents of Police. But he considered that the majority of the boys in the School were not so good as the majority of the boys in an English School would be, and that boys at Hill Schools in India are not so self-dependent as boys in England. Although he regarded the appointments made by nomination as generally satisfactory, he expressed his preference for a system of nomination followed by competition as likely to secure a better class of men.

After the foregoing Note was compiled, the Sub-Committee were favored with a further memorandum by Mr. A. O. Hume and with a Note from Mr. A. D. Carey. Mr. Hume combats the objections taken by Mr. Patterson to his proposals respecting the abolition of the Internal Branch and the appointment of an Uncovenanted Officer to the office of Commissioner. Mr. A. D. Carey confines himself to the questions to which the inquiry of the Commission is confined, while he is not unfavorable to the employment of Natives in the Department, Mr. Carey states that difficulty is experienced in finding Natives with the requisite qualifications who are willing to serve in the Department.

At the same time he gives it as his opinion that the continuance of a certain proportion of Europeans in the Supervising Staff is necessary for the efficiency of the Department. He prefers that appointments should be made by nomination rather than by competition, so as to secure that candidates possess the necessary moral and physical qualities, and would not insist upon any particular educational qualification. He dissents from Mr. Hume's view that the appointment of Commissioner should be conferred on an Uncovenanted Officer for reasons which he explains.

Section II.—Note by the Departmental Member.

No. 22C, dated Agra, 13th April 1887.

From—The Commissioner, Northern India Salt Revenue,

To—The Secretary, Public Service Commission.

In reply to your No. 211, dated 19th ultimo, I have the honor to submit the information called for. With reference to clause 4 of your letter, I also send you a copy of a letter No. 40, dated 1st May 1886, from the Secretary, Finance Committee, on the subject of the appointment of Natives of India to this Department, with my reply and with the views of Mr. Carey, the permanent Commissioner, and those of Mr. Hume, a former Commissioner, on the same subject.

India.
—
Salt.
—
Section II.

In paragraph 2 of my letter, I mentioned the unpopularity of this Service with Native gentlemen, and stated that during my tenure of office only one application had been made to me for an appointment. Since that time only one more application has been made. I may add that the names of both these gentlemen were entered by me in the list of accepted candidates. It is also only fair to add that the two Native Superintendents already in the Department are excellent officers—hard-working, energetic, and honorable. All this confirms the opinion expressed by me last year that Native gentlemen of the right class are well suited for this Department, but that, as a rule, the attractions offered by it are not sufficient to secure them. A well educated young man, with the knowledge of English essential in this Department, would much prefer a Tahsildarship with the prospect of a Deputy Collectorship in a few years. He would have more to look forward to than in the Salt Department, and in the meantime his life would be passed under far more pleasant conditions.

The question is not, however, a pressing one. Last year, in consultation with the Finance Committee, I arranged that the number of Superintendents should be reduced from 58 to 42, the duties of the officers reduced being carried on by a class of officers on lower pay. This reduction will be effected gradually by absorption as vacancies occur, and I do not, therefore, anticipate that any fresh appointments can be made to the Department for 7 or 8 years at least.

2. *With regard to clause 1, paragraph 1, of your letter*, I beg to state that in the lower Executive grades of the Department, that is, in all grades below the rank of Superintendents, comprising Inspectors, and all below that rank, only Natives of India are appointed.

In the case of the superior officers, first appointments are only made to the lowest grade of Superintendents. The Commissioner makes all initial appointments from a list of approved candidates. I enclose a nomination roll showing the conditions. The person nominated must be under 25 years of age; he must never have been dismissed from the Army or Civil Service, nor dismissed from, nor forced to resign, any Government employment; he must also give good references as to sobriety, honesty, and moral character. He must also furnish a medical certificate of physical fitness for Government service. There is no examination for admission, but candidates are appointed on probation for a year, and are not confirmed till they have passed a searching departmental examination. I do not think this system altogether satisfactory. There is no security that the candidates should have a good general education. In my opinion there should be a limited competition. At least three nominated candidates should compete for each appointment, the examination being in the ordinary subjects of a good general education.

3. *Clause 2, paragraph 1, of your letter.*—There are three grades of Superintendents. The lowest begins on Rs. 200, and rises by annual increments of Rs. 20 to 300. The next grade rises in the same way from Rs. 300 to Rs. 400, and the highest grade begins on Rs. 400, and rises by similar annual increments to Rs. 500. The annual increments are only allowed by the Commissioner for approved service and good conduct during the year. Promotions to a superior grade are made on the occurrence of grade vacancies.

It should be explained that the scale of pay for Superintendents mentioned above will only be enjoyed by those now in the Department. This scale was sanctioned by the Secretary of State in 1886 on the recommendation of Mr. Carey. But the Finance Committee recommended that in the case of all officers appointed in future to the Department, the scale of pay previously in force should be returned to. Thus officers will enter as Assistant Superintendents of the 2nd grade on Rs. 150, and after examination, and the occurrence of a vacancy, be appointed to the 1st grade of Assistant Superintendents on Rs. 175. From this grade they will rise, as vacancies occur, to be Superintendents on Rs. 200. There will be five grades of Superintendents, viz., on Rs. 200, Rs. 250, Rs. 300, Rs. 350, and Rs. 400, through which officers will rise by seniority tempered by merit. The lower scale of pay will again come into force when the supernumeraries are absorbed, probably in 7 or 8 years. As stated by me in paragraph 1 of this letter, the total number of Superintendents has been prospectively reduced from 58 to 42, the reduction to be effected gradually as vacancies occur.

Promotions are made from any grade of Superintendent to that of Assistant Commissioner by the Commissioner, and entirely on account of fitness for the post and superior merit and ability. There are six Assistant Commissioners in charge of Divisions, and one who is employed as Personal Assistant to the Commissioner. The former commence on Rs. 500, on which salary they serve for five years, after which their pay increases annually by Rs. 50 until the maximum monthly salary of Rs. 800 is reached. The pay of the Personal Assistant is Rs. 500. The Finance Committee have, however, recommended that one Assistant Commissioner in charge of a Division should be reduced on the occurrence of a vacancy, and that the Personal Assistant should in future be a Superintendent, not an Assistant Commissioner. In future, therefore, there will only be five Assistant Commissioners.

India.
Salt.
Section II.

There is one Deputy Commissioner. His pay is Rs. 1,000 rising by four annual increments of Rs. 50 to Rs. 1,200. He is appointed from the Assistant Commissioners by the Government of India on the nomination of the Commissioner, and entirely on the ground of superior ability and fitness for the post.

In regard to pension and furlough, the conditions for all these officers are those laid down in the Civil Pension and Civil Leave Codes for Uncovenanted Officers.

4. *Clause 3, paragraph 1, of your letter.*—The technical requirements of the Department are (1) a knowledge of salt manufacture, including at the Salt Mines in the Punjab salt excavation by mining and cubical measurement of the spaces excavated, and elsewhere at the Salt lakes and sources in Rajputana, &c., salt extraction, estimation by test rods on the lake shore, and measurements of store-heaps; (2) ability at the Salt sources to test the progress of manufacture by means of the hydrometer; (3) a knowledge, chemical and practical, of all the various processes of manufacture of crude and refined saltpetre and of the various kinds of carbonate and sulphate of soda made in the licensed works of Upper India, including Tirhoot; (4) ability to test saline soils of all kinds in order to determine the constituent parts in view to deciding on the fitness of any locality for the establishment of licensed works for the saline manufactures controlled by the Northern India Salt Department.

As a general rule, no professional attainments are essential for efficient service in the Department; but in the Punjab Mines a sufficient knowledge of engineering and surveying is required to enable the Mine Superintendents to survey and lay out drifts and tunnels and workings in the mines, and to carry on the excavation of salt safely and scientifically, and to lay down and work tramways with crossings and sidings, &c., inside and outside of the mines. At the Sambhar Lake, too, a moderate knowledge of surveying and levelling must be possessed by the Superintendents engaged in supervising salt manufacture.

5. *Clause 4, paragraph 1, of your letter.*—The classes who seek to be employed are chiefly the sons of Military, Civil, and Uncovenanted Officers, both European and Eurasian, and educated both in England and India.

The number of well-qualified candidates is now so great that there would be considerable competition for each vacancy if a limited competitive system were introduced, as I have suggested. I have already stated that the Service is not a popular one among Native gentlemen, and that there is little demand among them for appointments.

6. *Clause 5, paragraph 1, of your letter.*—I show the existing organization and constitution of the Department in the form required.

Existing Organization and Constitution of the Northern India Salt Revenue Department.

1 Department.	2 Total number of gazetted appointments, or of appointments not being purely clerical, of salaries of Rs. 100 and upwards.	3 Distribution of the gazetted appointments and the other appointments mentioned in column 2 amongst classes and grades, with rate of pay attached to each.				4 NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS IN EACH CLASS OR GRADE NOW HELD BY							
						1 Europeans not domiciled in India.	2 Europeans domiciled in India.	3 Eurasians.	4 NATIVES OF INDIA.				
									(a) Hindus.	(b) Mahomedans.	(c) Others.	(d) Total.	
Northern India Salt Department	9 gazetted	Commissioner of Salt Revenue	...	...	Rs. 2,500	Rs.	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Deputy Commissioner	...	...	1,000 to 1,200		1	...	...	...	...	...	...
		6 Assistant Commissioners	...	...	500 „ 800		3	3	...	...	...	...	...
		Personal Assistant to the Commissioner	...	...	500		1	...	...	...	...	...	...
	53 non-gazetted.	12 Superintendents, 1st grade	...	...	400 „ 500		4	6	2	...	...	...	...
		21 ditto 2nd „	...	...	300 „ 400		5	10	5	...	1	...	...
		20 ditto 3rd „	...	...	200 „ 300		...	11	8	...	1	...	...
62 Total												...	

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION,

NOTE—Hereafter, in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance Committee, probably in five years' time, as soon as the necessary absorption of supernumeraries occurs, the number of gazetted appointments will be reduced to six, viz., one Deputy Commissioner at Agra and five Assistant Commissioners—one at the Punjab Mines; one at Agra in charge of the Internal Branch; one in charge of the Sambhur Lake; one in charge of the Pachbadra Salt Source; and one in charge of the Didwana Salt Source.

AGRA;
The 13th April 1837.

W. SIDONS,
Personal Assistant to Commissioner
Northern India Salt Revenue.

India.
Salt.
Section II.

India.

No. 40, dated Simla, 1st May 1886.

Salt.

From—STEPHEN JACOB, Esq., Secretary, Finance Committee,

To—The Commissioner, Northern India Salt Revenue.

Section II.

I am desired to inform you that the Secretary of State for India in a recent Despatch has called on the Government of India to report what classes of offices there are into which the rule now applicable to Native members of the Civil Service under the Statutory Rules should be introduced, *viz.*, the rule that where an appointment is held by a Native of India, he should receive two-thirds of the salary assigned to the appointment when it is held by a European. This Despatch has been referred by the Government of India, for the consideration of the Finance Committee, and I am now desired to request that you will favour the President and Members of that Committee with your opinion on the subject.

2. The Departments involved in this inquiry appear to be the following :

Public Works Department.	Customs.
Finance Department.	Survey.
Forest.	Mint.
Educational.	Police.
Opium.	Post.
Salt.	Telegraph.

Medical,

and there may possibly be others which are not included in this list. The question regarding which the Committee desire to be favored with an opinion is, therefore, whether the two-thirds rule should be applied to such of these Departments as are under your control; if so, to what appointments in those Departments?

3. There has been much correspondence regarding the appointment of Natives of India to these Departments, as the result of which it has been decided that, while Europeans are not debarred, duly-qualified Natives can be appointed to all of them; and, in the case of the Finance and Opium Departments, it has been further ruled that a fixed proportion of the appointments periodically made should be given to Natives. But the question of the salary which they should receive when appointed has not obtained equal attention. In the Public Works Department the Government of India has assented to, and the Secretary of State has sanctioned, the application of the two-thirds rule, but it has not as yet been actually carried into effect. In the Educational Department, in some cases, the two-thirds rule seems to have been applied to the higher grades, and at the same time a lower scale of pay has been laid down for the grades usually occupied by Natives. In the Post Office Department the two-thirds rule is believed to have been applied to the only Native in high office. In other cases, however, it has hitherto been assumed that Natives admitted to an appointment in these Departments should receive the salary usually attached to the appointment without any abatement.

4. It is necessary, therefore, to consider the case of present as well as prospective holders of appointments. It will be necessary also to make careful enquiries in each Department as to where the line should be drawn, since there must be many posts in which the scale of pay is fixed too low to admit of any reduction, and the rule is only meant to be applied to the higher offices. The relation between the reduced pay of offices and the scale of pay laid down for administrative offices, which are usually filled by Natives (such as the posts of Deputy Collector or Extra Assistant Commissioner, Subordinate Judge, &c.), should also, no doubt, be considered. Some provision should perhaps be made that the two-thirds rule, or any rule causing an abatement in the scale of salary, should not take effect if it would produce an actual decrease of pay in the case of promotion from a lower grade. And it is perhaps open to question whether the rule should in all cases be applied to those Europeans who, being domiciled in India, rank as Statutory Natives, or only to those who are Natives by race and blood.

5. The Committee would further desire to be favored with your opinion as to whether a fixed ratio, such as that of two-thirds, is desirable, or a fluctuating ratio under which the reduction would be less in the lower grades and larger in the higher, or whether it would be preferable, in lieu of any arithmetical ratio, to adopt the principle of two alternative scales of pay—one for Europeans and one for Natives (as introduced already in the Educational Department); and, if so, on what basis such alternative scales can be laid down.

6. Lastly, I am to enquire whether you think it possible to introduce in the case of any other Department the rule of the Finance and Opium Departments under which a fixed number of appointments, or a fixed proportion of the vacancies, should be given annually to Native candidates.

No. 34C., dated Agra, 3rd June 1886.

From—A. B. PATTERSON, Esq., Officiating Commissioner, Northern India Salt Revenue,

To—The Secretary, Finance Committee.

In reply to your No. 40 of 1st May 1886, I have the honour to give you my opinion on the points indicated.

2. I am not in favor of applying to the Northern India Salt Revenue Department the rule under which Natives of India should receive only two-thirds of the salary assigned to an appointment when held by a European. Only Natives with a peculiar, and at present unusual, combination of qualifications are fitted for employment in the Department in the superior grades. A good education and good knowledge of English are absolutely necessary, and this must be combined with a good physique, active habits, and capability for undergoing out-door work and more exposure than is required, I

believe, in any other branch of Government service. In addition to this, the officer must be of a class from whom integrity and a high standard of devotion to duty may be with confidence expected. He must also have the faculty of controlling subordinates, which is only found among Natives of a good social class, and which by no means necessarily accompanies education.

India
Salt.
Section II.

The Department is not an attractive one to Native gentlemen, the work being of a kind which is distasteful to them as a rule. The present scale of salaries is certainly not too high for the class of men we want. There are very few applications from young Native gentlemen for employment in the Department; and if the scale of pay were made lower for them than for Europeans, I feel sure that there would be none at all from qualified Native candidates.

To show how little Native gentlemen care for appointments in this Department, I may mention that during the year I have held charge I have only had one application of the kind for a nomination.

When it is remembered that I have served for 22 years in districts of the North-Western Provinces, and that I have of course numerous friends among Native gentlemen in many districts, it will be easily understood that the Department does not offer many attractions for qualified Natives, even on the same scale of pay as that assigned to Europeans.

3. Under these circumstances, it is not necessary to answer the question contained in paragraph 5 of your letter.

4. In reply to paragraph 6 of your letter, I beg to forward, for your information, the opinion of Mr. Carey, the permanent head of this Department, on this subject, being extracts from his No. 56 of 4th August 1884 to the Government of India, in reply to a letter calling for his views on the subject of the employment of Natives in the Department. I also annex a copy of paragraph 147 of the Administration Report of the Department for 1867-68, in which Mr. Hume discussed the question. His opinion is all the more valuable, as his constant and generous advocacy of the claims of Natives to employment is well known. Mr. Batten also concurred in those views. My own, of course, are of little value compared with those of the distinguished officers I have named, all of whom have had far more experience in the Department.

I therefore will only say that I do not think it possible to introduce a rule under which a fixed number of appointments or a fixed proportion of vacancies should be given annually to Native candidates.

I am strongly in favor of appointing Native gentlemen with the necessary qualifications when possible, and I should consider it right to give such a candidate the preference over a European candidate.

But the interests involved are so great, the responsibility of the Department is so heavy, and the possible results to Government from any deterioration in the tone of the officers so disastrous, that I cannot recommend the adoption of any rule which would limit the field from which candidates may be selected.

Extract paragraphs 2, 3, and 5 from a letter No. 56C., dated 4th August 1884, from the Commissioner, Northern India Salt Revenue Department (A. D. Carey, Esq., c.s.) to the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department.

The question of the class of officers best fitted for the work of this Department is discussed with admirable force and clearness in paragraph 147 of Mr. Hume's Administration Report for 1867-68, copy of which is annexed to this letter for easy reference. The character of the duties to be performed has not changed since that report was written, and Mr. Hume's remarks, in which Mr. G. H. M. Batten afterwards "cordially concurred," are as true now as on the day they were penned.

The chief objection to the employment of persons of pure Indian blood in the superior appointments under this Department is that, with very rare exceptions, they are physically unsuited to the work. In every branch of the Department an immense amount of hard out-door work has to be got through. The trust and responsibility are also very great in the case of all the superior appointments, and only Natives of the highest class could properly be appointed to hold them. The work is almost entirely done in English, so that a high standard of education is essential. But the few Natives qualified in all these points can do much better for themselves, and a career in the Salt Department has no attractions for them. A candidate appointed to officiate as Assistant Inspector on Rs. 100 per mensem would be posted either to the Indus line, where his duties would consist in patrolling by day and night, or to Sambhar, where he would be employed in storing and weighing salt on the edge of the lake. To the young educated Native gentleman such work is thoroughly uncongenial; he thinks it beneath him, takes no interest in it, and looks about for an opportunity of finding employment for himself elsewhere. Within my experience young Natives of the class I am referring to very seldom are able to maintain proper discipline among their subordinates, or to manage the rough Banjaras and coolies they have to deal with.

We require Natives of high character and respectability, who have received a good English education, and who also have the Englishman's aptitude for out-door work and physical exertion, and for enforcing discipline. Such a combination is very rarely met with.

It follows that if it were decided to appoint Natives to vacancies, we should have to be contented with men not of the highest class. Such men would not have the qualifications which are necessary; they would be wanting specially in that strict rectitude and sense of duty which are marked characteristics of the present establishment, and the efficiency of the Department would suffer.

India.
Salt.

Section II.

In improving the management of the Salt Department, both in Madras and Bombay, one of the first and most important reforms made was the larger employment of Europeans in the more responsible positions.

5. The officers of the Salt Department do not constitute "a highly-paid English service," and their duties are severe and unattractive; while any want of efficiency in the discharge of those duties would quickly result in heavy loss of revenue. I am therefore of opinion that the best men whose services can be secured should be entertained, irrespective of race or domicile; and I accordingly recommend that no restrictions be placed on the employment in the Salt Department of persons who are not Statutory Natives of India.

Extract paragraph 147 from the Report of the Commissioner, A. O. Hume, Esq., C.A., C.B., on the Administration of the Imperial Customs Department for the official year 1867-68.

The question of more extensively employing Natives in responsible posts is one that has of late justly excited much attention. Having for many years steadily and persistently advocated this, I feel especially bound, as the head of a Department, not to conceal the fact that my experience in my present position had led me to believe that the views I formerly expressed need some qualifications and reservations. My predecessor, Mr. Money, after many years' trial had come to the conclusion that, with rare exceptions, the Natives *who could be tempted into our service* by the salary we can offer are unfit for the position of Patrols and Assistant Patrols. I entered the Department with somewhat different views, and having before long had abundant proofs of the correctness of opinions (to which even my predecessor had reluctantly come), I have taken some pains to discover why it is that the same class of Natives who so far excel Europeans, of the class obtainable for such posts as Tahsildars and Subordinate Civil Judges, should be so infinitely inferior to them as Line Officers. There appear to be several causes for this. In the first place, great bodily activity, incessant locomotion, indifference to sun, wind, weather, and his night's rest, not once in a way, but throughout his whole career (until he rises to a Collectorship), is essential to efficiency in the Line Officer. Now this indifference to physical fatigue and exposure, this capacity for great bodily exertion, is scarcely to be met with amongst the educated middle and lower class of Natives, the men who become our Tahsildars and Sudder Amins. We find it in the Native sportsman, the herdsman, who become the soldier, and others amongst the lower classes; none of whom could, of course, fill posts such as I refer to, and we find it (but, alas! rarely nowadays) amongst Native gentlemen of family, who are sportsmen. These, however, are few and far between; rarely possess even the moderate educational qualifications we require, and, what is most important, *will not* undertake a service like ours for Rs. 125 a month. Any one who knows them will realize from what I have said that these posts cannot be well suited to the "*dhulkum*," the people of the pen, or "writers," whom alone we could appoint to them. Amongst Europeans, on the contrary (young men fond of sport), this restless laborious life has a charm. Numbers, it is true, enter the Department to leave before their term of probation expires, but of those who remain, the vast majority do this perpetual knocking at about all hours and in all weathers more or less *con amore*. They can do their patrolling work as well, if not better, gun in hand; the excitement of the sport relieves the constant out-door life of much of its unpleasantness, and they live on the whole happy, healthy lives, doing good service to the State, where their Native *confrères* either break down sick (after innumerable protests about the hardness of their fate), or else simply slur over their work. It is not that there are *not* Natives who *can* do all that is required. I have not a better patrol on the line than Nizam-ud-din Khan, but then he is a Native *gentleman*, an enthusiastic sportsman, as rough-and-ready as any European; but it is that for the advantages we offer we cannot now obtain Natives like Nizam-ud-din Khan, men possessing the requisite qualifications in this way, and at the same time with any decent share of education. On the other hand, we *can* get fairly educated English *youths*, many of them sons of gentlemen, who can and will do the work, and who prefer the rough adventurous life, small though the stipend be, to regular office work on better pay. There is another point in which the classes of Natives alone available for our appointments conspicuously fail. They lack the power of commanding respect and enforcing discipline amongst large bodies of men. An Assistant Patrol may have 100 men under him, amongst whom the strictest discipline must be enforced, and he most probably has never any brother officer within 10 miles of him. The late lamented Colonel Fisher, whose knowledge of the language and character of Natives was only equalled by his liking for them, once told me that the youngest Cornet who could speak the language would keep better discipline in a detached troop than the old Rissaldar. At the time I neither understood nor believed this, but I find it to be a literal fact on the line. The youngest European Assistant Patrol,* who can talk the language, will keep up a more healthy tone of discipline and subordination than the oldest Native patrol, unless this latter—and we have only one such—happens to be a man of Nizam-ud-din Khan's stamp that I have sought for in vain. Somehow a sort of intimacy and familiarity, subversive of that *quasi*-military discipline that in a huge force like ours *must* be maintained, grows up invariably between the Native Patrols and a particular set of their subordinates; while there is always another set who, do what they will, are always in the black books. Travelling along the line, the difference in the set-up "of the force in beats over which Native and European officers respectively have long presided is very marked, and altogether in favor of the latter. Departmentally there is another point. An European Officer, if he only talk the language well and is civil and kindly, can do double as much with the zemindars and people around him as any Native (of the kind we alone meet with as candidates for employment) ever can. This is where line work is concerned; for even in our Department there are posts, such as a supervision of the Sultanpur works, where Natives do fully as well as Europeans; in fact, I doubt whether any European could have done as well there as Babu Kali Narain Roy has done. Without, therefore, relinquishing my old plea in favour of allowing Natives as

* Of course there are exceptions; but these are soon discovered, and do not long remain with us.

large a share as possible in the administration of the country, I think it must be conceded that there are certain classes of posts, entailing a certain description of duties, and requiring particular qualifications, for which, owing to differences in the national character and habits of mind and body, Natives are much less qualified than are Europeans obtainable for the same salaries, just as, owing to these same differences, there are other posts for which Natives are much better qualified.

Further Note by the Departmental Member,—dated 26th June 1887.

I entirely disagree with Mr. Hume's views as to the expediency of abolishing the Internal Branch. This establishment (of which the net cost is only about Rs. 1,40,000, not 2 lakhs as stated by Mr. Hume) is the agency by which (1) the illicit manufacture of salt in the Punjab, North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar is suppressed; (2) the frontier of the Sirsa, Hissar, Rohilkhand, Gurgaon, Muttra, Etawah, Jalaun, Jhansi, and Lalitpur Districts are guarded to keep out salt which has not paid duty; (3) yearly enquiries are made in the Rajputana and Central India States to ensure the observance of the Treaty engagements; (4) the refinement and eduction of salt in 532 saltpetre refineries and the processes in 43,549 crude saltpetre and sulphate and carbonate of soda factories are supervised and regulated. In fact the expenditure on the Internal Branch forms an insurance of Rs. 140,000, or a revenue of about 155 lakhs.

In 1885 Mr. Carey reduced the expenditure on this branch by about a lakh, and I arranged last year with the Finance Committee that in future there should be only one Assistant Commissioner in the Internal Branch instead of two. I may add that Mr. Bliss disapproved even of this reduction, and thought it dangerous to the revenue.

I may add that Mr. Hume's assumption that there is now any oppression to the people involved in the retention of the Internal Branch is baseless. Such was the case when I was an Assistant Magistrate 20 years ago.

But I can assert from my experience as a District and Settlement Officer that for a long time the Department has been so administered that there is no oppression nor any extortion from the people.

No prosecutions are now undertaken unless more than a seer of salt illicitly manufactured is seized, and cases of causeless arrest or seizure on the part of subordinates are always punished by dismissal. Prosecutions are very rare, and the duties of the establishment may be now said to be purely preventive. But if it were removed, illicit manufacture would at once revive. The saltpetre refiners now pay the full duty, or about 60,000 maunds of salt evolved in the manufacture of saltpetre.

If they could manufacture and sell salt without paying duty, you may imagine what would be the result. In some parts of the country the salt thus obtained is much liked. In case of a rise in the duty (very probable, I should say, in case of war), the temptation to illicit manufacture would be enormously increased if there were no Preventive Establishment. As to Mr. Hume's idea of substituting a Deputy Commissioner brought up in the Department for the present Commissioner, I consider it most impolitic. I look on it as most important that the head of the Department should be an officer of the Civil Service, familiar with general administration, and with that knowledge of, and sympathy with, the people which is best obtained by training as a District Officer.

It is chiefly because the officers at the head of the Department have for many years had such training and such experience that they have been able to introduce reforms which have freed the people from the old system of extortion and oppression to which Mr. Hume refers.

Again, the Commissioner exercises all the powers of a Local Government. He is empowered to suspend, reduce, and even dismiss highly paid European officers on his own responsibility, and I submit that it would be unwise and invidious to entrust such powers to an officer brought up in the Department—powers to be exercised over his late brother officers.

Again, the Commissioner has frequently to discuss important questions with high local officers, with the Agents to the Governor General in Central India and Rajputana, and with Residents and Political Agents. I need not say that in such cases business is facilitated by the fact that the Commissioner is a senior member of the Civil Service; and this fact also gives him more influence with the officials of Native States.

Mr. Hume says that the attractions of the appointment of Commissioner are not such as to induce a Civilian to remain for any time; and adds that if men remained for five years, something might be said for the system. As a matter of fact Mr. Hume is mistaken. For the last 25 years at any rate the average period of holding the appointment has been at least five years. Mr. Wigram Money, I believe, held it nearly ten years. Then came Mr. Hume, who held it about five years. Then came Mr. Battén, who held it about the same time. He was succeeded by Mr. Halsey, who held the post six years. Then came Mr. Carey, who has now been permanent Commissioner for five years. I was only acting for him.

Thus from 1867, when Mr. Hume assumed charge, till 1887 (20 years), there have been only four Commissioners.

Note by A. D. CARRY, Esq., Commissioner, Northern India Salt Revenue—dated Khewra, 29th October 1887.

I beg to return Mr. Hume's letter and the printed papers received with your note of 17th instant, and to thank you for the opportunity afforded me of stating my opinion on the points raised by the witnesses and by Mr. Hume.

India.
Salt.
Section II.

- On the question of the relative fitness of Natives and Europeans for employment as Superintendents and in the grades superior to Superintendents, my views* are already before the Commission. I entirely concur in the opinion expressed on that subject by my predecessor, Mr. Hume, in paragraph 147 of his Administration Report for 1867-68.

Within my experience Natives possessing the necessary qualifications and willing to serve in the Department are very difficult to find. Applicants anxious to obtain a footing in Government service before reaching the limit of 25 years of age, prescribed for first appointments by the Civil Pension Code, are forthcoming; but as soon as they have practical experience of the work, and are called upon to supervise manufacture or weigh salt on the edge of the Sambhar Lake during the burning heat of May and June, or to patrol at night time along rough and difficult foot paths on the Salt Range and the Indus line, their single thought is to obtain a transfer to some other Department. I think nearly all officers of experience in the Department will agree with me that the work is thoroughly distasteful to educated Native gentlemen (with very few exceptions), and is only accepted as a last resource.

I am therefore opposed to any hard and fast rule requiring a fixed number of appointments or a fixed proportion of the vacancies to be given to Natives.

The result of appointing persons to positions for which they are not suited is that work is badly done; and in the Salt Department bad work means loss, possibly heavy loss, of revenue, though it may easily escape notice, since explanations can always be found for fluctuations in the collections or absence of normal increase in revenue.

When I first joined the Bombay Salt Department under Mr. C. B. Pritchard, the number of Europeans employed in it was very small, and extreme laxity prevailed. To speak plainly, wholesale robbery was going on in all directions, and not the least important of the measures adopted by Mr. Pritchard, from which the revenue has so greatly benefited, was to considerably strengthen the element of European supervision.

The proportion of Europeans to the entire establishment after all remains very small. I regard a due proportion of Europeans in the Supervising and Controlling Staff as absolutely necessary to the efficiency of a Salt Department.

I am not in favor of paying Native Officers at a lower rate than Europeans of the same grade. Such a measure would make service in the Department even more unattractive than it is at present. Whenever a really qualified Native gentleman joins us, I would place him on a complete equality, as regards pay and privileges of every kind, with his European brother officer.

I do not concur in Mr. Hume's proposal to recruit the Department by limited competition among candidates nominated by a variety of authorities. I do not see that such a system provides any safeguard against the Department, being manned by persons to whom the work would be thoroughly uncongenial, who would do it badly, and whom it would be difficult to get rid of without hardship.

I would not even insist on a University education up to the F. A. standard as a qualification, as I think that the fewer the restrictions placed on the field of selection open to the Commissioner, the better. When a man suited in all respects for the special work of the Department has been found, it is not to the public interest that he should be disqualified and passed over in favor of a less fit person simply because he has not gone through a certain University course.

Considering the peculiar features of the work of this Department, and the fact that well qualified men have been found under the system now in force, I doubt if any change would be an improvement. I would therefore leave it to the Commissioner to nominate as heretofore on his own responsibility, unfettered by restrictions as to race or domicile or course of University education.

The Assistant Commissionerships should, I am of opinion, be ordinarily filled by promotion from the Superintendents, as is already the practice in the Northern India Salt Department. This system appears to me both the fairest, and that by which the best qualified men will be obtained.

As regards Mr. Hume's suggestion to reduce the official rank and standing of the head of the Department and fill the post by promotion from the subordinate grades, I think there are advantages in having as Commissioner an officer with experience in the general administrative work of the country. The keynote of Mr. Hume's letters is to be found in his anxiety that the annoyance to the public, which is almost inseparable from Customs work, should be reduced to a minimum, and in this desire he has my warmest sympathy. But I am not at all sure that by promoting to the Commissionership men of purely departmental experience he would obtain increased leniency in the administration of the Customs laws, or that a more marked disposition to subordinate departmental routine to the convenience of the public whenever possible would manifest itself. I think a contrary result is more probable.

In his letters of 18th June and 22nd September last, Mr. Hume advocates at considerable length the abolition of the section of the work of the Department known as the Internal Branch on financial and philanthropic grounds. This establishment was last year subjected to stringent examination by the Finance Commission, and suggestions for effecting a reduction in it made by Mr. Patterson, who then acted for me, were opposed by that Commission on the ground that danger to the revenue would result. For this reason, and because I think it almost certain that you will be of opinion that the matter is one which lies outside the scope of the inquiries of the Public Service Commission, I have not thought it necessary to follow Mr. Hume in discussing the possibility of dispensing with the Internal Branch organization.

* Vide letter to the Government of India, No. 56-C., dated 4th August 1884.

Section III.—Sittings at Simla.

WITNESS No. I.—19th May 1887.

Examination of SHAIR ASSADULLAH KHAN, Superintendent, Salt Revenue Department, Internal Branch.

India.

Salt.

Section III.

Shaik Assadullah
Khan.*The President.*

When did you enter the Department?—In 1865 I am a Native of the North-West Provinces, and a member of a family long resident there. I was educated for a short time in the Etawah High School, where I learnt English. My father also belonged to the Department, and was stationed in the Etawah District. A brother of mine is Officiating District Superintendent of Police at Lalitpur. I was 21 when I joined the Salt Revenue Department. I owed my first appointment to Mr. Hume. For two years I held officiating appointments as Assistant Patrol. My first permanent appointment was given me in 1867 as Assistant Patrol on Rs. 125. I was on the Customs line in the Nagpur Division. I was Assistant Patrol up to 1879, when I became a Patrol in Rajputana, and then, the Customs line having been abolished and Salt Treaties entered into with Native States, I became an Inspector on Rs. 200, my duties being to supervise the manufacture of salt and its weighment out from the Factory on its being cleared from the Salt Works. From Inspector I became Superintendent, which was rather a change of designation than of office. My present pay is Rs. 320, and my present duties are to supervise the manufacture of saltpetre and issue licenses, and prevent the illicit manufacture of salt.

Have you to travel over your district?—Yes. I have six Revenue districts under me, but in only three of them is there any work to be done. I am on tour for eight months in the year—from October till June. The manufacture ceases in the rains, and I return to my headquarters at Aligarh.

Who has the supervision of Factories in your absence?—A subordinate officer is put in charge.

Can you suggest in what branch Natives may be more largely employed in the Department, its efficiency being maintained?—The duties of a Salt Revenue Officer are of a very arduous nature, and require (1) that a man who undertakes them should have received a good English education; and (2) be possessed of great bodily activity and endurance.

And I suppose a knowledge of the vernacular is also necessary?—Yes. Natives of India do not generally possess the qualifications of a knowledge of English and good bodily activity and endurance at the same time. Moreover, the Department has no attractions to offer the educated Native. Its officers have to serve in out-of-the-way places—for instance, at the Rajputana Salt sources,—where even the common necessaries of life are wanting.

Do you consider it desirable that Government should, if possible, secure for service in this Department Natives who possess the requisite qualifications?—I do.

Heretofore I believe the more energetic races of India—the Mahomedan and the Rajput—have

The President—contd.

accepted English education very sparingly?—Yes.

Has there been a marked improvement in that respect in the North-West within the last few years?—Yes.

And do you think that in a few years' time there will be a larger number of educated Natives belonging to these energetic races qualified for service in the Salt Department?—I think so.

Have you reason to complain of any reluctance on the part of Government to employ Natives of the North-West in this Department of the public service?—I do not think so.

Your family being one of some position, you are doubtless acquainted with a large number of respectable Mahomedan families?—Yes; but having always been absent on duty elsewhere, it is only lately that I have come to the North-West.

Of the educated Mahomedans of your acquaintance, do you consider that a fair percentage are employed in the public service?—I think so.

Do you take any part in the direction of the Aligarh College?—Having been so frequently absent on tour, I have had no leisure to do so. I have a son and a nephew at that institution.

Are there among the pupils in that College Natives of Southern India and Bengal?—There are many such from Hyderabad, and, I believe, there are one or two from Bengal.

The Hon'ble Mr. Quinton.

Do you ride your marches?—Yes.

The President.

I believe you were at one time employed in supervising the manufacture of salt at Sultanpur—Yes.

Your present appointment is one which brings you into frequent relations with District Officers?—Yes.

It is an appointment which requires tact in the holder of it?—Yes.

You are the first Native who has held such an appointment?—I believe so.

Have you always been received with cordiality by the European Officers with whom you have been brought in contact?—Yes.

And have your business relations with them always been satisfactory?—Yes.

Your father is, I believe, Vice-President of the Municipal Committee at Meerut?—Yes.

Have you anything further to add?—Nothing

WITNESS No. II—19th May 1887.

India.

Salt.

Section III.

R. J. Whitten, Esq.

Examination of R. J. WHITTEN, Esq., Deputy Commissioner, Northern India Salt Revenue Department.

The President.

When did you enter the Department?—Twenty-five years ago as Assistant Patrol of the lowest grade in the Customs line, Delhi Division, on a salary of Rs. 100. I was born and educated in England. I obtained my first appointment in the Department through Mr. Money, Commissioner, on General Troup's recommendation. General Troup was a friend of mine. I was Assistant Patrol until I passed my examination about eight months after joining. I was transferred in December 1863 to the Internal Branch on Rs. 200. In 1869 I was appointed the Commissioner's Personal Assistant on Rs. 500. In 1870 I became Collector of Customs in the Agra Division on Rs. 600. That was exceptional promotion, and by 1875 I had risen to Rs. 800. In 1877 I was appointed Deputy Commissioner, which appointment I now hold. Since 1877 I have been twice appointed to officiate as Commissioner for short periods. I may mention that formerly there was a Customs line extending from Torbeyla on the Indus to the Mahanadi in the Central Provinces, a distance of about 2,000 miles, for about 1,500 or 1,600 miles of which the line was defended by a hedge. This line had to be patrolled in order to prevent the importation of salt from Native States, and also the exportation of sugar from British territory into Native States. There was an import duty on salt and an export duty on sugar. That system was abolished when the Salt sources in Rajputana, the Sambhar lake, and other sources were leased ten years ago. Treaties were made with the several Native States owning these sources and with other States for the suppression of many other earth-salt works.

What were the Salt sources in British territory before that time?—First the Excise works in the Delhi Division, next the Sultanpur and Nuh Salt works, and then the Saltpetre works all over the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. We had also some mines which were not affected by the abolition at all. When the line was abolished, the mines in the Salt Range continued to be worked; the Excise works at Sultanpur and Oudh were also continued; and in lieu of the line an establishment was organized at the Salt lakes in Rajputana for the manufacture of salt, and the levy of duty went on there instead of on the line.

Can you tell us the extent of the territorial area over which the operations of this Department extend?—The whole of the Punjab, the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, the whole of the Rajputana and Central India Agencies, and about one-third of the area of the Central Provinces within which Northern India taxed salt is consumed; also the whole of the Province of Behar or Tirhoot. We have also some salt quarries in the Mandi State in the hills near Simla, which the Department supervises on the part of the Maharaja, and a certain share of the duty of which the Government takes—that is to say, we keep the establishment and pay it and take a share of the duty as our right under treaty with the Maharaja. The duty amounts to about Rs. 30,000 a year, and our expenditure to Rs. 7,000 or Rs. 8,000.

The President—contd.

Will you tell us roughly the amount of revenue which is derived from the Salt works under the control of your Department?—Last year it was 157½ lakhs of rupees.

The manufactured salt produced in India has to compete with sea-borne salt from Cheshire?—Yes, and also with manufactured salt from France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Jeddah, Muscat; all these salts come into competition with ours.

Is it the case that to a considerable extent salt is brought to the country by ships as ballast?—Yes.

And that, therefore, the cost of the carriage of sea-borne salt has of late years been very much reduced?—Yes.

But notwithstanding that you have been able to push your salt further towards the coast?—Not materially, because any reduction of duty which has taken place in Northern India has also taken place in Bengal.

Is it the case that in consequence of greater facilities of communication, the Indian-produced salt has been pushed down much further towards the sea than was possible before railways were opened?—Yes.

And that the further you can occupy the country with the consumption of your salt, the larger the revenue of your Department?—Yes.

And the greater the responsibilities connected with its collection?—Yes. With reference to the question of communication, I may say that the Indian Midland Railway will convey our salt into parts of the Central Provinces, where the consumption is at present mainly of Bombay coast salt. The new Punjab line will cheapen salt within our present area, and may add a little to the consumption of rock salt in Sind to the displacement of Sind-manufactured salt.

There is no probability, so long as the tax is maintained at the present rate, that the revenue you collect will be lessened, and the probability is that it will be increased?—Yes. In continuance of any former answer, I may add that in the Salt Range in the Punjab there are outcrops of rock salt in Jhelam, Shahpur, and Bunnu, where the mines can be worked most economically. We have mines also at Kohat, and there salt is mined or quarried, bought and sold, after levy of duty.

Is any part of it on the Frontier?—No; it is on the Salt Range, a very hilly country, and difficult to get about in. I should mention that we have a small establishment at Peshawar and Attock, all down the line of the Indus, under four Superintendents, whose duty it is to prevent the transmission across the Indus of a kind of salt known as Kohat salt, on which for political reasons a duty of only 8 annas per maund is levied, the salt being mainly consumed by the Pathan tribes in Afghanistan and on the Frontier—in fact, the whole of the inhabitants of the trans-Indus territory use it.

The President—contd.

You say each mine is under a Superintendent?—Yes.

Has that Superintendent to make plans for the working of the mine?—Yes.

Is it his duty also to prevent any illicit removal of salt from the mine?—No. The Beat Superintendent in whose district the mine is situated undertakes preventive duties.

Will you kindly give us your views as to the possible larger employment of Natives in the Department?—Looking at it purely from the point of view of an Administrative Officer, and leaving out of consideration the sentiment or the policy of it, I think the European is the man who gives better value for your money in the Department than the Native will do. I say nothing about the honesty of the Native; he, as far as I know him in the Department, is just as honest as the European; but he has not the same power of controlling his subordinates; nor is he able to work so hard and stand exposure in the same way as a European will do. A European will kill a Native at work, whether it be in the sun or at night.

You say you have only two Native Superintendents?—Yes, but I have known some twelve or fourteen others.

Is the work of your Department popular with educated Natives?—No.

Why?—First and foremost on account of the night work; and, secondly, on account of the few attractions the Department offers in the way of pay, promotion, and society. As an instance of the want of attraction of the Department in the way of pay, I may refer you to the case of the last witness. That gentleman is a member of a highly respectable family, of which the head held the title of Nawab under a *sanaad* from the Emperors of Delhi—a title which has recently been recognized as a personal distinction in favor of the father of the witness. The witness has been in the Department altogether about 20 years, has borne an excellent character throughout, and enjoys the reputation of being a good officer all round. His pay is now only Rs. 320, while his brother, who entered the Police about five years ago as Assistant Superintendent, is now officiating as District Superintendent on not less than Rs. 400. And as regards the unpopularity of the work by reason of the localities in which it is carried on, I may instance the case of a Native Superintendent now stationed at a place called Phalodi, 14 miles away from the nearest town or village. There is absolutely no society there of any kind; drinking-water has to be brought from 10 miles away. This Superintendent is the only man within 10 or 12 miles who can read or write a word of Urdu or English. Phalodi is on the extreme north-west of the Jodhpur State, and the man I refer to is stationed there, because we find it so difficult to keep Europeans there. The Europeans who have been stationed there quarrelled with each other, and made themselves very unpopular. Phalodi is only a 2 years' post.

Are none of your works, with the exception of those at Delhi, near any of the large cities?—None of them are. Even those at Sultanpur are 50 miles from Delhi.

The President—contd.

Do you find that educated Natives object to being posted to places at a distance from towns where they can educate their children?—Yes; many complaints are made about the difficulty they have in educating their children in these out-of-the-way places, and it is unusual for a Native to bring his family to such places.

You have no doubt made the acquaintance of a large number of educated Natives since you joined the Department?—Yes; I have a great many Native friends.

Do they ever apply to you for appointments?—Certainly not.

Your service has been chiefly in the North-West and the Punjab?—It began in the Punjab, and then I went to Oudh, and then to the North-West, and now I am travelling about almost everywhere, though chiefly in the North-West, my headquarters being at Agra.

Do the Natives of Northern India, who have largely taken advantage of education, belong, as a rule, to the more energetic races?—No; they principally belong to the clerical castes, the Brahmans and Kayests. The more vigorous races of Upper India have not so largely availed themselves of the opportunities for education; and in the upper grades of the Salt Department men require a knowledge of English in addition to energy and honesty.

Do they not require a certain amount of knowledge of Chemistry also?—Not as an initial qualification, but certainly a man should be capable of acquiring it.

And also be capable of being taught Engineering?—Except in the case of the Mine Superintendent, and in a lesser degree the officers engaged in manufacture at Sambhar, we do not want that; what we want is a man of high class intelligence, and the more cultivated, the better.

Why do you say the more cultivated, the better?—Because his work constantly brings him into contact with District officials, Political Officers, and officials and Zemindars in Native States.

From what class of men do you generally recruit your Superintendent and Assistant Commissioners' grade?—From the sons of Military and Covenanted and Uncovenanted Officers.

Are you acquainted at all with the domiciled Europeans and Eurasians in your Department?—Yes, with all of them.

What sort of officers do they make?—Domiciled and non-domiciled Europeans and Eurasians may, generally speaking, be said to be all on a level; but if I had to choose between them, I should say that a non-domiciled European was the best of the three.

In what respect?—He is more energetic and a stronger man all round.

Do you consider that the best of each class are about equal?—Yes. The domiciled Europeans are principally men, who, as boys, were educated in the Hill Schools, such as Bishop Cotton's, the Mussoorie, Darjeeling, and Poona Schools.

Do they make fairly active officers?—Very good officers, indeed.

India.

Salt.

Section III.

R. J. Whitten, Esq.

India.

Salt.

Section III.

E. J. Whitten, Esq.

The President—concl'd.

At present appointments in your Department are made by nomination?—Yes; and I think the present system works very satisfactorily, and the only amendment I would suggest is, that an educational qualification should be insisted on.

What educational qualification would you insist upon?—I would insist on a University education up to the F. A., or a standard equivalent to that.

Have you any objection to appointments being thrown open to competition among nominated candidates with the educational qualification you suggest?—No.

Do you see any good ground for placing any bar to the appointment of Natives in this Department?—Not if you can get them with the qualifications I have indicated as requisite. I may say that the head of this Department has for the last 30 years invariably been an officer in the Civil Service, who has been a District Officer, or has served in a district, and to my knowledge for the last 20 years at least has invariably encouraged the employment of Natives in the upper grade of the Service.

Is it desirable to introduce a system of graded pensions in this Department?—Yes. I consider that such a system would add to the efficiency of the Service by enabling men whose health has been impaired by the exposure and hardships incident to the Service to retire without incurring the great sacrifice which they now have to make if they would retire.

Do you think also that as a superior officer you would have less reluctance to compel retirement under such circumstances?—Very much so, indeed.

Mr. Patterson.

Has the result of the taking over of the Salt works in Rajputana by the British Government, and the improvement in recent years in salt manufacture and in communications, been greatly to cheapen the average cost of salt over the whole of Northern India?—Yes.

And to reduce the retail price of salt?—Yes.

The President.

What is the average price of salt at present?—About 14 seers to the rupee. Fifteen years ago, certainly not more than 18 seers would have been obtainable for a rupee. In many parts of the territory under this Department the price of salt has actually been cheapened to the people by the imposition of our duty in lieu of the transit duties which the Native Princes used to levy.

Do you yourself think that anybody is prevented from using as much salt as he likes by reason of the tax?—No; and the great proof of that is that it really does not pay people now to undergo the risk and expense of manufacturing salt in their own houses. Taxed salt is so cheap. Prosecutions for petty infringements of the Salt Act by persons in saline districts are rare nowadays. For many years past we have ceased to prosecute persons found in possession of less than one seer of illicit salt.

During the time you have been in the Department have you known any instance of patronage

The President—cont'd.

having been improperly exercised?—No; and in the two or three cases of men having turned out badly, the Commissioner who appointed them was not acquainted with their families, and two of the men who were appointed by the Commissioner were excluded from the Department owing to their not passing the departmental examination.

The Hon'ble Mr. Quinton.

~~non domiciled Europeans~~
Are ~~men who are nominated in England~~ required to pass an examination in vernacular languages before nomination?—No; they are allowed one year, after they join the Department, in which to qualify themselves in departmental matters and to pass the vernacular test, and for that year they are regarded as probationers. Everywhere else on the Range the outcrops are protected by an establishment composed of peons and petty officers under Superintendents. The Range is divided into beats, each beat being in charge of a Superintendent. Then we have the Sultanpur Salt Works. These are Excise Salt Works—that is to say, we do not own them; they belong to and are worked by Natives; the salt is protected by our establishment; we supervise the manufacture in our own interests, insisting on its being up to a certain quality; and on the salt being purchased by traders, we levy the excise upon it, weigh it, and issue passes. The Sambhar Lake Salt source is leased by the British Government from the Maharajas of Jodhpur and Jaipur, and we work it purely on our own account. In the early part of the season we manufacture salt by the admission of the brine into shallow pans; there the brine evaporates, and the salt which has formed is taken to the edge of the lake and stored. We have a second system—a system of deep pans—in which as long as there is any brine available in the lake, we can manufacture salt. The best quality of salt we make in the lake is made in these pans. Finally, when the brine all over the area of the lake has evaporated to a certain point and the salt precipitates, we lift out the crystals which have formed naturally and without any help on our part. A somewhat similar system with local variations applies at all the Salt lakes.

What does it cost you to extract salt from the Punjab Mines?—Eight pies per maund to excavate the salt and bring it down to the depôt.

And at the Sambhar Lake?—About 7½ pies on an average.

I believe no Native is now allowed to make earth-salt in any part of the area controlled by this Department?—No.

What is the duty of the Department in connection with the manufacture of saltpetre?—There are saltpetre works, carbonate of soda works, and sulphate of soda works, all of which we supervise.

Who is the unit, so to speak, of your Department?—The unit is the Superintendent in charge of a Circle. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and Behar there are 14 circles. The aggregate area of these circles is 1,60,000 square miles, and within that area there are 503 saltpetre refineries at work, 38,000 crude salt-petre works, and very nearly 9,000 carbonate

The President—contd.

of soda and sulphate of soda works. It must be borne in mind that India is one of the great saltpetre-producing countries of the world, and that carbonate of soda and sulphate of soda are largely used in Indian industries. The object of the Department therefore, while protecting the Salt revenue as far as possible, is to promote rather than impede the manufacture of these substances. We have 14 Superintendents, and under them an establishment composed of Inspectors and petty officers, who are appointed to patrol the saline parts in the different pergunnahs and tahsils, and to look after the manufacture of the substances I have mentioned, and also to see that no infringement of the Salt Act occurs.

How many Assistant Commissioners have you?
—Six.

How many Assistant Commissioners in the Internal Branch?—Two—one supervises the Upper and the other the Lower Division; that is to say, the up and down country Divisions.

What are the duties of Superintendents?—They are supposed to be moving actively about their circles for eight months in the year. During the rains no manufacture is possible. We have no Assistant Superintendents. The Inspectors are in charge of the sub-circles within the circles of these Superintendents.

What are the Inspectors' duties?—They are at the head of the Subordinate Service. They are all Natives without exception.

Have no Europeans applied for Inspectors' appointments?—Very rarely. We do not consider

The President—concld.

these appointments eligible for Europeans. The pay in the first place—Rs. 30 to Rs. 70—is not good enough. In times gone by we have had one or two European Inspectors, and have not found them a success. Above the Inspectors are the Superintendents. We have now two Native Superintendents; one of them, the witness who has just been examined, is employed in the Internal Branch. There are, as I have said, six Assistant Commissioners. Those in charge of the Internal Branch administer the Internal Branch, see that the Superintendents do their work and make the establishment under them do theirs, and settle and dispose of all fines for misconduct, questions of leave, promotion—everything, in fact, which an Administrative Officer in charge of a Division has to look after. In the winter they go on tour through their divisions, and in the hot weather they remain at head-quarters, writing their reports and doing their administrative work. There is no out-door work for any one of the Internal Branch during the rains. In future there is to be only one Assistant Commissioner in the Internal Branch.

Who supervises the Superintendents in the Salt Range?—The Assistant Commissioner.

Has the Assistant Commissioner anything to do with the mines?—He is not specially in charge of the mines. There is a Superintendent in charge of each mine who is responsible for its working.

Is the duty of the Superintendents of the Beats arduous?—Yes; they have a great deal of night patrolling to do, and the country over which they have to patrol is very difficult indeed.

WITNESS No. III—19th May 1857.

Examination of A. F. ASHTON, Esq., Assistant Commissioner, Salt Department, Sambhar.

The President.

When did you enter the Department?—In 1869. I was born in India and educated in New Zealand, my father having gone there to reside. I was about 19 years of age when I returned to India and entered the Public Works Department in the Accounts Branch. I entered the Salt Department as an Assistant Patrol on Rs. 125 in the Etawah District. I held that appointment for about seven months, and was then transferred to the Cawnpore District, and from thence to the Bulandshahr, and subsequently to the Aligarh District. I was next appointed to be Officiating Assistant Commissioner in the Agra and afterwards in the Allahabad District, and again to the Agra District, and from Agra to Didwana as Assistant Commissioner. Subsequently I returned to the Internal Branch, and was posted first to Agra and then to Benares, and from Benares to my present appointment at the Sambhar Lake. I have had experience of the working of the Department in all parts of the country to which it extends, except in the Punjab.

What are the duties of a Superintendent in the Sambhar District?—The work is of two kinds—the superintendence of the manufacture, and the supervising of the weighment of salt. The Superintendent of Manufacture has to arrange for the manufacture of the salt at the lake. The

The President—contd.

work commences in October; it is his duty to collect labour and to see that the pans used in the manufacture are made in the vicinity of the lake, and later on he arranges for the making of the enclosures in the lake itself in which to collect the brine. When the manufacture of the salt has commenced, it is his duty to go out every day and supervise the extraction and the estimation of the salt. By estimation I mean the cubical measurement of salt in bulk by a graduated rod. He has also to supervise the payments made on account, and the storage and all work connected with the manufacture.

Are the persons who manufacture salt paid by contract?—All work connected with the manufacture is done by petty contract, except of course petty works of construction, which are done by daily labour. His next duty is to supervise the measuring of the salt and the storing of it in heaps. The bulk of his work takes place in the hot weather, when of course the lake is at the lowest.

Have you served with Native Officers of the Department at any time?—Not with Natives in the superior grades.

With Native Superintendents?—No.

India.

Salt.

Section III.

R. J. Whitten, Esq.

A. F. Ashton, Esq.

India.

Salt.

Section III.

A. F. Ashton, Esq.

The President—contd.

So that you cannot give us any opinion as to their qualifications?—Not in regard to individual cases.

Have you ever served with Natives in the Internal Branch?—Not with Natives as Superintendents.

What are your views with regard to the employment of Natives in the Department?—They are similar to those Mr. Whitten has just expressed, *viz.*, that if you can get a Native to stand the hard work and exposure, you may just as well employ him as a European; but I think that a Native, who by his education and in other respects was qualified to do the work, would scarcely think it worth his while to enter the Department.

Have you any educated Natives in the Inspectors' grade?—Yes.

What is your experience of them?—That if you get a really well-educated man, he will not remain in the Department if he can possibly get anything else. It is a constant difficulty with us to obtain well-educated men for the Inspectors' grade—that is to say, men with a knowledge of English.

Have you had many domiciled Europeans and Eurasians in the Department?—Yes. I have known a large number of officers of that class.

What do you think of their work?—I think they do their work fairly well.

WITNESS No. IV—19th May 1887.

Examination of J. BOLSTER, Esq., Superintendent, 1st grade, in charge of the Mayo Mines, Punjab Salt Range.

The President.

J. Bolster, Esq.

When did you enter the Department?—In 1871. I had been previously a Master in Bishop Cotton's School. I was born in Ireland and educated at a private school in Bandon. My first appointment in the Department was as Assistant Patrol on Rs. 125, which post I held for exactly two years, and was then promoted to Rs. 150. I am now a 1st grade Superintendent drawing Rs. 420, plus the special allowance which is attached to the appointment.

Had you received any Engineering training before you entered the Department?—No; but the Mathematical training I had received made the acquisition of a certain amount of Engineering knowledge comparatively easy. I had also the advantage of a six years' course of instruction under Dr. Warth, a Mining Engineer. Dr. Warth prepared the working-plans of the mines in the Punjab. He is a Conservator, Forest Department, but during the period to which I allude he held the office of Collector in this Department—an appointment corresponding to that of Assistant Commissioner in the Revenue Branch.

Have you worked at all with Native Superintendents in the Department?—Yes; I have had three Native Superintendents under me.

How did they do their work?—One, who is still in the Department, is a good man; the other two were failures.

The President—concl'd.

As compared with Europeans from England?—As a rule, an European from England has more liberal views about work; I mean he does not care what he turns his hand to.

The Hon'ble Mr. Quinton.

Have you observed any difference between the two classes as regards their patience and influence with their Native subordinates?—I do not think so.

The President.

Do you consider that the duties of officials in this Department are extremely trying?—Yes.

Especially in the case of Natives?—In the case of both Natives and Europeans; more especially is this so at Sambhar, where, during the hot weather, we are exposed to the sun all day long. In the Internal Branch we are in tents, up to the rains; and it requires men of considerable physique to stand the amount of hard work and exposure which we undergo.

Have you seen any reason to doubt the honesty of the educated Natives employed in the Department?—Not at all.

Have you found them sufficiently careful of the interests of Government?—I think so.

Have you any reason to think that they take advantage of their position to levy illegal demands from the public?—No. I think that with education the Native improves also in official morality.

The President—contd.

In what did they fail?—They had beats in a Salt Range, and, as you have already heard, the work in a Salt Range is particularly hard. They were both of them North-West Provinces Mahomedans of good family, and it is only just to add that they were in about the most trying place they could have been posted to. To begin with, the physical features of the country are against a North-West man; the roads which they have to ride are little more than pathways and very steep. The salt outcrops which the Superintendents have to visit are scattered about, some of them in places almost inaccessible, and this part of the work is done at night by the Superintendents visiting the guard posts. So inaccessible are these places, that I have myself seen peons and petty officers accustomed to the work of the Department for years refuse either to go before or to follow a European officer who went to inspect the crop. One instance of this occurred to myself, and I had to go alone. Again, on account of their having to lie out at night in wait for smugglers, the work of these men was very trying, and the extremes of heat and cold to which they were exposed were much greater than Natives are accustomed to in the North-West.

Ordinarily speaking, do you think Natives might be employed as Superintendents in the Internal Branch?—If they could be found with the necessary qualifications for the work. You see in

The *President*—concl'd.

Behar we have to mix and deal with Planters, and not only with Planters, but with the other people of the country with whom our duties constantly bring us into contact or antagonism. You want therefore a man who can depend upon himself, and who will make his influence felt to a greater extent than the Native is ordinarily capable of doing.

If you could get Natives with the requisite qualifications, you would not object to employ them?—No.

But ordinarily you prefer Europeans?—Yes.

How do you think domiciled Europeans compare with non-domiciled Europeans?—I prefer the non-domiciled Europeans.

When you were a Tutor at Bishop Cotton's School, a large number of boys attended it?—Yes, from 120 to 130.

What is your opinion of them?—Some were very good, not the majority though. There are some who are now Executive Engineers in the Public Works Department and Assistant and District Superintendents in the Police.

Were those you speak of as very good in all respects as good as English boys of the same class?—I think so. The majority of the boys in the school were not what the same number of boys in an English School would be.

What opinion have you formed of Eurasians as Superintendents in the Salt Department?—I have found them hard-working men.

And, as a rule, as able to undergo hardships as Europeans?—I cannot say that: I do not think they are.

The Hon'ble Mr. *Quinton*.

Do you think that the boys at the Hill Schools have as much self-reliance as boys at schools in England?—No; they are not so self-dependent.

In practice do they do as much for themselves as boys in the same class of life in an English School would do: for instance, have they more servants to look after their requirements?—My experience is that even at a Hill School the boys will not do for themselves what boys will do at home.

The *President*.

What do you think about competition for appointments in this Department? Do you prefer pure nomination or competition?—I prefer a system of nomination followed by competition, as I think it would assist the Commissioner to secure a better class of men.

Are the men who have been hitherto appointed to the Department by nomination efficient generally speaking?—With the exception of two or three, whom I would not call a success, I think they are all good men. The failures I allude to were cases in which the Commissioner might well have been deceived by the social position of the men and the opportunities they had had for acquiring the necessary education; and in which, in my opinion, he was justified in assuming that they were fit men for the Department. I know in the Department of no instances in which patronage has been improperly exercised. I may mention that one of the men I allude to is no longer in the Department, he having failed to pass the departmental examination.

India.

Salt.

Section III.

J. Bolster, Esq.

Section IV.—Written Evidence.

India.

Salt.

Section IV.

A. O. Hume, Esq.

No. 1—Note by A. O. HUME, Esq., C.B., formerly Commissioner of Salt and Inland Customs and Secretary to the Government of India, Agricultural and Revenue Department, dated Simla, 18th June 1887.

In your letter of the 10th June, you kindly ask me to state my opinion as to—

I.—The constitution of the North of India Salt Revenue Department.

II.—The relative qualifications of the several classes which seek employment in the upper grades (*i.e.*, carrying a salary of Rs. 100 and upwards, and not being purely clerical).

III.—As to the conditions of service in respect of pay, furlough, and pension.

2. I do *not* suppose that you desire me to attempt complete and exhaustive replies to these very widely reaching questions, as this would involve the compilation of a bulky treatise, which I have really not the time to prepare, and which I can hardly believe that even your Commission (burthened with the care of examining into the arrangements of so many departments), would have the patience to peruse. I therefore propose to reply to your letter on the assumption that all that is required of me is to note such special points connected with the subjects covered by your questions as I consider more particularly deserve the attention of your Committee.

3. The first point on which I would insist is that the existing system of recruiting the upper grades of the Department by nominations, which, with every care, involves much risk, should be modified. At present the Commissioner, rarely an officer of much experience in the Department (the appointment not being good enough to keep at all able members of the Civil Service many years), appoints just whom he pleases. I would change this. I would allow him to nominate as many candidates as he pleased, but I would also allow all District Officers, Commissioners, and any other responsible officials the Government might empower on that behalf to nominate as many candidates as they saw fit. Nominating officers to be responsible to Government that the candidates put forward by them were youths or young men, not above 24 years* of age, of good character, and belonging to respectable, but not necessarily rich, or even (so called) *good* families. From all these candidates the required recruits to be selected first by a series of physical tests, and then by a competitive examination. As regards the former, the men would be carefully examined by a Committee of Medical Officers, and only those with good sight, sound in wind and limb approved. Those thus approved would have to show that they could ride horses and camels well, and could ride and walk considerable distances without much fatigue, and, in such other way as might be considered desirable, prove that they were active and hardy. Candidates thus far approved would then go into a competitive examination. This examination should embrace only three subjects—English, Urdu, Arithmetic,—but should be so far exhaustive as to prove that those who passed satisfactorily were good Arithmeticians and Accountants, and either thoroughly good English scholars and fair Urdu scholars, able to converse fluently and write easily and fairly well in this latter language; or thoroughly good Urdu scholars and fair English scholars, able to converse fluently and write easily and fairly well in English. Examinations might be held once in two or three years at Agra; the foremost men getting any vacancies open at the moment, and others who, though not foremost, yet fully came up to the required standard, being employed at once as extra officers† of the higher subordinate grades, to be absorbed as vacancies occurred, provided that they in the interim conducted themselves to their superiors' satisfaction.

Of course after entry into the Department they would have to pass the required examinations in Departmental Law and Practice, and in what, for want of a better word, I may term the Chemistry of Salines. I lay stress upon this. There ought not be a single officer in the Department ignorant of the rudiments of Chemistry and destitute of a complete practical knowledge of the Chemistry of the Saline substances with which he is brought in contact.

I think this change in the manner of recruiting the Department very essential, but I do not dwell further on it, or do more than sketch the merest details, because if my suggestions on the second point I have to deal with should meet the approval of Government, it will probably be at least three and perhaps four years before any new recruits are required.

4. This second point is the abolition of the Internal Branch of the Department, whereby at least 2 lakhs a year would be saved to Government, and the people, especially of Oudh and Behar, and parts of the North-Western Provinces, relieved of no trifling amount of annoyance, extortion, and harassment. The Internal Branch has done excellent service in its day, and was, when my friend, the late Mr. Vere, created it, a necessity; but time and circumstances have changed, and it has now become an anachronism. It was designed to prevent the illicit manufacture of edible salt from the salt-earths that abound in the Provinces above referred to, and the illicit separation of edible salt in the process of manufacturing other salts, such as saltpetre, *khari*, *sajji*, &c. Now when

* An exception to this rule being made in favor of men already in the Department in the subordinate grades whose age might be allowed to exceed 24 by one-fourth less than the number of years they had served in such grades.

† So as to not to interfere with the promotion in these grades.

the retail price of salt in many places where salt-earth abounded fell little below the rate of Rs. 10 a maund; and when the people, habituated to the use of this dirty, small-grained illicit earth-salt, liked it quite as well as if they did not prefer it to the purer, cleaner, duty-paying salts, there was an enormous temptation to do that which the Internal Branch was specially organized to prevent. But now that at the same places the retail rate of salt does not exceed Rs. 4 per maund; now that it pays the crude saltpetre-maker better to leave the salt in along with the products of his pans than to separate it; now that by a quarter of a century's disuse of this inferior and use of a superior article the people have become so particular that they will not even take the blue Sambhar (in old days the best salt that could be got), but insist on perfectly pure white salt, the Internal Branch is little more than an instrument for annoying the people at a yearly net cost of at least 2 lakhs of rupees.

India.
Salt.
Section IV.
A. O. Hume, Esq.

5. The officers of the Internal Branch are mostly very good men, and I am sure they do their best to keep their underpaid subordinates in good order; but these are perpetually on the move far away from them, and their real and most essential occupation is the extortion of money from the peasantry on pretence of preferred charges of illicit manufacture against them. Incidentally, of course, they visit all plains covered with saline efflorescences, and see that no one has anywhere been scraping up salt-earth and all crude saltpetre, *khari, saji, and russi* works, and see that no salt is separated thereat; but this is so to say an accident of their mission; professionally they are licensed extortioners. To me it seems perfectly scandalous that now that no imperious financial necessity demands its retention, this ill-omened band of plunderers should continue to be maintained at a cost of between 2 and 3 lakhs to that very people on whom it preys. I admit at once that on the abolition of the Department some scores of old starving widows will each make a few *lotas* full of filthy brine or a few pennyweights of dirty earth-like salt. In God's name let them make it. If 50,000 did so, even the clear saving to Government by the abolition of the branch would still considerably exceed 2 lakhs a year. For setting aside the fact that the amount consumed by these 50,000 would be very small (and no one will nowadays buy such stuff), those who would resort to the process would be only those so poor that they now go without any salt at all, except when charitable neighbours give it them; and so long as any one gave them better stuff, they would never fall back upon this last repulsive resort of the saltless. Besides are we to worry the whole rural population of some 25 millions of people because some few paupers may make a few handfuls of salt? I declare if the charge were to involve the loss of 2 lakhs a year, it would be a small price to pay for the great and wide-spread relief we should afford the people; and when, instead of this, the change will effect, instead of a loss, a saving to fully this extent, I confess I am astonished to find that it still remains to be made.

In all these fiscal arrangements, too, the maxim *de minimis non curat lex* should be borne in mind. I can give a practical illustration of this to the point. When I took charge of the Department in (I think) 1867, the Internal Branch was worked with a vigour and thoroughness worthy of a better cause. Every man in whose possession or on whose premises or works a grain of earth-salt was found was prosecuted. At this distance of time I cannot be sure of figures. But I believe that at that time yearly close on 3,000 persons were prosecuted in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. It seemed to me monstrous, the more so that I believed half the cases to be false. A body of Customs peons, with a policeman, suddenly surrounded a man's house or work; there was nothing to prevent one peon slipping in a little *potli* containing half a tola of earth-salt into any crevice, or into any heap of ashes, and another finding it there a few minutes later. I applied to Government for permission not to prosecute where less than a seer of salt was found in one place. This being sanctioned, the prosecutions fell (I write from memory) to less than 1,000 during the second year. But the revenue never suffered in the slightest. It is incredible, but it is a fact that after I had left the Department the old system was reverted to, not from design, but owing to sheer carelessness; and it is only comparatively recently that the one seer limit has been again resorted to. Nowadays, under the changed condition of affairs, the abolition of the Department would be no bolder step than, and might be as safely taken as in 1868, the abolition of all prosecutions for seizures under one seer in weight. And I may add that, vehemently opposed to the measure as many of my officers were at the outset, there was not a single officer of any experience who did not concur after three years' trial of it that the revenue had not suffered, and that the people had benefitted greatly; and the same may now be confidently predicted of the abolition of the branch.

6. Now in abolishing the branch the first step will be to get rid of most of the subordinates; the best amongst them can be drafted to fill vacancies as they occur in other branches of the Department, or even transferred to these and retained there for a year or two as extras until absorbed; and the rest, the inferior majority, must be dispensed with on pension or gratuity, as the case may be. Then the superior officers acting under the Collectors' or Deputy Commissioners' instructions and guidance must see that recognizances are entered into by the zemindars of all places where there are extensive saline efflorescences or crude works to the effect that they will see that salt is not made or separated thereat. Tell the people that the Salt Department is going to be done away with, and they will be only too glad to do anything reasonable to facilitate matters. In all such villages too the chowkidars must be also made responsible for reporting any overt breach of the law.

Then the officers must prepare a list (Tahsildar) for each district of places that might be most readily utilized for manufacturing salt for the District Officers, and these would instruct each Tahsildar accordingly to keep an eye on these. Under existing conditions practically no supervision would be

India.
Salt.

Section III.

A. O. Howe, Esq.

required; but if the duty on salt were at any time raised, a little more vigilance might be required, and each collectorate should have records showing where that special vigilance should be directed.

For a limited period the Superintendent or Inspector (or whatever the head officer of each Circle is now called, there are some 14 of them) may be retained with a small personal staff, just to make sure that the new arrangements are working satisfactorily; but they should be absorbed as vacancies occur in the Department elsewhere, and in the course of two or three years the Internal Branch should have disappeared. At that time such officers as had not been absorbed should, if thoroughly good men, be posted as extra officers to Sambhar and other places, where there is always work for such, until such time as they were absorbed.

7. The third point in regard to the constitution of the Department to which I would draw attention is the feasibility of abolishing the Commissionership. The Commissioner draws Rs. 2,500, plus Rs. 250 travelling allowance, and I believe something besides. If this salary would ensure keeping the same officer, a 1st class Covenanted Civilian, for say not less than 5 years, there would be something to say in its favor. But it does not and cannot ensure this, and under these circumstances this high salary is a pure waste of money. The abolition of the Internal Branch will reduce considerably the work of the Superior Controlling Officers of the Department. But still the work of supervision will be more than one single officer can undertake. Give up the idea of having a 1st class Covenanted Civilian, who really now is not required for the Department, and take instead a 1st class Uncovenanted man thoroughly trained in all the minutiae of work. Instead of the Commissioner on Rs. 2,750 a month have a senior Deputy Commissioner on Rs. 1,200 rising to Rs. 1,500 a month, and the same travelling allowance that the present Deputy Commissioner gets. I undertake to say that not only will there be an average saving of some Rs. 15,000 a year more or less, but that in a series of years the work will be better done than it now is with a constant change in the head of the Department.

8. These are the chief points connected with the constitution of the Department to which attention appears necessary. As to the relative qualifications of the several classes which seek employment in the upper grades, there can be no doubt that of those who seek this employment, the best men that we get all round are pure Europeans. But this is not because there are not equally good Eurasians and Natives to be found, but because, with rare exceptions, the equally good men of these classes can find other, and to them more congenial, career. For the first 15 to 20 years of a Customs Officer's service, his life is one of constant bodily exertion and exposure during even the worst and hottest period of the year, and the pay during this period is not better than is to be obtained in the Revenue, Police, Judicial, and even merely Clerical lines. There are many fine young men, pure Europeans, to whom at the outset of their career this out-door life of constant bodily exertion, with plenty of opportunities for sport, is infinitely preferable to one involving in-door desk work, even though this latter may carry a somewhat larger stipend. But this is less often the case with Eurasians, and scarcely ever so with Natives. That there are Natives fully competent for the work, men like Khan Nizam-ud-din Khan (of the old Sirsa Line Division) and ~~the Babu~~ ~~forget~~ his name now), who was for many years in supreme charge of the Sultanpur Works sufficiently prove. But Natives of the required calibre have seldom hitherto applied for service in the Department; and though we have had some very good Eurasians, as a rule the Eurasians who apply are not first class. On the other hand, of the young pure Europeans, many of the very smartest lads seek employment in the Customs, and men like Messrs. Adams, Whitten, Ashton, and Lyon would have made names for themselves, and taken high places in any branch of the Service, Covenanted or Uncovenanted, Civil or Military. But, as will have been observed, I do not consider that the admissions to the Department should be restricted to any class or race. It is an Imperial Department, and therefore no Provincial rule in regard to candidates is required, and the only restriction in their case needful is that they should be domiciled in India. I do not myself doubt that as time runs on even the best classes amongst the Eurasians and Natives will compete, and compete with a fair measure of success; for service in this branch, and the rules for admission into the Service, should leave the door as widely open for them as for the pure Europeans, who hitherto have undoubtedly been, as a body, our best officers, and this because the nature of the life involved being congenial to many young Englishmen, to much fewer Eurasians, and to very few Natives, many of the smartest Europeans, much fewer of the smartest Eurasians, and scarcely any of the smartest Natives seek employment in the Department.

9. In regard to pension and furlough, my view is that the rules in regard to these should be identical for the superior grades of all branches of service, Covenanted and Uncovenanted; and whatever rules are finally accepted as regards the Revenue, Judicial, Public Works, Forest, and Police Departments might properly be accepted for the Northern India Salt Revenue Department. As regards pay, I consider that the pay now drawn in the several grades is as near perfection as possible. It has been arrived at after a long series of gradual modifications as the result of protracted experience, and I have been very much disturbed to hear that, under the orders of the Finance Committee, a reduction in the present initial salary of the superior grades is to be made. If I am correctly informed on this point, all I can say is that this proposed reduction will be an error of the greatest magnitude. You cannot nowadays get the class of Europeans, and *a fortiori* not the class of either Eurasians or Natives, at lower initial rates than now obtain; and a Commission that to the serious detriment of the Department thus effects a petty saving of Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000 a year, while it leaves untouched the 2½ lakhs that can be saved without loss to the State, and to the great comfort of the people by the abolition of the Internal Branch and the Commissionership, furnishes a truly striking example of that straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, so sadly characteristic of Indian official arrangements.

No. 2—Further Memorandum by A. O. HUME, Esq., c. B.,—dated 22nd September 1887.

The Departmental Member says: "This establishment (the Internal Branch), of which the net cost is only about Rs. 1,40,000, and not 2 lakhs as stated by Mr. Hume," &c. The entire cost of the Department at present is, I believe, in round figures Rs. 2,40,000; the receipts say (they vary slightly from year to year) Rs. 1,40,000. So that in the sense in which the Departmental Member uses the word "net," the net cost of the Department is Rs. 1,00,000, and not Rs. 1,40,000 as stated by him. But at least Rs. 1,30,000 of the receipts would come in just as readily if the Department were abolished, so that the net cost to the country of the Department is really Rs. 2,30,000; or even if from that we deduct Rs. 20,000 for stationery, a few extra Muharrirs to keep up the papers, and other incidental expenses to be incurred by the Revenue Department and some other items to be referred to later, it will be found that my statement that the net cost of the Department exceeds 2 lakhs is precisely correct.

Let me explain further that the receipts of the Department at present are of two kinds—first, duty on edible salt eliminated in the manufacture of refined saltpetre, &c.; and, second, of fees on the issue of licenses to manufacture or refine in particular localities saltpetre, khari, &c. The Salt duty may be in round figures Rs. 90,000; the license fees amount to about Rs. 50,000. Now the duty on salt may just as well be realized by the Tahsildars of the tahsil in which the refineries exist (and it is only at these, and they are comparatively few in number, that salt is nowadays eliminated and duty paid thereon) as by the Internal Branch. The matter is of extreme simplicity. The duty would be levied by a composition fixed yearly for each refinery. With reference to the extent of its operations, we know the crude works which supply each refinery; we know, and can further test, whenever necessary, the percentage of edible salt that the produce of these crude works contain; we know the extent to which the refiners eliminate this salt; we know the number of hundreds of maunds of refined saltpetre that each refinery can and does turn out; and we therefore know how much edible salt they must and will have turned out in the preparation of this quantity of refined saltpetre. No doubt under this system one refinery will pay Rs. 950 when, if mathematical accuracy were possible, they ought perhaps to have paid Rs. 1,020, or again perhaps only Rs. 900. But I maintain that the results arrived at will be actually nearer the truth than those obtained under the present system under which the refiners "dodge" the Government in a great variety of ways, and the refineries and the refining industry would be free from the present necessarily vexatious interference of the subordinates of the Salt Department.

Let it be understood that the above is no theory; it is a fact perfectly known to every real expert in the Department; and the Salt duty could be collected without the smallest trouble under this composition system by the Tahsildars at the sole cost of a little stationery; and in tahsils where refineries are very numerous, an extra Muharrir on Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 per mensem to keep the accounts.

As for the license fees, these licenses can be as well issued and the fees realized by the Peshkar or Kanungo or any other of the Tahsildar's subordinates under his general supervision as by the Internal Department. It must be borne in mind, for this is part of the good work done in the past by the Department, that every acre of ground where saline substances effloresce or can be washed to a workable amount (under Native processes) out of the soil has been examined, and every spot where those saline substances contain a sufficient percentage of chloride of sodium to render the temptation to make edible salt considerable is duly entered in the register of proscribed localities. Moreover, there are certain individuals born with a craze for illicit manufacture (just as at home some men seem born smugglers or poachers); these used to be numerous; they are now comparatively few in number; but such as they are, they are duly entered in the register of proscribed persons. As I mentioned in my first letter, all the necessary books and papers referring to dangerous tracts requiring to be occasionally inspected, the registers of proscribed localities and proscribed persons would be made over to the Tahsildars, with full explanations by the Salt Officers before these finally withdrew, and thereafter the licenses could be as well issued and the fees as readily realized at the tahsils (an extra Muharrir being allowed where necessary) as under the existing system.

Let there, therefore, be no mistake about this matter. With all possible deductions (some of which have yet to be referred to) the net saving to Government by the abolition of the Internal Department will exceed 2 lakhs of rupees.

Next, the Departmental Member says that the Internal Branch "is the agency by which (i) the illicit manufacture of salt in the Punjab, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and Behar is suppressed.

Now this is absolutely wrong. In the first place, we have never even pretended to suppress illicit manufacture in the Punjab. But it is the agency by which this is supposed to be suppressed in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and Behar. But, as a matter of fact, the absence of illicit manufacture (and there is very little of it nowadays) is due to no suppressing powers of the Department, but to the fact that the inducement to illicit manufacture has, as explained in my former letter, almost disappeared; and if the truth must be told, the Department never could suppress this manufacture were those inducements to become strong—no, not if its cost were raised to 10 lakhs.

Just take the facts. I have got hold of the published departmental lists, and I see that at the outside the Department cannot on its present footing turn out more than 250 *gusht* parties. Now there are say 45,000 works scattered over 1,20,000 square miles of country. There are not above 250 working days in the year, for all these works are closed throughout the rains and for some little time afterwards; so 250 parties in 250 days have to prevent illicit manufacture at 45,000 different localities spread over 1,20,000 square miles of country. Now a *gusht* party cannot, as a rule, effectively deal with more than one work per diem. It is not so much the time occupied in surrounding

India.

Salt.

Section IV.

A. O. Hume, Esq.

India.

Salt.

Section IV.

A. O. Hume, Esq.

the premises, in getting the assistance of the Police (which is obligatory), and in the search, though this is considerable, as that the moment a *gusht* party appears at one work, the fact is made known with incredible rapidity at every work within a radius of 5 miles, and all traces of illicit manufacture removed. So it follows that about half the works can be properly examined once, and the other half about twice in 250 days. Can any one be so foolish as to suppose that this kind and extent of supervision would suppress illicit manufacture if any really serious temptation to practise this existed? It acts as a slight deterrent; it has done excellent work in organizing the khari works, in discovering all dangerous localities, and in other ways; but it never did, and never could, suppress illicit manufacture, and never will do this—no, not if it were quadrupled in strength—were the inducements to illicit manufacture to become strong.

Then the Departmental Member goes on to say that this Department is “the agency by which (2) the frontiers of the Sirsa, Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Muttra, Etawah, Jalaun, Jhansi, and Lalitpur Districts have been patrolled to keep out salt which has not paid duty.” Now, in the first place, say this patrolling is necessary; the establishment required for this work will not, and does not, cost Rs. 5,000 a year; and say we kept it, this is no argument for retaining the rest of the Department costing Rs. 2,35,000 per annum. But, as a matter of fact, when on abolishing the line I proposed this patrolling as a needful precaution at the first start on the new system, I never contemplated its permanent retention; and if the Sub-Committee will call for a return, I believe that they will find that in all these years nothing absolutely has ever resulted of all this patrolling, though possibly in just two districts, the Agra and Muttra, where the Bhurtpur and British villages are much interlaced, there may (I think I have heard this) have been a few petty seizures, which for all practical purposes might as well never have been made.

Then we are told that the Department “is the agency by which (3) yearly inquiries are made in the Rajputana and the Central India States to ensure the observance of the Treaty engagements.” Well, these inquiries can be made quite as well by one smart active officer, with three or four peons, having his head-quarters at Sambhur, as by the Internal Branch. At the very outside this officer would not with his small establishment cost more than Rs. 5,000. This work has to be done, and this item constitutes part of the Rs. 20,000 which I have already deducted from the gross saving.

Lastly, we learn that this Department “is the agency by which (4) the refinement and eduction of salt in 532 saltpetre refineries and the processes in 43,549 crude saltpetre and sulphate and carbonate of soda manufactories have been supervised and regulated, and that in fact the expenditure on the Internal Branch of Rs. 1,40,000 constituted an insurance charge on a revenue of about Rs. 1,55,00,000.”

Now, as to the first portion of this extract, I have already shown how very trifling is the supervision and regulation that the Department can exercise; and when we add to this, in round numbers, 45,000 existing works at least double that number of localities in which salt could be educed, and bear in mind that, whether in works or out of them, no special plant is required (a kurpi, a lotah of water, and the fire a man cooks his dinner with will suffice in most places), and that the manufacture is of such a nature that all traces of it can be obliterated in 10 minutes, and remember that the 1,50,000 odd spots in which this illicit manufacture could go on are spread over 120,000 square miles of country, we shall begin to realize how utterly illusory are the claims put forward on behalf of this Department, so far as suppression and supervision are concerned.

As for the “insurance” matter, a happy phrase invented by my poor friend Vere, and thereafter clung to by the Department as a conclusive reply to all cavillers, like many other happy phrases, it is more neat and suggestive than true, and certainly whatever truth it embodied when it had its birth, it is now a fiction *pur et simple*. So far as any real and substantial protection of the Salt revenue nowadays is concerned, the Internal Department is, despite all the hard work bestowed upon it by its many able officers, a mere name.

I have shown sufficiently that there is no use whatsoever in retaining the Department, but the Department, remember, further seeks to traverse my contention that there are the very strongest reasons for abolishing it. He admits that 20 years ago, when he was an Assistant Magistrate (*i.e.*, when he was a little nearer the people a *chota Sahib*, who had some chance of hearing a faint murmur of what was going on), things were as I say; “but he asserts from his experience as a District and Settlement Officer that for a long time the Department has been so administered that there is no oppression and no extortion from the people.” I, *per contra*, reassert that every march of every *gusht* party is marked by petty extortion and oppression; and as there are some 240 of these, and they are on the move every day for say 250 days in the year, the aggregate of the annoyance to which the people are subjected is very great.

Who is the Committee to believe? I might fairly argue that it is unwise for any District Officer, who lives on serene heights far above the people, to place his experiences in opposition to mine. I who live to a greater extent than perhaps any other Englishman amongst the people—I who have ever brought before my eyes that other side of the shield that no official ever sees, and that few even dream of—I might fairly plead that as a District Officer successive Governments were kind enough to pick me out as an exceptionally good District Officer, and peculiarly well informed as to what was going on in his District, and that, despite this, it was not till long after I had ceased to be a District Officer—not till I had altogether left the service, and entirely broken of all relations with the official world—that I began to learn the truth as to what goes on amongst the people. Certainly I had opportunities such as few District Officers nowadays enjoy. I was ten years in the same district. I was with

the people all through the mutiny, and protected them against the hasty vengeance of some of my justly angry fellow countrymen. I did my best to know everything that went on in my district, and lived on terms of intimacy with hundreds of respectable Natives in the district that now many officers would consider quite *infra dig*. Nay, I was quite persuaded that, to use the Native phrase, no dog could bark within my jurisdiction without my hearing of it. But this was all a delusion. As I have come to learn since I have ceased to be an official and a *burra Sahib*, I heard no dog bark that did not mean me to hear him of the vast mass of what went on below the surface. I remained, despite my utmost efforts, despite my apparent exceptional advantages, profoundly ignorant. There are doubtless far abler men amongst the Magistracy now than I ever was, but they have neither enjoyed the advantages that I enjoyed, nor do any of them live in as close contact with the people as I did; but I venture to say that there is not one of them who, had he then occupied the same unofficial position I do, would not have known ten times as much of what was really going on in my district as I did in those days as District Officer. It is not too much to say that at the present day there is no body of men who know less of what the people really think, feel, and suffer than the District Officers, and this primarily at any rate simply because they *are* the District Officers—the *burra Sahibs* of the jurisdictions. But I would not press this argument further. I would rather ask the Committee to consider for themselves what speciality there is in the very lowly paid subordinates of the Customs Department that renders them an exception to the universal rule. North or south, east or west, amongst Christians, Hindus, or Mahomedans in Europe or in Asia are there any set of uneducated, ill paid officials who do not, as a body, extort and oppress to the full extent of their opportunities? Here as any one who understands the independent action of the *gusht* parties, with scarcely one-fourth of which any really well paid official can ever be, well knows the opportunities are from the nature of the case almost innumerable. That they do every where extort and oppress; that they are to the people a swarm of mosquitoes, that, if unable to do serious injury, are yet a source of the greatest annoyance and irritation, I know; but setting this knowledge aside, as an Irishman would say, “Why wouldn’t they extort and oppress” having the innumerable opportunities they have; are they better paid, better disciplined, better educated, more strongly officered, more sharply looked after than the Police; and are not oppression and extortion the very breath of the nostrils of the Police?—and gentlemen on the strength of their experience as District Officers want the Committee to believe that this inferior establishment—for inferior it is to the Police—is immaculate; they do not oppress the people; they don’t extort from any one. If the Committee can believe this, their faith is large. Of course the Police is a necessary evil, and this all over the world; but, like the poor, they must be ever with us. But because we cannot get rid of this swarm of hornets, is it any reason why we should continue to foster this other swarm of mosquitoes by whose abolition Government would actually save 2 lakhs of rupees a year?

But the Departmental Member urges that if the Department were abolished illicit manufacture would revive. I have already explained that it is to changed conditions, and not to the exertions of the Department that the disappearance of illicit manufacture is due; and, moreover, I have shown that if the people wanted to manufacture illicit salt, they would do it for all our little 240 or 250 *gusht* parties could do in an area of 120,000 square miles, so this plea for the preservation of the Department need not trouble us. It is of little use now, because its services are not required; but were those services required, then, even if multiplied by four, it would be quite incapable of effectually rendering those services.

Nor do I think that the probability of any such material enhancement in the duty rate as should revitalize the all but defunct illicit manufacture should enter into our calculations; for if there is one thing more certain than another, it is that no Government could, except very temporarily, make such an enhancement. As it is, the complaints about the Salt tax are loud and deep throughout the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, and there is just one point on which the entire Liberal Party at home—Unionists and Separatists—are agreed, and that is, that the Salt tax shall not be raised. I believe that they are wrong, but it is absolutely certain that no English Government will be found that will support any material, permanent or otherwise, than very temporary enhancement of the existing Salt duty.

To return. “Combatting Mr. Hume’s argument that the evolution of salt by manufacturers of other saline products is no longer profitable,” the Departmental Member “mentions that saltpetre refiners now pay the full duty on about 60,000 maunds of salt evolved in the manufacture of saltpetre, and that in some parts of the country this kind of salt is much liked.” As to the quantity of salt, possibly there is some mistake, and that 45,000 maunds would be nearer the mark. But 60,000 or 45,000? What I said was that it was no longer profitable for the crude workers to make salt. As to the refiners, under 600 in number, they too would be only too glad not to have this salt to get rid of; but as they can only sell decently pure saltpetre, they must separate the salt; and naturally, having been compelled to get it out, they do their best to sell it. But as to its being liked, if the Departmental Member will kindly compare the prices at which the refiners are glad to sell it with those of imported salts selling all around, he will be able more correctly to gauge the “liking” the public has for it.

On my proposal to substitute an inexpensive head of the Department for a costly one, I lay less stress, as the saving involved would not exceed Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 15,000 a year; but I am compelled to say that the arguments put forward against the change appear to me to be of the most unsatisfactory nature. We are told that it is “most important that there should be at the head of the Department an officer who is familiar with the general administration, and possesses the knowledge of, and sympathy with, the people, which is best obtained by training as a District Officer.” It is safe to say that all the best Uncovenanted men in the Salt Department have more real knowledge of, and

India.

Salt.

Section IV.

A. O. Hume, Esq.

India.

Salt.

Section IV.

A. O. Hume, Esq.,

sympathy with, the people than nine-tenths of the present body of District Officers. It is no reproach to these latter; they cannot live amongst and on, or nearly on, a level with the people, as all our young Salt Officers necessarily do for the first 10 or 15 years' of their service. As a body, there is no branch of the Government service in which the men are so utterly separated off from the people by want of all real knowledge of these latter and by entire absence of sympathy for them as in the present Covenanted Civil Service. As for familiarity with the general administration, no man rises to be near the top of the Assistant Commissioners without acquiring quite as much familiarity with the general administration as is requisite for the conduct of the Northern India Salt Revenue Department. *En passant*, too, let me say that after the Internal Department, which alone brings them specially in contact with the people, is abolished, I fail to see wherein a Commissioner of Customs could officially give much evidence of that knowledge of, and sympathy for, the people on which such stress is laid.

But when we are told that "it is chiefly because the officers at the head of the Department have for many years had such training and such experience that they have been able to introduce reforms which have freed the people from the old extortion and oppression to which Mr. Hume refers," common justice demands that I should tell the truth, and assert that every single real reform, whether in procedure or expenditure, that has taken place in the Department during the last 30 years has been initiated by one or other of the Uncovenanted men of the service, the highest praise claimable by any Commissioner being that he had the sense to accept and act upon wise advice tendered by men who knew far more about the subject than himself.

It is no doubt true that the Commissioner now has power both to reduce and dismiss highly paid European Officers on his own responsibility. But it is quite unconstitutional, in my opinion, that any officer of the rank of a Commissioner of Customs should be vested with such absolute power, and it should certainly be withdrawn whether the head of the Department is a Covenanted or Uncovenanted man.

Lastly, an attempt is made to traverse my assertion that the Commissionership does not present such attractions as to induce a 1st class Covenanted Civilian to hold it for any time by the somewhat reckless assertion that "from 1867, when Mr. Hume assumed charge, till 1887, there have been only four Commissioners.

Now, as a matter of fact, instead of four there have been seven, *viz.*, Hume, Batten, Halsey, Auckland Colvin, Elliot Colvin, Carey, and Patterson; and these tenures broken, I having been Home Secretary as well as Commissioner of Customs for 3 months; Halsey's tenure having been twice broken; Carey's tenure once, so that really there have been ten instead of four incumbencies in the 20 years. But this is beside the question, because I specially said 1st class Civilians, and there have never from its first beginning been more than two 1st class Civilians in the Commissionership, *viz.*, Sir G. Campbell and Sir Auckland Colvin, neither of whom could be induced to retain it many months; and from both of whom I have had the assurance personally that nothing would have induced them to retain permanently such a ("carpet bagging," as Sir A. Colvin called it) post.

All the rest of the Commissioners have been second rate men—some good, some indifferent: these were the only two first rate men who ever held the post, and from their own lips I have learnt the fact I asserted. As for second rate Covenanted Civilians, you may get a certain number of just as good men in all branches of the Uncovenanted Service.

But I have already written, I feel, at what would be undue length were not more than 2 lakhs of rupees a year of public money at stake, and were it not my duty to show clearly my reasons for believing that the Committee cannot safely accept the views of the Departmental Member as disposing conclusively of the rather important financial reform that I have advocated, and I shall therefore close this letter without further comment.