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<b>Reference</b>	IOR/L/PS/12/289
<b>Title</b>	PZ 2872/39 'Importation into India of counterfeit Government of India silver coins from the Persian Gulf'
<b>Date(s)</b>	8 May 1939-15 Sep 1939 (CE, Gregorian)
<b>Written in</b>	English in Latin
<b>Extent and Format</b>	1 file (10 folios)
<b>Holding Institution</b>	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
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#### About this record

This file contains correspondence between British Government officials relating to the importation of counterfeit Government of India silver coins from the Persian Gulf into India. The main correspondents are the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, the Political Agent in Bahrain, the Residency Agent, Sharjah, and the Government of India. The discussions centre on where in the Persian Gulf the counterfeiters could be based, where the effects of counterfeit coins are being felt the most, and which individuals are suspected of counterfeiting coins. A list of suspects based in Sharjah and Dubai is provided between folios 7-8. The last folio (folio 11) is a statement taken from an unnamed passenger, travelling from Koweit [Kuwait] to Bombay on the SS *Bankura*, who had purchased counterfeit coins whilst in Koweit and was caught by customs officers.



Previous File. IOR: L/PS/12/289 ①

P.

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL) DEPARTMENT.

P.Z.  
2872  
1939.

SUBJECT:

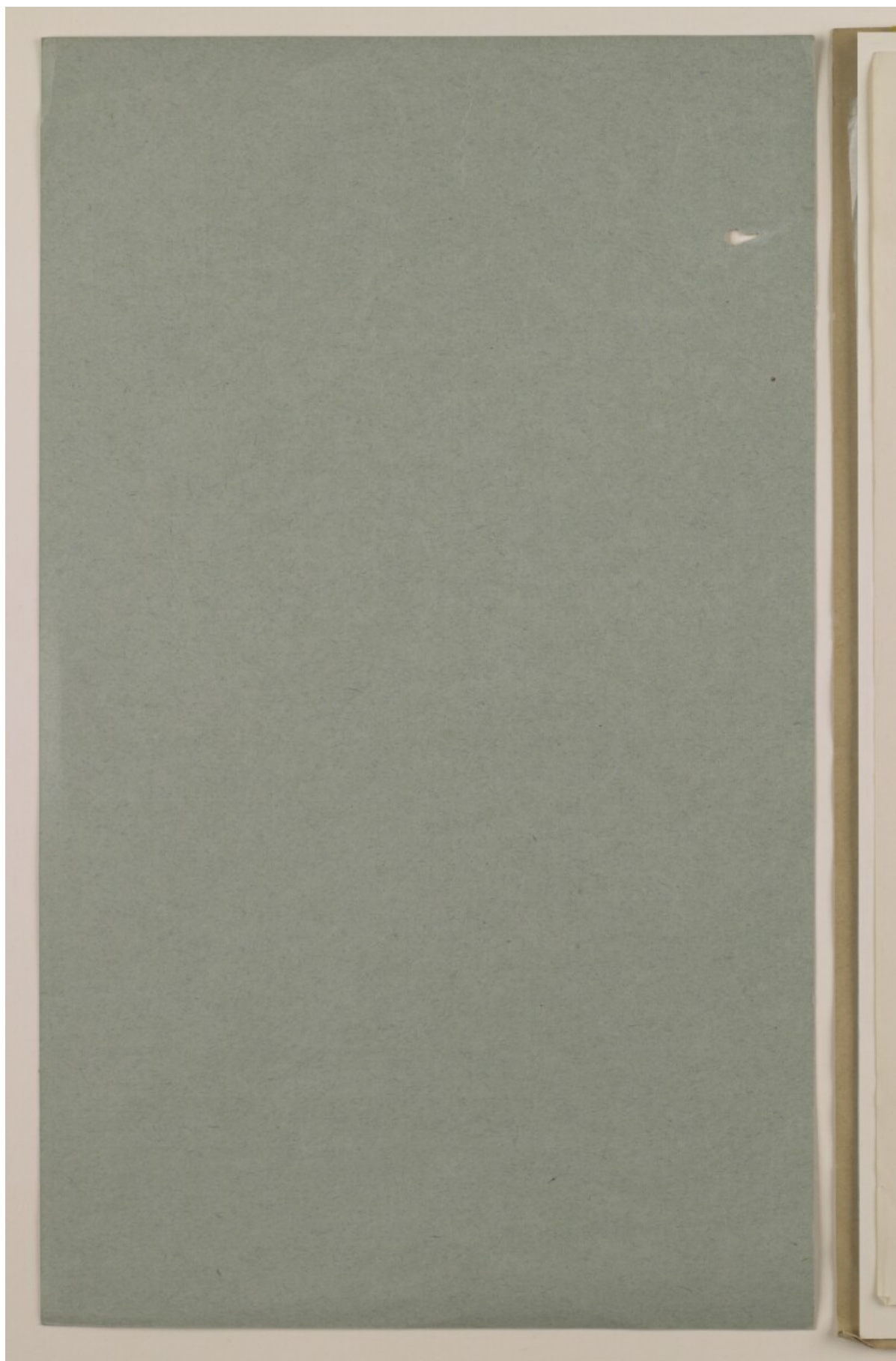
*Importation into India of  
counterfeit Govt. of India silver  
coins from the Persian Gulf.*

This File contains the following papers:—

YEAR.	
1939.	P.Z. 2872. 5568. ✓
19	. P.
19	. P.
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19	. P.
19	. P.
19	. P.

Papers may be removed from or placed within this File only by the Political Registry.

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Minute Paper. Department.

Secy. *Financial Dept.*

You may be interested.

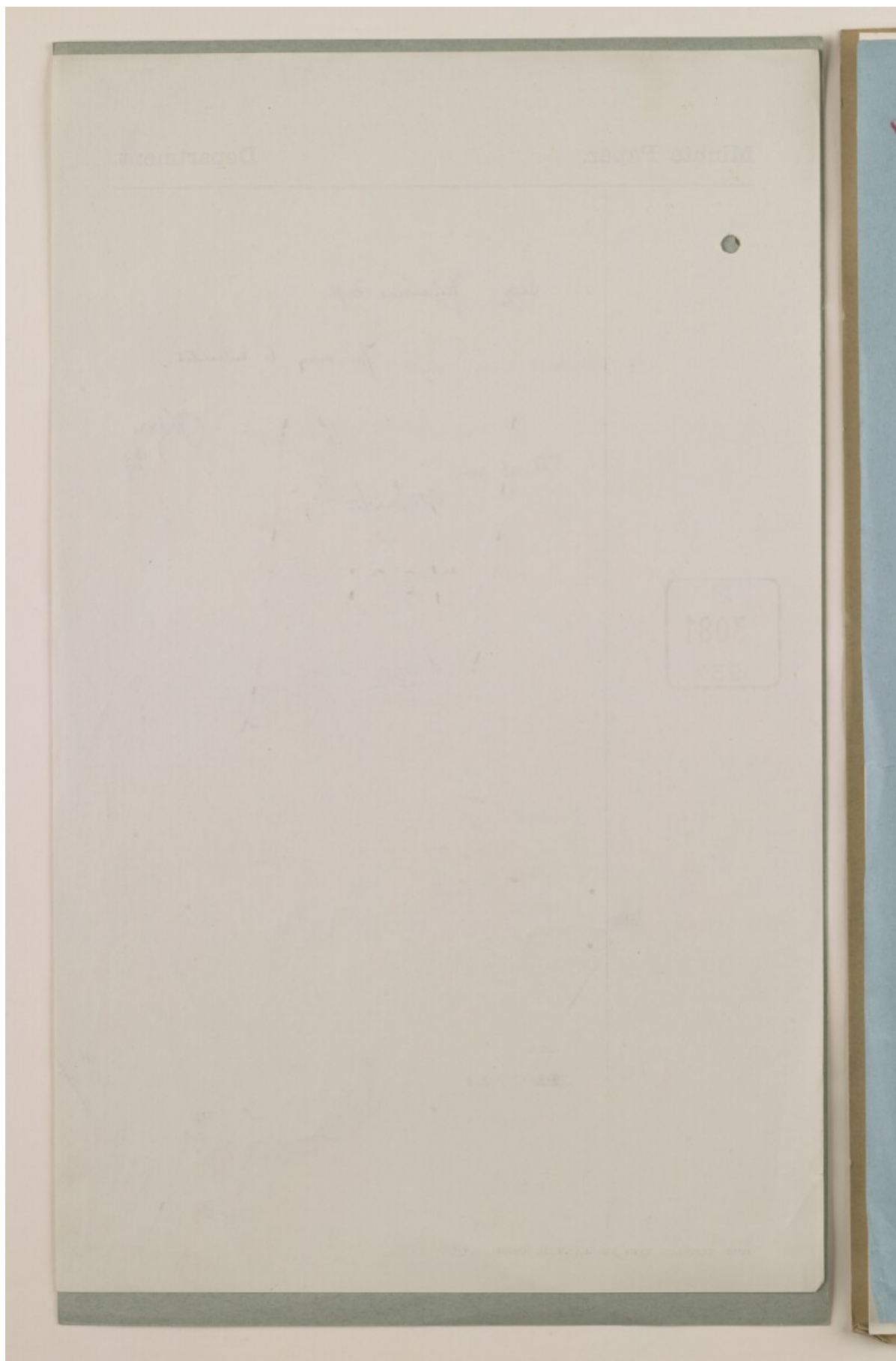
Thank you. *14*  
*W. B. Barlett*

*13/9*

F  
3081  
1939

(0010) WL22950/235 10,000 0/38 A.&E.W.Ltd. Gp.645







**INDEXED**

2872. 5568 1939

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

Department.

Confidential.

**EXPRESS LETTER (AIR MAIL).**

[N.B.—This is an ORIGINAL message sent by AIR MAIL which provides a means of communication more expeditious than the ordinary mail and is cheaper than the telegraph. It is intended to be treated, on receipt, with the same expedition as if it had been telegraphed. To save time and to obviate formalities it is drafted in the form of a telegram. It is authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer of the Department.]

Office of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Camp, Shiraz.

No. Q/374 of 1939. Dated ~~18th~~ 18th August, 1939.

To - The Secretary to the Government of India, External Affairs Department, Simla.

Repeated His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, London. ✓

The Political Agent, Kuwait.

Reference your ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ The Political Agent, Bahrain.

The Political Agent, Muscat.

Subject: Importation of Counterfeit Government of India silver coins from the Persian Gulf.

2872. Reference Government of India Express Letter No.D.1487-M/39, dated the 18th April 1939.

2. Enquiries have been instituted by the Political Agents concerned in their areas, and the results of their investigations may be summarised as follows:

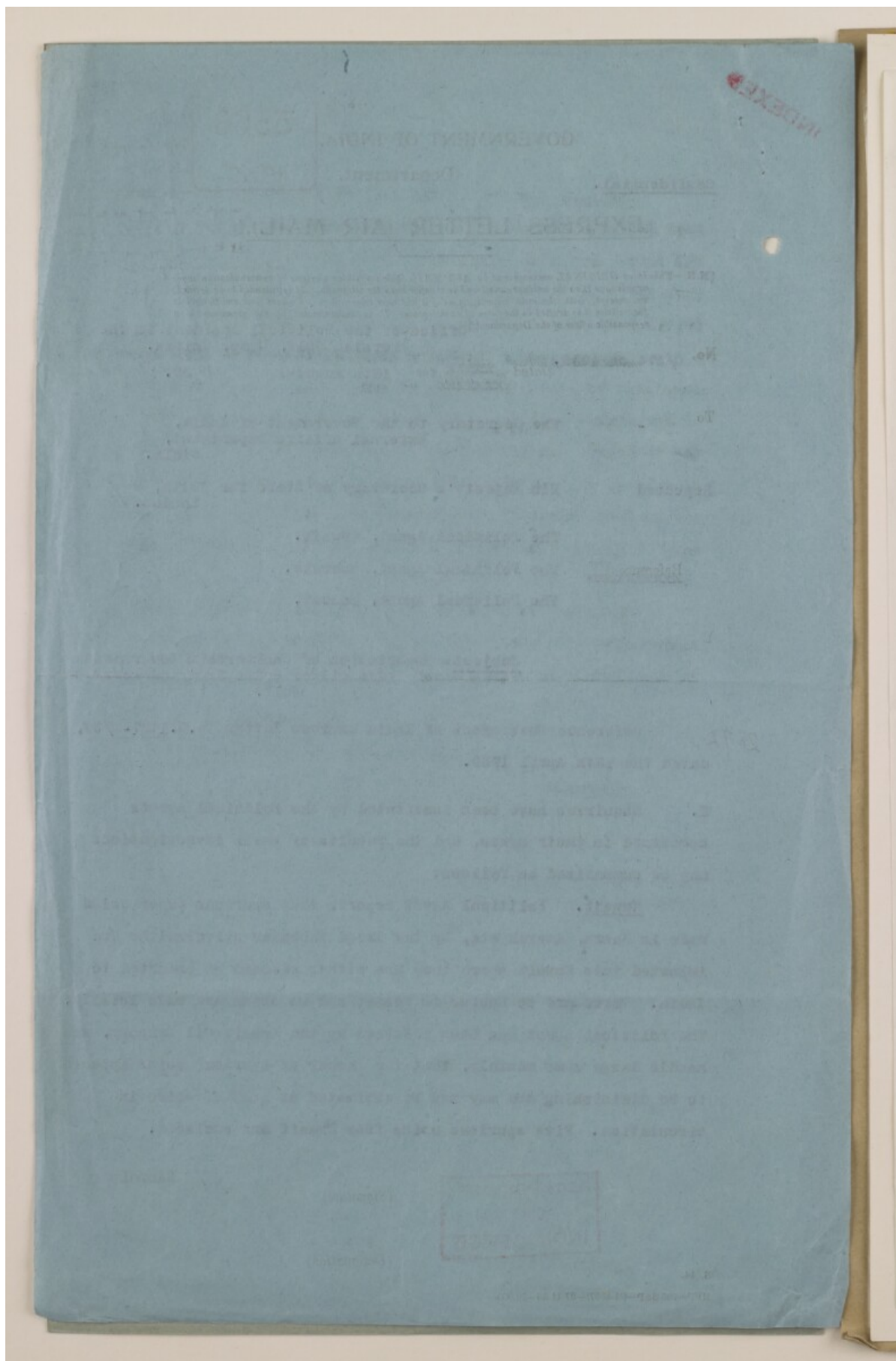
Kuwait. Political Agent reports that spurious rupee coins made in Basra, Amarah etc, by the Iraqi Subbaian silvermiths are imported into Kuwait where they are either re-sold or exported to India. There are no Subbas in Kuwait and no coins are made locally. The Political Agent has been informed by the Kuwait Oil Company, who handle large sums monthly, that the number of spurious coins appears to be diminishing and may now be estimated at 1/2% of coins in circulation. Five spurious coins from Kuwait are enclosed.

REC'D. POL. DEPT.  
9 SEP 1939  
INDIA OFFICE

(Signature) / Bahrain

(Designation)

S.44.  
MFP—885 S&P—(M-1597)—27-11-38—10,000.







-2-

Bahrain. Copy of letter No.1257/9 A of the 6th August 1939 from the Adviser to the Bahrain Government to the Political Agent, Bahrain, is enclosed, from which it will be seen that the possibility of the existence of a regular counterfeiting organisation would appear to be remote.

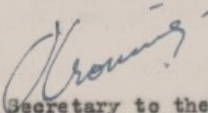
Trucial Coast. Owing to local conditions in this area enquiries have been difficult to carry out. I enclose a copy of Memorandum No.C/460-15/2, dated the 18th July 1939, from the Residency Agent, Sharjah, to the Political Agent, Bahrain. Briefly, it will be seen that certain people, whose names are given, were suspected of counterfeiting activities some years ago; there is, however, no evidence that this is carried on now.

Muscat. No trace of any organisation engaged in the manufacture of counterfeit coins. The number of these coins in circulation is negligible.

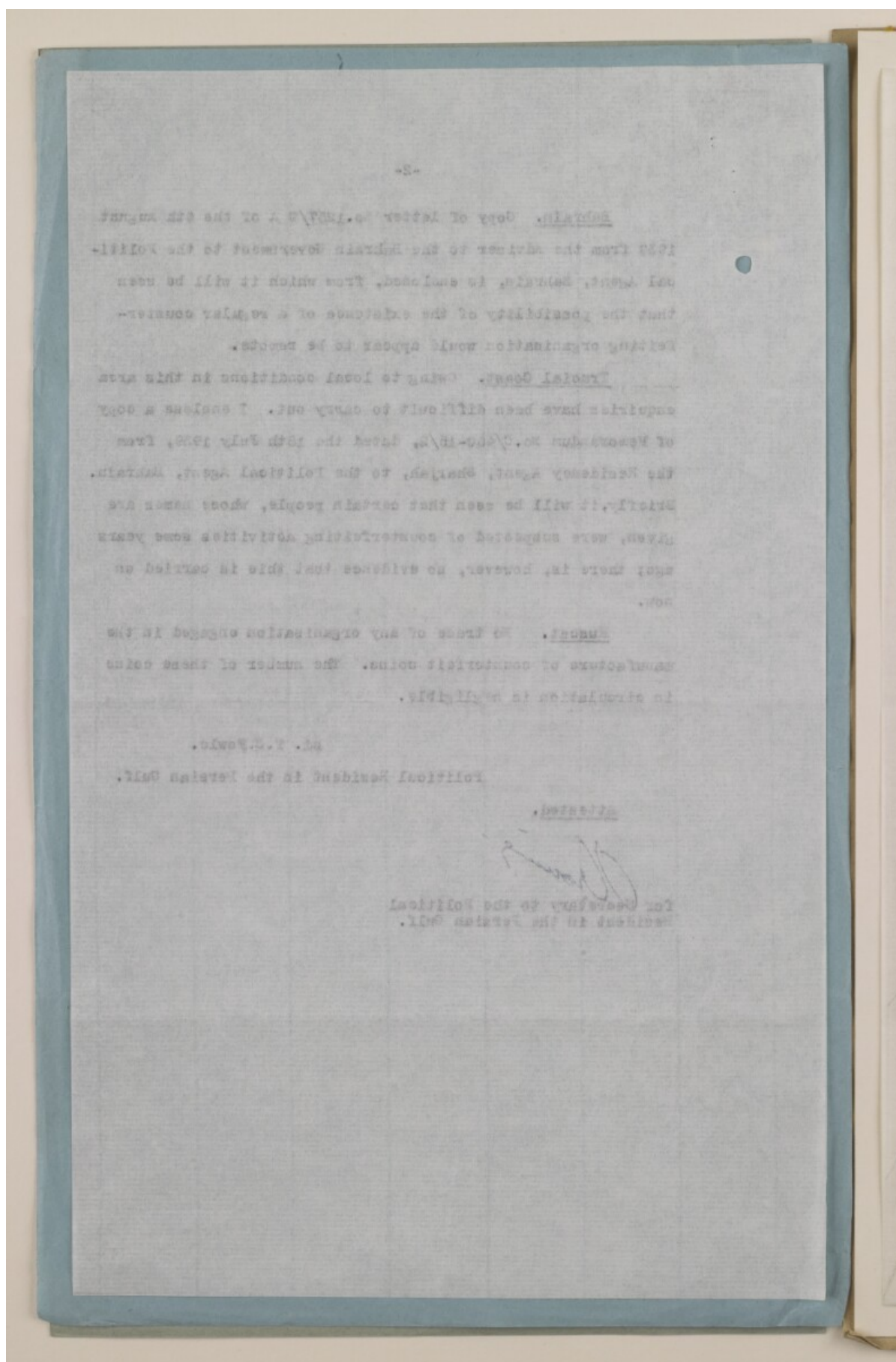
sd. T.C.Fowle.

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

Attested.

  
for Secretary to the Political  
Resident in the Persian Gulf.







Copy.  
Very Urgent.

GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN.

5568

1939

No.1257/9 A of 1358.  
Office of the Adviser to the Government,  
Bahrain, Dated 19th J/Thani, 1358 - 6th  
August 1939.

H.B.M.'s Political Agent,  
Bahrain.

MEMORANDUM.

Reference your No.C/464-9/10 of 6th August, 1939, regarding counterfeit rupees.

2. Some three or four years ago there appeared to be an excessive number of counterfeit rupees in Bahrain. Investigations were made and it was found that apparently counterfeit rupees were being brought in from abroad, mostly from India. A watch was put on and imported silver was examined. In a few months the amount of counterfeit coins was reduced to a very small proportion. At present, as far as can be ascertained, very few counterfeit coins are in currency in Bahrain.
3. There was at this time an unauthenticated rumour that coins were being manufactured in Qattar, this rumour existed when Bahrain and Qattar were on friendly terms.
4. It is my considered opinion that the manufacture of counterfeit coins in Bahrain on a large scale would be impossible. Bahrain is such a small place that an influx of counterfeit coins would be noticed immediately and an export of coins from Bahrain, except during the regular season, would immediately create attention.
5. If any persons were suspected of being implicated in making or passing false coins they would immediately be placed under police surveillance. I am, however, giving special instructions to the Police to look into the matter.

sd. C.Dalrymple Belgrave,  
Adviser to the Government.

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Confidential.

No.C/460-15/2.

British Agency,  
Sharjah,  
18th July 1939.

To,

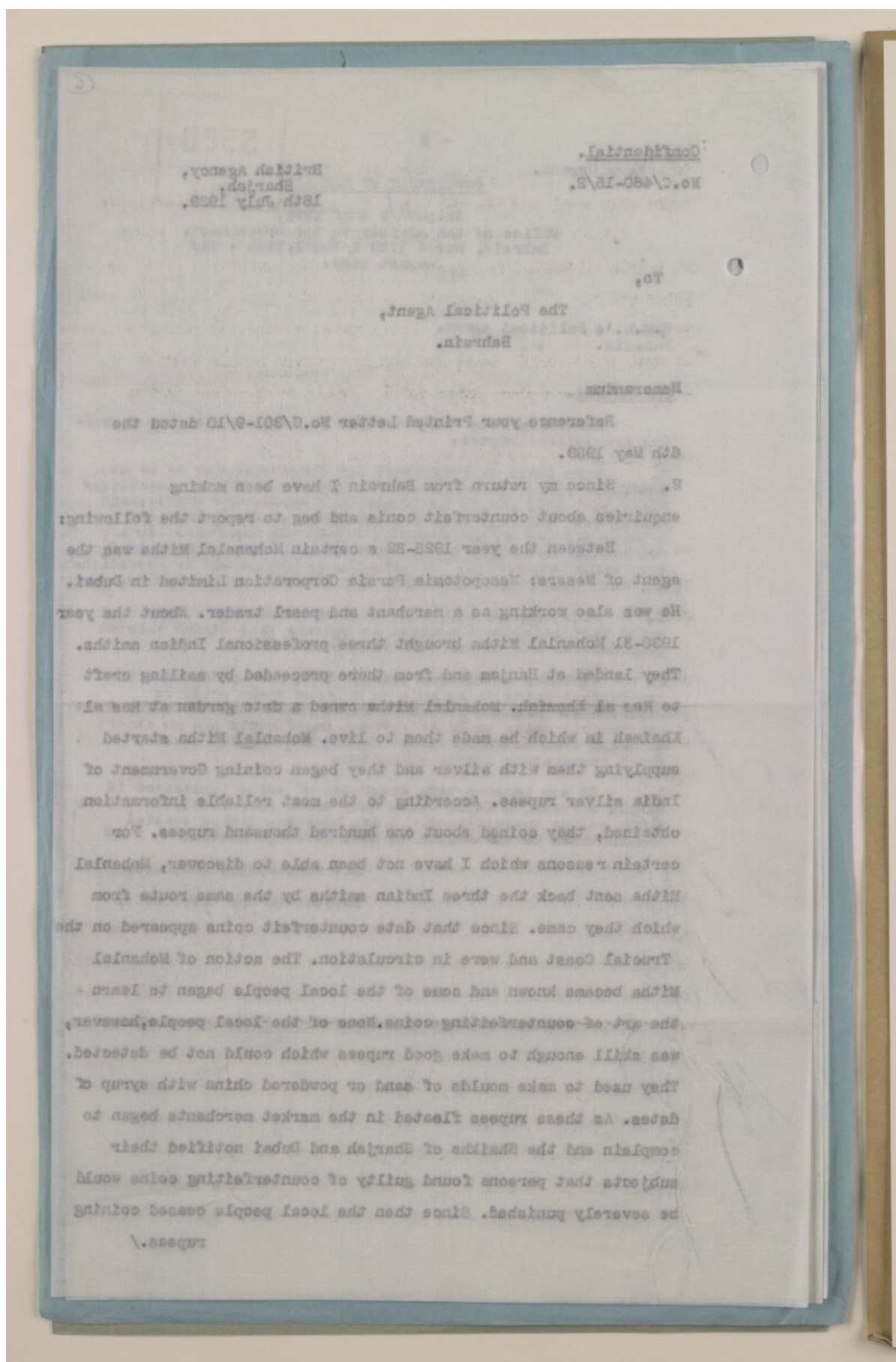
The Political Agent,  
Bahrain.

Memorandum

Reference your Printed Letter No.C/301-9/10 dated the 6th May 1939.

2. Since my return from Bahrain I have been making enquiries about counterfeit coins and beg to report the following:

Between the year 1925-32 a certain Mohanlal Mitha was the agent of Messrs: Mesopotamia Persia Corporation Limited in Dubai. He was also working as a merchant and pearl trader. About the year 1930-31 Mohanlal Mitha brought three professional Indian smiths. They landed at Hanjam and from there proceeded by sailing craft to Ras al Khamiah. Mohanlal Mitha owned a date garden at Ras al Khaimah in which he made them to live. Mohanlal Mitha started supplying them with silver and they began coining Government of India silver rupees. According to the most reliable information obtained, they coined about one hundred thousand rupees. For certain reasons which I have not been able to discover, Mohanlal Mitha sent back the three Indian smiths by the same route from which they came. Since that date counterfeit coins appeared on the Trucial Coast and were in circulation. The action of Mohanlal Mitha became known and some of the local people began to learn the art of counterfeiting coins. None of the local people, however, was skill enough to make good rupees which could not be detected. They used to make moulds of sand or powdered china with syrup of dates. As these rupees floated in the market merchants began to complain and the Shaikhs of Sharjah and Dubai notified their subjects that persons found guilty of counterfeiting coins would be severely punished. Since then the local people ceased coining rupees./







- 2 -

rupees. As the local people were not skilled for counterfeiting coins they used to sell the coins for melting below face value.

I have also been informed that a certain Persian known as Saiyid al Hakim was responsible for counterfeiting coins at Qatar and the Shaikh deported him about the year 1934-35. He came to Dubai where he stayed for about three months and then disappeared from the Trucial Coast and did not return again. Some of the money which come from Qatar still contain counterfeit coins.

Following are the names of the local people who were suspected of counterfeiting coins on the Trucial Coast:-

SHARJAH.

(1) 'Ubaid bin Salih bin Nauman. He was a petty trader. He is now living at Falaj al Qabail where he inherited property from his late brother in law the late Nasir ar-Rubai'i. Falaj al Qabail is at Batinah. Nothing is known against him now.

(2) Salim bin Sultan al Hamur. He is a well to do person and owns a pearl Sambuk. His yearly income is between Rs.5000/- and Rs.10000/- In winter he goes to Ras al Khaimah with his slave wife and spend the whole winter fishing. Nothing is known against him now.

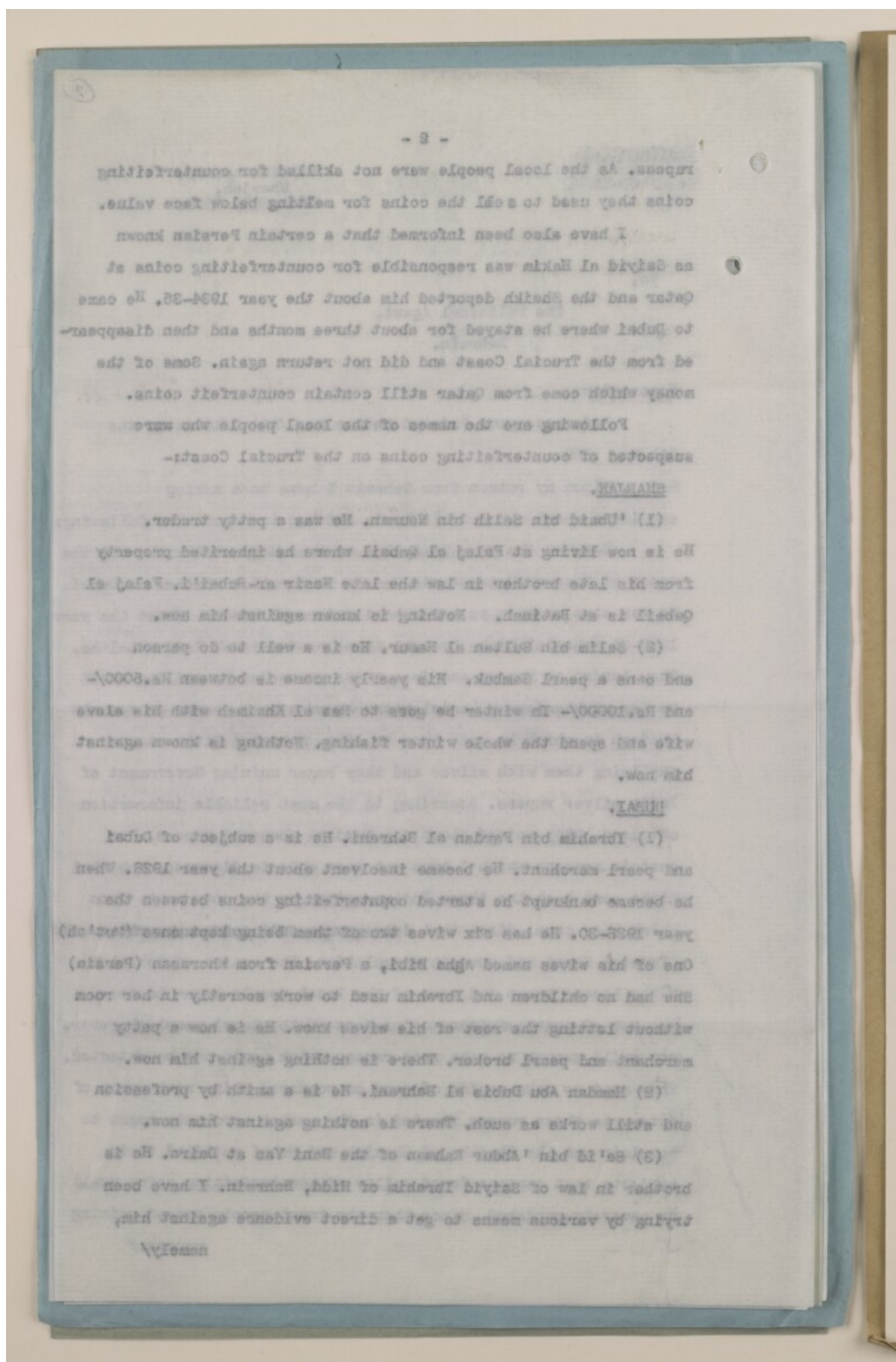
DUBAI.

(1) Ibrahim bin Fardan al Bahrani. He is a subject of Dubai and pearl merchant. He became insolvent about the year 1928. When he became bankrupt he started counterfeiting coins between the year 1928-30. He has six wives ~~two of them being kept ones (Mut'ah)~~ One of his wives named Agha Bibi, a Persian from Khorasan (Persia) She had no children and Ibrahim used to work secretly in her room without letting the rest of his wives know. He is now a petty merchant and pearl broker. There is nothing against him now.

(2) Hamdan Abu Dubis al Bahrani. He is a smith by profession and still works as such. There is nothing against him now.

(3) Sa'id bin 'Abdur Rahman of the Bani Yas at Daira. He is brother in law of Saiyid Ibrahim of Hidd, Bahrain. I have been trying by various means to get a direct evidence against him,  
namely/







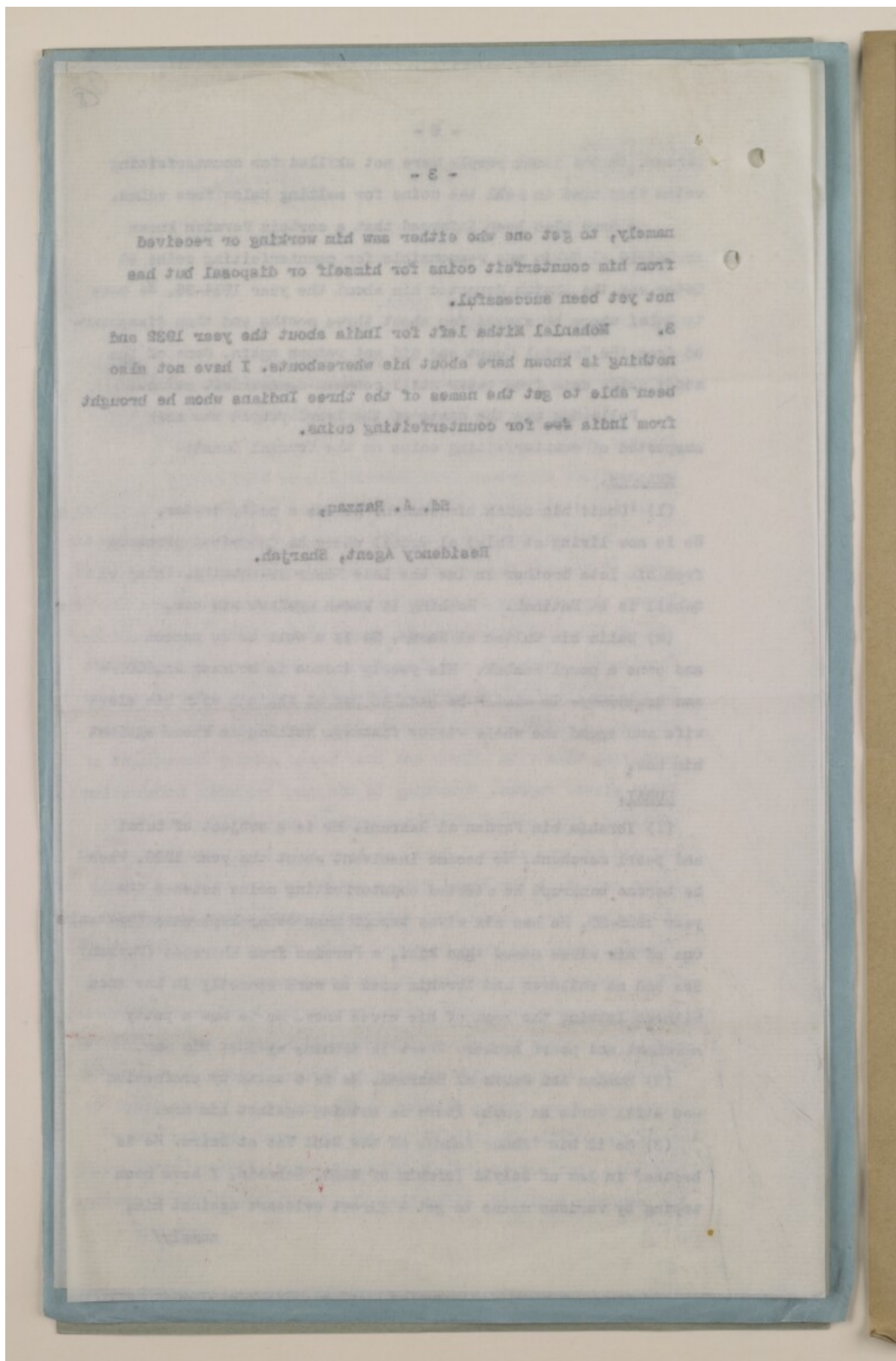
- 3 -

namely, to get one who either saw him working or received from him counterfeit coins for himself or disposal but has not yet been successful.

3. Mohanlal Mittha left for India about the year 1932 and nothing is known here about his whereabouts. I have not also been able to get the names of the three Indians whom he brought from India ~~for~~ for counterfeiting coins.

Sd. A. Razzaq,

Residency Agent, Sharjah.







**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**FILE COPY**  
Government of India. 2872 (with 3 lcs)  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.  
1939  
12 MAY 1939  
FD  
r/p  
11/5

**INDEXED**

**EXPRESS LETTER.**

From  
Foreign,  
New Delhi.

To  
Political Resident in the Persian Gulf (with 1 SC)  
Repeated to Political Agents at Kuwait and Bahrain  
No. D.1487-N/39. Dated New Delhi, the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

Subject :- Importation of Counterfeit Government of India silver coins from the Persian Gulf.

A copy of a letter from the Collector of Customs, Karachi, No. 36/39, dated the 31st March 1939, with enclosure is forwarded.

2. The Government of India would be glad if the matter could be investigated and the result reported at an early date.

3. A copy of this letter and its enclosures is being sent to the India Office.

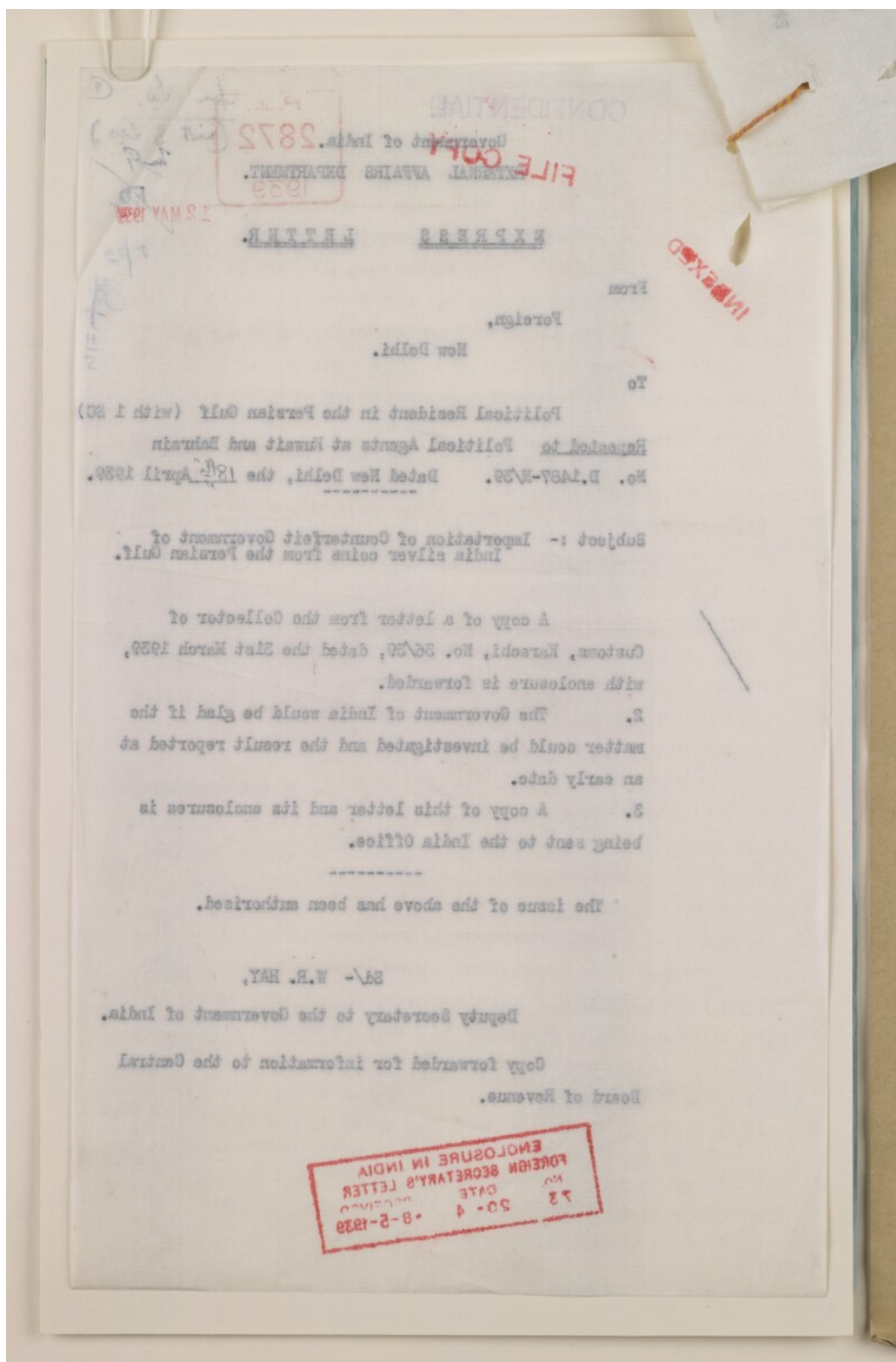
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The issue of the above has been authorised.

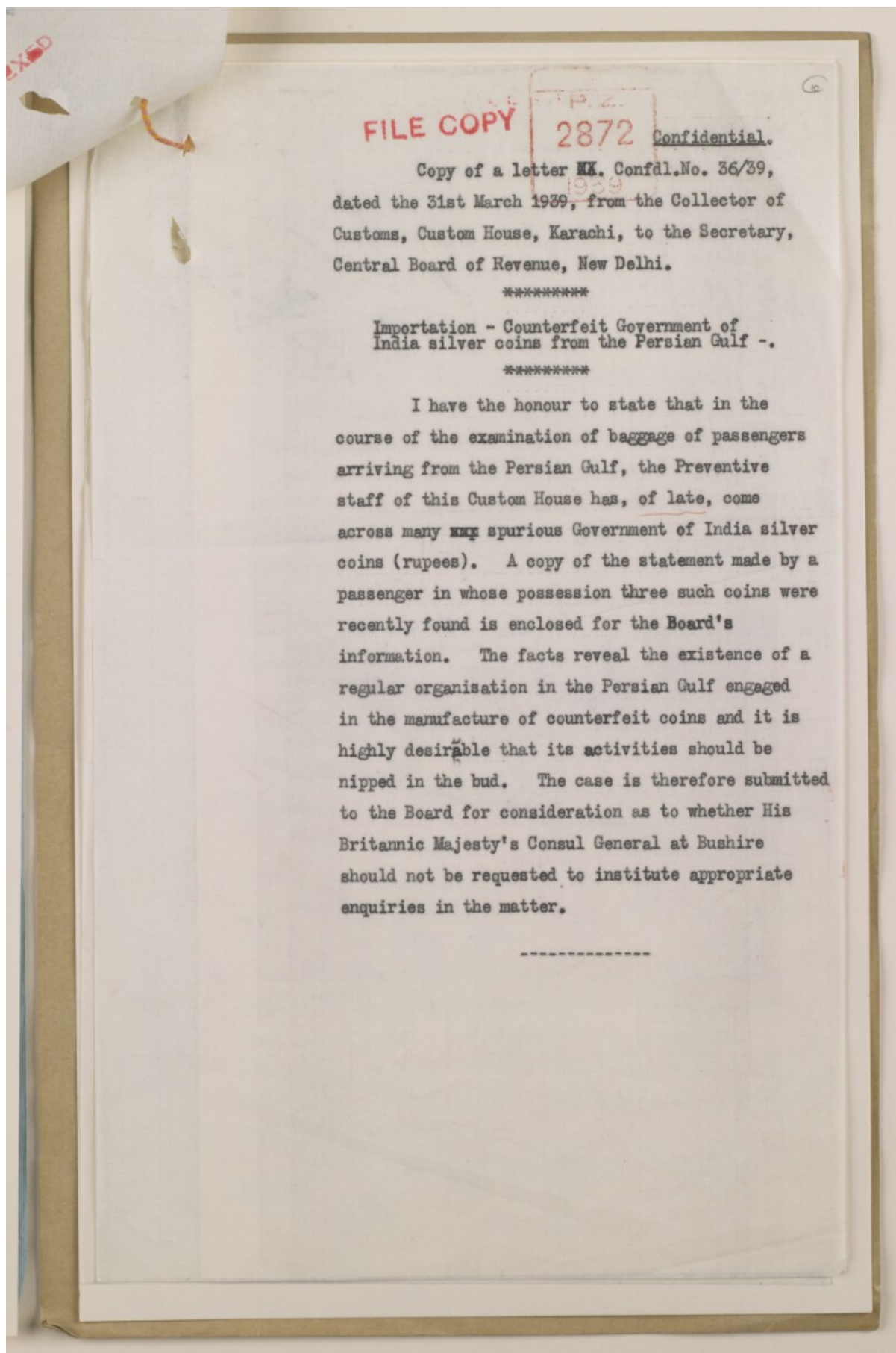
Sd/- W.R. HAY,  
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

Copy forwarded for information to the Central Board of Revenue.

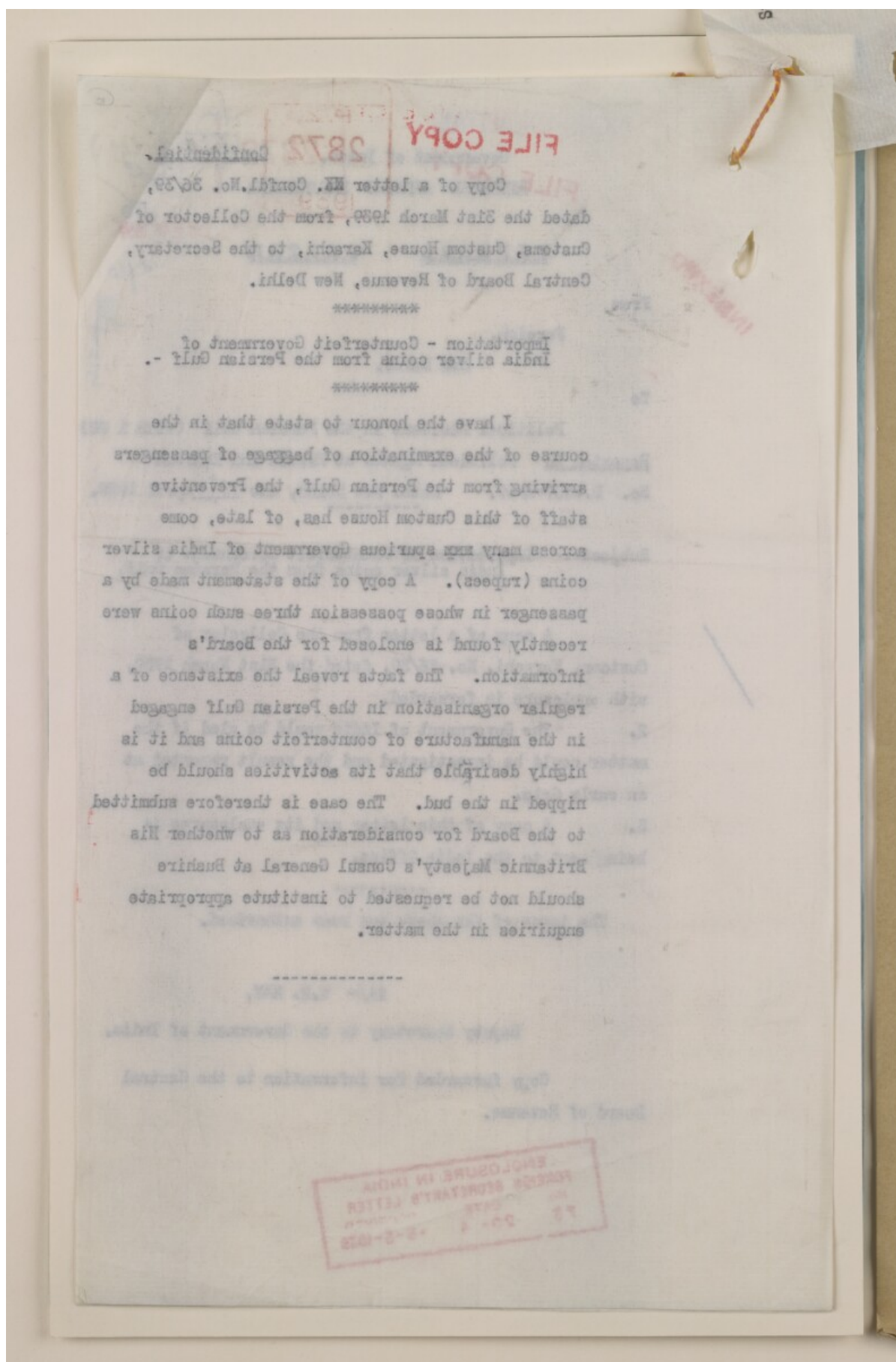
ENCLOSURE IN INDIA  
FOREIGN SECRETARY'S LETTER  
No. 73 DATE 20-4 RECEIVED  
-8-5-1939













FILE COPY

Statement dated 27.3.1939 of a passenger on s.s. Bankura.

I embarked at Koweit on Saturday 18th instant. I am a general merchant and commission agent with headquarters at Koweit. Two or three times a year I visit Bombay on business. I am on such a visit now and will, in all probability, remain in Bombay for about a fortnight before returning to Koweit. I deal chiefly in brassware, glassware, sugar and cloth.

About a year ago, Iranian traders, who came to trade at Koweit, began to import Government of India coins and sell them at prices between 25 and 50% below face value. Silver (?) rupees were being offered for sale at -/7/- to -/14/- each. Last August, I purchased about Rs. 100 worth of these coins (silver ? rupees, eight, four and two anna pieces) and took them with me to Bombay. I produced them at one of the banks and changed some of the money into notes. Other coins that were obviously bad I sold to a silversmith for melting.

The three coins, found in my possession yesterday by the Customs Officer, were bought by me for -/7/- each at Koweit. I did not intend uttering them in the bazar or elsewhere but would have given them to a silversmith for melting.

It is common talk at Koweit and other ports in the Persian Gulf that an Armenian and 'Saba' (from Busra) are engaged in making Government of India silver coins at Dubai. It is said that these coins contain only a small quantity of silver, and are dark in colour. For the first few days they have the appearance of genuine silver but later lose their silver sheen. I am aware that the three rupees purchased by me are not genuine and will not be accepted in the market. I have not seen the alleged counterfeiters and so not know their names.

This statement has been read out to me and is correct.



