

THE OATHS ACT.

[INDIA ACT X, 1873.] (8th April, 1873.)

I.—PRELIMINARY.

1. * * * *
2. * * * *

3. Nothing herein contained applies to proceedings before Courts-martial, or to oaths, affirmations or declarations prescribed by or under [any other law.]² Saving of certain oaths and affirmations.

II.—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 :— Authority to administer oaths and affirmations.

- (a) all Courts and persons having by law or consent of parties authority to receive evidence ;
- (b) the Commanding Officer of any military, naval or air force station or ship occupied by troops in the service of [the Government :]²

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 Magistrate is competent to administer in the Union of Burma.

III.—PERSONS BY WHOM OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS MUST BE MADE.

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

- (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 persons or to receive evidence ; Oaths or affirmations to be made by—witnesses ;
- (b) interpreters of questions put to, and evidence given by, witnesses ; interpreters ;
- and
- (c) jurors. jurors.

Nothing herein contained shall render it [* * * *] 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.

¹ Omitted by the Union of Burma (Adaptation of Laws) Order, 1948.

² Substituted *ibid*.

³ The words "lawful to administer, in a criminal proceeding, an oath or affirmation to the accused person, or" were deleted by Act XVII, 1945.

Affirmation
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 5 shall be administered according to such forms as the High Court may from time to time prescribe. ¹

Power of
Court to
tender cer-
tain 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 pro-
posed 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 8, if such oath or affirmation is made by the other party to, or by any witness in, such proceedings, 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.

Administra-
tion 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 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 per-
son 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 8, 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 invalid-
ated by omis-
sion of oath

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

¹ See the High Court Rules and Orders.

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. or irregularity.

14. Every person giving evidence on any subject before any Court or person hereby authorized to administer oaths and affirmations shall be bound to state the truth on such subject.¹

Persons giving evidence bound to state the truth.

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

Amendment of Penal Code, sections 178 and 181

16. Subject to the provisions of sections 3 and 5, 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.

Official oaths abolished.

¹ Cf., section 191 of the Penal Code (Volume VIII of this Code).