

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 442.

The following petition from certain dealers in fire-arms with reference to the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Arms Consolidation Ordinance, 1895," which was laid before the Legislative Council on the 31st ultimo, is published.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 1st August, 1899.

In the matter of the Arms Consolidation Ordinance, 1895,
and

In the matter of a proposed Ordinance to amend the Arms
Consolidation Ordinance, 1895.

To

His Excellency Sir HENRY BLAKE, G.C.M.G.,
*Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Hongkong
and Vice-Admiral of the same,*

And to the Legislative Council of the said Colony.

The Humble Petition of The Tung Tak firm of No. 191
Queen's Road Central, The Yow Foo firm of No. 356
Queen's Road Central, The Chee Yan firm of No. 230
Queen's Road Central, The Fook Lung firm of No. 14
Fat Hing Street, The Tak Lung firm of No. 322
Queen's Road Central, The Wing Tack firm of No.
16 Queen's Road West, The Luen Wo firm of No.
12 Queen's Road West, The Cheung Tai firm of
No. 140 Praya West, The Tung Sing firm of No. 54
Queen's Road West, and the Kwong Tak Cheong
firm of No. 215 Queen's Road West, all of Victoria,
in the Colony of Hongkong, Arms Dealers.

Respectfully Sheweth:—

1. That your Petitioners are dealers in arms as defined by section 3 of Ordinance No. 8 of 1895 carrying on business in the Colony of Hongkong at the respective addresses above mentioned.
2. That at the present time there are eleven Chinese firms licensed under the said Ordinance No. 8 of 1895 at Victoria aforesaid carrying on the said business of dealers in arms of whom your Petitioners are ten, the remaining firm being the Yow Cheong firm of No. 206 Queen's Road Central, Victoria aforesaid.
3. That at the present time your Petitioners, in accordance with the provisions of section 10 of the said Ordinance No. 8 of 1895, pay to the Government of this Colony an annual fee of \$10 in respect of the licence to deal in arms granted to them under section 10 of the said Ordinance No. 8 of 1895.
4. That your petitioners are informed that a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Arms Consolidation Ordinance, 1895," has been recently introduced into the Legislative Council of this Colony and was read a first time by the said Council on the 20th June, 1899, whereby it is proposed to enact (*inter alia*) that [section 3] section 10 of Ordinance No. 8 of 1895 shall be thereby repealed and in lieu thereof the following section substituted:—

"Every importer of or dealer in arms shall take out a licence annually and shall register his name and place of business for the time being, and any godown, warehouse or other place in which he stores or intends to store arms, at the Office of the Captain Superintendent of Police. Any importer of or dealer in arms not taking out such licence as aforesaid or not registering as aforesaid shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months. From and after the commencement of this Ordinance the fee payable for such licence as aforesaid shall be \$1,200 per annum payable in advance, but no person, who at the date of the commencement of this

Ordinance possesses a valid and unexpired licence for importing or dealing in arms, need take out a new licence under this Ordinance until the expiration of his current licence."

5. That the "Objects and Reasons" annexed to the said Bill as printed and published in *The Hongkong Government Gazette* of the 24th June, 1899, contain (*inter alia*) the following statement only with regard to the proposed annual licence fee of \$1,200 per annum, viz. :—
“(3.) To raise the annual licence fee from the sum of \$10 to \$1,200.”
6. That your petitioners respectfully beg to protest against the imposition of such proposed annual fee of \$1,200 on the grounds that it is excessive and prohibitive and that no sufficient reasons for the imposition thereof are given in the said "Objects and Reasons" and more particularly on the grounds and for the reasons hereinafter set forth.
7. That in this Colony the business of dealers in arms is, as compared with other forms of business carried on therein, extraordinarily hampered and curtailed primarily through the provisions of the said Ordinance No. 8 of 1895 which so fetters and confines the said business as to deprive it of that freedom which is usually enjoyed by other forms of business in this Colony and which your Petitioners submit it is the policy of the British Empire to ensure to its subjects.
8. That one of the practical results of the provisions of section 6 of the said Ordinance No. 8 of 1895 is to debar your Petitioners from retailing any of their stock-in-trade within this Colony or its Dependencies owing to the fact that all purchasers must possess a valid licence to carry or possess arms as more particularly stated in the said section and in consequence almost the sole form of business open to your Petitioners consists in the export trade in connection therewith.
9. That such export trade is almost wholly confined to the Portuguese Colony of Macao and to the City of Canton, in the Empire of China, and is in itself rendered difficult and troublesome owing to the provisions of the said Ordinance No. 8 of 1895 and more particularly of section 6 thereof which requires that a permit from the Captain Superintendent of Police must be obtained by the exporter in respect of each and every shipment made by him and particulars of such shipment given before such permit can be obtained, and in addition that in such cases as relate to shipments to places within the jurisdiction of the Emperor of China a further permit must first be obtained from the proper official at such place before the shipment can be made.
10. That as a result of the general restrictions put upon the said business the volume thereof is unreasonably curtailed and reduced and the profits derived by your Petitioners therefrom are precarious and small, and in the event of the imposition of such licence fee of \$1,200 as aforesaid none of your Petitioners would be in a position to pay the same and they would be driven to close their respective businesses in this Colony.
11. That should such licence fee be imposed it is the present intention of your Petitioners to remove their respective businesses to the said colony of Macao there to pursue the same.
12. That your Petitioners respectfully beg to lay before you the conditions under which similar businesses to their own can be carried on in the said colony of Macao, where the licence to dealers in arms amounts to \$2.50 per annum, where there are no regulations or restrictions such as are in existence in this Colony, where the retail business is unfettered (there being no farm or monopoly in respect of the dealing in arms), and where no permits save the said licence are required.
13. That owing to the conditions under which similar businesses can be carried on in the said colony of Macao and the consequent favourable terms upon which such businesses are enabled to compete with your Petitioners, they are unable to charge such prices for their goods as would enable them to make a fair and reasonable profit in their said businesses and so place them in a position to meet such licence fee of \$1,200 as aforesaid if imposed.
14. That the result of the closing of your Petitioners' said businesses in this Colony consequent upon the imposition of such licence fee of \$1,200 as aforesaid would be to put a practical stop to the business of dealing in arms in this Colony and would lead to the transfer to the said colony of Macao of the trade which this Colony enjoys in connection therewith.

15. And, lastly, that your Petitioners have large stocks ordered from Europe and partly in course of transit to this Colony and have further entered into contracts for the sale thereof or of a part thereof; and that heavy losses would result to your Petitioners in connection with the foregoing in the event of the closing of their said businesses which would be occasioned by the imposition of such licence fee of \$1,200 as aforesaid.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray Your Excellency that the existing annual licence fee for dealers in arms as provided by section 10 of Ordinance No. 8 of 1895 be not increased and that the proposed fee of \$1,200 be not imposed; and further that Your Excellency may be pleased to take such other action in the premises as to Your Excellency may seem fit. And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.

Dated this 8th day of July, 1899.

譚鏡 德隆泰記 陳逢桂 廣德昌隆記 關樑 福隆 雷銓 同盛 伍聰學 致仁義記 司徒華 祥泰號 何世榮 有孚 伍桂芳 興和號 林義益 同德 伍深榮 永德

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 443.

The following Regulation, made by His Excellency the Governor under section 10 of the Post Office Ordinance, is published for general information:—

REGISTERED COVERS.

From and after the tenth day of August, 1899, no registered covers shall be received at the General Post Office unless the same shall bear on the left-hand lower corner thereof the name and address, in full, of the sender.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 5th August, 1899.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 444.

The following Notice is published.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 5th August, 1899.

POST OFFICE NOTICE.

It is hereby notified that, in consequence of a communication received from the Director General of the Post Office in India to the effect that a Post Office is maintained by the Government of British India at—

Chandernagore,
Karikal,
Mahé,
Pondicherry,
Yanam,

from and after this date the scheme for Imperial Penny Postage will apply to the British Post Offices at those places as regards letters posted through this Office.

W. C. H. HASTINGS,
Postmaster General.

General Post Office, Hongkong, 5th August, 1899.