

## PERSIA.

*Mr. Pratt to Mr. Bayard.*

No. 305.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Teheran, October 22, 1888. (Received November 30.)*

SIR: Believing it desirable that our Government should be enlightened in regard to the exact relation of silver to the economy of this Empire, I have been endeavoring for some time past to procure reliable data bearing upon that question for transmission to the Department.

The want of official statistics on the subject made this task seem in the beginning almost a hopeless one.

At last, however, I have succeeded in obtaining, through trustworthy private sources, the required information, and this I now have the honor to submit to you, embodied in the following report:

Though Persia nominally possesses a bimetallic currency and still continues to coin gold in small quantities, the universal medium of circulation throughout the land is silver.

This metal up to eight or nine years ago was supplied to the Persian mint in bars, imported by native and foreign merchants from England *via* Bushire.

The Persian mint then paid for the bullion an amount of new kran pieces equivalent in weight, and as the Persian kran is .90 fine, gained 11 per cent. or more on the transaction, the importers gaining  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., less their expenses for freight and insurance.

In October, 1880, 1 ounce troy of standard silver cost 56.35*d.* and one pound troy of it £2.817. For 1 pound (5,760 grains) of pure silver the importers received in Persia 1 pound weight of kran; and 1 kran weighing 70.672 grains, 81.503 go to the pound. At the then rate of exchange (27.5 kran=£1) these 81.503 kran were equal to £2.96363, and the importer realized on each pound troy a profit of £0.1466, or about  $5\frac{1}{8}$  per cent. But as the importer had to pay transport, insurance, etc., his direct profit was nil; in fact he would have lost on the transaction if he had not bought merchandise for exportation with the kran he received here and then gained on the exchange.

The value of the exports from Persia is not very considerable, and considering that the export trade is in the hands of many while the silver import was in the hands of a few the silver importers soon found that they had more kran than they could hope to purchase merchandise with.

To cover the losses of the importers the Persian mint had to raise its rate and pay more for the silver than its equivalent weight in kran.

The mint in September, 1888, was paying  $107\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of kran for 100 pounds of pure silver, most of which came from Russia.

A firm of Tabriz and Moscow is reported to have just made a contract with the mint-master for the supply of 1,000 pud (43,880 pounds Troy, nearly) at the rate of  $107\frac{1}{2}$  kran for a weight of pure silver equal to

100 krans. The Persian mint gains about  $2\frac{3}{8}$  per cent., less the expenses of the mint establishment on this transaction.

The profits of the importer are about  $11\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., less expenses of transport, insurance, etc. He buys pure silver at the rate of  $45d = .476$  an ounce = £2.274 per pound Troy (London market September 1, 1888), and gets for the pound 1.075 pounds of krans = 87.61 krans = £2.539 (at exchange 34.5 krans per £1 in Russia), hence his profit is £0.265 on a pound of silver, or about  $11\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.

As he does not export much and has to buy bills for remitting his money to Russia, and has also to pay much for the transportation from Russia to Teheran, his clear profits are very much less, probably only 5 per cent.

Those who are supposed to be "au courant" estimate the quantity of silver annually made into coin at the Persian mint at about 220,000 pounds.

Exchange on London varies between 32,  $32\frac{1}{2}$ , 33 and 34 krans silver to the pound sterling.

Bills of this legation on the bankers for the Department of State, London, are regularly purchased at 33. Bills of the British legation sell, I understand, at the same rate.

An English firm here are now arranging it appears to import silver in bars from India.

The question arises, could not this be done with greater advantage from the United States direct?

I have, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.

*Mr. Pratt to Mr. Blaine.*

No. 347.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,

*Teheran, April 17, 1889. (Received May 27.)*

SIR: I have the honor to report that the American missionaries at Tabriz, wishing to dispose of their present place of worship (which had become too unsafe for further use), applied to his excellency, the Emir Nizam, governor of the province, for permission to purchase a site upon which to erect another building for the purpose in question.

On account of certain charges against the Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries under British protection, it appears that a general order had been issued prohibiting the erection of any new Christian churches in the Emir's province (Azerbaijan). Hence, his excellency stated that it would be impossible for him to grant the permission desired, unless an order to that effect were sent him from the central government at Teheran, and advised that the missionaries should endeavor to obtain this through me.

There was accordingly sent me a petition embodying the above, a copy of which I have the honor to inclose herewith for your consideration.

It was also suggested by certain of the missionaries that by presenting the facts of the case to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, the British minister here, and to the French minister, Mr. de Balloy, it might be possible by united effort to obtain a rescinding of the general prohibitory order before mentioned.

I did not feel at liberty, however, even where it concerned a non-political matter of this nature, to undertake joint action with the en-

voys of other powers without your cognizance and authorization; besides which the propriety of such a mode of procedure appeared to me questionable, it being in my opinion more politic for your representative here to pursue, as far as possible, an entirely independent course in his dealings with this Government.

Accordingly I thought best (in a private interview I had with him previous to his departure with the Shah) to lay the petition of the American missionaries directly before the first minister, his excellency the Emine Soltan, and am happy to state that the result has been an official order to the Emir Nizam authorizing our people at Tabriz to purchase land and erect their church as desired.

The plan I adopted for the arrangement of this affair, as above reported, will, I trust, meet with your approval.

I have, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.

[Inclosure in No. 347.]

*Petition addressed by the American missionaries at Tabriz to E. Spencer Pratt, United States minister at Teheran.*

At the regular meeting of Tabriz station of the Northeastern Persia Mission held Tuesday evening, February 12, 1889, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted, and Dr. Holmes was requested to forward them to his excellency, the United States minister.

"Whereas the American mission church building in Tabriz is in a dangerous condition, necessitating the erection of a new building; and

"Whereas his excellency the Ameer Nizam having informed us that while we have the right to rebuild on the old site, if desired, it would be necessary to obtain permission from Teheran in case we wish to rebuild elsewhere; therefore,

"Resolved, That we respectfully request of his excellency E. Spencer Pratt, United States minister at the court of the Shah, that he will obtain the necessary authorization permitting us to buy a site and to build a church."

Rev. S. G. WILSON,  
*Moderator.*

*Mr. Pratt to Mr. Blaine.*

No. 363.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Teheran, June 8, 1889. (Received July 15.)*

SIR: I have the honor to report that I have received from Oroomiah, near western Persian frontier, under date of the 25th ultimo, a letter complaining of an assault committed at Gundekta, Tkhoma, Turkish Kurdistan, upon the person of one E. W. McDowell and one John G. Wishard, represented as American citizens peacefully traveling through that region.

Whilst referring the case to the Department in the copy of said communication attached, I have thought it advisable, since the locality mentioned as the scene of the alleged outrage is contiguous, apparently, to Persian territory, to bring the facts to the attention of the Turkish ambassador at Teheran in a note, a copy of which is also respectfully submitted herewith for your consideration.

This course, which I trust will meet with your approval, I adopted in order to afford the official representatives of the Porte an opportunity to investigate the affair of their own accord and properly punish the

guilty parties, thereby relieving our Government of the possible necessity of having to resort to the unpleasant expedient of a demand for redress at Constantinople.

I have, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.

[Inclosure 1 in No. 363.]

*Mr. McDowell to Mr. Pratt.*

OROOMIAH, PERSIA, *May 25, 1889.*

DEAR SIR: As a citizen of the United States, living and traveling in the East by permission and under the protection of the same, I beg leave to call your attention to a violation of our rights to safe and unimpeded travel through these countries. Dr. John G. Wishard and the undersigned, E. W. McDowell, while passing through Tkhoma, in Kurdistan, were robbed of our property and had personal violence inflicted upon us.

This was done in daylight in the streets of a village, Gundekta, and the instigator of it was one of the rulers, Malek Baboo, of Tkhoma Gowai, his accomplices being two priests of the village, Kasha Gihjonnis, of Mugrai, and Kasha Yokhonnis, of Gundekta.

They were aided by the people of the village.

This was done without any provocation whatever. On the following day in attempting to pass on our way empty we were again assaulted by the men of Gundekta, stoned, one of us knocked down, our clothing torn from us, and other indignities suffered. We had appealed to the chiefs of this district for protection before passing through the village the second time and placed upon them the responsibility of our safe conduct through their territory. They not only refused protection but in one case, at least, assisted in robbing us. We have abundant and satisfactory proof as to the guilt of these three ring-leaders and of all their confederates. We desire their punishment. This is a serious matter to us, involving much more than the loss of our goods. We do not propose to leave a stone unturned in securing the punishment of these men.

We know that your jurisdiction does not extend to Kurdistan, but we understand that you wish to be kept informed of all matters pertaining to government which affect the interest of American subjects in Persia. If in any way you can assist in bringing these offenders to justice you will have rendered us valuable service, for which we shall be truly grateful.

Very respectfully, yours,

E. W. McDOWELL.

[Inclosure 2 in No. 363.—Translation.]

*Mr. Pratt to Khalil Khalid Bey.*

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Teheran, June 8, 1889.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to submit herewith enclosed a translation of a letter which I have received from Oroomiah, dated 25th May, bringing a complaint against the authorities, the inhabitants, and certain priests of the village of Gundekta, in the province of Tkhoma, Kurdistan, for an attack made upon two of my countrymen traveling in these parts. As the unfortunate incident took place in a province of Turkey adjoining the territory of Persia, I thought that in bringing it to your notice you might indicate the simplest and most expeditious manner of obtaining a judgment and bringing the guilty parties to justice.

Confiding in the spirit of justice which has always animated your conduct and the friendship of which you have already given me such repeated proofs, I beg, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.

*Mr. Pratt to Mr. Blaine.*

No. 365.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Teheran, June 18, 1889. (Received July 24.)*

SIR: Referring to my dispatch No. 363, diplomatic series, of the 8th instant, I have the honor to report that yesterday, the 17th instant, I received a note from his excellency Khalil Khalid Bey, Turkish am-

bassador at this capital, inclosing for transmission through such channels as I should select, a communication addressed to his excellency the governor-general of the Vilayet of Van, on the subject of the complaint of Messrs. McDowell and Wishard, brought by me to the embassy's attention on the 8th as already reported.

Copies and translations of the ambassador's above-mentioned note and of my acknowledgment thereof are herein respectfully submitted.

I have also the honor to submit inclosed for your consideration the copy of a letter I have this day forwarded to Mr. McDowell with the note from the Turkish embassy to the governor-general aforesaid.

It is my hope that the affair may thus be satisfactorily adjusted without the necessity of our Government's intervention.

I have, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.

[Inclosure 1 in No. 365.—Translation.]

*Khalil Khalid Bey to Mr. Pratt.*

TEHERAN, June 16, 1889.

MR. MINISTER: I have had the honor to receive the letter you were pleased to address to me under date of the 8th instant, on the subject of the complaint of two of your countrymen, traveling on the frontier, against the authorities, the inhabitants and certain priests of the village of Gundekta, situated in the province of Tkhoma, in Ottoman Kurdistan.

Though trusting that the incident in question is but of a purely local and private nature, I have, nevertheless, not failed, by the letter you will find inclosed, to call the facts to the attention of his excellency the governor-general of the Vilayet of Van, who, I am sure, will not delay to have justice in the matter accorded.

Accept, etc.,

KHALID.

[Inclosure 2 in No. 365.—Translation.]

*Mr. Pratt to Khalil Khalid Bey.*

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Teheran, June 17, 1889.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your esteemed note of the 16th instant, containing a communication for his excellency the governor-general of the Vilayet of Van, on the subject of the complaint brought by two of my countrymen against the authorities, the inhabitants, and certain priests of the village of Gundekta, situated in the province of Tkhoma, Ottoman Kurdistan.

In expressing to you my thanks for the manner in which you have been pleased to take this matter in hand, I hasten to say that I shall, without delay, transmit the letter in question to its destination through the agency of Mr. McDowell, and beg your excellency to accept, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.

[Inclosure 3 in No. 365.]

*Mr. Pratt to Mr. McDowell.*

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Teheran, June 18, 1889.

SIR: Referring to my communication of the 8th instant, I take pleasure in handing you inclosed a sealed note which in accordance with my representations based upon the complaint conveyed in your letter of the 25th ultimo, his excellency Khalil Khalid Bey, the Turkish ambassador at Teheran, has addressed to his excellency the governor-general of Van.

The note in question you will please deliver in person or transmit through most reliable hands to the governor-general in order that this matter may have his earliest attention and the desired investigation be instituted as soon as possible.

I am, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.

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*Mr. Pratt to Mr. Blaine.*

No. 383.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Teheran, August 7, 1889. (Received September 14.)*

SIR: I have the honor to report that yesterday, the 6th instant, by special request, I laid the corner-stone of the American hospital at Teheran, in the presence of a numerous assembly, comprising distinguished members of the Imperial family, high dignitaries of state, both civil and military, and representatives of the different ministers.

The ceremony consisted in an impromptu address, in which I briefly explained, in French, the object of the institution, the idea of which had originated with Dr. W. W. Torrence, and on being approved of by his Imperial Majesty the Shah was now being carried out with the voluntary aid from America mentioned in my dispatch No. 23, diplomatic series, of the 27th January, 1887, and the generous co-operation here of those who could easily recognize the practical value of a charity of this nature.

My address was followed by a short prayer and benediction by the Rev. S. Lawrence Ward.

I have, etc.,

E. SPENCER PRATT.