

Revenue Consultation

No. 677

Dated 17th May 1859

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
from 11th to 17th May 1859.*

No. 58. Read the following letter from Lieutenant A. D. TAYLOR, I. N.; Commanding Her Majesty's Surveying Vessel "*Bheema*" I. N. on Special duty Dharwar Road Commission; to THOMAS PYCROFT Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George; dated Sedashighur, May 2nd 1859, No. 25.

I have been endeavouring to find time to make a report regarding our examination of the Kalee Nuddee, and of the Goond Forests, but with my new duty on this Road Commission I have not a moment to spare, and can therefore give now but a brief account of our proceedings, hoping to get subsequent opportunity to report more fully upon this and other subjects.

2. Referring to events in the order of their occurrence I have to report that we walked up along the bed of the Kalee Nuddee from above Hundigudda on the left bank, which is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles above Mullapore, and the highest limit of tide water, and of navigation; thence to Bohberigudda opposite the foot of the Barbull Ghaut on left bank, a distance of 18 statute miles consisting of several long level reaches alternating with rapids; in this distance our measurements shew a rise of 120 feet, or 7 feet per mile, which fact decides in the negative the question of the practicability of opening up the river for navigation without locks, and even perhaps with locks, a dozen of them being requisite in that 18 miles, and more than double that number for the same number of miles higher up.

3. We had not time to continue the exact system of levelling further than the above point, though we noted by the Aneroid a further rise of 100 feet in 10 miles till we came to most difficult walking over Rock with strong rapids and falls in the river when we ceased further examination and ascended the left bank (which abounds with fine teak) to the plateau, 1300 feet above the river.

4. Two days afterwards we walked to the falls of Lalgooly, the head of which I made to be 800 feet above the Sea and their fall is 300 feet in less than half a mile, thus proving that in the length of the river intermediate between these great falls and the highest point to which we ascended (a distance of 6 miles) there must be falls and rapids aggregating 300 feet.

5. Thus much briefly for the river with reference to its navigable qualities; now if any steps are to be taken towards improving its bed for the purpose of bringing down the teak, we must I think forego its improvement for navigation; it cannot become the common highway of Steam cargo boats and of floating rafts of timber; we cannot allow huge logs to be battering at our lock gates; so at least it seems to me, but I may be wrong: I would nevertheless wish the subject to be looked into by the Engineer Department before entering fully into the best means to be employed for bringing down the timber.

6. I must say I have been disappointed in finding so great a rise in the bed of the Kalee Nuddee above Mullapore; common report assigned to the river water at the foot of the Gunesh Goody Ghaut a level but little above that of the sea, but actual trial gives 120 feet; now taking into consideration that what the cotton Merchants want is to get their cotton all down, pressed and despatched to England before the rainy season, during which it is said to deteriorate immensely; I must confess that I strongly advocate a line of rail from Beikool through Hoobly and on eastward through the cotton country; and that, viewing the country along the banks of the Kalee Nuddee and its feeders as the great teak Nursery, we should keep the river for floating down that valuable timber as well as Muttee, Jumbee, and Nancee, or Benteak and other woods useful for sleepers; the profits derivable from the sale of this jungle timber alone being fully sufficient to defray the expense of improving the river bed for floating down all timber, and the same may be said of this jungle wood as Dr. Cleghorn reports of the teak in Goond, viz. that the trees are well grown and ripe, much threatened with fire; some already being scorched at the roots.

7. Expecting from the Conservator's reports both written and verbal that the difficulties in the way of bringing down the timber would be found to be great, I must say we were most agreeably surprised, and can report with confidence that not only is the task easy, and triflingly expensive in comparison with the value of the timber, but the store of teak is enormous, of blackwood moderate and of other jungle woods, as enumerated in the preceding paragraph practicably inexhaustible.

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8. On the Goond Plateau, and its slopes and on both banks of the Kunooree Nullah which flows round two-thirds of Goond the teak is very plentiful, outnumbering any other single class of trees in those dense forests; that on the summit may for the most part be dragged down the gently sloping channels cut by the rains until it reaches the steeper water course falling into the Kunooree Nullah at the distance of 3 miles from its junction with the Kalee Nuddee, up to which point no improvement is needed, and the task of floating timber will be easy.

9. From what we ourselves observed and from common report, I should say there need be no fear of a deficiency of teak for half a century to come, and a proper conservancy will provide for more future wants; there is not much timber of the largest size, but a diligent search may find ample for current wants; there is plenty of teak within available floating carriage on the river banks, for a dozen contracts as at present given; the fault seems to be too great a slowness in letting out contracts, and during such delay the ripe teak stands great chance of being burned at the annual spontaneous ignition of the jungle.

10. As mentioned in the latter part of para. 5, I would postpone answering the question propounded by Dr. Cleghorn, viz. "how to get down the timber" until Engineers have considered whether the result of the levels taken does persuade them that the improvement of the river above the present tidal limit is not so worthy a project as the rail from the cotton fields to the sea; for any minor plan for bringing down the timber may interfere with the general scheme of a grand highway either by land or water from the coast to the interior.

11. In conclusion, I have to inform you that on our arrival at Yellapore we were burnt out of house through the spreading of the jungle fire fanned by a strong East wind towards the direction of our house; we thereby lost some personal and public instruments, and worst of all my note book of our measurements for the previous month; thus I am compelled to be so brief in my report upon this most interesting subject.

No. 59.

ORDER THEREON, 17th May 1859, No. 677.

Ordered to be communicated to the Chief Engineer, the Conservator of Forests, and to Colonel A. Cotton, for such remarks and suggestions as they may severally wish to offer, as to the best measures to be taken for providing the means of bringing down the timber of the Goond Forest to the coast.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.