

**INDIAN TARIFF BOARD**

---

**EVIDENCE**

Recorded during enquiry regarding the

**GRANT OF PROTECTION**

TO THE

**COAL INDUSTRY**



CALCUTTA : GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CENTRAL PUBLICATION BRANCH  
1926

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I. Resolution of the Government of India, Department of Commerce, No. 47-T. (49), dated the 30th September 1925 . . . . .	1
II. Press Communiqués issued by the Tariff Board—	
(1) on the 13th October 1925 . . . . .	2
(2) on the 6th November 1925 . . . . .	2
III. Questionnaires issued by the Tariff Board—	
A.—Questionnaire . . . . .	4
B.—Supplementary questionnaires—	
(1) For the North Western Railway . . . . .	11
(2) For the Great Indian Peninsula Railway . . . . .	11
(3) For the Bombay Millowners' Association . . . . .	12
(4) For the Karachi Chamber of Commerce . . . . .	12
(5) For Messrs. Tata Sons, Limited . . . . .	13
(6) For Bombay Industrial firms other than textile mills . . . . .	13
IV. 1. Letter to the Collectors of Customs, Bombay, Karachi, Madras, and Rangoon, dated the 15th October 1925 . . . . .	15
2. Correspondence with the Government of India in the Depart- ment of Commerce . . . . .	17
V. Evidence tendered by—	
1. Indian Mining Federation, Calcutta—	
A.—Written . . . . .	19
B.—Oral, dated 26th November 1925 . . . . .	47
Oral, dated 28th November 1925 . . . . .	94
2. Indian Mining Association, Calcutta—	
A.—Written . . . . .	121
B.—Oral . . . . .	150
3. Collector of Customs, Rangoon—	
Written . . . . .	191
4. Collector of Customs, Bombay—	
Written . . . . .	192
5. Collector of Customs, Karachi—	
Written . . . . .	194
6. Collector of Customs, Madras—	
Written . . . . .	195
7. Chief Mining Engineer, Railway Board—	
Written . . . . .	196
8. Chief Inspector of Mines in India—	
Written . . . . .	197
9. Messrs. Tata Sons, Limited—	
Written . . . . .	198
10. The Ahmedabad Millowners' Association—	
Written . . . . .	200

	PAGE.
V. Evidence tendered by— <i>contd.</i>	
11. The Millowners' Association, Bombay—	
Written . . . . .	201
12. Chamber of Commerce, Bombay—	
Written . . . . .	207
13. Upper India Chamber of Commerce, Cawnpore—	
Written . . . . .	209
14. Burma Chamber of Commerce—	
Written . . . . .	210
15. The Chamber of Commerce, Madras—	
Written . . . . .	211
16. The Karachi Chamber of Commerce—	
Written . . . . .	212
17. The Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay—	
Written . . . . .	214
18. Indian Colliery Employees' Association—	
Written . . . . .	217
19. North Western Railway—	
Written . . . . .	218
20. Great Indian Peninsula Railway—	
Written . . . . .	220
21. Major F. Cook—	
Written . . . . .	225
22. Messrs. Nuservanji Ruttonji Nazir and Sons—	
Written . . . . .	226
23. Messrs. Choonilal Harilal and Company—	
Written . . . . .	227
24. Messrs. Eduljee Dinshaw—	
Written . . . . .	228

**APPENDIX A.\***

*Statement showing total amount of coal traffic (carried for the public and foreign railways and revenue) booked over the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, (a) from coal fields on the E. I. and B. N. Railway system separately, (b) from the coalfields on this railway's own system, (c) from the coalfields on H. E. H. the N. G. S. Railway, and (d) from Bombay up-country from the 1st January 1912 to 31st March 1925.*

Period.	(a) FROM COALFIELDS ON		(b) From coal fields on this railway system.	(c) From coal fields on the N. G. S. railway.	(d) From Bombay.†	Revenue coal.‡	TOTAL.
	E. I. Railway.	B. N. Railway.					
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Year ending 31st December 1912 . . . . .	468,051	282,162	25,176	74,541	16,154	999,975	1,866,059
Quarter ending 31st March 1913 . . . . .	140,266	60,891	6,541	19,140	3,878	220,599	451,315
Year ending 31st March 1914 . . . . .	504,021	267,879	17,479	90,966	10,554	964,650	1,855,549
"    31st March 1915 . . . . .	576,544	357,379	26,574	40,642	6,073	980,860	1,937,863
"    31st March 1916 . . . . .	903,944	648,264	35,369	36,840	3,547	1,118,707	2,746,864
"    31st March 1917 . . . . .	1,319,873	623,293	61,678	50,725	6,427	1,316,106	3,378,102
"    31st March 1918 . . . . .	946,950	714,447	41,372	59,710	10,858	1,426,846	3,200,183
"    31st March 1919 . . . . .	1,399,819	570,001	121,559	64,795	12,214	1,521,156	3,589,544
"    31st March 1920 . . . . .	1,255,786	444,915	124,209	71,781	7,699	1,399,456	3,303,906
"    31st March 1921 . . . . .	965,969	290,755	279,563	56,085	25,437	1,276,024	2,893,833
"    31st March 1922 . . . . .	408,559	455,952	402,327	43,204	43,110	1,903,639	3,251,791
"    31st March 1923 . . . . .	430,675	374,325	336,316	39,612	33,522	1,316,982	2,531,432
"    31st March 1924 . . . . .	440,417	178,142	282,615	13,071	27,326	1,048,691	1,990,464
"    31st March 1925 . . . . .	441,110	185,110	405,583	56,260	19,521	1,184,206	2,291,790

\* *Vide* page 177 of Volume III of Evidence recorded by the Coal Commission.

† The principal stations to which coal is despatched from Bombay are those serving the Bombay mills area, such as Kurla, Sion and Kalyan. There are also despatches to Poona and Sholapur.

‡ Detailed information for revenue coal is not readily available.

The figures shown against each year are the purchases in those years. The actual consumption of coal and oil fuel by Locomotives each year is shown on the further statement attached, Appendix F.



APPENDIX G.\*

Statement showing the coal traffic received into Bombay.

Period.	FROM G. I. P. COLLIERIES.				FROM E. I., B. N. & N. G. S. COLLIERIES.			
	Pench Valley.	Chanda.	Ballarshah.	Gotitoria.	Via Jubbulpore (E. I.)	Via Nagpur (B. N.)	Via Jubbulpore (B. N.)	Via Wadi (N. G. S.)
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Year ending 31st December 1912 . . . . .	...	...	...	...	57,728	12,229	...	917
Quarter ending 31st March 1913. . . . .	...	...	...	...	8,670	5,303	133	37
Year ending 31st March 1914 . . . . .	...	...	...	...	38,237	13,347	47	1,116
" 31st March 1915 . . . . .	...	...	13	...	229,559	78,753	89	3,780
" 31st March 1916 . . . . .	1,364	...	14	...	570,292	284,689	39	3,817
" 31st March 1917 . . . . .	6,579	1,440	...	...	943,163	339,540	...	505
" 31st March 1918 . . . . .	544	1,400	235	...	443,499	399,187	...	1,850
" 31st March 1919 . . . . .	8,683	318	472	...	590,891	339,929	...	940
" 31st March 1920 . . . . .	6,731	458	...	...	710,339	257,861	...	704
" 31st March 1921 . . . . .	25,306	851	328	...	543,857	144,780	...	5,641
" 31st March 1922 . . . . .	38,252	776	403	59	107,750	140,187	...	3,229
" 31st March 1923 . . . . .	11,437	103	...	...	106,933	74,695	...	10
" 31st March 1924 . . . . .	13,102	73	501	...	59,864	38,593	...	274
" 31st March 1925 . . . . .	21,199	24	311	...	70,777	39,538	...	1,486

223

\* Vide page 192 of Volume III of Evidence recorded by the Coal Commission.

*Statement III.—Letter, dated the 13th January 1926, from the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.*

In continuation of this office letter No. 20814-T.—185, dated 12th January 1926, I forward herewith copy of Appendix F. with the necessary figures duly filled in.

APPENDIX F.\*

*Statement showing the figures of this Railway's own consumption of (1) coal and (2) oil fuel for the year ending 31st March 1925.*

Period.	CONSUMPTION ON LOCOMOTIVES.	
	Coal.	Oil fuel.
	Tons.	Tons.
Year ending 31st December 1912 . . . . .	831,532	Nil.
Quarter ending 31st March 1913 . . . . .	225,145	Nil.
Year ending 31st March 1914 . . . . .	906,359	404
„ 31st March 1915 . . . . .	867,134	57
„ 31st March 1916 . . . . .	989,317	64
„ 31st March 1917 . . . . .	1,096,992	1,239
„ 31st March 1918 . . . . .	1,140,720	4,779
„ 31st March 1919 . . . . .	1,159,930	6,200
„ 31st March 1920 . . . . .	1,188,656	9,246
„ 31st March 1921 . . . . .	1,156,731	14,658
„ 31st March 1922 . . . . .	1,117,074	36,835
„ 31st March 1923 . . . . .	1,016,554	53,047
„ 31st March 1924 . . . . .	984,993	68,018
„ 31st March 1925 . . . . .	1,023,889	78,058

\* *Vide* page 184 of Volume III of the Evidence recorded by the Coal Committee.

*Statement IV.—Telegram, dated 18th February 1926, from the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.*

20814. T YR Wire 81 Sixteenth instant Total quantity coal transported Bombay by rail April to December 1925 Eighty seven thousand four hundred and twenty six tons.

**Witness No. 21.**

**MAJOR F. COOK.**

WRITTEN.

*Letter, dated 8th October 1925.*

In reference to the proposed duty on imported coal I should like to give my views as expressed in my written evidence before the Coal Commission recently.

I was for twelve years the largest importer of Welsh Steam Coal in full ship cargoes at Cape Town and Admiralty Coaling Contractor, and although at that time the South African Coalfields were not developed and only locally used there was a duty of 3 shillings and 4 pence per ton of 2,240 on each and every cargo and is still levied. A rebate was given on all coal supplied to the Admiralty. The Cape Government Railways imported their own Welsh Steam Coal for use on their Railways and when short bought from me.

When strikes in England dislocated supplies it enabled the South African Coal Companies to get big prices for at that time rubbish. Then they found better seams and eventually another big Welsh Miners strike drove the imported coal right out of South Africa but the duty still remains and assists the South African Collieries by protecting them from any cheap coal that might be brought as a fill up cargo by a shipowner on speculation of selling.

I lost my whole business eventually in 1912 owing to the Union Castle Company cornering all the South African Coal allowing no one to export coal to any Cape Port, Mauritius or India except through themselves and they are the people to-day who have reaped a big harvest in India to the detriment of the Indian coal trade.

Try a protective duty of say Rs. 3 per ton for 12 months and you will render great assistance to the Indian Coal Trade if it paid South Africa to impose a duty even when they had no coal surely it will pay India.

Any further information I can give I should be glad to do so.

Witness No. 22.

**MESSRS. NUSERVANJI RUTTONJI NAZIR AND SONS.**

WRITTEN.

*Representation, dated the 12th November 1925.*

We are informed by the Director, Royal Indian Marine, Bombay, that your Board is inviting opinion of the Coal Trade in this country whether a protective duty to be imposed on imported coal generally or on coal imported from any particular country.

In so far as our experience goes, we can say that the step is un-welcome and we are, therefore, absolutely against any such protective duty on any imported coal whatsoever whether it is English or South African, as both these coals are superior to Indian coals and are very economical, both as to price and quality, and the Indian consumer will be deprived of having the best coal for his industrial purposes.

Witness No. 23.

**MESSRS. CHOONILAL HARILAL AND COMPANY.**

WRITTEN.

*Representation, dated 12th November 1925.*

With reference to the letter No. M.-3794, dated the 5th instant, from the Director, Royal Indian Marine, we have nothing to add to what our Representative, Mr. Choonilal Girdharlal, said, and represented in February last to the Coal Committee (*vide* Coal Committee Report, Volume II, pages 265—272). However, we must strongly emphasise the point that if any extra duty is placed on any foreign coal, it will kill the bunkering business of Bombay, which is nowadays really the backbone of the coal trade here, because most of mills have gone to electricity or oil.

## Witness No. 24.

**MESSRS. EDULJEE DINSHAW.**

*Letter, dated Karachi, the 24th November 1925.*

We are in receipt of your letter No. 633 of the 7th instant enclosing the Tariff Board's Questionnaire in the matter of the request of the Coal Industry of India for protection, for which we thank you and submit for the Board's consideration the following general observations on same in our capacity as large bunkering contractors at this port as well as large consumers in the shape of factories upcountry.

The whole case made out by the Coal Industry is very lame and loosely put and would appear to be a scramble for plucking some of the plums which a generous legislature burning with the glow of patriotic fervour to foster nascent industries has suitably provided. We admit we realise some of the industries of India require protection in their infancy, but that powerful weapon needs to be very discriminately used and it was never truer than in the case of coal industry. The principal argument in favour of protection as will be admitted would be if the foreign article were freely competing with its Indian contemporary all over this huge continent, but that, according to the admission of the Coal Industry, foreign coal does not. The Coal Industry in India is feeling the draft of keen competition only at sea ports and on examination of their claims to be shielded against such diabolical struggle for business one turns away with disappointment at the utter lack of reason in the grounds advanced. Statistics would show that the imports of foreign coal into the Indian west coastal sea ports were during 1924 close to the pre-war average and with the great fall that has occurred in the demand for bunkers through the reduction in shipping visiting the ports as a result of slump in trade, we should not be at all surprised if such imports reveal a further shrinkage for the current year. Thus the principal bogey trotted out by the coal trade to draw false sympathy has proved to have no substance. If during the pre-war years such imports of foreign coal caused the coal trade no inconvenience we are at a loss to understand the present howl for protection under similar conditions, more so, when it is remembered that there has been no phenomenal increase in the annual production of Indian coal mines in the interval. There probably is a germ of truth in the present woe begone state of coal trade due to difficulty of disposing off their products by the mines, but by what process of reasoning the Coal Industry would link it with the arrival in this country of a quantity of coal which is about the same as what came into it say 10 years ago, we are unable to understand. A further factor that operates to-day to make foreign coals cheaper is that of freight. Marine transport charges owing to the glut of shipping and the scramble for what little business is going around have been now reduced to a point where a voyage not infrequently shows a loss, and to classify this adventitious aid as a permanent factor in their calculations for demand for protection by the Coal Trade in India must be very carefully guarded against. Immediately freight rises, the price of South African fuels would automatically reflect it in increased prices. The real trouble about the lack of popularity of Indian Coal with its overseas consumers is entirely due to the shady practices to which Coal Trade resorted in the paling days of 1919 and 1920 "the hectic boom of prosperity" as phrased by the Coal Mining Federation, but the "orgy of commercial immorality" we think is a better and fitter expression—when everything that was black was booked as coal without conscience or scruples. Indian coal never did enjoy a very high reputation amongst its above clientele and this effort to swell their profits further by such fraudulent means dealt a death blow to the reviving demand for Indian coal by overseas shipping, and we are afraid a lasting damage has been done to Indian

coal for bunkering purposes. We regret to have to observe that our bunkering department cannot boast of a single order for Bengal Coal for bunkering purposes and the Coal Trade may be assured no amount of subsidising is likely to influence a British shipowner in favour of Indian coal until it has thoroughly rehabilitated itself in the eyes of the owners by proved quality and consistent purity of description. You can take a horse to a trough but you cannot make him drink would about describe the state of affairs that will result if foreign coal is penalised by an import levy, for such of the owners who bunker foreign coals in Indian ports will obtain their requirements at the Red Sea ports of Perim, Aden, or Port Soudan which are all on their way to their destinations west bound, or at Colombo or Singapore if east bound. The result will be that the bunkering firms at the Indian sea ports will lose a corresponding volume of business without any gain to the Coal Trade in India, but to the detriment of such firms, their staffs and employees, the last named being mostly sons of the soil who would be thus thrown out of employment through no fault of their own. With regard to levy of an import duty on liquid fuel we cannot see any reason for its wholesale application to such import of every character. It must be recognised that the bulk of the users of this type of fuel are agriculturists and zamindars working oil engines on their holdings preferring this plant for its simplicity, cheapness of operation and absence of necessity for maintenance of a highly qualified staff. Surely it is not contemplated by the Coal Industry that they should all scrap their oil engines and instal steam plants to enrol themselves as consumers of the product of the Coal Mining Federation. Needless to say we strongly deprecate any protection being granted to the Coal Trade of India in the shape of import duty on foreign fuels of any type. Let the Indian Coal Trade win back to its former place by the operation of economic laws instead of its structure being strutted and bolstered up with bounties and artificial aid.

With these general remarks we subjoin our answers to Section I of the Questionnaire.

1. The decline in coal prices is merely the Indian reflection of a world wide movement for prices to fall in sympathy with economic causes. It is the old tale of buyers being unable to meet the idea of producers who in turn have to readjust their rates to suit the buyers' pockets. Freed from the trammels of the world War when embargo and monopoly invested holders with a false idea of the value of their wares the economic law of supply and demand is vigorously reasserting itself and the downward trend is an indication of economic convalescence. It is impossible to gauge with any degree of accuracy to what extent the seemingly parlous state of the Coal Industry is due to over production, but that can be corrected only by either

(a) curtailing production or

(b) reducing level of prices to reach a larger class of consumers who are now being kept off by consideration of £ s. d.

2. We had no appreciable proof of any such improvement.

3. Generally we would not invest improved transport with the virtue of possessing a tendency to lower prices.

4. (a) Natal coal, Grade A, at about Rs. 20-8-0 per ton c.i.f.

(b) Transvaal coal, Grade A, at about Rs. 19-4-0 per ton c.i.f.

(c) North Country coal, Grade A, at about Rs. 21-8-0 per ton c.i.f.

5. Yes.

6. We do not think there is such a wide divergence as Rs. 10 per ton between English and Indian coal except perhaps Best Welsh (Admiralty List) in which case it is fully worth the difference. Other British coals certainly command higher prices but the *quid pro quo* is in the better steaming value.

7. Only a limited quantity of this description has found a market so far: whether it will continue to do so is entirely a matter of price.

8. We have chartered boats for this very run at Rs. 11 but the figure of Rs. 12 would serve as a datum line.

9. Between Rs. 13 and Rs. 14.
10. We have not seen the Coal Committee Report.
11. Every word of the Coal Committee on this point is literature.
12. Impossible to tell accurately.
13. This is Bombay's pigeon.
14. Yes, it is our own as bunkering contractors.
15. Doubtful.
16. Most decidedly not.
17. It should have that tendency naturally but whether consumer would consider Indian coal under such circumstance a better value seems highly doubtful.
18. Shipping will decidedly bunker at non-Indian coaling ports scattered on the highways.
19. Doubtful.
20. Doubtful.
21. Most decidedly not.
22. It hopelessly fails to satisfy this condition.
23. We agree.
24. Certainly *il va sans dire*.



**UICFD**  
**2003-04**