DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS TRADE.

Report on the Conditions and Prospects of British Trade in INDIA

1926-27.

By THOMAS M, AINSCOUGH, C.B.E., M.Com., F.R.G.S.

His Majesty's Senior Trade Commissioner in India and Ceylon.



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DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS TRADE.

COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION ABROAD.

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

1. In the Empire.

The Trade Commissioner and Imperial Trade Correspondent Services.

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

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

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

The Department is represented in India by Mr. T. Ainscough, O.B.E., H.M. Senior Trade Commissioner; Mr. W. D. Montgomery Clarke, H.M. Trade Commissioner, Calcutta; and Major R. W. Clarke, H.M. Trade Commissioner, Bombay.

2. In Foreign Countries.

(a) The Commercial Diplomatic Service attached to the British Diplomatic Missions.

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

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

(b) The British Consular Service.

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

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

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

NOTE.

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

COVERING DESPATCH.

To the Right Honourable Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, K.B.E., M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

Office of H.M. Senior Trade Commissioner in India.

Fairlie House, Fairlie Place,

Calcutta.

August 1st, 1927.

SIR.

I have the honour to forward for your information a report on the conditions and prospects of British trade in India during the Indian fiscal year 1926-27.

This is the first of the annual reports written since the war in which is has been possible to strike a definitely optimistic note with regard to the import trade of this vast market. At the same time, many of the important and far-reaching changes which are taking place tend to weaken the British position in India and call for special efforts and revised methods and organisation in order to meet them. As in previous reports, it has been my aim not merely to state facts and tendencies, but, wherever possible, to comment on them and to advance practical and carefully considered suggestions.

I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Officials of the Commerce, Industries and Finance Departments of the Government of India for their unfailing courtesy and assistance during the year. Special thanks are due to the Director-General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, the Chief Controller and staff of the Indian Stores Department and to the Collectors of Customs for their help and co-operation which have always been so willingly rendered. I would also like to record my appreciation of the numerous memoranda which have been contributed by Engineers and other Officers in charge of important works throughout the country and which have, in many cases, been incorporated with due acknowledgments in the report.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THOMAS M. AINSCOUGH, H.M. Senior Trade Commissioner in India.

PREFATORY TABLES.

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

I.—TRADE DISTRIBUTION: PRINCIPAL ARTICLES.

Table showing Variations in the Shares of the Principal Articles in the Import and Export Trade of British India during the last three years, as compared with averages of the pre-War and War periods.

IMPORTS (in percentages).

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

: · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			1914-19. Average.		1925–26.	1926-27
Cotton manufactures		36	35	33	29	28
Iron and steel	. ,	7 .	6	8	8	7
Machinery		4	4	, 6	7	6
Sugar		9	- 10	8	7	8
Railway plant			5	2	2	1
Hardware		2.	2	3	2	2
Mineral oil		3	3	4	4	4
Silk		. 3	2	2	1	2
Other articles		32	33	34	40	42

EXPORTS (in percentages),

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

		191419. Average.		1925–26.	1926–27.
Jute, raw and manufac- tures	19	25	21	26	26
tures	15.	16	27	28 .	23
Food-grains	21	17	17	13	13
Seeds	11	. 6	9	8	6
Tea	6	8	9	7	9
Hides and skins	7	8	4	2	2
Other articles	21	20	13	16	21

II.—TRADE DISTRIBUTION: PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES.

Table showing Variations in the Share of the Principal Countries in the Import and Export Trade of British India during the Last three years, as compared with Averages of the pre-War and War periods.

IMPORTS (in percentages).

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

		1914–19. Average.		1925–26.	1926-27.
United Kingdom Other parts of the British	63 .	56	54	51	· 48
Empire		9	8	8	7
United States of America	3	7	6	7	8
Japan	2	10	7	. 8	7
Java	6	8	6	6	6
Germany	6	1	6	6	7
Other foreign countries	13	9	13	14	17

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

EXPORTS* (in percentages).

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

		1914–19. Average.		1925–26.	1926–27.
United Kingdom Other parts of the British	25	31	26	21	21
Empire	16	21	13	14	17
United States of America	. 8	12	9	10	11
Japan	8	11	14	15	13
France	7	4	5	6	4
Germany	10	ľ	7	7	7
Other foreign countries	26	20	26	27	27

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

^{*}Including re-exports.

	COM	MERCI	AL SU	JMMA:	RY.			
Area—British India Native States	***	***	***	444	***	Ī,	mile 094,3 711,0	300
1	otaI	*		***		1,	805,3	332
Population Census of	1921—	-		1 + 1 %				• .
British India Native States	. * *	•••	***	***	*** ****		003, 939,	
	Cotal		***			318	942,	480
Monetary unit(s)— 3 pie=1 pice 4 pice=1 ann 16 annas=1 r 1 lakh=Rs.1 1 crore=100	na. upee. ,00,000	} e.g., } 67	Rs.1,4 ,200 ru	45,67,20 pees.	00=1	crore,	45	lakhs,
Rate of Exchange (pre	e-war ar	id curr	ent ave	rage qu	otation	s) `		
Pre-war Current. 30.6	3. 27		•••	***	;··	***	1s. 1s.	4d. 6d.
Index Numbers - July	y, 1914=	=100.	¬:	. •				
Wholesale prices Retail prices Cost of living	(food), I	Bomba ean), E	y Sombay	, 7	. Aj	pril, 19 pril, 19 in., 19 ay, 19	27 - 27 <i>-</i>	167. 156.

Principal weights and measures (other than ordinary metric or British) with British equivalents.

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

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

Principal weights and measures in use in the export trade.

Prince	pal weights an	d measu	res in	use in	the expo	rt trade	•		
•	* * ;		e of ur neral.	rit.		Bri	tish Im	perial Va	lue.
	Tola		155	***		***	180 g	rains troy	7.
	Seer (Standa	rd or Ra	ailwav	or Ind	ia)	***	2.057		
٠.	Seer (Factor			***	,	554		13-5 oz.	
	Viss	/		***		***	3.60		
	Maund (Sta	ndard (or 40		Railwa		0 00		
	Indian		- 10			., 01	- 82 The	. 4 oz. 9	dr
	Maund (Fact			***		711		i. 10 oz.	
	•			•••					
	OTE.—For loca or India," by (orma-
Total .	Imports—1st I	April, 19	926, to	31st N	Iarch, 1	927.		. •	
		.	٠.		•	•		Rs.	
٠.,	Merchandise				•••		2,31,4	0,66,344	
	Government	Stores	***	***	•••	***	9,5	9,76,127	
**	Treasure		***	***	•••	***	41,5	3,20,573	
	• •				-				
		Total	• • •	•••	•••	***	2,82,	53,63,044	. *
	Principal In machinery	nports.—	Cotto	on ma	nufactu	res, su	gar, in	on and	steel,
	Imports of n	nerchano	lise fr	om Un	ited	•		Rs.	-
	•				King	dom	1,10,5	8,12,651	
				Un	ited St	ates	_	-	
	**		•	. 0	f Ameri	ica	18,3	1,57,720	
	15			Ger	many	***	16,9	1,55,959	
	12	5.7		Tar	oan'			8,95,332	
•	27		23	Jav	7a.	***		3,08,008	
Total	Exports.—(Inc. Rs. 301,44,59	dian Me 9,772.	rchan	dise) 1	st April	, 1926,	to 31s	t March,	1927,
	Principal Ex	•	Cotto	n inte	grain ·	Dirlse t	2 2		
	Exports of I						·	Rs.	
	Exports of 1	·	· ·		Kingd		63 77	40,714	
						OIII		87,961	
	34	25	. **	IInit	Japan ed State	o of	₹1,00 ,	01,201	
	35	22	##	· ·	Ame		93 40	11,084	
				-	German			97,783	
	33				~ V4 111(E)	-, ***	ACC PACE	v:,:\U	
Railw	ay mileage.—3				-				
* .	Railways ow	ned by t	the Sta	ate		***	***	27,429	
	Other railwa		***	***	4.1 T	***	, E T 4	11,150	
	Total ro	ute mile	age or	pened f	or traffi	С	***	38,579	

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