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DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR REPORTS ON TRADE
AND FINANCE.

FRANCE.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1896

ON THE

TRADE OF SAIGON, & c.

REFERENCE TO PREVIOUS REPORT, Annual Series No. 1679.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty,
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FRANCE.

SAIGON.

Consul Tremlett to the Marquess of Salisbury.

(Received at Foreign Office, March 29, 1897.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to enclose my Annual Report upon the Trade, Commerce, and Navigation of Saigon for the year 1896.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHAS. F. TREMLETT.

Report on the Trade, Commerce, and Navigation of Saigon for the Year 1896.

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TONKIN.

The death of Governor-General Rousseau on November 9 interrupted in a degree the progress of the measures then in view.

Not so much is heard of "piracy," but an occasional outbreak, resulting in loss of life, shows that it is prevalent in the interior, (2334)

COCHIN-CHINA.

Rice season. As premised in previous report, the rice harvest was inferior to that of 1895, but not to the extent anticipated; it should, however, be mentioned that a considerable quantity of new grain coming in early was exported with and augments the total of the crop of 1896.

Export of rice. It will be seen by the following tables that shipments amounted to 8,281,000 piculs, equal to 487,000 tons, or 78,000 tons less than the previous season.

The export of broken rice and rice flour was 875,430 piculs, or 51,500 tons.

Total export 538,500 tons, or 74,000 tons less than that of 1895.

Qualities.	Quantity.	Value.	
		Currency.	Sterling.
	Tons.	Dollars.	£
White rice	169,300	8,020,000	868,800
Cargo	259,600	9,800,000	1,061,700
Paddy	68,100	1,780,000	187,400
Total	487,000	19,550,000	2,117,900

NOTE.—Exchange at 2s. 2d.

STATEMENTS of Rice Exports for 1896.

Countries.	Ports.	Quantity.	Total.
		Piculs.	Piculs.
China	Hong-Kong	5,660,200	5,765,400
	Swatow	47,800	
	Amoy	57,400	
Philippines	Manila	93,700	320,200
	Iloilo	222,700	
	Cebu	3,800	
Tonkin	Haiphong .. .. .	..	117,400
Straits	Singapore .. .. .	..	560,900
Java	Sourabaya .. .. .	..	569,300
Réunion.. .. .	Port Louis .. .. .	..	37,000
New Caledonia	Noumea .. .. .	..	14,100
Europe .. .. .	.. .. .	..	857,000
	Total .. .. .	..	8,281,300

New crop. The crop now being harvested cannot be reported upon with much approach to certainty as nothing will be actually known until a much later period; the weather during what should have been the wet season was very capricious, and although what is

called "early" rice benefited greatly from lack of rain, the bulk of the crop must have suffered more or less. Early grain came to market even in October, and, during the first half of November, arrived in quantities of 4,000 piculs daily—an unprecedented fact.

Of late years the climate of Cochin-China has changed to a considerable extent: there is no longer the comparatively "cool" season to which old residents have been accustomed from the end of November until March, and even now early in February there are signs of the commencement of the rains.

TABLE of other Exports.

Product.	Quantity.		Value.	
			Currency.	Sterling.
	Piculs.	Tons.	Dollars.	£
Betel nut	2,202	131	55,000	6,000
Cardamoms	759	45	151,800	16,500
Cocanut oil	2,143	127	1,700	180
Coprah	33,631	2,002	11,000	1,200
Cotton	52,053	3,100	1,041,000	113,000
Fish	1,004,177	60,000	10,042,000	1,088,000
Gamboge	304	18	18,200	2,000
Hides	9,878	588	197,600	21,500
Horns	5,460	325	92,800	10,000
Isinglass	483	28	144,900	15,700
Lard	11,462	680	137,500	14,900
Pepper	20,025	1,192	701,000	76,000
Silk	5,420	322	1,355,000	147,000
Salt	101,522	6,043	13,200	1,400
Wood	3,053	182	6,100	700
Pigs (live) (number)	14,804	..	118,400	12,800

The number of vessels of all nations that cleared from Saigon during the year 1896 was 307, of 366,268 tons; adding the steamers of the Messageries Maritimes, Compagnie Nationale, and Bangkok Lines, the total comes to 478 vessels, of 608,817 tons.

The British flag accounts for 112 vessels, of 155,541 tons, or somewhat less than one-half of the tonnage employed.

The average tonnage of British vessels was 1,380; that of the others about the same.

STATEMENT of Shipping Entered.

Nationality.	Steam.		Sailing.		Total.	
	Number of Vessels.	Tons.	Number of Vessels.	Tons.	Number of Vessels.	Tons.
British	110	153,048	2	2,495	112	155,541
Dutch	1	1,415	...	...	1	1,415
French	2	1,524	2	2,999	4	4,523
German	137	173,370	...	...	137	173,370
Norwegian	28	25,178	...	...	28	25,178
American ... ..	...	...	2	2,631	2	2,631
Swedish	1	989	1	685	2	1,674
Japanese	1	1,886	...	...	1	1,886
Total	300	357,408	7	8,860	307	366,268
Messageries Maritimes	120	187,583	...	...	120	187,583
Compagnie Nationale... ..	24	44,853	...	...	24	44,853
Messageries Fluviales	27	10,113	...	...	27	10,113
Grand total	471	599,957	7	8,860	478	608,817

Rates of freight ruled as under:—

	Per Picul.	
	From—	To—
	Cents.	Cents.
Singapore	4	11
Hong-Kong	5	15
Philippines	16	20
Amoy	19	20
Java	15	17

Port regulations.

Port regulations were published afresh in August; they contain some new and some old paragraphs. Art. 9. Except within the actual roads of Saigon, all crimes, délits, &c., are considered as having occurred at sea. Art. 12. Each pilot shall hand each captain coming in from sea a copy of these regulations, so that he cannot plead ignorance, and it is to be hoped that the captains will get them.

Exchange.

Exchange has fluctuated more or less, but in no marked degree.

Rates have ruled as under:—

Paper.	Usance.	From—	To—
London Bank Bills	Demand	2s. 1½d.	2s. 2½d.
Documentary Bills	3 months'	2s. 1½d.	2s. 3½d.
Hong-Kong Bank Bills	Demand	¼ % premium	1½ % discount
Documentary Bills	15 days'	1 % discount	4 % discount
Singapore Bank Bills	Demand	¼ % premium	2 % discount
Documentary Bills	30 days'	1 % discount	4½ % discount
Manila Documentary Bills..	30 days'	Par	
Japan Documentary Bills ..	30 days'	2 % discount	4½ % discount
Java Documentary Bills ..	30 days'	129 florins	140 florins

NOTE.—The official dollar rate closed at 2.65 fr., as against 2.75 fr., December, 1895.

BULLION.

				Amount.
				Dollars.
Coin imported .. .. .	..	..	..	6,459,500
„ exported .. .. .	..	..	..	1,432,000

Consequent upon the existence of the bubonic plague at Hong-Kong, the import of cattle, sheep, and everything appertaining to them, was absolutely prohibited in May, but this prohibition was withdrawn in October. Cattle importation.

A white light was exhibited on July 1 on the Isles de Norway in the Gulf of Tonkin, varied by two flashes in two minutes: height above sea level 110 metres, height of tower 30 metres, visible 22 miles. Lighthouse.

The Budget is fixed at 12,000,000 dol. (1,125,000*l.*)

Budget.

CHOLON.

This city, commonly called "China Town," is, as its native name implies, the mart for all products of the colony, and of Cambodia. Grain from the most distant provinces must pass Saigon, and find a market there; it is the residence of all Chinese merchants, and rice-mills, with one exception, are situated there.

Its population is estimated at 120,000, to which should be added at least 20,000 during the busy season; but these figures are probably much below the reality.

It boasts of a Mayor and Municipal Council, which disposes of a budget of 175,000 dol. (20,000*l.*).

Passes which cost in 1896 10 dol. 9 c. (1*l.* 2s. 1d.) have been raised to 12 dol. 50 c. (1*l.* 5s. 7d.) per annum. Taxes on Chinese.

Passports formerly 4 dol. (8s. 10d.) are now 6 dol. 50 c.

(14s. 6d.); there has been some rioting in consequence, and the price of labour all round has increased 100 per cent.

Trade of
Leeds and
district.

The following observations refer to the trades principally carried on in the Leeds district, and on which, in a recent circular from the Foreign Office, I was requested to report.

Generally speaking, the "Tarif," which is the General Tariff of France, severely handicaps all foreign manufactures.

Woollens.

Woollens may almost be left out of consideration, except light blankets, of which a large number are sold yearly at 2s. 9d. each.

Iron.

Large quantities of iron are employed constantly. It is nearly all imported from France, if not manufactured there.

Textile
machinery.

Some ginning machinery has been ordered from America, and the industry may develop at no distant date.

Agricultural
machinery.

With regard to agricultural machinery methods are very primitive, and will change with difficulty.

Electric light
machinery.

There has been a good deal done in electric light machinery, and, with the exception of the post office, all by foreign firms, English for the most part. The cities of Saigon and Cholon are to be lighted by electricity, but I am not able to state whether the contract has been settled; the money, however, has been voted.

Brickmaking
machinery.

An enormous quantity of bricks are made and used annually, and I should say there was not much machinery used in the process. It is quite possible that something may be done in this, if not too expensive.

Leather
tanning, &c.

Chinese and natives produce a considerable quantity of leather of an inferior quality, but it is good enough for native use apparently; even Europeans use it on account of its cheapness.

Tobacco.

The tobacco plant is superb, but the quality does not recommend itself to European taste, and is not an article of export.

Soap making.

There is a fairly large establishment which exports a considerable quantity of soap to neighbouring colonies.

Coal mining.

Coal mining is extensively carried on in Tonkin.

If I have not mentioned each subject noted in the circular, my silence may be taken to mean either that the article is unsuited to the place, or that no profitable business is likely to be done in it.

Above all, it should be borne in mind that labour is plentiful and cheap, except for Europeans.

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