

CHINA. No. 7 (1870).

COMMERCIAL REPORTS

FROM

HER MAJESTY'S CONSULS

IN

CHINA AND SIAM.

1869.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
April 1870.*

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.
1870.

S I A M.

No. 5.

Consul-General Knox to the Earl of Clarendon.—(Received April 8.)

My Lord,

Bangkok, February 12, 1870.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a Report on the trade at this port during the year 1869, together with the usual returns.

I have, &c.

(Signed) THOMAS GEORGE KNOX.

Inclosure in No. 5.

Report on the Trade at the Port of Bangkok during the year 1869.

Shipping.—During the last three years the total tonnage of all vessels which entered at this port has been as follows:—

	Total Number of Vessels.	Total Tonnage.	Number of British Vessels.	Tonnage.
1867 . . .	327	127,606	101	40,567
1868 . . .	346	141,297	103	47,237
1869 . . .	461	184,415	164	73,188

The above Table shows a considerable increase in British shipping during the past year.

Exports.—The exports from Siam are in excess of all previous years. Rice, our principal product, has been largely exported to Europe, and has there come into competition with that exported from the Bay of Bengal, Rangoon, Akyab, &c. Siam rice not being so well known (our first exports being in 1868) did not at first bring as high a price as that with which it had to compete; but if I am to judge by the price currents lately given, it is gradually creeping up to that which had formerly the sole command of the market. It therefore appears probable that, before long, it will be found that there is but little difference in the qualities of the rice from countries whose soil and climate are so similar, and that, eventually, all will depend upon which can be laid down in Europe at the lowest rate. This advantage Siam has had for the last two years, but whether she will continue to hold it is a very difficult question to solve.

Taking Bangkok, Saigon, and Rangoon, the chief ports for the export of rice, I find that the rent of land is less in Siam than either British Burmah or Saigon. In Siam it does not exceed 2s. 4d. per acre, while in Saigon it is 3s. 11d., and in British Burmah 5s. per acre. But on the other hand our export duty, which is about 10d. per picul, is in excess of that of Rangoon where the duty is about 7½d. per picul, and also of Saigon where there is no export duty on rice, but a tonnage due of 1 franc per ton

which would amount only to two-thirds of a penny per picul. It will thus be seen that the producer is at an advantage in Siam as compared with the same person in Rangoon and Saigon, and this, with people who are so disinclined to lay out money as the inhabitants of these countries are, is of some little importance.

On the other hand, the shipper in Siam has heavier export duties to pay than his competitor in either of the other ports.

I have succeeded in getting a return of the land under rice cultivation for last year, but cannot say that I place much reliance on it, and imagine that it is at least one-third short.

According to the return there were 600, and 2,911 acres devoted to this purpose. Nearly the whole of this land is in close proximity to the rivers, of which there are no less than five running parallel to one another in what may be called the delta of the Menam, and these again are connected by canals. Therefore the expense of bringing the rice to this place is a mere trifle, the more so as nearly every villager has his own boat.

The price of paddy during the greater part of last year was as low as 17. 15s. per coyan (tons 1 $\frac{1}{4}$). This price is low and would hardly give encouragement to extend the cultivation. The Siamese, like many other people, are disinclined to labour more than is absolutely necessary to supply their immediate wants. They are, however, very highly taxed in many ways, both directly and indirectly, and in order to meet these calls, they are obliged to work, and find the cultivation of rice the easiest and most efficient method. Once at work, it is comparatively easy to plant a few extra acres for surplus rice, and this is generally done now that they have so ready a sale for it. At the present rates I do not anticipate much extra land being brought under cultivation, but a year or two of a return to high prices would stimulate them to extra exertions, which would probably be continued even after prices had fallen to what they are now.

We have yet to see how much rice Europe will take. For the last two years that market has been forced, and the price low; but this will probably cause new uses to be found for this article, and consequently there is a likelihood of the demand extending.

Imports.—In imports there is nothing to remark. The Tables for the last three years show little variation; and unless a better wearing material than the cotton goods now sent can be manufactured at prices sufficiently low to tempt these people, the bulk of them, particularly the workers in the fields, will continue to manufacture their own from the cotton of the country, which is sufficiently abundant for the purpose.

I append a Table of the rates of exchange during the past year.

Siam and the Shan States have always been famous for their elephants, but I believe it is not generally known that the breeding of these animals after having been captured is extensively carried out in this country.

The method is very simple. During the rains little use is made of them. They are then turned out in the jungle and allowed to roam about, being merely visited once a fortnight, and if found to have wandered too far driven back towards home. It is at this time that they get with young, and are not worked after this fact becomes plainly manifest.

The young one after birth remains with the mother for about three years, or until it is too high to be able to get under to suck. The mother does not breed again during this time, but would appear to do so very soon after. Whether she would breed earlier if the young one were taken away from her sooner than is now the case I have been unable to ascertain, as the Siamese do not appear to have tried the experiment; though as they say that on the death of the young one during the first year she soon has another, this would appear to be probable.

There is little difference in the size of those bred in this manner, if anything it is in their favour. They are said to be rather more cunning than those caught, and to be less inclined to obey others than their own keepers. This method of keeping up their establishment of elephants is usually followed by many of the high officials—Governors of provinces and others.

Another method is to have large droves of females that have never been worked (though they are not considered wild, there being a different name for them) driven in once a year, and very eligible young males are then caught and tamed for use.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

THOMAS GEORGE KNOX.

Bangkok, February 12, 1870.

(No. 1.)—RETURN of British Shipping at the Port of Bangkok, during the Year 1869.

Direct Trade in British Vessels from and to Great Britain and British Colonies.

ENTERED									CLEARED								
Whence Arrived.	Number of Vessels			Tonnage.			Total Number of Crews.	Invoice Value of Cargoes.	Whither Bound.	Number of Vessels.			Tonnage			Total Number of Crews.	Invoice Value of Cargoes.
	With Cargoes.	In Ballast.	Total.	With Cargoes.	In Ballast.	Total.				With Cargoes	In Ballast.	Total.	With Cargoes	In Ballast	Total.		
Great Britain	2	...	2	819	...	819	28	£ 21,756	Great Britain	36	...	36	19,666	...	19,666	602	£ 105,552
Hong Kong	23	39	62	6,878	20,734	27,612	911	28,637	Melbourne	1	...	1	450	...	450	17	1,700
Singapore	41	36	77	15,968	15,303	31,269	1,453	53,337	Hong Kong	32	...	32	11,517	...	11,517	138	84,738
Australia	2	...	2	582	...	582	29	1,060	Singapore	34	2	36	11,337	1,337	12,674	739	79,207
Bombay	6	7	13	5,601	2,607	6,208	311	20,500	Bombay	18	...	18	8,295	...	8,295	152	88,545
									Mauritius	6	...	6	3,041	...	3,041	92	11,300
	64	82	146	27,846	38,644	66,490	2,732	125,190		127	2	129	57,306	1,337	58,683	2,431	371,045

Indirect or Carrying Trade in British Vessels from and to other Countries.

Chinese Ports ...	5	9	14	1,511	4,005	5,516	170	2,042		Japan ...	2	...	2	802	...	802	25	5,622
Manila ...	...	1	1	...	247	247	16	...		Jeddah ...	1	...	1	374	...	374	30	230
France ...	2	...	2	599	...	599	22	6,000		Chinese Ports ...	11	...	11	4,081	...	4,081	144	29,080
Java ...	...	1	1	...	336	336	12	...		San Francisco ...	3	...	3	1,120	...	1,120	38	14,560
										Java ...	1	...	1	293	...	293	11	1,600
										Europe ...	5	...	5	2,652	...	2,652	81	22,997
										France ...	3	...	3	1,267	...	1,267	41	18,616
	7	11	18	2,110	4,588	6,698	231	8,042			20	...	20	10,592	...	10,592	370	92,945
Total ...	71	93	164	29,956	43,232	73,188	2,963	133,232		Total ...	153	2	155	67,898	1,337	69,235	2,801	463,990

British Consulate, Bangkok, February 12, 1870.

(Signed)

THOMAS GEORGE KNOX, Consul-General.

(No. 2.)—RETURN of British and Foreign Shipping at the Port of Bangkok, during the Year 1869.

Nationality.	ENTERED.									CLEARED.											
	With Cargoes.			In Ballast.			Total.			Invoice Value of Cargoes	With Cargoes.			In Ballast.			Total.			Invoice Value of Cargoes.	
	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.		Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.		
British ... / ...	71	29,956	1,275	93	43,232	1,688	164	73,188	2,963	£ 133,232	153	67,898	2,778	2	1,337	23	155	69,235	2,801	£ 463,990	
Danish ...	1	320	...	4	1,248	...	5	1,568	...	2,300	6	1,810	...	...	...	6	6	1,810	...	9,655
Dutch ...	14	4,865	...	5	2,936	...	19	7,801	...	11,370	13	5,338	...	...	...	13	13	5,338	...	16,108
French ...	16	5,455	...	15	5,510	...	31	10,965	...	6,600	29	9,815	...	...	...	29	29	9,815	...	56,757
Swedish and Norwegian ...	3	1,088	...	1	295	...	4	1,383	...	2,090	3	1,165	...	...	...	3	3	1,165	...	7,000
North German ...	45	16,834	...	20	9,283	...	65	26,117	...	13,125	61	24,413	...	...	...	61	61	24,413	...	135,493
Russian ...	1	499	...	1	619	...	2	1,118	...	200	2	1,118	...	...	...	2	2	1,118	...	7,133
United States ...	2	867	...	8	3,319	...	10	4,206	...	6,500	10	5,108	...	...	...	10	10	5,108	...	25,118
Siamese ...	154	56,791	...	1	412	...	155	57,203	...	544,613	159	57,168	...	...	...	159	159	57,168	...	455,772
Portuguese ...	4	600	...	...	...	...	4	600	...	1,600	4	600	...	...	...	4	4	600	...	7,720
Spanish ...	...	...	...	1	236	...	1	236	...	...	1	236	...	...	...	1	1	236	...	2,460
	311	117,295		149	67,120		460	184,415		761,870	441	174,779		2	1,337		443	176,116		1,181,176	

BANGKOK.

British Consulate, Bangkok, February 12, 1870.

(Signed) THOMAS GEORGE KNOX, Consul.

(No. 3.)—RETURN of Foreign Shipping engaged in the Direct and Indirect Trade at the Port of Bangkok during the Year 1869.

Nationality of Vessels.	ENTERED.						CLEARED.					
	Direct Trade.		Indirect Trade.		Total.		Direct Trade.		Indirect Trade.		Total.	
	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.
French.. .. .	8	3,625	23	7,389	31	11,014	4	2,034	25	7,831	29	9,845
United States .. .. .	..	..	10	4,162	10	4,162	..	..	10	5,108	10	5,108
North German.. .. .	4	1,406	61	21,057	65	22,463	8	4,321	53	20,092	61	24,413
Dutch	3	1,607	16	6,193	19	7,800	7	2,406	6	2,962	13	5,368
Danish.. .. .	..	..	5	1,568	5	1,568	..	..	5	1,568	5	1,568
Swedish and Norwegian .. .. .	..	..	4	1,383	4	1,383	..	..	3	1,165	3	1,165
Russian .. .. .	..	..	2	1,118	2	1,118	..	..	2	1,118	2	1,118
Portuguese .. .. .	..	..	4	600	4	600	..	..	4	600	4	600
Spanish .. .. .	..	..	1	236	1	236	..	..	1	236	1	236
Siamese	155	57,168	..	..	155	57,168	159	57,168	..	..	159	57,168

SIAM.

British Consulate, Bangkok, February 12, 1870.

(Signed) THOMAS GEORGE KNOX, Consul.

RATES of Exchange at Bangkok during the Year 1869.

	On London, at Six Months After Sight.	On Singapore, at Ten Days After Sight.	On Hong Kong, at Thirty Days After Sight.
	s. d.		
January ..	4 6	Par.	4 per cent. discount.
February ..	4 6	Ditto.	Ditto.
March ..	4 6	Ditto.	3½ per cent. discount.
April ..	4 6	Ditto.	Ditto.
May ..	4 7	Ditto.	Ditto.
June ..	4 7½	Ditto.	2½ per cent. discount.
July ..	4 7	Ditto.	Ditto.
August ..	4 6	Ditto.	Ditto.
September ..	4 6	Ditto.	Ditto.
October ..	4 6½	Ditto.	Ditto.
November ..	4 6½	Ditto.	Ditto.
December ..	4 7	Ditto.	3½ per cent. discount.

Bangkok, February 12, 1870.