

Supplement to "Indian Witness," March 17th, 1894.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION

ON THE

OPIMUM TRAFFIC.

Special Report of the Evidence taken in India.

Part XII. 6th & 7th December, 1893.

PRICE ONE PENNY, or ONE ANNA, for each part.

Published by the
SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE OPIUM TRADE,
BROADWAY CHAMBERS, LONDON, S. W.

Also at the

METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE, 45, DHARAMTALA ST., CALCUTTA.

The Royal Commission on Opium.

The Chairman stated, before calling witnesses connected with the China trade, that while the Commissioners were prepared to receive their evidence, they were of opinion that the inquiry in relation to China could scarcely be dealt with satisfactorily in Calcutta; and that before coming to any conclusions with reference to China they must obtain information either by communications with China, with the Consular body and other independent authorities, or else by a personal visit on the part of certain members of the Commission to Singapore, and possibly some of the Treaty Ports in China.

Evidence of Mr. H. S. Howard.

I am a member of the firm of Messrs. David Sassoon & Co. and desire to give information with reference to the trade in opium with the Straits Settlements. Singapore and Penang take about 14,000 chests of opium annually. About 250 chests monthly are consumed locally, the rest being exported to the Native States, the Malay Peninsula and China. To Hongkong, about 26,000 chests are exported annually. During my stay of thirteen years in China, I came in contact with the Chinese belonging to the better classes, viz., merchants, mandarins, etc., and I have never found them to be the worse for indulging in the drug. On the contrary, they always showed great aptitude for work after a smoke.

By Mr. Wilson :—My firm is one of the principal opium shippers in China. I resided in Shanghai, Tientsin, and Ningpo, and I visited Foochow, Amoy, Swatow, and Hongkong. I never heard of any objection to the trade in China.

By Mr. Fanshawe :—I have been brought into personal contact with Chinese of the better classes. Opium-smoking is regarded by them only as a pleasure. My firm do business in other goods besides opium.

Evidence of Mr. Shrager.

By the Chairman :—I belong to the firm of Messrs. Grudberg Brothers. During the past five years I have frequently visited the Straits, Cochin-China, Siam, and once Hongkong and Batavia. I have mixed very freely amongst the Chinese, but I cannot recall a single instance of having come across a Chinaman that was incapacitated through smoking opium. On these visits to and from the Straits, the steamers

I travelled by never carried less than 300 to 400 Chinese deck passengers between Penang and Singapore, sometimes as many as 500 to 600, mostly coolies. I observed opium smoking to be almost universal amongst them, and have often watched them smoking, but never noticed it to produce any bad effects on them. In our Singapore office, we employ Chinese clerks and a Chinese cashier. Our cashier, who is an old man, told me that he smokes opium regularly. I have never noticed him to be indolent; he is a very shrewd man and has been in our employ over four years. Like all other of the better class Chinese that I have met, this man is intelligent, cheerful, and bright-witted. I have frequently visited the Chinese merchants with whom we do business in Singapore and all the other parts I have been to. Some of them are fine muscular men, although known to me to be habitual opium-smokers. I have sometimes been called into their private rooms, where I have seen them smoking opium, reclining on an easy chair. I never noticed them unable to discuss freely on the subject of my visit and express their views in a clear and business-like way. In our godowns we employ a number of Chinese coolies; these are very illiterate men, but I have never known them to make an error by delivering the wrong goods out of any warehouse. These men are known to me to be regular opium-smokers. I have never found them indolent; in fact they much prefer to do their work by contract, which, through their industry, gives them a far better return. Physically, these men are not as a rule well developed, but I have often been surprised at their carrying power. I have noticed two such men carry a bale of goods weighing from 1000 to 1200 lbs. All Chinese handicraftsmen are said to smoke opium regularly after their day's work; of such men I have seen a good deal, and have no hesitation in saying of them, that they are by far more practical and better men at their work than any others that I have met outside of Europe.

Opium is contraband into Java; the country's requirements, about 700 chests a year, are imported by the Government direct from Calcutta and supplied to any opium farmer who pays the Government a royalty for the right to manufacture and retail it. The excise arrangements in Siam since the beginning of this year are similar to those at Singapore. The opium farmer pays a royalty for the right to manufacture and retail opium. Nobody but the opium farmer has a right to import opium into Siam. The consumption in Cochin-China and Tonquin is 2,300 to 2,500 chests a year, which is imported direct from Calcutta. The Government manufacture it themselves and pack it in small quantities ready for use, which they sell at a fixed price to consumers.

By Mr. Wilson.—Q.—What do you mean by saying that opium is contraband into Java and into Cochin China?

A.—The importation is prohibited except by the Government. Only the Government have a right to import opium.

Q.—What do you mean by the phrase, "the right to manufacture"—what is the manufacture?

A.—The opium as it is exported from here, is not in the state or condition in which it is consumed in the places that I have visited. It goes through the process of manufacture to make it ready for smoking.

By Mr. Fanshawe.—The Chinese of the better classes regard opium smoking as a luxury, from what I have heard from them. Our firm exports opium, and we are contractors for the French Government, but that is only a small branch of our business.

Evidence of Mr. A. E. J. Abraham.

By the Chairman.—I am a member of the firm of Messrs A. E. J. Abraham & Co. We ship opium and do a little business in gunny bags, and a little in jute. Before the ratification of the Cheefoo convention, opium used to be stored in bond and had to pay a duty of thirty taels per picul on being landed, and nothing more. Since the ratification of the Cheefoo convention the sum of eighty taels has been added as likin dues, bringing up the whole amount to 110 taels. I have resided ten years in China, at Shanghai to Hankow.

I came in contact with men who smoked opium: I saw them nearly every day that I was there, but I did not see that it did them any injury, or that they showed in any way that they were habitual smokers. I have seen rickshaw coolies, coolies that carry opium, and coolies that land goods, men of all sorts, and my own house servants, who smoked opium, but I did not see that they suffered in any way. The Chinese do not believe that England is forcing them against their will to accept the traffic in opium. They laugh at the idea. I do not think that justice was done to India in ratifying the Cheefoo Convention. China was given a right to collect a duty which was not recognised till then as a legitimate maritime duty. The word "likin" means that the tax was levied for a special purpose. I believe that it was raised with the purpose of paying for the suppression of the Taeping rebellion. It was not a tax that could be levied on foreigners. It was not a tax recognised by the European powers. It was a tax lived by the Local Governments on Chinese subjects and each province had its own likin dues. If the opium were shifted from one

province to another, it had to pay double likin dues; but as it is, the ratification of that treaty legalizes this duty, and the opium is handicapped in such a manner, that no foreigner can land it even in godowns without paying the heavy duty of 110 taels per picul. If the opium is burnt or destroyed by sinking the boats, he is not only liable to pay the full amount the duty and likin, but another duty is added as a penalty.

By Mr. Wilson :—Q.—What class of Chinese had you any conversation with, to justify your statement that the popular belief that England forced opium on China is not credited by the Chinese themselves?

A.—Opium merchants and Chinese in general. I cannot mention the exact class of men I have come across; but I have had conversations with different classes of Chinese on the subject, who poohpoohed this idea. They were intelligent men. The masses, as distinct from the classes, have no idea about these things. I consider that the Chinese Government is at the present time under no obligation to England to admit opium. They might if they pleased impose a prohibitive duty.

Evidence of Mr. R. M. Cohen.

By the Chairman :—I am a member of the firm of Messrs. David Sassoon & Co. and Honorary Presidency Magistrate. I have been in Singapore one year on the firm's business and I resided in Shanghai six years, and four years in Newchwang a port in Manchuria. I have seen many aged Chinese who have been in the habit of smoking opium, and it has done them no harm. Our own Chinese servants smoke and I have seen it in Chinese merchants' houses. I used to see them smoking the opium, and then they would transact their business. I have no reason to think that opium produces any bad effect. With regard to laborers, I myself had some experience in Newchwang. The river gets frozen there for three or four months, so that there is no navigation. We have to send our letters by couriers on a very long journey, and it takes days to reach certain places. The only person who can take this journey is a Chinaman who smokes opium because the weather is so very cold, sometimes fifteen or eighteen below zero. In my opinion it is the opium which serves him as a stimulant. It is not only the case with men, but I have seen females as well as males smoking opium, and I have not seen any ill-effect from it. Soldiers also used to come to the merchants' houses and smoke opium, and I never saw any vice in them during my ten years in China. I never had occasion to dismiss a servant on account of opium, nor have I heard of any Chinaman committing any offence under the influence of opium.

By Mr. Fanshawe :—I think about 300 or 400 chests a month are shipped from Singapore to China, a good proportion in Chinese boats. In order to avoid the heavy duty levied in China, they try to smuggle in in Chinese boats, risking their life and property simply to avoid the heavy duty. Opium is more easily smuggled out of Chinese ships than it would be out of English ships, because English ships go direct to Hongkong, and they keep a register of all the opium landed there; while the Chinese can go here and there. Opium is a harmless drug if taken moderately, and I do not see why the Government should do away with its monopoly without a just cause; any change in the present system of manufacturing will raise suspicion in the minds of the Chinese, and they will be unwilling to deal in Bengal opium as they do now-a-days. The effect of any change will be less consumption in China, to the loss of all concerned in the opium trade in India, Government included. Morally, Government will be held responsible for the loss of this trade to its subjects. In my opinion it is the duty of the Government of India to give its support to the opium trade, and sustain it in the interests of the country. I may add that by stopping the supply from India Persia will take the lead. There have been already 10,000 chests of Persian opium freely imported into China, and if we stop shipping opium, Persia will take the lead. There will also be an increase in the cultivation of the poppy in China. So that no good will be done to the Chinese by our stopping it.

Evidence of five Chinamen.

The following were called in and examined through an interpreter: Messrs Lin Sin Khoo, Iyak, Eup Ate, Pin Yen, and Assowie, one of them was a book-keeper employed by Messrs Eng, Hong, & Co., another employed by a firm of boot and shoe makers; another a Doctor of medicine; another a Professor of Chinese; and another a priest of the Chinese Church in Calcutta.

By the Chairman :—The spokesman, Mr. Pin Yen, Chinese Doctor, said that some Chinese use opium as medicine and some smoke it, and for some diseases it is very good. Smoking was not harmful to the Chinese generally. It was very good for some sick persons. If any man took too much, it did him harm.

By Mr. Wilson :—I practise medicine in Canton. I came to see some relations in Calcutta. I do not smoke myself, I do not require it. If I were sick, it would be very good.

In reply to Mr. Fanshawe, Mr. Eup Ate said that he had smoked for seven years. He began it before he was sick. Opium-smoking is

not like brandy. Opium does not make them drunk, brandy does. Chinamen do not regard opium-smoking as good or bad.

In reply to Mr. Wilson, the same witness stated that he was a teacher of Chinese in China, he had been five or six years in Calcutta, and was with the Amban as interpreter. He knew Hindustani as well as Chinese.

Evidence of Mr. James Monro, C. B.

By the Chairman:—I was formerly Inspector-General of Police in Bengal, after that Commissioner in Bengal, and finally Chief Commissioner of Police in London; and I am now engaged in this country as a missionary. All the remarks I should like to make refer only to Lower Bengal. I refer to that province, because all my service was there, and I have special means of being acquainted with the circumstances of the people. With the other provinces, I have only a second-hand acquaintance. I wrote a pamphlet on the subject in answer to various questions that were put to me, as to the opium trade generally being an obstacle to missionaries. It is with reference to that point alone that any facts which I have acquired in my experience are to be applied. I do not wish to give an opinion, but merely to state facts which I know to be applicable to missionary operations in Lower Bengal alone. As I have stated in my pamphlet, so far as I am aware, the cultivation of opium and the connection of Government with opium form no obstacle whatever to missionary operations in Lower Bengal. I base that statement upon my previous experience. With reference to the people at large, the great majority of the people know nothing whatever about the cultivation of opium, or the connection of the Government with the opium trade in China,—absolutely nothing. You may go miles and miles, for days and days, and ask the people in the villages and they know nothing whatever about opium, or the Government connection with it.

The witness read the following extracts from his pamphlet. The income realized by the Government of Lower Bengal from the consumption of opium by the inhabitants of the Province is about sixteen lakhs of rupees (excluding license fees), or say roughly about £220,000—including license fees it will be about £140,000—surely no very large sum to be made from the indulgence in a particular drug by about seventy millions of the population of a Province.

“Turning now to the actual amount of opium consumed by the inhabitants of Lower Bengal, the figures are as follows:—In the whole Province containing a population of above seventy millions, the total consumption of opium, according to the latest figures published, is about 1,940 maunds (of 82 lb avoirdupois;—that is to say, the annual amount

of opium consumed *per head* is about sixteen grains. Of this somewhat more than a fifth is consumed in Calcutta alone, leaving about 1,525 maunds, or about fourteen grains per annum per head, as the total quantity of the drug consumed by the remaining sixty-nine millions of the inhabitants of Lower Bengal. There is, moreover, no reason to believe that the consumption of the drug is increasing, while the facilities for indulging in opium in its pernicious forms are being steadily restricted by reduction of the number of shops for opium smoking. During the last ten years the amount of opium consumed has not increased beyond the rate of growth of the population of the districts in Lower Bengal, in which it is chiefly used; and the number of licences for opium-smoking shops stands as below:—

“Average number of licenses for opium-smoking shops from			
	1885 to 1890
Number of such licenses in 1890-91	463
“ “ 1889-90	390
“ “ 1888-89	435
“ “ 1887-88	454

I should mention that the estimate of seventy millions for the population was based on the figures I had access to at that time. According to the last census it would be considerably more.

I gave some statistics showing the consumption of opium by divisions. Again I must say with regard to the population that the estimates are derived from the figures I then had access to:—

Division.	Population.	Annual Consumption.	
Burdwan	7½ millions.	326	maunds.
Presidency (including Calcutta)	“	653	“
Rajshahye	8 “	210	“
Dacca ...	9 “	99	“
Chittagong	4 “	58	“
Patna ...	15½ “	97	“
Bhagulpore	8½ “	151	“
Orissa ...	4 “	298	“
Chota Nagpore	4½ “	52	“

Consumption, therefore, is comparatively large in the Capital, Calcutta; in the Rural Divisions it is highest in Orissa, least in Patna, inconsiderable in Dacca, Chota Nagpur, Chittagong, and Bhagulpore.”

I was Inspector-General of Police for five years, and the subject of the cause of crime was a matter of special attention on my part. The

whole of the serious crimes of Bengal passed under my review. I also inspected districts, not from my office, but by going to them, and mixing amongst the people at the various police stations and hearing all that had to be said upon the subject, and the conclusion which I came to from wide experience was that so far as regards crime opium has no perceptible influence in causing it. So far as figures go, it would appear that where most opium is consumed you have a very large amount of crime. I instance the case of Orissa, where most of the opium outside Calcutta is consumed, and there the crime is trifling; there is hardly any such thing as serious crime in Orissa. It was always the province, *qua* police, that we thought was the least important, and there you have the most opium consumed.

In the Patna Division where the greatest amount of opium is given you have a very considerable amount of crime. There is no doubt that the most important and serious crime is in the districts in Eastern Bengal, such as Jessore, Dacca, Bakurganj, Tipperah and Mymensingh.

In the Patna Division where there is a small consumption of opium there is more turbulence and disorder than in Orissa; but they are not nearly so turbulent as in the Eastern part of Bengal. In the district of Gya you have a large amount of crime against property. There is very little consumption of opium in Eastern Bengal, the average is about five or seven grains per head of the population.

The opium habit has practically no effect whatever on the village life of Lower Bengal. The amount consumed in the villages is a mere trifle. The frequenters of opium dens are idle, useless fellows, not particularly or necessarily criminal, but people who have taken to the habit, and who consume opium no doubt in many instances to excess. These are the people upon whom it has a very bad effect; but the general frequenters of opium dens—by which I mean opium smoking shops as distinct from selling shops, are lazy, idle, useless fellows of all classes; sometimes of the better classes, but generally of a lower class. The people who smoke opium are decidedly of a lower class than those who eat it. They go to the *madak* shops, or where there is any *chandu*, to the *chandu* shops, but the notion of these opium shops being places where the police can find out clues of crime is a pure myth. You do not find clues of crime in *madak* shops. It has been stated that just as you would go to the pawnbroker in London to find out crime, you would go to a *madak* shop here to find out crime. But you do not go to the pawnbroker in London for that purpose; no professional thief ever goes near a pawnbroker. He has his own "fences" who get rid of all the property he

has, and he never goes near the pawnbroker. In the same way the police do not go to the *madak* shops to find out clues to crime. They may find bad characters frequenting the *madak* shop sometimes; but they do not go there to find out clues to crime.

I have been for many years a member of the corresponding committee of the Church Missionary Society, and I have come across a good many missionaries in that connection, since I have been here at work. I have come across many more, but I do not recall any missionary to whom I spoke about his missionary work who ever suggested that the opium trade and the Government connection with it in Lower Bengal formed any obstacle to his work. Since I came here I have made a point of asking all the missionaries whom I have come across especially in the District of Nuddea (a district that has been held by the Church Missionary Society upwards of sixty years), and not one of these missionaries have ever experienced any obstacles in his missionary work on account of the opium traffic and its results. I have talked with missionaries in other districts in the same way, and I have not as yet come across any missionary who has expressed an opinion that the opium trade did form an obstacle, or who could show me any facts which warrant any such opinion, supposing he had expressed it. There was one exception. In one of the districts I met one of the zenana ladies engaged in missionary work. When I had talked to her and asked her about the difficulties she had met with, and the progress she was making, she wound up by saying. "Then, Mr. Munro, there is this dreadful opium trade." I thought I was going to hear some facts, and said to her, "what do you mean exactly; have you many shops in this place?" She replied, "Well, I do not know, because of course, we never go there." "Do you mean," I said, "that you have seen much evil resulting from the presence of those shops where you are stationed?" She then said "Well, if you put it in that way, I have not." I asked "do the Natives talk about it and say that it is an obstacle to your mission?" "No," she replied "I cannot say that they do." "What exactly do you mean; how is it that you find opium an obstacle to your missionary work?" "Well, Mr. Munro" she said "the trade must be bad." I said "That is not what I want. I want to know *how* the trade is bad and how it is prejudicially affecting your mission work?" and she had nothing whatever to say. She had simply formed an opinion that the trade must be bad and she fitted in the facts to support that theory. That is an opinion that I have often found expressed at home in a similar way. That is my experience with reference to missionaries. As a missionary myself, in my own expe-

rience going amongst the village districts where I am perfectly well known, and when the people would not have the slightest hesitation in talking to me, I have never heard an adverse opinion in regard to opium expressed. My daughter has been itinerating during the last year in the villages in the north of Krishnaghur District and neither in the zenanas nor anywhere else, have the women or the men ever expressed the opinion that opium was in any way an obstacle to missionaries. I say that especially about zenanas. So far as my daughter is concerned and other ladies that I have met with, who have visited zenanas, there is not one of them who can tell me anything about the horrors of the opium trade in the zenanas. And that I believe is the experience up to date of the Secretary of the Anti-Opium Society. Mr. Alexander has so stated—that hitherto he has not been able to get any ladies to come forward and give evidence as to the evils which they saw in the zenanas. That is precisely my experience so far as I hear. Of course I have not visited a zenana, but that is undoubtedly the experience of my daughter and other ladies of the Zenana Mission with whom I have talked on the subject in more than one district.

I do not think the regulation which has been recently issued forbidding the smoking of opium in licensed places, likely to have a beneficial result. I base my opinion upon what I have seen in a similar case in London with reference to the closing of public houses after half-past twelve. They used to be open all night. Then I think in 1875 they were closed after half-past twelve, and the result of that closing has been an enormous increase in unlicensed workmen's clubs, and the evil they have done in London is incalculable. It is heart-breaking to see the evil which the establishment of those clubs, especially in the north, in Hoxton and other places, has caused in London. The increase of those clubs is distinctly attributable to the closing of public houses. I do not say it was a good thing to keep the public houses open all night, but I say that the means taken to diminish the evil have led to a far worse evil—namely, the bringing into existence of those unlicensed workmen's smoking clubs. The same thing, I anticipate, will happen when you drive out the characters who frequent the smoking dens; you will find they will be smoking in clubs or unlicensed premises or in their families, which will be far worse. As a matter of fact, I saw it stated in some of the papers that since the order for closing the shops has been carried out in Bombay, resort has been had to the establishment of clubs, and that naturally the Government has failed in prosecuting the owners of those clubs. On that account I think that in driving away those evils

—admitting, for the sake of argument, that the smoking is an evil—and bringing it into unlicensed premises over which the police have no control, and especially introducing it into families, will have a disastrous effect. I am bound to say that there is much more evil done to India by alcohol than by the consumption of opium, and I think there is very much more evil done by the consumption of *ganja*, which is absolutely pernicious so far as my experience goes, than is caused by the consumption of opium. I note that specially. It is grown in the district of Rajshaye, and I believe that the Commissioners heard evidence of the evils done in that district by the consumption of opium; but I did not hear a single complaint as to the evils that occurred from *ganja*, in the district of Rajshaye in which *ganja* is grown. It is one of the districts in which it is grown, and in that district and in many other districts, and in connection with crime generally, if I were asked my opinion about the connection of *ganja* with crime I should say that it had a district effect upon crime; and especially it leads as is shewn by figures, to a decided increase in insanity. The proportion of lunatics admitted in the asylums suffering from *ganja* is very large. I can give no opinion how it can be done, but if restrictive measures could be introduced in any way, I think they would be a decided benefit to the country, and a very much greater benefit than any attempt to restrict opium, which, so far as my experience goes in no way affects Lower Bengal prejudicially.

By Mr. Wilson.—Q.—You refer to a memorial presented to the Secretary of State. Have you that memorial?

A.—I have not the memorial here.

Q.—Then in the remarks you are making you are answering something we have not before us?

A.—I did not put the memorial in; I was not asked to do so.

Q.—In your pamphlet you have given us some figures about the income from the consumption of opium, sixteen lakhs of rupees?

A.—Those were figures for 1890-91 or 1891-92.

Q.—The figures brought before us by Mr. Gupta for 1890-91 show twenty-one and a half lakhs?

A.—Then I will modify it to that extent. I think it was sixteen lakhs without the license fees.

Q.—Are you aware that the duty and the license fees together now amount to twenty-seven and a half lakhs?

A.—No, I am not aware of it, but I accept your statement.

Q.—You do not agree with the idea that the *madak* and *chundu* shops correspond with the pawnbrokers shops in London ?

A.—Not at all.

Q.—Do you know that that was put forward in an official paper by Mr. Gupta on behalf of the Government Excise Department ?

A.—I do not know in what capacity. I entirely disagree with it from my knowledge of the police here and the police in London, and I think if you asked him he would admit that it is wrong.

Q.—I asked him two or three days ago, and he adhered to it ?

A.—He certainly does not know about the pawnbroker in London as I do, and I do not think he knows so much of the police in Bengal as I do. I was a Magistrate for many years and took a special interest in the criminal classes, and I was Inspector-General of police for five years. Mr. Gupta, so far as I know, never had anything to do with the police in Bengal except for a time when he was a Magistrate.

Q.—You gave us a case of a zenana lady who did not know anything about it. You really do not attach any importance to that incident ?

A.—None. She had no facts, and the other zenana ladies told me that they saw nothing. In fact, they have nothing to see or to tell about the evils of opium in the zenanas, and they have never found it an obstacle to their mission work in the zenanas.

Q.—In reference to many strong things that have been said by missionaries in connection with the opium question, is it not a fact that they relate largely to China ?

A.—Quite so ; I am only speaking of Lower Bengal.

Q.—Is it not a fact that the strongest expressions used by missionaries in regard to opium refer solely to China ?

A.—Principally to China ; but India is also included.

Q.—I notice that in your paper eight or ten times you quote the phrase "burning moral conviction" in inverted commas. Would you like to say anything as to why you quoted that phrase, apparently in derision ?

A.—Not in derision. I saw it in an article in the *Spectator*, and it struck me as very appropriate to the way in which in some quarters, the opium discussion was being conducted. A great many, no doubt, estimable men are firmly convinced and have burning convictions about the evil caused by opium without knowing very much about it, and they allow their burning moral convictions to overcome their discretion, their regard for facts, and their Christian charity, because they absolutely denounce everybody who, whether he has had experience or not, disagrees with them

Q.—And you thought it worth while to put it before us in inverted commas ten times ?

A.—I thought that was the root of the whole things—burning convictions without discretion, or regard for facts.

By Mr. Fanshawe.—With regard to the Patna division where the poppy is largely cultivated, I admit that it is a common belief that a certain amount of opium is kept back by the cultivators and that my view must be qualified by that consideration.

Q.—I understood you to express an opinion as to the danger of generalising in India from the experience of one province or even of one district ?

A.—That certainly is what I have always felt, and that is one reason why I confined my remarks to a province about which I know something. The circumstances of Lower Bengal are in no respect the same as, we will say, of the Punjab, or Burma, or Madras. The circumstances of different districts even in Lower Bengal are all different. I can instance that very well in reference to two districts—Nuddea on the one side, and Jessore on the other. If you attempt to carry out the same policy in those two districts you will surely fail ; the circumstances of the ryots in one are quite different from the circumstances of the ryots in the other. Having been in Jessore I went to Nuddea, and if I had carried out the same policy there, as I had in Jessore, for example, in times of famine, I should have failed absolutely. That shows how, even in given provinces, the circumstances of each district are often very different. The circumstances of Behar, for example, are totally different from the circumstances of Orissa and Lower Bengal ; the people are of different races. And *a fortiori* if you extend the generalisation from districts to provinces the argument will have greater force.

Q.—With regard to the closing of licensed smoking shops your view is clear, is it not, that the wiser policy would be to keep them open because the people visiting them would be subject to police control ?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Though you do not say that bad characters necessarily go there, you think that idle men do congregate there, and that the wiser policy would be to keep them open because they would be under direct police control, that is your view ?

A.—Yes, just in the same way as it is better that public houses should be under police control in London than that gambling clubs into which no policeman can enter should be established.

Evidence of Mr. J. M. Gibbon, C. I. E.

By the Chairman.—I was formerly a Member of the Legislative Council of the Viceroy. I arrived in India in December, 1854, or thirty-nine years ago. Roughly speaking, of that time I spent two years in the Gorakhpore district as assistant in a zemindari, two years in Calcutta in a merchant's office, eleven as an indigo-planter in Chumparun, twenty-two in charge of the Bettiah Estates (in Chumparun, in Tirhoot, in Sarun, and in Gorakhpore), and two years in England. Opium is largely given to children and used by people who live in malarious districts. There is a general consumption of it by the non-agricultural portion of the community. I have not observed that the consumption of opium has caused any serious moral or physical injury. It is principally used as a medicine or in the nature of medicine. Some people who have come to us from the North-West having once taken to opium cannot throw it off. They take it as a stimulant. To prohibit the use of opium for other than medical purposes would, I believe be impossible. To attempt it would be an exceedingly unpopular interference with the personal habits of the population, and would lead to smuggling from neighbouring States, especially Nepal. Our Government is a strong Government, and poppy is a crop easily seen and detected where grown; the cultivation could of course be prohibited in British territory and stopped, but the growth could not be stopped just outside our frontiers. If the Government prohibit the cultivation in the province, the cultivation in Nepal will be largely increased and opium smuggled into the province, instead of through it. To prevent smuggling from Almora to Jalpaigori I look upon as an impossible feat. The only change I would recommend in the public interest is the suppression of smoking dens, and in the interest of the cultivators, that the Government should be more liberal to them in bad seasons and know their own minds better regarding the area they wish to put under poppy cultivation. At present after a good season the Government try to decrease the area and strain every nerve to increase it after a bad one, whereas the cultivators' wishes run the other way, the cultivators wish to increase after a favourable season and to try other crops after an unfavourable one. It is for the interest of every class that the poppy cultivation should be retained to the interest of the tax-payer, the merchant, the landholder and cultivator. To the tax-payer and merchant insomuch that the loss of revenue to the Government would have to be supplied by direct taxation or by duties levied on other goods. To the landholders as it enables their tenants to meet their rents. To the cultivator it is profitable in many ways,—first, the price paid by Government

is a fair one and an average yield per acre pays a fair profit on cost of cultivation; there are often great prizes, that is to say, the profits are often extraordinarily large, the work or labour to be bestowed on it is light, all members of the family can take part in it, the cultivator is sure of his market, he is assured of being able to dispose of his produce, he receives comparatively large sums in advances without interest, the receipt of such advances enables him to pay his rents and pay for his clothing. Poppy may be sown any time between the 15th October and 10th December according to season and heat of sun. He receives two or three advances in the season. Did he not receive such advances to meet his rents he would have to sell the produce of his summer crops just as they were reaped when prices are at their lowest. He therefore makes a treble profit on the cultivation of poppy, the actual profit on cost of cultivation, the use of money without interest, and a saving on sale of his other crops. It is also profitable to many who have large areas to be brought under the plough, insomuch that it may be sown late, and the cultivator may sow it last of all if he so wishes. Oats are the only crop I know of that may be sown with a chance of success after poppy. Wheat barey, peas, gram, oil-seeds, etc., etc., must all be sown quickly or the season is lost. Larger profits may be made from other crops than is received from poppy, but I know of no other crop that can take its place. Ginger will yield larger returns, but ginger can only be grown in shade. Turmeric also, but all lands will not yield turmeric, and only special castes grow it. Sugar-cane also but sugarcane requires heavy labour; uses the land for the whole year, and I have known goor or crude sugar to be drug on the market, unsaleable in some seasons. Tobacco in some few cases gives enormous profit and is increasing enormously in cultivation, especially in Tirhoot, but tobacco-growing requires special knowledge, great care and hard labour, monopolizes the soil in most cases for a twelve month and cannot be grown in all lands. The produce of Behar is considered good enough by Native smokers who hide the taste of the tobacco with other articles, such as goor and pine-apple, but Behar will never produce tobacco good enough for the European market for the amount of salt in the soil and the dust the leaf absorbs in the west winds; these give a biting taste to the tobacco that Europeans cannot endure. Poppy, on the contrary, is a cold season crop; the cultivator first gets his Indian corn, his early rice or some other rainy season crop off his land and then his poppy; he is paid for his opium and sells the poppy-seed, and if the season is an early one, he may probably get a crop of cheena off it also. If the cultivator deems it necessary to take an advance on his other

crops from a trader, he must pay heavy interest on the advance and also dispose of his crop at less than the market value and at a time when the produce is at its cheapest. I do not think the prohibition of poppy cultivation will affect the rate of rent. I have asked as many Natives as I could get to talk upon the policy of prohibition and they were all against it.

By Mr. Wilson.—Q.—You consider that the poppy crop is a profitable crop?

A.—Decidedly.

By the Chairman.—Q.—They are ready to take the advance, but not always willing to cultivate the poppy?

A.—Yes. After they have sown the poppy they collect the dust in ridges in order that the seed may not be affected by the heat of the sun. People take an advance, and they make these ridges simply to hide their failure to sow it.

By Mr. Wilson :—Q.—These people are excessively poor, are they not?

A.—That is not my opinion of them.

Q.—Can they pay their fines with facility?

A.—Not always.

Q.—What happens if a man cannot pay his fine?

A.—He generally pays the fine, but he does not always return his advance until he is forced to do it. I have never known a man imprisoned. When a man has made up his mind not to fulfil his contract he is generally in a position to pay his fine when the time comes.

Q.—What is the security that the Government gets for the advance?

A.—None. They have power to force these people under the law to return the money, just the same as any other contractor.

Q.—You said just now that under certain circumstances some pressure had to be used—what kind of pressure?

A.—That is very difficult to explain. The whole district is divided into zillas, and the zilladars, or the people who expect to superintend the cultivation, bring moral pressure to bear. I do not know any other way. You have to be constantly nagging at a man to do a certain thing; you cannot strike him or punish him or fine him. It is a moral influence—the influence of the name of the Government. The only man that can possibly influence him to enter into the contract is the bund-

aswar, or head villager, who often receives the whole of the advances from the Sub-Deputy Opium Agent.

Q.—You have referred to alcohol and ganja; are you a teetotaler?

A.—I am not.

Q.—If you had sons or nephews you would not object to see them taking a little alcohol in some form daily?

A.—No.

Q.—Would you have an equal complacency in their taking a little opium daily?

A.—It is contrary to our customs to take it; I do not exactly know whether I would or not.

Q.—That is all you wish to say on that point?

A.—I really have not thought it out; I do not know whether I would or not.

By Mr. Fanshawe.—Q.—Is it a prevalent belief among the people with whom you have been thrown for so many years that opium is a preventive against chills or malarial influences?

A.—It is.

Q.—Do I understand you to mean, that the beginning of the habit is in connection with some definite disease?

A.—These habitual takers have taken opium for many years, long before I had the pleasure of their acquaintance. I do not know how they took to it or where they began.

Q.—You have touched on an interesting point which has also been referred to in the statements of other witnesses—that the medical and non-medical uses of opium merge very much into each other; is that your experience?

A.—Decidedly.

Q.—One cannot well distinguish between the two?

A.—No.

Q.—The man who takes it habitually has often begun it in connection with some disease and then he retains it as a habit, as a stimulant?

A.—Yes.

Q.—With regard to sugarcane, the substitution of this crop for the poppy would be limited by the condition of labour and also by the demand in the market?

A.—By both. Manure would also be very difficult to procure for the sugarcane. Sugarcane is a crop that you must begin to grow at the begin-

ning of March or the end of February. From February to the end of June is one long drought, and unless they are able to irrigate their sugarcane it would be a failure to a certain extent unless the soil is a moist one. In other places, as in Shahabad, the irrigation placed at their disposal has largely increased the cultivation of the sugarcane.

Q.—You can irrigate the sugarcane from canals?

A.—Yes, but if you irrigate from canals you will raise the whole of the zemindari influence against you, because they are thoroughly impressed with the opinion that drainage from the canals brings out the salts in the soil, making it useless and barren, and that any irrigation to be beneficial on any land, whether for poppy or sugarcane or tobacco or any other crop, must be well water, and only well water, irrigation, not drainage.

Q.—May I put it in this way, that in dealing with the question of substituting sugarcane for opium we must take into consideration the extent of the market, the extent of the supply of the manure, the character of the soil, and the predilection or acquired knowledge of the cultivators?

A.—Yes.

Q.—I understand you to regard tobacco as the crop which could be best substituted for opium if a market were available?

A.—There is one other crop that may run opium close—oilseeds: but they depend so entirely on the state of the market that you cannot take that crop into account. Oilseeds have risen about forty per cent in value within the last fifteen years, since the year of the famine, 1875. Were the market to run the other way and go down, oilseeds would not be in the race with opium.

Q.—Can they be grown on the same class of soil and under the same conditions as opium?

A.—Yes, that is the only crop that can be grown under the same conditions.

Q.—As things stand, tobacco is the crop which you regard as the main substitute for opium?

A.—Provided there is a market and that people can acquire a knowledge of the special conditions.

Q.—Have you any reasons for thinking that a large extension of the market for Indian tobacco is likely?

A.—No; certainly not. I believe that all home-grown tobacco must be consumed in the country. The landlord would not suffer directly from

the prohibition of the poppy; he would find a little difficulty in recovering his rents.

By Mr. Wilson.—Q.—You have told us that after a good season Government tries to decrease the area?

A.—Yes, it is decreased in cast-off bad lands.

Q.—One sees by the tables that it is sometimes largely decreased?

A.—There are good lands and bad lands under poppy. Every Sub-Deputy Opium Agent will do his best to keep up the outturn, but when the order comes from head-quarters to decrease, he has to decrease, and he does decrease. He knows who his good ryots and contractors are, and he will give up their lands in preference to others. It therefore often happens that the cultivation is decreased without decreasing the outturn.

Q.—Had they any compensation for being deprived of the license?

A.—No. It is a mutual contract. The Government are at liberty to throw it up this year, and the ryot has nothing to complain of. On the other hand, the ryot may refuse, and the Government cannot complain.

Evidence of Mr. S. E. Peal, F. R. G. S.

By Mr. Fanshawe.—I resided in Assam as a tea-planter for over thirty years and I have had considerable experience of the use and effects of opium in Sibsagar; having employed Assamese, Kachari and Bengali labour for clearings and cultivation, issuing the drug myself; the monthly supply for some ten or twelve years amounted to about forty pounds. The whole of Upper Assam is a very level country, and perhaps fifty per cent of the area is completely flooded in the height of the rains. When I went there in 1863 I opened these tracts where the cultivation is carried on above the level of the water, We grow tea on the rolling lands that are above the level of the water, these estates entirely by Assamese labour. There were no Bengalis at that time. The villagers were induced to come in and work for the plant-ers by the issuing of opium as a means of currency. They came in in large numbers for the purpose of the clearance and cultivation of our tea gardens. We now use Bengali labour almost exclusively. And Kacharis to a small extent from Western Assam. As far as my experience and enquiries went, I never knew boys to indulge in it, and young men very rarely—unless as a medicine, its use was confined to middle-aged and elderly people—as a stimulant and sedative, never producing injurious results at all comparable to the use of spirits among the European working classes, of whom I had an extensive experience for seven

years in London, ere coming to India. I could seldom detect an opium-eater by his personal appearance and general habit, and when exploring across the frontiers, east and south-east of Assam, for six weeks at a time, often under very trying circumstances, have been surprised to hear the men of my party of ten or twelve, call for the "*kania*" (local name for opium-eater) when anything extra, difficult, or hazardous had to be done. On several occasions I have found out, by this means, that some of the best and most powerful and vigorous of my party were the opium-eaters or smokers—a fact which I was not prepared for from imported prejudices. The staying power and recuperative effect of the drug I have often had opportunities of observing on these expeditions, as also at other times when prolonged physical exertion was necessary, similar, apparently, to the effect produced by cocoa. Its effect on old people seems to be notoriously beneficial. I have known of but one death due to it, and that was a case of determined suicide by a Bengali coolie. It is a common belief, that the use of opium is a preventive against chills and malaria. It was generally supposed to be begun in that way as a preventive, and also as means of curing attacks of fever and malaria. People have come to me for opium in order to cure them. I have not known that persons who eat opium are specially liable to be carried off by sickness and dysentery. I think it is not generally prejudicial, but it is possible that occasionally it may be carried to such an excess as to be very injurious. But I have no cases of that kind before me. I am not aware that the people of Assam look upon it as a vice. They regard it as we regard the smoking of cigars or tobacco. I have seen a good deal of opium-smoking in Assam and have not seen any ill-effects from it. Any prohibition of the drug generally would be, I think, most disastrous in Assam, and would result in its being at once extensively cultivated in all the hills around among the many savage hill tribes, over whom we hold no jurisdiction. It would be extensively smuggled in as it was in the past. I have seen large quantities in former years, taken by Nagas, to sell in the bazars, and used to have samples of it done up in the rolls like tobacco. This illicit growth and sale of the drug by these hill savages has ceased entirely through the Government opium being of such superior quality. I have frequently gone on expedition across the frontier towards China and Upper Burma in old days when it was desirable to ascertain where the passes were. I used to take ten or twelve men with me. Under these circumstances it used to be exceedingly trying, and travelling was in some cases very dangerous. Great physical exertion was frequently necessary among the people, and my experience is that in cases of that kind opium is frequently beneficial. I saw the beneficial effects of it.

By Mr. Wilson.—Q.—No planter now distributes opium, I think. It is distributed at centres, opium shops. Unless a man takes a license from the Government he cannot supply the opium to his coolies. That was given up twenty years ago.

A.—The opium habit seemed to have been a very old one; it may have been several hundred years old. When we came into the country the Government opium was found to be so superior to the Native that they invariably came to me for it in preference to their own opium. I went into the country about the time when the prohibition against growing it was promulgated; and the habit having been handed down from generation to generation the people came to me for pure Government opium and took it away for their parents and others in the villages.

Q.—You say that you have not seen boys take it, and young men rarely; did they not suffer from malaria equally with other people?

A.—They may have done so, but I have never known cases of boys taking opium as a habit.

Q.—If the district were malarious, and if opium were a valuable prophylactic, you would expect that the boys and young men would be advised to take it equally with their elders?

A.—It may have been given to them by their parents medicinally, but I have not known it as a habit among boys.

Q.—Had you either for yourself or for the people working for you any available medical assistance?

A.—For a portion of the time I had; in the earlier days I had not. For the first two or three years I had not any medical assistance; subsequently we had Native doctors practising according to the European system.

Q.—Did they recommend the habitual use of opium as a prophylactic against malaria?

A.—No, I cannot say that. The Assamese will not take medicine from a practitioner as a rule.

By Mr. Fanshawe.—Q.—Can you tell me whether opium-eating is more common or less common now than it was when you went there thirty years ago?

A.—I should think it was less common now than it was in the old days.

Q.—Are you aware that the price has been greatly increased since the number of shops have been reduced?

A.—The price is about double.

Q.—And are you aware that the shops have been very much decreased?

A.—I think so.

Evidence of Mr. James Wilson.

Mr. Wilson, lately Editor of the "Indian Daily News," in reply to the Chairman said, that in that capacity during the last quarter of a century, he had become acquainted with the opinions of the people of this country through the Native press, which he had had to read and by correspondence from all parts of the country, he found the general feeling to be adverse to the abolition of the traffic. On moral considerations the people say that if opium were suppressed, greater evils would arise from the consumption of drugs of a more obnoxious character, and that there would also be a very large increase in the consumption of alcohol. Mr. Wilson quoted from *Reis and Rayyet*, a Native paper, an account of a private meeting of the Behar Opium-Eater's Association, at a fair at Sonopore, in which it was stated that they decided to emigrate to Native States, if opium were abolished. Personally witness had had very little experience of opium, some of his own men had been opium-eaters, but he had not observed any particular effects from the use of the drug. With regard to the fiscal considerations, there was undoubtedly great reluctance on the part of the Native population to lesson the revenue at present derived from opium, as they feared that some attempt might be made to supply its place by direct taxation. They have no hope whatever that England will compensate India for the loss of the opium revenue, they form that conclusion from the fact that whatever expense can be put upon India, is put upon India. He also read an extract from the "Hindoo Patriot" commenting adversely on the evidence of the Missionaries who had appeared before the Commission, and especially the suggestion of a tobacco tax. The income tax the witness considered still more objectionable.

Asked by Mr. Wilson whether he attached the slightest importance to the extract from "Reis and Rayyet," and whether he thought that there seriously was an Opium-Eater's Association of Behar, which sat at midnight for the purpose of cursing this Commission, the witness said that he attached importance to the paragraph from his knowledge of the editor of the paper. He had not the slightest idea as to the circulation of the "Hindoo Patriot."

Evidence of Mr. W. H. Ryland.

President of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association. In reply to the Chairman, the witness stated that he had been forty years in the

service of Government, and he presented the following statement of the views of the Association with which he was connected.

The general opinion of the Association is—(1) That the present enquiry has not been called for by any recent development of the circumstances connected with the produce and use of opium. (2) That opium is comparatively innocuous as compared with alcohol and other intoxicating stimulants. (3) That as a narcotic and prophylactic opium has been largely and beneficially used for generations in a variety of disorders and by great numbers of the people all over India without immoderate indulgence or exhibition of evil effects to an extent which needs national interference. (4) That the system of cultivation adopted by the Government under State control is in itself a check upon excessive production and a restriction upon inordinate consumption. (5) That the stoppage of the system would inevitably extend the area within which the plant is capable of growth and cause very much distress among the present cultivators; while absolute prohibition of the use of opium could no more be enforced than the use of other stimulants in every country (Great Britain included) and without the introduction of greater evils. (6) That as regards China and other foreign countries dependent upon India chiefly for the supply of the article, to prohibit its export would only remove the bar to production in other countries where the plant can almost equally well be cultivated (not excepting China itself) and where benevolent sentiments do not prevail. (7) That it is not less within the power of China, if so disposed, to prevent the traffic if it be in reality regarded with disfavour, though such from most accounts would not appear to be the case. (8) That if the revenue from opium be discarded, there is no other substitute that can be devised without introducing further taxation which would press heavily not only upon those who contribute to the revenue by the consumption of the drug, but upon those also who are innocent of its use. The Association, therefore, so far as India is concerned, considers enquiry to be unnecessary, and would offer a respectful but strong protest against imposition of any portion of the cost, or of any fresh taxation, as its result, upon India. The witness further said on his own behalf that the tendency for many years past had been to limit opium consumption and that the orders and policy of Government had been to raise the revenue by preventing illicit smoking and manufacture without stimulating consumption. He enlarged on several paragraphs of the Association's statement.

In reply to Mr. Wilson, witness said:—

The objects of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association are to advance the political, moral, social and intellectual improvement of the

community in this country ; and of course we are in a large manner interested in anything that concerns the revenues or taxation or anything that might follow upon any general measure of the Government. It was established within the last ten or twelve years. Its subscribers number about 400 or 500. He also said that the statement presented by him had been considered by the representatives of the Association assembled in committee and that they had approved it by resolution.

Q.—Are you aware that the Anti-Opium party in England did not ask for the present enquiry ?

A.—I was not aware of that.

Evidence of Mr. D. Z Zemin.

This witness represented the Calcutta Trades Association of which he was past-master. He was also an Honorary Presidency Magistrate. He had had considerable experience among Native workmen, of whom about ten per cent took opium and except very occasionally when they were drowsy or a little heavy, they always did their work efficiently. He believed that prohibition would be exceedingly distasteful to the people generally and would cause much discontent.

Evidence of Mr. T. N. Mukharji.

The witness stated to the chairman that he was first Personal Assistant to the Director of Agriculture and Commerce in the North-Western Provinces; then he was Officer in charge of the Exhibition Branch of the Government of India, and in connection with that office he was sent to England during the Colonial and Indian Exhibition; he also went to make arrangements for the Glasgow Exhibition. He now held the post of Assistant Curator in the Economic and Art Section of the Indian Museum. He considered alcohol many times worse than opium. He had found opium very useful in removing drowsiness during the hot weather, and he thought that Europeans, especially missionaries, entertain a prejudice against opium. It would be most cruel and mischievous to forbid to the people of India the use of a stimulant, or narcotic, or sedative which their instinct told them was good for them. In reply to Mr. Wilson, he admitted that he had no absolute facts or statistics to prove that opium arrests natural decay after the age of fifty. It was his opinion, based upon observation. The habit of taking opium in excess for those who cannot afford it leads to petty theft. In reply to Mr. Fanshawe he said that he had tried opium five or six times, but was not a habitual consumer.

Printed by

JOSEPH CULSHAW, for the METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE, Calcutta.

