

Foreign Office, November 1, 1864.

EARL RUSSELL, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has received, through Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Peking, the following Report on the Trade of the Port of Tientsin, for the year 1863:—

**REPORT on the Trade of the Consular District of Tientsin, for the year 1863.**

Section I.

SHIPPING AND NAVIGATION.

*British and Foreign Vessels.*

The Shipping Returns for the year 1863, as compared with the returns of 1862, exhibit an increase in the number of British vessels trading at the port of Tientsin equal to one half. Indeed, the British vessels exceed *all* the other foreign flags, exclusive of the Americans which visit this port, by a little more than one-third. The subjoined Table will fully illustrate the truth of this:

Flag.	Shipping in 1863.		Shipping in 1862.	
	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.
British ...	69.	19,108	39	10,671
American ...	20	6,558	18	4,436
Sundry ...	45	10,610	54	11,454
<b>Totals</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>36,276</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>26,561</b>

The decrease which the returns exhibit in the number of "sundry" vessels is accounted for, first, [by the British merchants extensively employing small steamers in the Tientsin trade; and, secondly, by the British merchants having a quantity of light handy sailing-vessels suitable for this trade.

First. I mentioned in my report in 1862, the decrease in "sundry" vessels as compared with 1861, and I employed the following remarks as being in my opinion explanatory of the fact:—"The increase of small steamers in 1862," (as now in 1863) "connected with the Tientsin trade is, however, the principal cause of the decrease of continental shipping. These small steamers, nearly all of which hoist English colours, are undoubtedly by far the most convenient class of vessels for the traffic at this port. The city of Tientsin stands about 65 miles from the village of Taku, upon a river which, owing to its insufficient depth of water and tortuous course, is extremely difficult of navigation. At the mouth of this river (Pei-ho) there is a bar, which renders it unsafe for vessels drawing more than 11 feet 6 inches of water to enter Taku anchorage; while outside in the gulf the weather is often so boisterous, and the swell so high, that vessels cannot discharge their cargoes for several days together. The convenience, therefore, of a class of steam vessels able not only to clear the bar, but to carry their cargoes right up this 65 miles of river navigation to the very gates of the merchants godowns, is very great."

The trouble of hiring native boats, the slowness and stupidity of the native sailors, their dishonesty, the inconvenience of transhipment, and the delay which it occasions, have induced merchants to employ light swift steamers. *Three* such vessels have run regularly in 1863 between Tientsin and Shanghai, and several others have made occasional trips at moderate intervals.

Secondly. The British merchants at Tientsin have a sufficient quantity of sailing-vessels of a light draught of water, which renders the chartering of continental vessels superfluous. This was *not* so in 1861. British vessels could not be obtained of a size *small enough* for the Tientsin trade. The British merchants had, therefore, to charter continental vessels.

But the freight of German and Danish vessels has fallen in the market. The five or six British steamers, which trade between this and Shanghai, have engrossed the trade which belonged to continental vessels in 1861, and British merchants like British vessels better than those flying the flags of other Powers.

*Coasting Vessels.—Foreign and Native.*

The foreign vessels that visit Tientsin are, in the vast majority of instances, engaged in a merely coast trade. The merchants, foreign and native, in Hong Kong, Canton, and the other southern ports, charter foreign ships to transport their merchandise to Tientsin; and the merchants, foreign and native, in Tientsin employ foreign vessels to export their merchandise to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Canton, and other southern ports; the foreign ships and steamers generally touch at Shanghai, or make Shanghai their destination. The coasting trade at Tientsin, the only trade of the port, in the great majority of cases, is done by native or foreign Shanghai houses.

Not only are foreign vessels employed in a *coasting trade* between this port and Southern China, but they import and export *native produce*. Foreign vessels bring up to Tientsin, not only foreign manufactures, but sugar, rice, tea, oil, medicine, paper, and other native produce for which there is an extensive market at this port; and foreign vessels carry away not merely re-exports, but beans, peas, cotton, wool, hides, fruit, medicine, and other produce of Northern China, as well as the native junks. For particulars of the coasting trade, I beg to refer to my report on the trade of Tientsin, in 1861-1862.

The native junk is rapidly disappearing from the highways of commerce; the native merchants do not engage them; the principle of marine insurance annihilates the native craft: "Can you insure?" is a question which the Chinese merchants almost invariably put. Eighty southern junks came in 1863, one third of their holds were empty; one hundred and twenty-seven came in 1862. The eighty junks which entered in 1863, contained rice, sugar, tea, oil, paper, medicine, fruit, preserves, silk pieces, native hardware, wood, prepared opium, birds' nests, fish, sharks' fins, &c., &c., &c.; and they took away, peas, beans, salt, fruit, vegetables, fish, wheat, barley, millet, medicine, ginseng, &c., &c.

The coasting trade done in this consular district by the native junk is very great.

*Ports and Harbours, Buoys, Lighthouses, and Junk Buildings.*

For a description of the ports, harbours, buoys, lights, lighthouses, and junk buildings, I must refer to my report drawn up in 1862.

Section 2.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

*Foreign Trade Imports.*

The Import Return for 1863, given below, will sufficiently indicate the nature and extent of the trade transacted at Tientsin during 1863. Except cotton manufactures, the returns for 1863 compare very favourably with those for 1862.