Revenue Department

Minutes of Consultation

13th July 1858

B-ach nos 19 & 20

Order no 94379 9th July 1858

(78 words)

பாதுகாக்கும் பிரிவு

செப்பனிடுபவர் பெயர்: O.J. கொரிஸ்டியர்

செப்பனிடுவதற்காக எடுத்தக்- 05/08 11/07
கொடுக்கப்பட்ட நாள்.

3/11/08	19/11/08	30.11.07
சரிபார்க்கும்	சரிபார்க்கும்	ஒப்புமைச்
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943/2

Fort Saint George, Revenue Consultation of 13th July 1858.

No. 19. Read the following letter from H. CLEGHORN, Esq., M. D., Conservator of Forests; to W. H. BAYLEY, Esq., Acting Secretary to Government Revenue Department; Fort Saint George, dated Madras 24th June 1858, No. 377.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of Extract Minutes of Consultation No. 859, calling "for explanation regarding the demand of Seignorage for Sleepers supplied to the Railway Department" and for my opinion regarding certain proposals made by the Consulting Engineer for Railways.

1. I should mention that the indiscriminate felling of trees in the Government Forests of Salem adjoining the Railway has been brought to my notice by the Collector, Coffee Planters, Missionaries and other Residents of the Shevaroy Hills, and one of my Assistants was sent (as intimated to Government in my letter No. 283 of 24th February 1858) to carry out definite instructions for the conservancy of these Government Forests, which have been devastated to a very great extent, chiefly by Contractors or Sub Contractors of the Railway Company or Mullialees professing to be in their employ.

2. There has been no wish to obstruct the Railway but the reverse. Mr. Williams having been sent to Salem District with a view to facilitate the operations of the Company, the sympathy of the Collector and myself were wholly with the progress of the Railway, but the unrestrained proceedings of a large body of Contractors, whose agreements had not passed through this office or been made known to the Collector, threatened the annihilation of the remaining Forest, and would probably have affected the water supply of the surrounding country.

3. Messrs. Brice and Co. the enterprising Contractors of the Bombay Railway Company and Mr. Ross Resident Engineer of the Madras Railway Company have drawn a large number of Sleepers from the Coimbatore and Canara Forests paying* Rupees 1½ per tree or 3 or 4 Annas per Sleeper according to circumstances. Captain Johnston in his Report of Inspection states that Mr. Ross's Sleepers were "excellent, and supplied at a price considerably below what has hitherto been paid for them," vide Extract from Minutes of Consultation Revenue Department No. 724, para. 25.

* *During the last two years.*

4. To assimilate the practice in Salem and North Arcot with the rules in Coimbatore and Canara, and to cover the expenses of the Conservancy Establishment, the same tax was proposed to be levied, and Government appeared to sanction the principle, for in Extract Minutes of Consultation No. 540, Revenue Department, 28th April 1858, when my instructions to Mr. Williams were forwarded for the information of Government, the remark was recorded in para. 6, that the steps taken and arrangements proposed (by me) "seem judicious."

5. Captain Johnston states in para. 4 "there is no doubt of the justice of the charge" but "I do not see how it can be enforced retrospectively," I certainly did not anticipate that the sleepers *already furnished* should pay Seignorage.

6. As regards sleepers still to be furnished, I think the charge should be made, in justice to my Department and be adjusted in the manner suggested by Captain Johnston himself in the first part of para. 6 viz., by arrangement between the Contractor and Agent. If all existing contracts are to be exempted, the seignorage for wood supplied to the Railway will be practically *Nil*, for I understand that many large contracts have been issued, and I conclude from the state of the Railway and the published expectation of its being opened by the end of next year that very few if any additional contracts will be required.

7. The arrangement proposed by Captain Johnston will answer very well for sleepers accepted by the Railway Engineers, but as about 25 per cent. are rejected, and often immediately† sold by auction for building and other purposes, I would suggest that the Agent and Manager should be requested to give instructions, that whenever an Engineer is about to ex-

† *For the Contractor's benefit.*

Conservator

amine sleepers he should give notice to the Overseer of this Department, who will be desired by me to attend and count the rejected sleepers, that the Seignorage may be recovered when they are sold. As these rejected sleepers will probably on an average, bring in 10 to 12 annas each, it appears fair that on them also a seignorage should be charged. It will be for Government to determine whether in this case, it should be at the same rate. Rejection beyond a certain ratio (10 or 15 per cent.) of course implies careless and wasteful felling.

8. As respects timber cut but found not suitable, I would suggest that in the event of its non-removal within a specified time, say three months, this Department should be at liberty to confiscate and sell for the benefit of Government.

9. I would also point out that these contracts have been and are issued without any reference to me or to the Collector, and that they are simply agreements in which one party covenants to supply another with timber which belongs not to him but to the Government, and this without permission or consent of Government.

10. The difficulties in Salem have occurred partly from no intimation having been given by the Railway authorities, and partly from the absence of Mr. Williams under circumstances already within the knowledge of Government. Had he been there and obeyed my orders, he would have marked off the trees to be felled, and the Contractors so far from being impeded, would actually have been materially assisted, as they would have been saved the trouble, expence and delay of selecting trees. That Government, the owners of the Forest, should determine which trees are to be cut is surely no grievance or hardship.

11. If Government desire it, they can of course give the wood for nothing, but I see no reason why they should be more liberal with timber than with any other public property. I think the seignorage just in principle, and most useful as a check on the indiscriminate felling of timber, I can assure the Government that unless *decided* and *immediate* measures are adopted and *enforced*, the Forests of Government will be ruined beyond remedy.

12. The mischief as Government will see from the enclosed is daily going on, and if protection is not speedily afforded, it will be too late.

13. I would strongly urge that the Railway Company should first consult me regarding contracts for timber from Government Forests, if they cannot do this, the only course is effectually to prevent trees being cut by the contractors until I have first selected them. If the Railway Company give me 3 or 4 months' notice of their probable requirements, I can always be prepared and prevent further difficulty or delay.

14. To carry out these arrangements for marking off trees and registering the seignorage, &c. I would propose the appointment of an Assistant Conservator to be located in charge of these forests, and I shall shortly be prepared to recommend some person for the appointment. It will be absolutely necessary, however, that he should be aided by two Overseers and some peons and I would earnestly press upon Government that as this matter is urgent they should sanction for this district a temporary establishment at the following rates.

		Rs.	A.	P.
One Overseer at Rupees	80	80	0	0
One Overseer at ,,	60	60	0	0
Ten Peons at ,,	6 each	60	0	0
	Rupees...	200	0	0

Rupees 900. Government are aware that a considerable portion of the expenditure already sanctioned for the department remains unemployed.

P. S. Since writing this letter the Inspector General of Hospitals lately returned from the Shevaroy Hills has expressed a strong opinion in favor of protecting these forests as a necessary measure in a sanatary point of view.

H. C.

Extract of a letter from J. W. CHERRY, Esq., Acting Collector of Salem; dated Salem 7th April 1857, No. 90; to H. CLEGHORN, Esq., Conservator of Forests.

"My object is to bring to your notice how extensively the Forests in this District are destroyed without any means for preventing it.

I may also add that every day from 10 to 20 bandy loads are to be seen, of large and valuable bamboos taken away from the Sherveroy Hills. These are disposed of at most profitable rates in the Coimbatore and Trichinopoly Districts.

A small tax levied upon these bamboos might provide funds for an Establishment of some kind, to prevent this wholesale and indiscriminate cutting of Government timber. This has been going on lately to such an extent that independent of the loss of the value of the wood to the State it is supposed to affect the fall of rain which once used to be abundant on these Hills, but which in the last 4 or 5 years has been much diminished; thereby causing no little sickness and seriously injuring both the pasturage and plantations in the neighbourhood."

Extract of a letter from the Reverend J. M. LECHLER, dated 21st March 1857; to J. W. CHERRY, Esq., Acting Collector of Salem.

"I thought the Collector had put a stop to this custom so very destructive to the wood which is becoming so valuable and scarce even in this neighbourhood. In any country of Europe one single act of setting fire to a wood or forest would be most severely punished, should this work of annual destruction on the Hills round Salem not be forbidden."

Extract of a letter from J. B. NORTON, Esq., dated 24th June 1858; to H. CLEGHORN, Esq.

"Going up the Mullipooram ghaut you will see on the sides of the Hills unmistakable evidence of the devastation already committed. It is preposterous that Chettys may take enormous contracts * for sleepers and cut and hack down what and where they please. I have seen magnificient trees felled for a single sleeper or less, the growth and curve of the tree precluding its yielding more, and for a long time 25 per cent. of the sleepers were rejected by the Railway when inspected! Conceive what a loss!

* *One for* 78,000. *H. C.*

But I think the Malliallies are more mischievous than the Railway contractors. These latter cut as much as possible at the foot of the hills and on the lowest slopes, that they may save carriage. But the Mallialee cuts on the tops of the Hills and all over them. Go where you will, you hear the chop, chop of the Malliallie's axe and they cut ruthlessly. Their habit of abandoning the patches cleared after a few years have somewhat exhausted the soil, makes the havoc continual. Mr. Brett had some idea that the Malliallies were privileged, and though planters are under restrictions as to cutting timber, the Malliallies are not, or set rules at defiance. Only this last year they coolly cleared thirty acres of forest in my boundaries before I could stop them. First my Agent wrote to me, then I wrote to Mr. Grant, he was on jummabundy, and so more time was lost though these gentry clear the wood so rapidly that they commit irreparable injury in the course of a few days."

(True Extracts.)

(Signed) H. CLEGHORN, *Conservator of Forests.*

No. 20. ORDER THEREON, No. 943; dated 9th July 1858.

Ordered that the above letter be forwarded to the Financial Railway Department for consideration, with reference to the Extract from the Minutes of Consultation in that Department dated 4th and 17th June 1858, Nos. 295 and 329.

2. In para. 14 the Conservator of Forests proposes the immediate employment of a temporary establishment of two Overseers and ten peons for the purpose of marking off trees to be felled in the Salem Jungles and registering the Seignorage, &c. The cost of this establishment is stated at 200 Rupees per mensem, but the period for which it is required is not given. As however there appears to be a sum of Rupees nine hundred remaining unemployed from the sum sanctioned by the Government of India, the Right Honorable the Governor in Council authorizes the employment of the extra temporary establishment from the above saving. Dr. Cleghorn will be careful to see that the monthly

Rs.	
80	1 *Overseer*... ... ...
60	1 *do.* ... ...
60	10 *Peons at* 6... ... ...

200	
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charge on account of the Forests conservancy does not exceed the sum sanctioned by the Government of India, viz. Rupees 4,530.

3. It will be satisfactory to the Government to have a statement shewing the present strength and cost of the conservancy establishment under all heads, and the saving from unfilled appointments to which it is presumed Dr. Cleghorn refers in the concluding paragraph of his present letter. Dr. Cleghorn will accordingly take an early opportunity of furnishing this statement, as well as information respecting the period for which the temporary Establishment proposed to be entertained for Salem will be needed.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Enclosure 3
943/X Copy

No 943

Extracts from the Minutes of Consultation
Under date the 9th July 1858.

Read the following
letter from the Conservator
of Forests

Here enter 24th June 1858
No 37

Ordered that the
above letter be forwarded
to the Financial Railway
Department for consideration
with reference to the
Extracts from the Minutes
of Govt in that Dept
dated 4th and 17th June
1858 No 295 & 329.

Copies to the
Conservator

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by the Government of

Overseer —— 80
do —— 60
10 peons @ 6 —— 60
200

9th/5

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the Governor in Council
authorizes the employ-
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temporary establishment
from the above saving.
Dr. Clayhorn will be
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monthly charge on
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Conservancy does not
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WHB

8 Copies to the Imperial Railway Dept. No. 10
4 " " Conservator of Forests No. 1
1 " " Accountant General No. 2
1 " " Civil Auditor No. 3

C. Com. 22nd June/88. No. 2626.

R/

Revenue 1888 Depart.
Dy. to Govt. 13th July

c. 1943

Extract from Proc. of Govt.
Dept. 2 July 88.

Further Govt. 4th August/88 No. 1085

197-67

Forwarding to the Imperial Railway Department for a letter from the Conservator of Forests containing explanation regarding the demand of seignorage for sleepers supplied to the Railway and sanctioning the immediate employment of a temporary Establishment as proposed by Dr. Cloghorn for marking off trees to be felled in the Salem jungles and registering the seignorage fees.

No 19 & 20.

16th July