

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	<i>996</i>	Press Mis.
Dated	<i>29th July 1859.</i>	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
from 23d to 29th July 1859.*

No. 26. Read the following letter from H. CLEGHORN, Esq., M. D. Conservator of Forests; to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq., Secretary to Government Revenue Department, Fort St. George; dated Bangalore 23d June 1859, No 681.

1. I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, dated 9th May 1859, No. 638, and I now subjoin a short account of the Malsar Farm from personal observation. A report of Lieutenant Beddome is enclosed, repudiating the employment of coercion at any time in connection with the forest operations, and alleging that the farm is not visited by Mr. Martin who holds a permanent situation in Coimbatore.

2. When Colonel F. C. Cotton first proposed the working of the Anamally Forests, the labour of the small tribe of Malsars was considered a special advantage in the undertaking, if not an element of success, and from the beginning these wild men of the woods have been of the greatest use to the Department in preparing Elephant ropes, squaring logs, clearing young trees, carrying letters and supplies, &c. (See Reports of Colonel Cotton, Captain Michael, Major Hamilton, &c., *passim*.)

3. The forest work increased, full employment was given and ready money paid during the working months. During the non-working months, from a scarcity of food there was a danger of their relapsing into thieving habits, hence the scheme of the Malsar Farm which was authorized in March 1856, I believe at the recommendation of Mr. Thomas the Collector. The idea was excellent, viz. to withdraw this erratic and predatory tribe from their irregular practices and to accustom them to habits of industry.

4. The locality selected was close to the timber slip, where the virgin soil is very productive and well watered from the adjoining slope. Some heads of Cholum* grown as an experiment were of large size and good quality.

* *Sorghum Vulgare*.
5. Mr. T. Reid, Head Overseer of the Forest Establishment (now Assistant Engineer at Hyderabad), from his conciliatory manners, remarkable tact and energetic character, was peculiarly suited for the work, and he made a good beginning.

6. Mr. Reid was soon afterwards promoted on the formation of the Public Works Department, and the charge of the farm and the funds was given by the Collector to Mr. Martin, who succeeded Mr. Reid as forest Overseer.

7. The clearance of the forest continued and was much extended during the two succeeding years, and at my visit last year, the area of the farm seemed to be much in excess of the village requirements, and larger than the Malsars could permanently cultivate even if industrious men. Mr. Beddome begged that a portion of the jungle might be retained for the trained Elephants to graze in, and I spoke to Mr. Cherry about this matter and also that rows of trees might be left to overshadow the rivulets.

8. About this time (1858), Mr. Martin suffered from fever, unpleasant differences arose, and he resigned his forest appointment to enter the Collector's office at Coimbatore, where he is also Marriage Registrar. The distance (nearly 50 miles), being too great for him to superintend the farm, I am not surprised at the "poor result." It would have been better if the supervision of the farm had devolved upon his successor, the present first Overseer.

9. The working of the timber slip and the management of the farm contiguous to it should be under one individual as originally proposed. The Overseer can easily arrange that, say one half be employed in the forest, and the remainder be encouraged to cultivate the adjoining fields. The Malsars are singularly wilful and improvident, but a few words of judicious counsel with personal attendance is probably all that is required for the preservation of the seed stock and the gathering in of harvest.

10. It is plain that if an eleemosynary farm be kept up on a large scale along side of the Timber Depôt, it cuts two ways. Government pays for the farm and the Forest Department loses the labor, which is then obtained from a distance at great cost and with uncertainty.

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11. It is right to add that the original purpose of the farm has been to some extent accomplished; the Malsars are now seldom connected with robberies, they have the option of full employment either from the Forest Department or from the Railway, and they are paid ready money which as Mr. Martin says is "a great inducement." Having been five times at the Malsar village, I believe that wood cutting is more in accordance with their inclination and previous habits of life than settled agriculture.

12. If any case of real oppression had occurred, I should have heard of it as I always stop to speak to the villagers. On the last occasion, Dr. Macpherson and I rode up the Anamallays, they came out to carry our saddle bags with alacrity and received their wages with every symptom of satisfaction.

13. I think that the progress of these two tribes (physically) may be left to the gradual advance of civilisation; there are few parts of India which show more distinct marks of prosperity and careful agriculture than the talook of Poolachy, which is the garden of Coimbatore. If any further attempts at their amelioration should be deemed advisable, I would venture to suggest that a trial be made on a small scale to educate their children on the same principle that a humane Government has already tried to improve other uncivilised tribes, such as the Khoonds, Santhals and Yanadies.

P. S. When this was being despatched, I received a communication from Major Hamilton to whom I had written as to his recollection of the Malsars. His remarks are so correct, confirming all that I have seen and heard that I beg to enclose an Extract of his letter dated 17th June 1859.

H. C.

From Lieut. R. H. BEDDOME, Assistant Conservator of Forests; to H. CLEGHORN, Esq., Conservator of Forests; dated Coimbatore, 19th May 1859, No. 542.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 655, of the 16th Instant, together with an extract, from a letter from Mr. C. A. St. Martin to the Collector of Coimbatore, and beg to inform you that Mr. Martin's statements as to the Malsars being compelled to work in the Forests are altogether incorrect. I have at times been put to great difficulties by the Malsars not coming up to the Forest to prepare the valca-nar for the Elephant ropes during the working season, but I have never in any case used coercive measures with them. Mr. Martin ordered them, (as I before informed you) not to work at all in the Forest, this last season, but they generally came to us willingly, when they received advances, except when they were engaged in their fields. In some cases when they have received advances for work, they have left the Forest before working out their advances, in these cases I have ordered them back, but they have always returned of their own accord, when it has been pointed out to them that they had not worked out the advances that they had received.

In para. 8 of Mr. Martin's letter of the 9th of October 1858, he states that the Malsars were employed against their will in felling Vella-naga and Ven-teak; this statement is altogether incorrect: I myself took the contract with the two head Malsars, they entered into it quite willingly, agreeing to cut a certain number of trees at so much per tree and taking advances for the same.

You are aware of the great importance of Malsar labor in the Forests; they are the only people who understand the preparation of the Elephant ropes from the Valca-nar, and if I was deprived of their services the Forest operations would come to a stand still, they also do all the clearing before the fires commence, they are acclimatized, and to a great extent proof against the fever, whereas coolies from the low country, even when I can procure them, fall sick immediately they come up to the forest and are useless, I do not however ask in any case for forced labor, but do request that you will communicate with the Collector of Coimbatore and request that Mr. Martin be deterred from giving such orders to the Malsars that may prevent them from seeking for work in the forest; they several times told me this last season that Mr. Martin

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had ordered them not to take work in the forest, and they naturally suppose that these orders emanate from the Collector, and that he is opposed to their taking work in the forest even though they wish for it. I know Mr. Martin's animus against the forest department since he has left it, and that he does all that he can to throw difficulties in its way.

The Malsars are an idle race, and are great thieves, continually robbing travellers near the foot of the hills, I do not think that the experimental farm will ever succeed, as they take no interest in it; they had hitherto always looked to the forest for work when in want of bread, and have received many advantages from it, such as timber gratis, &c.; they receive high wages, and getting the money in advance they generally seem very glad to come up for work, but from what I know of the habits of the race I do not think that they will ever make farming answer. I do not think that Mr. Martin once personally inspected the Malsars' fields during the last season whilst I was in the forest, but trusted entirely to the reports of Natives that he sent there.

*Extract of a letter from Major D. HAMILTON, 21st Regiment N. I., dated Trichinopoly,
17th June 1859.*

"With regard to the Malsars, when I first went to the Forest they were the terror of the place, for though only armed with bows and arrows and seldom using any thing but stones in their attacks, the Natives were so afraid of them that 3 times their number would run away the moment the Malsars appeared, and leaving their supplies of rice, &c., to the robbers hide themselves in the jungle. Owing to the density of the jungle the Malsars generally escaped with impunity; at last they became so bold that on one occasion, they looted the supply of rice coming up for the Government Elephants! Captain Michael was most anxious to endeavour to civilise this wild race and considered that as the fear of punishment had little or no effect on them, the best way of reforming their thieving habits would be to try and induce them to cultivate the land. He was obliged to leave on sick certificate for England before he could carry out his experiment; on my taking charge I saw what an advantage it would be if we could once get the Malsars to settle down as cultivators, for independently of reforming a set of troublesome robbers, Malsars from a distance hearing of their prosperity would be induced to settle in the neighbourhood of Audivarum and we should eventually procure a certain supply of labour for Forest work so much required, and as you are aware so difficult to obtain. Mr. Reid had great influence with the Malsars for they knew he was their friend and they had perfect trust in him, yet, with all his influence and though they were offered land, cattle, implements, every thing to commence with, it was with the utmost difficulty he could induce them to begin cultivating. If I wanted them to work in the forest, trimming timber, clearing jungle, building huts, &c., I had not the slightest trouble in procuring as many men as I required though they worked for less hire than coolies from the plains, but to induce them to cultivate required considerable *tact and management*; had they been left to themselves they one and all would have returned to their former wandering life. Mr. Reid being obliged from ill health to give up the appointment in the Anamallay Forest was a great loss, as he so thoroughly understood the Malsars, and you know what an excellent man he is. However, the Malsars continued to improve under Mr. Martin and when I left the Forest they appeared to me to have become reconciled to their new mode of life and even to appreciate it. The change for the better in their outward appearance was most marked, instead of the all but naked savages you saw them at work in the fields, hardly a man without a decent cloth and turband, and robberies had become of rare occurrence. I was in great hopes then that my anticipations would be fulfilled.

I never heard of the Malsars being *coerced* to work in the Forest, but I certainly have more than once *had to use my influence* to prevent their neglecting their cultivation altogether. No one who has not been amongst them would believe how easily this wild ignorant outcaste race is imposed upon. They are considered and treated by the Natives of the country as the very lowest of the low and fleeced by them whenever an opportunity offers most unmercifully. Without careful and constant supervision I see no prospect of their improvement, but with it I am

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confident you would succeed. The person to look after the farm should be some one connected with the Forest, certainly not a person *permanently residing at Coimbatore*. I regret exceedingly to find by the report that they appear to be retrograding instead of advancing, but I hope you will not give them up without another attempt; if a wild savage is to do exactly as he likes he will not cultivate as long as he can find a livelihood without it, any more than a child would naturally go to school!"

(True Copy.)

(Signed) H. CLEGHORN,
Conservator of Forests.

No. 27.

ORDER THEREON, 26th July 1859, No. 996.

Ordered that this letter and its enclosures be communicated to the Board of Revenue.

Lieutenant Beddome, the Assistant Conservator of Forests in charge of the Annamallays totally denies Mr. St. Martin's allegations of coercive measures having been used, to force the Malsars to labor in the forests.

As Mr. St. Martin has been permanently transferred to the Collector's office at Coimbatore, he will cease to have supervision of the farm, and the Overseer of the forest establishment at the Annamallays will be nominated as Superintendent in his place.

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

Revenue Dept.

No. 996

Proceedings of the Madras Government
Under date the 26th July 1859

Read the following letter
from the Conservator of Forests

Reports on the Malsar
farm at the foot of the Anna-
mallays, and submits a letter
from Lieut. Beddome denying that
the Malsars were ever forced to work
in the forests, with extract from a
letter to the same effect from
Major Hamilton, formerly in
charge of the forests.

(Here enter 23rd June 1859. No. 681)

Ordered that this letter
and its enclosures be communi-
cated to the Board of Revenue

Lieut. Beddome, the
Assistant Conservator of forests
in charge of the Annamallays,
totally denies Mr. St. Martin's
allegations of coercive measures
having been used, to force the
Malsars to labor in the forests,
and the latter will therefore
be called upon through the Col-
lector of Coimbatore, to explain how
he came to make such an un-
founded charge in his letter

The Board of Revenue
are requested with reference to the
opinion expressed by the Conservator of
Forests that the Experimental Farm in the
Annamallays is not likely to succeed,
to furnish an early answer to the
reference made to them in Paragraph
4 of the Order of Government of the 9th
May last No. 636.

that officers of the 29th July
and 9th October 1858.

As Mr S. Martin
has been permanently trans-
ferred to the Col's office at
Cumburton, he will cease to
have supervision of the farms,
and the ~~first~~ officer of the
forest establishment at the
Bunainallays will be nomi-
nated ^{as Capt} in his place.

[Signature]

6 Copies
To The Board of Revenue
4 - Conservator of Forests

27 July 1858

Rev. Comm. 10th May 1859-49.

Revenue 1859. Departt

Pro. of Govt 29th July.

N^o 996.

Pro. of the Madras Govt.

D^y 26th July 1859.

From the Conservator of Forests
d^y 15 Oct 1859 C. N^o 1940 in Pro 10th Nov 1859
N^o 14748.

N^o 26727.

M^r S. Martin to cease
to have supervision of the
Malabar farms and the Over-
-sight of the Forest Establish-
-ment at the Annamallays
to be nominated in his
stead.