

Provisional Government of Spain on the 29th December last, reforming the Customs Tariffs in force in the Philippine Islands, as well as a Supplement to that Decree, relative to the nationalizing and importation of foreign vessels, and the building, careening, sale, and manning of Spanish ships.

The following is the translation of the Decree and the Supplement:—

ART. 1. The reform of the Customs Tariff of the Philippine Islands, made and carried out by the now abolished "Superintendencia General de Hacienda," in fulfilment of the Royal Order of 21st November 1860, is hereby approved, with the following modifications, viz., that for all financial operations the metrico-decimal system be used, and that woollen fabrics be classified by weight, like other articles, instead of calculating the duty on them by length.

ART. 2. The following form is given to the modifications made by the aforesaid "Superintendencia" in various divisions of the Tariff.

Div. 35. Duties on Gin, Bitters (ajinjo), &c., including the barrels. The marked duty is maintained, but the barrels shall pay separately.

The "Intendencia," having heard the Administration of the Branch, shall make a proportionate reduction in the duty on this article; that reform may be at once brought into action, in temporary substitution for the former reform, which is contrary to the usual Customs practice; but the Provisional Government must be consulted thereon.

Div. 268. Impure Carbonate of Soda.—Reducing the duty to 8 escudos, instead of 16, as marked in the Tariff.

Div. 1035. Plush and Shaggy Cloths, whether plain, worked or printed, shall pay at the rate of 260 escudos per quintal, instead of at the rate of 520, as formerly.

Div. 298. Barley, whether cleansed, pearl, or peeled. The duty is reduced to 24 escudos per quintal, instead of 1½ dollars per pound, as marked in the Tariff.

Div. 1004. Red Cotton, for weaving.

Div. 1005. White Cotton, unbleached ditto, or Cotton of other colours, for weaving.

Div. 1006. Yellow, Pink, and Green Cotton, for weaving.

These three divisions shall be amalgamated in one division (No. 1005), which shall be drawn up in the following manner:—

Spun Cotton for weaving, whether unbleached, white, or coloured, 120 escudos per quintal; duties 7 or 14 per cent., according to the flag, if coming from abroad; and 3 or 8 per cent., respectively, if coming from Spanish possessions.

*Mixed Woven Goods.* The following articles are added to the Tariff:—Cloths, thick worked Cloths (Pateneures), Kerseymeres, Beaver Cloths (Castorinas), and Serge, made half of wool and half of cotton in the wool and warp, with a duty of 75 centimes of a dollar per square yard; the duty to be for the future modified according to weight, in conformity with Article 1 of this Decree.

The following is the definition of Thin Woven Goods:—All articles in which there is room between each two threads for another thread of the same size shall be considered as Thin Woven Goods.

Coal from the mines of Cebú shall be exported free of duty.

ART. 3. The "Intendencia" shall particularly apply itself to the reforming of the Tariff anew,

by making a reduction of 50 per cent. in all additional duties over and above the 3 and 8 per cent., which are the general rates of duty; and by reducing the differential duty by 50 per cent. also. Those two duties shall be maintained for two years, counting from the date at which this Decree comes into force, and shall be abolished at the expiration of that term.

ART. 4. In the new Tariff all the present export duties shall be abolished. But exporters must declare the quality and quantity of the goods they export; and the Customs Administrations must intervene and note them down, for the purpose of drawing up the Commercial Statistics of the Islands.

ART. 5. The following additional charges are also abolished, viz., the 2 per cent. on European merchandize imported in Spanish vessels coming from the ports of Asia and Oceania, and the 1 per cent. on ditto from Singapore.

ART. 6. All the dues, hitherto known as Light House, Cleansing, Anchorage, Loading, and Discharge Dues, &c., shall, by the said "Intendencia" having heard the Junta of Tariffs and Finance, be amalgamated into one sole due, called Duty on Unloading (descarga), which shall be charged on the tons of 1,000 kilograms of merchandize unloaded; and the new duty shall be made to bear a proper proportion to the abolished dues, the rates being different for vessels navigating the high seas, for coasting vessels, and, among the latter, for those of less than 20 tons measurement. Should a vessel, forced to put into port by stress of weather, or any other "forca majeure," trans-ship her cargo to another vessel, or unload with the intention of loading again, she shall not pay the due, which is only chargeable on merchandize unloaded for the purpose of being introduced into the Islands.

ART. 7. The duty on unloading shall be collected by the Custom-houses, and shall, like all other general imposts, be paid into the public treasury.

ART. 8. The Customs Administration of Manilla shall receive the character of the Central Administration of the Branch, and shall at once take charge of the despatch of the matters confided with that character to the Tax Administration; but the head of the latter shall preserve the character of Revenue Inspector, and shall take cognizance of the appeals from the decisions of the former.

Madrid, 29th December 1868.

(Signed) ADELARDO LOPEZ DE AYALA,  
The Minister of the Colonies.

The rules now enforced in the Philippine Islands concerning the importation and nationalizing of foreign vessels, and the building, careening, sale, and manning of Spanish ships, are not sufficiently in accordance with the Decrees lately issued on that subject in the Peninsula, nor are they in conformity with generally received financial principles. To remedy this evil it will be proper to apply to the administration of those Colonies some of the Articles of the Decrees issued by the Ministry of Finance on 22d November last, thus obtaining practical result favourable to the liberty and facility of navigation.

Therefore, as a Supplement to the Decree of this day's date, reforming the Customs Tariffs of those Islands, and in the exercise of my powers