SIAM. No. 2 (1880).

# COMMERCIAL REPORT

BY THE

## ACTING BRITISH CONSUL-GENERAL

IN

# SIAM

FOR THE YEAR

1879.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. 1880.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

1880.

### Commercial Report by the Acting British Consul-General in Siam for the Year 1879.

#### SHIPPING.

In this year the total tonnage entered and cleared at this port exceeds

that of any previous year.

The year that comes nearest to it in this respect is 1876, when the total tonnage entered and cleared amounted to 458,020 tons, of which 181,252

tons were British.

In this year, 1879, the total tonnage entered and cleared amounted to 481,098 tons, of which 242,612 were British.

From this it will be seen that in this year more than half the tonnage was British, while in 1876 only 40 per cent. was British.

From this it would appear that in this trade, at any rate, the British shipping has, during the late bad times, gained on that of other nations

In this calculation I have ignored the native junk trade, which amounts to about 10,000 tons, and is chiefly under the Chinese flag, with a sprinkling of French and English boats.

Rice.—The export of rice, our principal article of export, this year exceeds, according to the custom-house returns, that of any preceding

A great portion of this grain has been sent direct to Europe.

The year has been distinguished by an unusual amount of rain up country, and consequent heavy floods in the plains. The Siamese say that the water has not been so deep in the Menam valley for more than thirty years. For more than ten weeks the whole of Bangkok was inundated at every tide, and at one time there was nearly a foot of water in the office of this Agency, a state of affairs which I have not before experienced in twenty-two years' residence at this place. As the water subsided, the decaying vegetable matter, and the washings of the stinking fish manure from the gardens, caused very unpleasant odours to prevail, and, as might have been expected, fevers of a malignant type have been unusually common. The stench in the latter part of December was so bad that the crew of Her Majesty's ship "Encounter," lying at the outer anchorage at the bar of the Menam river, suffered much inconvenience, and Dr. Coates, staff-surgeon on board, made a rough analysis of the water alongside the vessel and reported it to contain large quantities of ammonia and sulphuretted hydrogen.

The fruit gardens suffered much injury, and a great deal of the growing rice was drowned and destroyed, but the loss to the people on this account is not so great as might be supposed, for, as the floods subsided, they replanted their rice, and a good crop is expected for next season. Thus the cultivators have, in many cases, to go through the labour of planting twice over. This they regard as a considerable hardship, but in

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reality, however, it is not a very great evil, for it has kept the people employed during a period which is usually devoted to drinking and

gambling.

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Teak.—The past year has been on the whole a favourable one for the timber traders, a larger amount of wood having been got out of the forests this season than perhaps ever before. This is owing to the unusually high floods spoken of above, which have facilitated the floating out of the logs. These floods, however, are not an unmixed advantage to the traders, for the force of the water causes many rafts to be broken up, and much timber thus gets adrift, and is often picked up by unprincipled persons and appropriated instead of being held to salvage according to recognized custom. This evil, and many others which check the increase of this trade, would be much lessened by the introduction of some such system of registration and supervision as is in force on the rivers of British Burmah, and is there found to work so well.

The forests still continue to be worked almost exclusively by British subjects from Burmah.

The export returns of 1879 do not show the result of the successful forest season, as the bulk of the timber is still on its way down river.

Next year, however, will probably show a considerable increase in the export of this article.

Pepper and Gamboge.—There is a considerable increase in the export of pepper this year as compared with the two previous years.

There is also an increase in gamboge, of which valuable production

Siam is considered to produce the best in the world.

The port of Chantaboon is one of the chief places from which pepper comes to Bangkok, and is, I believe, the only place from which gamboge comes.

During the past year the Borneo Company, the only English firm here, have established regular steam communication between Bangkok and Chantaboon, and are rapidly gaining the confidence of the natives, and hope to thus open a new and profitable trade.

This enterprise has fortunately been assisted at the outset by the passenger traffic caused by the new sapphire mines discovered in the neigh-

bourhood of Chantaboon.

From May to December the number of passengers taken by the Company's steamer from Bangkok to Chantaboon was 4,912, the great majority of whom were British subjects furnished with passports from this Agency.

Sapphires.—The year 1879 will long be memorable in the provinces of Battambong and Chantaboon for the discovery of valuable sapphire mines and for the great influx of foreigners, chiefly from British and Independent Burmah, to work the same. There have long been mines of inferior value in this neighbourhood, and about five years ago new mines were discovered by a native hunter. Being, however, in a very remote and secluded position, it was some time before the fame of the new mines spread to the Burman and Indian gem traders and miners.

Some individual diggers, however, having found their way to the mines, and having returned to Rangoon and Calcutta with the proceeds of their work, realised very large sums, and a rush for the new mines commenced and continued throughout the last year, during which many thousands of British subjects passed through Bangkok from British Burmah on their way to the mines.

The arrival of these large bands of armed strangers caused considerable alarm among the natives of Chantaboon and Battambong, who could scarcely be persuaded that the country was not invaded once more by the old hereditary enemies of Siam, the Burmans and Peguans.

The miners, however, by their peaceable behaviour restored confidence,

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and the country people soon were glad to sell them all kinds of provisions at enhanced rates.

The miners, in their haste to become rich, disregarded all considerations of health, and immense numbers died from jungle fever. The Toung-thoos from Pegu proved the most capable of standing the climate, and, many having made money and returned successful to their homes, the rush continued unabated for a long time; but now the great mortality is beginning to tell, and the broken health and emaciated appearance of most of those who return will check the eagerness of others to try their fortunes in this fever-stricken district.

The Governor of the province has hitherto levied  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ticals (5s.  $7\frac{1}{2}d$ .) from every man working at the mines, and this is cheerfully paid.

Good order has hitherto, I am happy to say, been maintained, and the Governor has appointed a British subject named Kam Sai to act as Headman and to collect the license duty.

The Siamese authorities do not regard with entire complacency this conveyance from their soil of these valuable gems without the payment of any royalty. No definite proposition has, however, yet been made to impose any other than the license tax above mentioned.

There would probably be found considerable difficulty in collecting any sort of ad valorem duty.

As it is, the discovery of the most valuable stones is kept as secret as possible by the fortunate finders, and should any ad valorem duty be attempted to be imposed, the tax-gatherer would probably be defeated by craft or force.

When Admiral Coote was here, I was anxious to show him some good specimens of these sapphires, and called for some of the miners who were in Bangkok on their return from the diggings. One of them, a poorly clad and miserable looking individual, produced a few small stones, and, after a great deal of coaxing, was induced with many precautions to give us a private view of his great prize, which was a very large sapphire in the rough, which he valued at 20,000 rupees. He would probably not have shown this stone at all had he not been on the point of leaving in a steamer.

Owing to the secrecy thus observed by the possessors of valuable gems, it is impossible to give any estimate of the total value of stones found, but that individuals have made very large profits is certain. There is a man now in Bangkok who dug out a stone which he offered for sale in Chantaboon at 1,000 rupees, but did not find a purchaser. He went with it to Rangoon, where he was offered 15,000 rupees; but, having then awoke to the value of the stone, he declined to sell and took it to Calcutta, where he eventually obtained 30,000 rupees for it.

Now, however, there are many experienced gem merchants established in the neighbourhood of the mines, and something like the real value of the stones can be obtained by the miners on the spot.

Many of the miners finding themselves in cash have invested in the luxury of wives taken from the Siamese population, and the value of marriageable young women, who are at all good looking, has in consequence gone up to a very high figure.

The largest sapphire hitherto found, which I know of, weighed 370 carats in the rough, and when cut turned out 111 carats of the finest water.

The ruby, onyx, and jade are also found in the district, but the quality of none of these is such as to make them very valuable.

Among the provisions most popular with the miners are preserved milk in tins, and English biscuits of all kinds, and of these articles there is now an abundant supply in the native shops of Chantaboon.

Cattle.—There is a large overland trade in buffaloes and bullocks with British Burmah, of which I am unable to obtain any reliable statistics. This trade is chiefly conducted by wandering bands of British subjects from Burmah, and they are often the prey of Siamese dacoits. The Siamese, on the other hand, declare that these British subjects are by no means blameless themselves, but I really believe that the great mass of them are exceedingly inoffensive and useful traders. They traverse the jungles in every direction, appearing to be proof against the fevers which are generally so deadly.

There has been for the last two years a continual export of cattle from

Bangkok to supply the Dutch at Acheen, and at one time the Siamese authorities became alarmed lest there should not be enough left for agricultural purposes, cattle stealing being so rife in the country that the natural rise in price of animals as they become scarce could not be relied upon to stop the traffic in time to prevent serious inconvenience. The trade has, however, continued unchecked, and hitherto the fears expressed

have not been realized, and less anxiety is felt on the subject.

The contract for the supply of the Dutch is held by a German firm here, who buy the cattle from Indians, subjects of Her Majesty, who collect them from the natives. The cattle are exported in a British steamer chartered for the purpose.

W. H. NEWMAN. (Signed)

Bangkok, March 15, 1880.

### (Table 1.)—RETURN of British Shipping at the Port of Bangkok for the Year 1879.

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

	•	En	TERED.							CL	EARRD.				
	Num	ber of Ye	ssels.		Tonnage.		Invoice		Nun	ber of Ye	ssels.		Tonnage.		Invoice Value of
Whence Arrived.	With Cargo.	In Ballast.	Total.	With Cargo.	In Ballast.	Total.	Value of Cargoes.	Where Bound.	With Cargo.	In Ballast.	Total.	With Cargo.	In Ballast,	Total.	Cargoes,
Great Britain	93 41 	1 20 5 8 5 4 2 1	5 113 46 8 5 4 2 1	1,623 43,909 28,031  	612 19,583 3,685 6,805 5,614 4,184 1,500 467	2,235 56,492 31,916 8,805 5,614 4,181 1,500 467	£ 5,340 530,516 251,881  	Great Britain Singapore Hong Kong Calcutta	54 54	ï	39 91 54 1	34,161 39,907 36,469 	1,152 1,631 2,783	34,161 41,050 36,469 1,631	253,493 396,809 469,294 

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

Chinese ports Java	2	3 8 2 1	15 10 2 1	3,895 415 	2,158 4,317 920 614	6,053 4,732 920 641	14,059 1,545 	Chinese ports Java	***	:::	7 14	:::	7 14	2,260 3,470	:::	2,260 3,470	23,674 26,456
	14	14	28	4,310	8,039	12,319	15,604			- 1	21		21	5,730		5,730	49,529
Total	152	60	212	77,873	45,689	123,569	812,353	Total	***		201	2	206	116,267	2,783	119,050	1,169,105

British Agency and Consulate-General, Bangkok, March 15, 1880. (Signed)

W. H. NEWMAN, Acting Agent and Consul-General.

(Table 2:)—RETURN of British and Foreign Shipping at the Port of Bangkok for the Year 1879.

			Enti	ened.							CLEA	RED.			
	With	Cargo.	In I	Ballast.	Т	otal.	Invoice		Wit	ı Cargo.	In I	3allast.	т	otal.	Invoice
Nationality.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Value of Cargoes.	Nationality.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Value of Cargoes.
British Siamesc German Dutch Danish American French Norwegian Italian Spanish Russian Junks	152 131 21 2 4 4 5 4  120	77,873 67,501 9,126 613 1,020 2,343 1,695 1,830  (?)	60 5 38 5 3 3 2 1 3 1 1 (?)	45,689 1,851 20,538 2,960 1,120 1,584 736 279 1,798 651 1,073 (?)	212 136 59 7 7 7 7 5 3 2 1 120	123,562 69,352 29,664 3,573 2,140 3,927 2,431 2,109 1,798 1,302 1,073 (?)	\$12,353 455,159 29,684 1,646 90 8,377 11,033 3,210  5,004  29,220	British Siamese German Dutch Danish American French Norwegian Italian Spanish Russian Junks	168 62 11 12 8 6 6 2 2	116,267 69,539 29,571 4,998 4,097 4,510 2,682 2,616 1,473 1,158 1,073 5,133	2      	2,783      130	206 168 62 11 12 8 6 6 2 2 2 1 184	119,050 69,539 29,571 4,998 4,097 4,510 2,082 2,616 1,473 1,158 1,073 5,263	£ 1,169,125 642,715 257,648 27,772 21,944 35,038 14,347 29,029 9,235 13,140 7,313 42,648 2,269,954

British Agency and Consulate-General, Bangkok, March 15, 1880. (Signed)

W. H. NEWMAN, Acting Agent and Consul-General.

(Table 3.)—Return of Foreign Shipping engaged in the Direct and Indirect Trade at the Port of Bangkok in the Year 1879.

1													1763-041-04
		Entered							CLEARED				
	Direc	t Trade.	Indire	ct Trade.	т	otal.		Direc	t Trade.	Indire	ct Trade,	T	otal.
Nationality.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Nationality.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.
Siamese German Dutch Dunish American French Norwegian Italian Spanish Russian	136 1 2 	69,352 441 1,717 	58 57 77 77 75 3 2 1	29,223 1,856 2,140 3,927 2,431 2,109 1,798 1,302 1,073	136 59 7 7 7 7 7 5 3 2 1	69,352 29,664 3,573 2,140 3,927 2,431 2,109 1,798 1,302 1,073	Siamese	168 4 9   	69,539 3,191 4,296 	58 2 12 8 6 6 2 2 1	26,380 702 4,097 4,510 2,082 2,616 1,473 1,158 1,073	168 62 11 12 8 6 6 2 2 2 1	69,539 29,571 4,998 4,097 4,510 2,082 2,616 1,473 1,158 1,073
	139	71,510	95	45,859	234	117,369		181	77,026	97	44,031	2/8	121,117

British Agency and Consulate-General, Bangkok, March 15, 1880. (Signed)

W. H. NEWMAN, Acting Agent and Consul-General.

Furnished by H. S. H.'s Commissioner of Customs.

	From	Singapore.	From Ilo	ng Kong.	From	China.	From .	Europe.	Prom	Java.	From C	Coast.		
Description.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quan'iry.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantify.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Total Quantity.	Total Mexican Dollars.
Shirtings, white Pieces  - "Figured " Coloured piece goods " Turkey red clothis	592 592 1,199 7,001 9,904 3,324 777	0,457 43,500 20,216 24,212 873 68,583 10,654 23,200 13,475 608,530 313,475 608,530 41,540 2,680 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 10,582 6,530 8,50 8,50 8,50 8,50 8,50 8,50 8,50 8,5	1,839 1,839 1,931	Dollars 2,450 2,272 38,711 21,318 72,016 15,122 20,656 5,054 17,312 13,236 5,054 17,312 13,236 380	2.318 2.318 2.318 2.318 2.319 2.319 2.319 2.319 2.319 2.319 3.319	Dollars 493 5,341 5,401 14,821 4,821 4,821 658 617 3,506 4,025 3,1361	5,856 9,256 124 3 256 200 70 039	Dollars 4,413 379 1,679 5,413 550 5,488 3,618 3,618 10,041 5,3077 1,363	"110 "40 "528	Dollars.  484  440  520	4,810	Dollars 2,729 391 1,801 6,501 10,413	181,007 284,186 42,632 84,785 1,042 59,812 1,496 7,678 37,618 1,043 1,065 1,768 877 85,122	343,014 362,850 24,850 20,216 24,252 36,890 36,890 36,890 36,690

	From Singapore. From H	g Kong. From China.	From Europe.	From Java.	From Coast.	1	
Description.	Quantity.  Value.  Quantity.	Value. Quantity.	Quantity.	Quantity.	Quantity.	Total Quantity,	Total Mexican Dollars,
ilk piece goods Fieces  , ctape 7, ctape 7, ctape 8, ctape 8, ctape 9, ctap	29,481	Dollars   Dollars   193,704   2,931   776,837   776   2,293   776,837   2,103   2,10	2,131 12,355 131 4,000 131 4,000 132 605 133 605 133 605 134 607 136 756 137 637 230 4,185 11,678 20,166	90 2,160 1,700 1,7	Dollars.  10,010,911 214,665 27,879 32 21,101 35,345 35,34	30,616 674 30,334 16,891 16,891 16,891 16,891 10,696,799 601,893 17,997 17,997 17,997 1,188 5,190 1,188 5,190 1,188 5,190 1,188 5,190 1,188 5,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,188 1,190 1,	199,309 29,881 29,881 29,981 21,945 461,283 21,863 21,863 20,184

	Fron	Singapore.	From Ho	ng Kong.	From	China.	From 1	Europe.	From	Java.	From (	Const.		
Description.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Total Quantity.	Total Mexican Dollars.
Betel nut Piculi Boes war " Shor silk " Dates silk " Dates silk " Dates silk " Dates silk " Paris cools " Raris goods " Rifles and guns " Sugar " Picul Treasure Cases	ges 592 1,32 305 375 375 375	20,949 20,788 2,398 1,236 22,680 15,062  1,224,069	252 197 5,874 12  310	9,367 6,328 304  2,441 62,521	20 298 398 31,768	Dollars 4,880 50 1,757	::: ::: ::: ::: ::: ::: ::: ::: ::: ::	Dollars 6,158 600	::: ::570 :::	Dollars 642	3,580 7 	Dollars. 7,409 1,269	33,609 1,172 453 1,329 7,682 5,762 901 	70,770 33,023 45,324 2,398 7,256 22,044 21,220 4,198 1,287,190
		4,592,139		1,459,253	•••	168,315	•••	98,485	•••	31,371		140,254	***	6,489,817

EXPORT of Merchandize from the Port of Bangkok, Siam, from January 1 to December 31, 1879.

Furnished by H. S. M.'s Customs.

								urmaneu nj	11.0.01	a Ouaton	10.								
				For Hon	g Kong.	For Sing	apore.	For Cl	ina.	For Sa	igon.	For Eur Ame	ope and crica.	For	Java.	For C	Coast.		
D	escript	ion.		Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value,	Total Quantity.	Total Value in Mexican Dollars.
Rice Paddy Sugar Pepper Peas Teel-seed Sapan wood Ebony Rosewood .			Piculs	16,841 20,900 11,313 1,087 6,854 43,164	Dollars. 2,410,008 22,103 117,740 111,835 4,040 21,720 93,869 250 62,131	1,462,063 2,915 6,495 4,712 15,884 13,323 7,710	Dollars, 2,607,114 4,043 42,607 37,922 39,962 44,407 15,086  574	89,816 9,261 3,615 3,713  13,434	Dollars 171,142 12,006 16,438 31,480  39,781 13,469	391  	Dols. 1,980	1,145,365  754  8,100 5,417 	5,300 11,000	125,507 330 	Dollars. 236,723 500	3,864 262 270 15 35 	Dollars. 5,822 210 1,965 90 50	3,996,544 29,609 31,601 20,507 17,006 29,277 69,725 100 39,846	7,157,227 38,562 180,630 186,627 41,052 110,127 158,010 250 76,174

	For Hon	g Kong.	For Sing	apore.	For C	iina.	For Sa	igon.	For Eur Ame	rope and crica.	For	Java.	For	Const.		***************************************	
Description.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Total Quantity.	Total Value in Mexican Dollars.	
Teak planks Ticuls Ticuls timber Cities Tices Salt Coyans Dried mussels Piculs Tices Salt Coyans Dried mussels Piculs Tices Salt Coyans Dried mussels Piculs Salt Coyans Dried Mussels Salt Coyans Dried Salt Coyans Dried Salt Coyans Dried Salt Coyans Salt Coyans Dried Salt Coyans Salt Coyans Dried Sal	55,444 451 451 451 451 451 17,883 1,270 861 861 861 198 57 77 81 1890 1,121 8,905 1,121 8,905 1,121 8,905 251 34 1,004 1,004 1,004 1,004 1,004 1,005 1	Dollars. 90,001 4,925 2,376 6,00,908 27,712 8,044 8,742 78 8,044 8,742 11,043 9,552 10,410 1,050	9,271 4,200 5,045 5,045 5,045 5,125 6,025 5,125 6,025	Deliura 18,650 12,054 12,054 12,054 12,055 112,065 28,619 12,065 28,065	45,466 1,549 3,295 63 3,927 4 4 4 5,660 8,021 4,918 8,033 4,42 7 2 25 33	Dollnar 64,279 13,762 27,282 628 628 628 628 638 635 645 645 647,705 65,705 67,706 67,	130 75 71 71 71 71 71 71 71 71 71 71 71 71 71	Dols. 2000 76	"13 """	Dollars. 613 613	2,158 747 747	Dollars. 2,827	611 621 10  620  25 	Dollars 1,160 2,969 120	113,612 7,022 2,816 21,230 1,636 16,550 8,1636 8,180 16,71 17,161 1,315	177.813 17,892 17,892 14,023 30,376 120,662 37,433 8,519 3,748 3,748 4,752 10,410 10,410 10,410 10,457 11,452 11,4	SIAM. II

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	For Hon	g Kong.	For Sing	apore.	For Ch	ina.	For Sa	igon.	For Eur Ame	rope and crica.	For .	Java.	For (	Coast.		
Description.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Total Quantity,	Total Value in Mexican Dollars.
Sharks'fins Piculs  Sharks'fins Piculs  Shat meat	1,642 3,018	Dollars. 103 103 103 103 103 103 105 105 105 105 105 105 105 105 105 105	1,477 1 3,577	Dollars. 28,036 14,710 13,405 13,198 20,621 48 87,018 6,188 6,188 6,188 6,188 6,188 6,188 6,188 6,189 7,189 8,195 1,740 82,510 195 568,017	 483 929 425  926  130 10 10        	Dollars	1,058 	Tols		Dollars.	"08 141,073 1,811 2,702 10 672 ""799 ""799	Dollars	         	Dollars	16 3,602 7,391 147,639 20,949 6,931 20,667 1623 1,630 29,949 1,630 29,949 28,567 74,600 15,570 74,600 15,570	162 420 420 63405 66 379 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 68 68 67 67 67 67 67 67 67 67 67 67 67 67 67