

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.
THE INDIAN OATHS ACT, 1873.
ACT NO. X OF 1873.

British Burma Gazette, May 3rd, 1873

The following Act of the Governor General of India in Council received the assent of His Excellency the Governor General on the 8th day of April 1873, and is hereby promulgated for general information:-

An Act to consolidate the law relating to Judicial Oaths, and for other purposes.

Preamble.

WHEREAS it is expedient to consolidate the law relating to judicial oaths, affirmations and declarations, and to repeal the law relating to official oaths, affirmations and declarations; It is hereby enacted as follows:-

I.-Preliminary.

Short title.

1. This Act may be called "**The Indian Oaths Act, 1873:**"

Local extent.

It extends to the whole of British India and, so far as regards subjects of Her Majesty, to the territories of Native Princes and States in alliance with Her Majesty;

Commencement.

And it shall come into force on the first day of May 1873.

Repeal of enactments.

2. The enactments specified in the schedule hereto annexed are repealed to the extent mentioned in the third column thereof.

Saving of certain oaths and affirmations.

3. Nothing herein contained applies to proceedings before Courts Martial, or to oaths, affirmations or declarations prescribed by any law which, under the provisions of the Indian Councils' Act, 1861, the Governor General in Council has not power to repeal.

II.-Authority to Administer Oaths and Affirmations.

Authority to administer oaths and affirmations.

4. The following Courts and persons are authorized to administer, by themselves or by an officer empowered by them in this behalf, oaths and affirmations in discharge of the duties or in exercise of the powers imposed or conferred upon them respectively by law:-

- (a) All Courts and persons having by law or consent of parties authority to receive evidence;
- (b) The Commanding Officer of any military station occupied by troops in the service of Her Majesty: provided
 - (1) that the oath or affirmation be administered within the limits of the station; and
 - (2) that the oath or affirmation be such as a Justice of the Peace is competent to administer in British India.

III.-Persons by whom Oaths or Affirmations must be made.

Oaths or affirmations to be made by-

5. Oaths or affirmations shall be made by the following persons:-

witnesses:

- (a) all witnesses, that is to say, all persons who may lawfully be examined, or give, or be required to give, evidence by or before any Court or person having by law or consent of parties authority to examine such person or to receive evidence;

interpreters.

- (b) interpreters of questions put to, and evidence given by, witnesses; and

jurors.

- (c) jurors.

Nothing herein contained shall render it lawful to administer in a criminal proceeding an oath or affirmation to the accused person, or necessary to administer to the official interpreter of any Court, after he has entered on the execution of the duties of his office, an oath or affirmation that he will faithfully discharge those duties.

Affirmation by Natives or by persons objecting to oaths.

6. Where the witness, interpreter or juror is a Hindu or Muhammadan, or has an objection to making an oath, he shall, instead of making an oath, make an affirmation.

In every other case the witness, interpreter or juror shall make an oath.

IV.-Forms of Oaths and Affirmations.

Forms of oaths and affirmations.

7. All oaths and affirmations made under section five shall be administered according to such forms as the High Court may from time to time prescribe.

And until any such forms are prescribed by the High Court, such oaths and affirmations shall be administered according to the forms now in use.

Explanation.- As regards oaths and affirmations administered in the Court of the Recorder of Rangoon and the Court of Small Causes of Rangoon, the Recorder of Rangoon shall be deemed to be the High Court within the meaning of this section.

Power of Court to tender certain oaths.

8. If any party to, or witness in, any judicial proceeding offers to give evidence on oath or solemn affirmation in any form common amongst, or held binding by, persons of the race or persuasion to which he belongs, and not repugnant to justice or decency, and not purporting to affect any third person, the Court may, if it thinks fit, notwithstanding anything hereinbefore contained, tender such oath or affirmation to him.

Court may ask party or witness whether he will make oath proposed by opposite party.

9. If any party to any judicial proceeding offers to be bound by any such oath or solemn affirmation as is mentioned in section eight, if such oath or affirmation is made by the other party to, or by any witness in, such proceeding, the Court may, if it thinks fit, ask such party or witness, or cause him to be asked, whether or not he will make the oath or affirmation:

Provided that no party or witness shall be compelled to attend personally in Court solely for the purpose of answering such question.

Administration of oath, if accepted.

10. If such party or witness agrees to make such oath or affirmation, the Court may proceed to administer it; or if it is of such a nature that it may be more conveniently made out of Court, the Court may issue a commission to any person to administer it, and authorize him to take the evidence of the person to be sworn or affirmed, and return it to the Court.

Evidence conclusive as against person offering to be bound.

11. The evidence so given shall, as against the person who offered to be bound as aforesaid, be conclusive proof of the matter stated.

Procedure in case of refusal to make oath.

12. If the party or witness refuses to make the oath or solemn affirmation referred to in section eight, he shall not be compelled to make it, but the Court shall record, as part of the proceedings, the nature of the oath or affirmation proposed, the facts that he was asked whether he would make it, and that he refused it, together with any reason which he may assign for his refusal.

V.-Miscellaneous.

Proceedings and evidence not invalidated by omission of oath or irregularity.

13. No omission to take any oath or make any affirmation, no substitution of any one for any other of them, and no irregularity whatever in the form in which any one of them is administered, shall invalidate any proceeding or render inadmissible any evidence whatever, in or in respect of which such omission, substitution or irregularity took place, or shall affect the obligation of a witness to state the truth.

Persons giving evidence bound to state the truth.

14. Every person giving evidence on any subject before any Court or person hereby authorised to administer oaths and affirmations shall be bound to state the truth on such subject.

Amendment of Penal Code, Sections 178 and 181.

15. The Indian Penal Code, Sections 178 and 181, shall be construed as if, after the word "oath," the words "or affirmation" were inserted.

Official oaths abolished.

16. Subject to the provisions of sections three and five, no person appointed to any office shall, before entering on the execution of the duties of his office, be required to make any oath, or to make or subscribe any affirmation or declaration whatever.

WHITLEY STOKES,
Secretary to the Government of India,
Legislative Dept.

[ATTACH LIST 1] 01 SCHEDULE. (See Section 2.) PART I.-STATUTES.