

Revenue Department

Minutes of Council

20th Dec 1857

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1857

Fort Saint George, Revenue Consultation of 29th October 1857.

No. 55. Read the following letter from H. CLEGHORN, Esq., M. D., Conservator of Forests; to the Secretary to Government Revenue Department, Fort Saint George; dated Ootacamund, 5th October 1857, No. 171.

SIR,

The Collector of Coimbatore having lately addressed* me upon the subject of granting Forest land for coffee cultivation; and as this seems to be a matter of very great importance, from the numerous applications almost daily being made in this, and other Districts of the presidency, as well as Mysore, I think it advisable to submit my views for the consideration of Government, trusting that they may meet with approval.

From H. F. C. CLEGHORN, Esq., Conservator of Forests; to E. B. THOMAS, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore; dated Ootacamund, 2d October 1857, No. 161.

SIR,

In reply to your letter No. and date as per margin, soliciting my opinion as to the principle which should be kept in view in granting Forest land for coffee cultivation on the Neilgherry Hills, I have the honor to submit the following observations.

2. I regard the question thus referred to me as bearing principally on three points.
 - 1st. The protection of the springs in the mountains and on their slopes, ensuring the supply of water to the low country.
 - 2d. The conservation of valuable timber, which is in great demand, and
 - 3d. The ornamental appearance of the Hills. Upon the two first, I offer a few remarks.
3. The higher sholas clothing the ghauts on both sides are of the utmost importance, and the climate is believed to suffer the greatest detriment from their removal. I would therefore suggest that the high wooded mountain tops overhanging the low country (such as Hoolichol) should be preserved with rigid care, the forest there should not be given over to the axe, lest the supplies of water may be injured. It is the opinion of many persons, that the vast clearings which have taken place, have had a share in producing the irregularity of the monsoon which has of late years been so much complained of in Coimbatore. In order that the course of the rivulets should be overshadowed with trees, I conceive that the Hills should be left clothed to the extent of about $\frac{1}{2}$ of their height from the top, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ of the slope and all the valley below for cultivation; this available portion would far exceed in extent the higher ridges which should be conserved.
4. It seems to me that the immense tracts of virgin forests in the rich valleys of the Koon-dahs appear to be eminently suited for Coffee cultivation, and the removal of the forest there would not be attended with the same disadvantage as on the Eastern Ghauts, where the drier climate does not admit of the same effort at speedy reproduction.
5. If it be desirable to lay down a general rule in regard to the limits of elevation, within which clearing for coffee cultivation should be allowed, I would specify from about 2,500 to 4,500 feet, this being I understand the extreme range within which coffee planted on a large scale is found to thrive.
6. It is important to give every facility for the cultivation of Coffee, but it is desirable to limit the clearings to those situations, where this peculiar shrub can be grown with advantage. I have observed some clearings, where the ground is so precipitous that it is extremely improbable that the soil can last many years.
7. It may be urged that, in general, people are sufficiently alive to their own interests to select only those sites which are in every way eligible; but from the inexperience of many who embark in Coffee planting, it seems desirable to lay down some rule. I need only point to the vast amount of land cleared and subsequently abandoned, both in this country and Ceylon, either before or after planting.

புரத்தாப்பு பரிசு - 1.

செப்பனெயர் பெயர் சீ. சிவசுந்தரி

செப்பனெயர் காக எட்டை 15/12/06
கொள்வப்பட்ட நாள்.

செப்பனெயர் முடிந்த நாள் 05/07

செப்பனெயர் முடிந்த நாள் 05/07
செப்பனெயர் முடிந்த நாள் 05/07
செப்பனெயர் முடிந்த நாள் 05/07

Fort Saint George, Revenue Consultation of 29th October 1857.

8. It is to be regretted, that independent of considerations of climate, Coffee cultivation should find a place in those parts of the forest where the timber is of a superior description, and which at present Government is put to great shifts to obtain for public purposes.

9. I would therefore add, that in places which are accessible, and which contain very fine timber, it seems desirable that one of the Assistants in my Department, should have an opportunity of removing such timber as is available or of marking it, with a view to its being taken at a valuation by the occupier, should he desire to do so, I specially allude to 1st Teak, 2d Blackwood, 3d Vengay and 4th Kurrah Murdah.

From E. B. THOMAS, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore; to H. F. C. CLEGHORN, Esq., M. D.,
Conservator of Forests, dated Coimbatore 25th September 1857, No. 44.

Sir,

The orders of Government repeated on several occasions as well as in the Revenue Board's Manual for the Neilgherry Hills, are, to preserve from destruction, the woods and forests of these Hills. The applications for forest land (for Coffee) are yearly increasing. Between the two, it is difficult to know what to do, none but forest land answers for Coffee, and once given, every tree is felled.

2. If I give the fine forests to all who apply, I neglect the orders and wishes of Government. If I refuse them, Coffee planters and other speculators, impute to me "that I check capital and enterprise," &c. Of the value of forests, as preserving the springs and moisture of the Neilgherries, you are well aware; and that the plains of Coimbatore depend greatly on the water flowing down from the Hills. I consider the higher and prominent forests are most valuable for this purpose. I have therefore, usually, discouraged all applications for cutting forests on the higher ranges, or above 3 or 4,000 feet, giving it wherever asked, below that range; the more especially as Coffee does not require, and will not thrive, at a higher elevation.

3. I would beg your views and opinion in this matter, to aid in guiding me under the many applications now making to me. I think clearing in ravines, below 4,000 feet will have no very ill effect on the springs, but that the destruction of timber above that elevation, is very undesirable on this eastern side of the Hills, where forests are scarce, and not abounding as they do on the western slopes of the Neilgherries, towards Malabar, where clearing may go on for some years with advantage.

No. 56. ORDER THEREON, No. 1106, dated 29th October 1857.

Ordered that the foregoing letter be recorded.

(Signed) H. FORBES,

Acting Secretary to Government.

Coimbatore Collectors
Office Coimbatore 25th Sept 1857

From J. B. Thomas Esq.
Collector of Coimbatore.

To H. F. C. Cleghorn Esq. M. D.
Conservator of Forests.

The orders of Government repeated on several occasions as well as in the Revenue Board's Manual for the Neilgherry Hills, are, to preserve from destruction, the woods and forests of these Hills. The applications for forest land (for Coffee) are yearly increasing. Between the two, it is difficult to know what to do, none but forest land answers for Coffee.

2. If I give the fine forests to all who apply, I neglect the orders and wishes of Government. If I refuse them, Coffee planters and other speculators, impute to me "that I check Capital and enterprise," &c. Of the value of forests, as preserving the springs and moisture of the Neilgherries, you are well aware; and that the plains of Coimbatore depend greatly on the water flowing down from the Hills. I consider the higher and prominent forests are most valuable for this purpose. I have therefore, usually, discouraged all applications for cutting forests on the higher ranges, or above 3 or 4,000 feet, giving it wherever asked, below that range; the more especially as Coffee does not require, and will not thrive, at a higher elevation.

below that range, the more especially as Coffee does not require, and will not thrive, at a higher situation.

3. I would beg your views and opinion as this matter, to aid me in guiding me under the many applications now making to me. I think clearing on areas, below 2000 feet will have no very ill effect on the springs; but that the destruction of timber above that elevation, is very undesirable on the eastern side of the Hills, where forests are scarce, and not abundant as they are on the western slope of the Nalgahans, towards Malabar, where clearing may go on for some years with advantage.

I have the honor to be

Yours Most Obedient Servant
 J. P. Thomas
 Collector

Received
 25 Sept. 1857

Copy sent to Mr. J. P. Thomas
 25 Sept. 1857

100

1857
 25 October 1857
 C. P. Thomas Esq.
 Collector of Combarua

1857
 25 Sept. 1857

I reply to your letter No. 100 dated 25th Sept. 1857, as per margin, soliciting my opinion as to the principle which should be adopted in view of granting Forest land for Coffee cultivation on the Nalgahans Hills. I have the honor to submit the following observations.

1. I regard the question thus referred to me as being principally on three points:
 - 1st. The protection of the springs in the mountains and on their slopes, assuring the supply of water to the low Country.
 - 2nd. The preservation of valuable timber, and its use for fuel and other purposes.
 - 3rd. The preservation of the appearance of the Hills.
- Upon the first point, I offer a few remarks.
- The higher slopes clothing the hills are both a source of the utmost importance, and the climate is believed to suffer the greatest detriment from their removal. I would therefore suggest that the high lands should be kept

overhanging the low Country (such as Koolicut) should be preserved with rigid care. The forest there should not be given over to the Agr. but the supplies of water may be injured. It is the opinion of many persons that the past clearings which have taken place, have had a share in producing the irregularity of the Monsoon which has of late years been so much complained of in Coimbatore. In order that the course of the Riverlets should be unobstructed with them, I am anxious that the Hill should be kept at least to the extent of about 1/2 of their height from the top, leaving 1/2 of the slope and the valley below. The hill should be a barrier against the higher ranges which should be continued.

It seems to me that the immense tracts of virgin forests in the rich valley of the Riverlets appear to be admirably suited for Coffee cultivation, and the removal of the Forest there would not be attended with the same disadvantages as in the Western Ghats, where the dense forest was not a part of the same effort at improvement. If it be necessary to lay down a permanent rate in regard to the height of elevation, within which clearing for Coffee cultivation should be allowed, I would suggest that over 2000 feet the density of the forest is such that Coffee

I would name for the consideration of Government is Assistant Surgeon C. Drew.

5. This gentleman combines qualifications which seem to render him well suited for the Superintendence of the Anamallay Forests. He has shown himself to be a careful and accurate observer, and when at Calicut did good service in various ways, especially in suppressing the Gatha Percha tree, and enabling me to track some Sandalwood robbers from Mysore. He is a good Botanist, and a humane Medical man, who would cordially exert himself in carrying out the measures for ameliorating the Hill tribes, Mullers and Gonds.

If the services of Assistant Surgeon Drew can be granted, there would not then be the serious difficulty inevitably attending the removal of Captain Compton without a suitable successor. Ten days or a fortnight would be necessary to enable Mr. Drew to learn his new duties.

I believe that the Honble. Mr. Elliot will corroborate the opinion expressed in the present paper. I beg to annex Copy of letter from the Acting Collector of Malabar who has had good opportunities of judging of

Mr. C. has qualifications for public service.
If approved by Government, I would re-
commend that he should receive the same
emoluments as Captain Hamilton viz. Re-
sides \$50 per month.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your Most Obedient Servant,
H. Chapman
Conservator of Forests

1871

1871

From

H. Chapman Esq. to
Governor of the

the Secretary to Government

Residence of the

at St. George

2 Bats 48 Bats
1857. B. 4.

The Collection of Combinations being lately
presented me upon the subject of granting land
for Copper Cultivation and as this seems to be a matter
of very great importance from the numerous applications
which daily being made in that and the like to the
President, and all St. George, I think it advisable to
submit my views for the consideration of Government
hoping that they may meet with approval.

2 Bats 48 Bats
1857. B. 4.

I have the honor to be

Sir,
Your Most Obedient Servant

H. Chapman
Conservator of Forests

7/11/42

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