

THE
100
YEAR
JOURNEY

AISHTMA

All India Skin & Hide Tanners & Merchants Association



Sidenote

Marco Polo (a Venetian traveller who explored Asia in the 13th century) documented in 1290 AD that the curing of hides and the manufacture of leather were two of the most important industries of Gujarat. Every year a number of ships laden with the skins of goats, oxen, unicorns and other animals went to Arabia. The leather was used for sandals and was cleverly worked into red and blue sleeping mats exquisitely inlaid with figures of birds and beasts and skillfully embroidered with gold and silver wire.



Manufacturing of leather was a developed industry in ancient India. Over the years the tanning industry grew at three major centres (Calcutta, Madras and Kanpur) and export to overseas countries started during the 1880s. Over time India became one of the largest producers of saddlery and harness goods in the world. In 1857, the harness and saddlery factory was established in Kanpur primarily to cater to the needs of the military and police.

Skins being inspected at a tannery





Sidenote

World War I (WWI), also known as the Great War, was a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918. The Military were the major users of leather shoes, belts, bags, etc. A substantial quantity of hides and skins produced in the country was exported as raw material, with little or no processing at all.

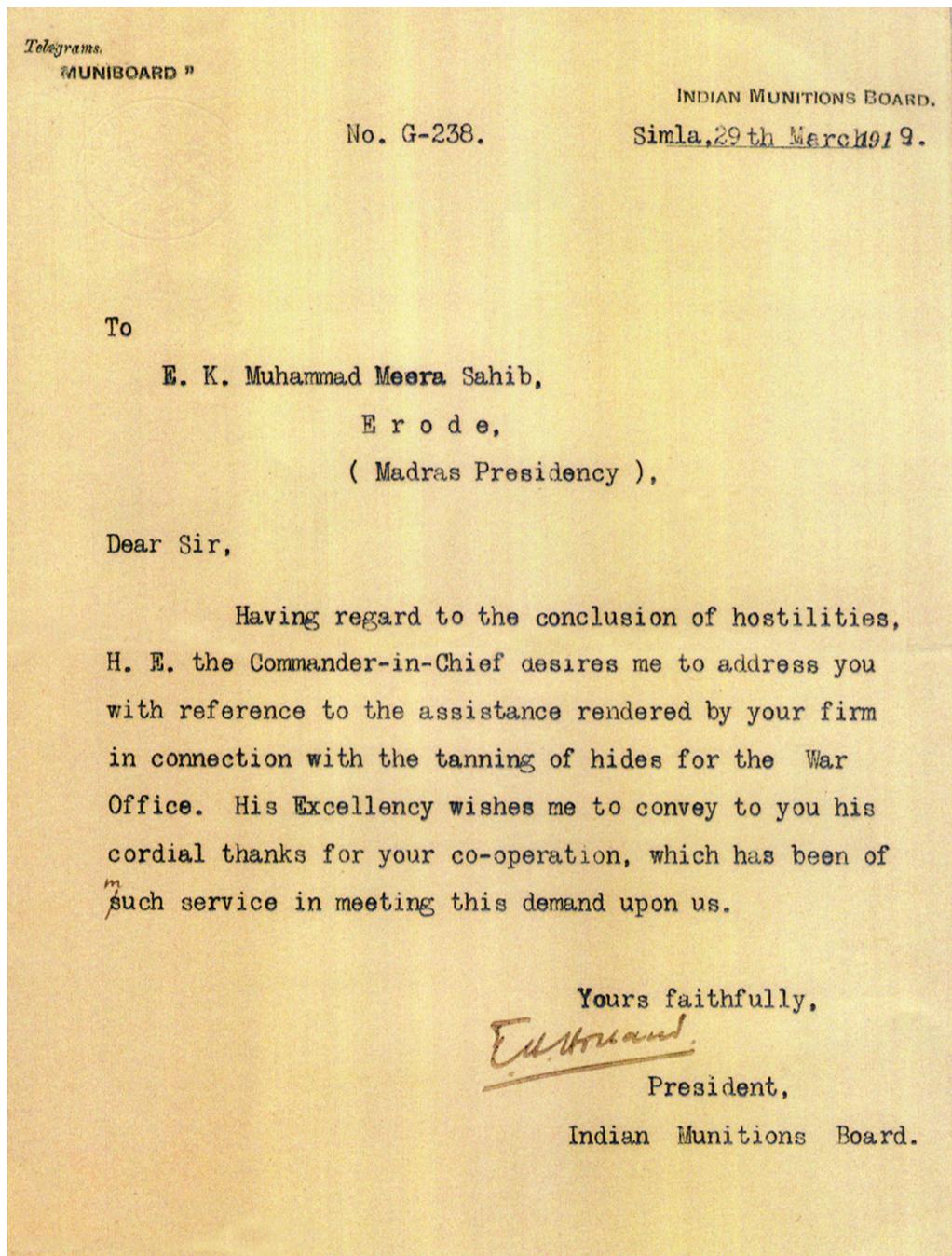


World War 1

A letter issued on 29th March 1919 by the Indian Munitions Board during World War 1 to E K Mohamed Meera Sahib

**The Imperial Munitions Board (IMB) was the Canadian branch of the British Ministry of Munitions. It was formed by the British War Cabinet to alleviate the Shell Crisis of 1915 during the First World War. The Board was mandated to arrange for the manufacture of war materials in Canada on behalf of the British Government.*

During the early stages when The Southern India Skin and Hide Merchants Association (SISHMA) was formed, World War I was going on. Europe was in turmoil. Amidst such upheavals on the international front, India saw a revolution in its leather industry.



As the World War I progressed, the demand of the Allied Powers for leather became very large. The Munitions Board* encouraged the production of leather and leather goods, thus offering a stable market serving the needs of their armies.