

Local & Munl. (1895-) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G.O., No. 2070 L.

DATED 29 Oct 1895.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Wild Animals.

Recording G.O., Revenue Department, communicating to the Judicial Department and to the Board of Revenue resolution of the Government of India, reviewing the reports of the number of human beings and of cattle killed by ----- or by the bite of poisonous snakes.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

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Miscellaneous.

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ENCLOSURES.

CURRENT No.

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

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No. 663, REVENUE, 4TH OCTOBER 1895.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department (Public), dated Simla, the 16th September 1895, No. 15-Public—1377-1388:—

Read—

Home Department Resolution No. 14-Public—1548-59, dated the 20th September 1894, reviewing the reports on the results of the measures adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India during the year 1893.

Read—also the following letters from Local Governments and Administrations submitting returns for the year 1894:—

- From the Government of Madras, No. 276-A., dated the 16th May 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Government of Madras, No. 991-A.R., dated the 18th June 1895.
- From the Government of Bombay, No. 2954, dated the 17th July 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Government of Bengal, No. 3654-J., dated the 4th July 1895, and enclosure.
- From the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, No. 540, dated the 1st June 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Government of the Punjab, No. 399, dated the 3rd May 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, No. 4182, dated the 29th May 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Chief Commissioner of Burma, No. 41-1 W-1, dated the 2nd April 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Chief Commissioner of Assam, No. 306-Mis.—1856-G., dated the 9th April 1895, and enclosure.
- From the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, No. 92—455-85, dated the 18th January 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Resident at Hyderabad, No. 88, dated the 5th April 1895, and enclosures.
- From the Chief Commissioner of Ajmere-Merwara, No. 771—165, dated the 8th July 1895, and enclosure.
- From the Resident in Mysore, No. 247—2386, dated the 23rd January 1895, and enclosure.

Resolution—

The statement appended to this Resolution contains the figures returned from the various Provinces regarding the number of human beings and of cattle killed by wild animals or by the bite of poisonous snakes, the number of wild animals of various descriptions, and of snakes, destroyed in each Province, the amount of rewards paid for their destruction, and the number of licenses issued in Form XI under the Indian Arms Act, 1878, free of charge, allowing the possession of arms for purposes of destruction of wild animals or protection of crops. The figures for the year under report (1894) are compared in the statement with those for 1893.

2. The following figures show the loss of human life caused by wild animals that has been reported in these two years:—

Province.]	Number of persons killed during	
	1893.	1894.
Madras	274	279
Bombay	38	40
Bengal	1,600	1,693
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	232	279
Punjab	37	40
Central Provinces	256	221
Burma	178	156
Assam	155	145
Coorg	2	1
Hyderabad Assigned Districts	27	37
Ajmere and Merwara	5	2
Total	2,804	2,893

The figures for each Province show little variation from the preceding year. Of the deaths in Bengal, 939 (as against 860 in 1893) are stated to have been due to "other" (unclassified) animals, mostly jackals, wild boars, and alligators, the latter being very destructive in all districts of the Dacca division. The deaths due to tigers in Burma had in 1893 risen to 124 from 28 in 1892: the reported figures, however, were believed to be incorrect. Apparently those for the earlier year were defective, as the number of deaths caused by tigers was 108 in the year under report. The Provinces in which the loss of life caused by wild beasts was highest in proportion to population were: Assam, Bengal, Burma and the Central Provinces: the mortality in these Provinces was one in 37,771, 42,142, 48,754 and 48,798 of the population respectively. In Burma the rate of mortality, which had risen in 1893 to one in 42,728, was one in 48,754. Among the whole population of India, one person was killed by wild beasts out of every 76,436, as compared with one in every 78,862 in 1893 and one in every 74,677 in 1892.

3. The number of deaths due to snake-bite in each Province was as follows:—

Province.	Number of persons killed by snakes during	
	1893.	1894.
Madras	1,498	1,612
Bombay	1,192	1,233
Bengal	10,797	9,856
North-Western Provinces and Oudh	4,847	5,689
Punjab	917	1,037
Central Provinces	1,024	1,087
Burma	499	567
Assam	206	160
Coorg	..	..
Hyderabad Assigned Districts	192	231
Ajmere and Merwara	41	66
Total	21,213	21,538

Bengal and Assam show a decrease in the number of deaths, and the other Provinces an increase, the largest increase being that of 842 in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. The differences between the two years are in most cases fluctuations for which no cause can be assigned with certainty, as slightly more efficient reporting would produce such differences in the figures. In 1892 the deaths caused by snake-bite in the Lower Provinces of Bengal were 9,120; and last year the Government of India observed with regret that the number had risen to 10,797. Though the deaths in Bengal exceed those in other Provinces, there was apparently nothing permanent

in the rise, as the number has receded to 9,856 in 1894. The decrease of mortality is ascribed both in Bengal and Assam to the low flood-levels of the year, the snakes not having been dislodged from their usual haunts as happens when the water is high. In Assam the mortality is the lowest recorded in the last ten years. The loss of life from snake-bite was highest in proportion to the population in Bengal, Ajmere and Merwara, the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and the Central Provinces, the figures being one person per 7,239, 8,218, 8,245 and 9,921 in these Provinces respectively. If all the Provinces be taken together, one person was killed in this manner among every 10,267 of the population in 1894, as compared with one in every 10,424 in 1893.

4. The total number of cattle returned as killed by wild animals and snakes was 97,371 against 94,666 in 1893.* It is acknowledged that little reliance can be placed on the accuracy of the total figures, since, especially in the case of deaths of cattle from snake-bite, the reporting is necessarily very defective, the owner having no motive to report and the occurrence often not coming to the knowledge of an official. There was an increase in the total number of cattle killed by wild animals (89,544 to 92,495), and a decrease in the number killed by snakes (5,122 to 4,876). The principal increases in the former figures were from 8,343 to 10,228 in the Central Provinces, and from 17,446 to 19,594 in Assam. The reported deaths of cattle from snake-bite also in the Central Provinces increased from 95 to 235. Thirty-four thousand one hundred and ninety-four cattle were killed by tigers, and 33,696 by leopards, the greatest number of the former cases (12,620) being in Assam and of the latter (11,426) in Bengal. It is probable that tigers, leopards or panthers are not much discriminated in the original returns.

The increase in Assam is ascribed by the Chief Commissioner to more accurate reporting. In the Central Provinces the same explanation has been offered for a continuous increase, but the Chief Commissioner views the statistics in general with distrust, and has desired the special attention of the officer who in each district has been placed in charge of the operations for the destruction of wild animals and snakes, to the reported increasing destruction of cattle. The increase in the last few years has been very large in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, where the average in 1884—86 was 11,792 cattle killed by wild animals, while the number for 1892 was 27,966 and for 1894, 35,519. The Local Government, however, ascribe the rise to better reporting.

5. The number of wild beasts destroyed was 13,447, the total amount of rewards paid being Rs. 1,04,927. The corresponding figures in the previous year were 15,309 and Rs. 1,04,840. The numbers of the various kinds of wild animals destroyed do not differ much from those in 1893; the chief decrease was in the number of other (unspecified) animals destroyed (4,120 to 3,051): this was chiefly due to a falling off (2,859 to 2,084) in the figures for Lower Bengal, where the number of "other animals" destroyed still far exceeds that in any other Province. The destructiveness of these animals (wild boars, alligators, &c.) to human life in Bengal has been alluded to in paragraph 2 of this Resolution. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh (where the total number of animals killed and amount of rewards granted show a small decrease) Rs. 1,405 were paid for the destruction of 514 bears against Rs. 873 for 316 in the preceding year. It is explained, however, that rewards for 471 bears were paid in the Kumaon division, and it is suspected that some of the skins were purchased in Nepal and Thibet for the sake of the reward; the Local Government has directed that the matter should be specially enquired into.

6. The number of venomous snakes reported to have been destroyed, and the rewards granted on this account shown in the returns, fell respectively from 117,120 to 102,210 and from Rs. 12,607 to Rs. 10,150. (In 1892, however, the number of snakes killed was returned as only 84,789). In Madras no rewards are paid by the Government for killing snakes. In the Bombay Presidency also, if rewards paid by municipalities be excluded, no rewards were given during 1894 for the destruction

* The figure shown for 1893 in the Resolution No. 14—Public—1548 to 1549 of 20th September 1894 was 90,253. The Bengal Government have since supplied revised figures for 1893, viz., 36,348 in place of 31,935.

of snakes. At one time a large number of venomous snakes (*phursas*) were killed in the Sâtara and Râtnagiri districts; this ceased on certain restrictions being introduced in the system of rewards: and the Bombay Government decided to watch the mortality in case it should show an increase. The Local Government consider that there are not yet sufficient data for a conclusion: but there has been no marked increase in the mortality in these two districts. In Sind 11,812 snakes (for which no rewards were paid) are stated to have been killed against 6,450 in the preceding year. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh the payment of rewards by Government has been discontinued since 1891; 14,829 snakes are reported to have been killed in 1894 against 21,139 in 1893. The chief decrease, however, took place in Assam, where the figures for the destruction of snakes were: in 1892, 2,329; in 1893, 9,443; and in 1894, 1,808. The rewards paid in Assam fell from Rs. 2,657 to Rs. 303. Practically the whole decrease took place in the Sylhet district, where 9,132 snakes were killed in 1893 and only 1,515 in 1894. The decrease is ascribed, like the reduced mortality from snake-bite in this Province, to the absence of high floods in 1894. The offer of a reward of Re. 1 per snake by the Local Board of North Sylhet, noticed in the Resolution of the Government of India reviewing the returns for 1893, has had no effect, the number of snakes killed in that sub-division having fallen largely. Thus recent experience in Bombay, the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and Assam seems to confirm the view, based on earlier experiments, which was expressed in 1890 by the Government of India, that there is little practical utility in a system of rewards for killing snakes. In the Central Provinces (where 1,544 snakes were killed during 1894) the Chief Commissioner has approved a uniform rate of reward, viz., one rupee for each poisonous snake killed: this rate has been brought into operation during 1895, and its effect will be visible hereafter. The largest number of snakes killed (52,063) was, as usual, in Lower Bengal, where Rs. 5,006 were paid as rewards.

7. Besides licenses for purposes of sport, which are issued in Form VIII under the Indian Arms Act, 1878, on payment of a small fee, 15,043 (against 16,321 in the previous year) licenses in Form XI were issued, free of cost, for possession of arms for the purposes of destruction of wild animals or protection of crops. Adding the licenses continued from previous years, the total number of licenses in Form XI in force during 1894 was 64,857 against 69,931 in 1893. The largest decrease in the number in force was in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh (16,827 to 15,035) and the Central Provinces (16,126 to 14,075) where such licenses are still more numerous than in any other Province. In the Central Provinces, however, the accuracy of the figures is considered doubtful. In regard to the decrease in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, it is stated that greater discrimination was found necessary on the part of District Magistrates in granting licenses in order to secure that licenses are not issued in this form for purposes which it is not intended to cover.

The Indian Arms Act was applied to the Hyderabad Assigned Districts by Foreign Department Notification No. 1875-I, dated 1st June 1894. The Resident has observed that the grant of licenses in Form IX (corresponding to Form XI) will, in these districts, require careful watching.

8. While the Governor-General in Council deplores the loss of life which is annually reported to have been caused by wild beasts and snakes, His Excellency in Council has nothing at present to add, on the subject of measures for reducing the mortality caused by wild beasts, to the remarks made in paragraph 7 of the Resolution in this Department of 20th September 1894, reviewing the statistics of 1893. So long as the habits of the natives of the country remain as they are and they continue to go bare-footed and sleep upon the ground it will, in the opinion of the Government of India, be vain to expect that the number of deaths from snake-bite will fall to a very material extent. But the Government of India adhere to the opinion, which they expressed in 1890, that the removal of undergrowth and debris in or near village-sites cannot fail to reduce the chances of loss of life from this cause. At the same time the Government of India admit that this precaution may be both more useful and more practicable in some parts of the country than in others. In places

where vegetable growth is very rapid, it will be difficult to exercise any supervision over keeping it down; though a good deal can be done by the villagers themselves, if they can be convinced of the usefulness of this precaution. It is noticed with satisfaction that attention has generally been given to this subject, although opinions vary as to the amount of good to be expected. Considerable activity in the matter is reported to have been shown by District officers and Local Boards in Madras and Bombay. The Government of Madras, however, are inclined to think that the work of clearance is in many cases not very thoroughly done. In Lower Bengal a good deal has been done by municipalities, but the villagers remain apathetic; and little, it is stated, can be done to remove the rapidly-growing vegetation of many village-sites. The Local Government observe that it is not in those districts where jungle abounds near the houses that the mortality from snake-bite is greatest. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, although attention was everywhere paid to clearing inhabited sites, the deaths due to snakes rose from 4,847 to 5,689. In Burma it is expected that the rules regarding village sanitation which have recently been published will have a beneficial effect in checking the breeding of snakes. In Assam, as already remarked, the mortality from snake-bite was the lowest for many years, and the results are considered by the Chief Commissioner fully to justify the measures which have been adopted for the preservation of human life. The Government of India remain of the opinion that any organised system, such as the appointment of special officers, for the destruction of wild animals and snakes would not be attended by any diminution of the loss of life at all commensurate with the expense which the adoption of such a system would involve. The experiment tried in the Madras Presidency in 1873 resulted in the destruction of 22 tigers and 8 leopards at a cost of Rs. 10,000. At the present time sportsmen and professional shikaris experience year by year greater difficulties in finding tigers to shoot and there is no doubt that the number of these animals in the populous parts of the country is rapidly diminishing. Whenever it is reported that an animal has taken to man-eating measures should, as directed in the Home Department Resolution of 4th December 1890, be promptly taken to exterminate it and Local Governments and Administrations should do all in their power, by the grant of liberal rewards and by requiring local authorities to give special assistance to sportsmen and shikaris, to effect this object. The Government of India adhere to the view expressed in the Resolution just referred to that the grant of rewards for the capture of venomous snakes had not appreciably affected the mortality from snake-bite, and they see no reason to depart from the decision then adopted that the question whether such rewards should be continued or not must be left entirely to the discretion of Local Governments and Administrations.

Order—Ordered that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Local Governments and Administrations for information and guidance, and that it be published in the *Gazette of India* for general information.

Also, that a copy be communicated to the Foreign Department.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. P. HEWETT,
Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India.

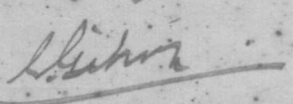
To the Government of Madras.

ORDER—No. 663, Revenue, dated 4th October 1895.

Miscellaneous.

Communicated to the Judicial Department, to the Local and Municipal Department and to the Board of Revenue.

(True Extract.)


Secretary to Government.

To the Judicial Department.
„ the Local and Municipal Department.
„ the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue).

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REVENUE.

Local & Municipal Dept.
CURRENT No. 3052

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G.O., No. 663, 4th October 1895.

OCTOBER.

Wild Animals.

Resolution of the Government of India reviewing the reports of the number of human beings and of cattle killed by — or by the bite of poisonous snakes, communicated to the Judicial Department, to the Local and Municipal Department, and to the Board of Revenue.

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