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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 461 Press ~~Mis.~~

58-59

Dated 26 - 3 — 1860.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, for the month of March 1860.

No. 58. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Public Department, dated 15th March 1860, No. 372.

Communicating a letter from Major D. Hamilton, giving a brief account of the progress made on the Palmi Hills in the special duty to which he was appointed. (Vide Public Proceedings from 11th to 20th March 1860, No. 35-36.)

No. 59. ORDER THEREON, 26th March 1860, No. 461.

Ordered to be recorded.

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

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter from Major DOUGLAS HAMILTON, late on special duty Military Hill Ranges, to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Negapatam, 1st March 1860.

1. Having joined my Regiment proceeding on service to China, I have the honor, agreeably to instructions received from His Excellency Sir Charles Trevelyan, to report the progress I have made in carrying out the special duty to which I was appointed.

2. I proceeded from Trichinopoly to the Pulni mountains, which I reached on the 9th of October. Soon after my arrival the North-East monsoon set in with unusual severity, lasting till the end of November; this was a great hinderance to my sketching, but by taking advantage of every opportunity that offered, I succeeded in obtaining 18 large drawings, of which 3 are panoramas.

3. As soon as the monsoon was over and the weather became settled, I proceeded on a tour of the Hills, but had only been out four days, when I received information that my Regiment was under orders for service in China, and that I should be directed to join immediately. I therefore returned to Trichinopoly, but shortly after my arrival, the march of the Regiment was deferred until the end of February.

4. On His Excellency Sir Charles Trevelyan visiting Trichinopoly, I had the honor to shew him the sketches I had made, and His Excellency acceded to my proposition that I should at once return to the Pulnis, and complete the series of views of the upper range. I accordingly returned without delay, but had not been a week on the Hills, when the news reached me that my Regiment had received a "forthwith" order to march to Negapatam for embarkation, I therefore rejoined.

5. Though my second visit to the hills was of so short duration, yet, owing to the fineness of the weather, I was enabled to add considerably to my sketches and visit several localities I had not previously seen.

6. I have now 26 drawings, 4 of which are panoramas; and the greater portion of the remainder are of large size. Although the series is not so complete as I could wish, yet, I trust when finished, I shall have, as far as the high range of the Pulnis is concerned, sufficient to carry out the intention of Government in deputing me for this duty.

7. Many of my sketches are unfinished, I am taking them with me to China and hope to complete them during my leisure hours, when they will be forwarded to Government with a report.

8. As it is so uncertain when I shall find time to complete these drawings, I deem it advisable now to mention some of the results of my observations and enquiries during the time I was on these mountains.

9. I wish particularly to remove an impression that the Pulnis are unhealthy for three months in the year, and, consequently, not a fit locality for European Troops; more especially as this opinion has lately been officially laid before Government by a high authority. The greater portion of the Eastern or lower Pulnis, it is true, is most unhealthy during the hot months, but this is decidedly not the case on the Western or upper range. Several European families belonging to the American Mission have been for years in the habit of residing at Kudaikarnal during these months, and those I met spoke most highly of the salubrity of the climate as also did Mr. Clarke the Collector of Madura, whose family I believe passed two hot seasons in the Hills without returning to the plains. Some of the Natives at the Settlement of Kudaikarnal have resided there continuously for years, one who had been a resident upwards of eight years told me he had never heard of a case of jungle fever contracted at Kudaikarnal.

10. I may mention that though I was not on the Pulnis during the supposed unhealthy months, my servants were much exposed in the monsoon to the inclemency of the weather, yet, with the exception of one case of cold and slight fever, they were perfectly healthy, which, I

Palni

have found by experience, would not have been the case at Utakamund under similar circumstances.

11. As far as I could judge during my sojourn on the Hills, I am of opinion, that, the climate of the settlement of Kudaikarnal is milder and more even than that of Utakamund though the average elevation of the houses is within a few feet of that of the Utakamund lake.

12. The present ghaut, viz., Perieacolum to Kudaikarnal, is the only made one ; it is little better than a bridle path, the upper portion is very steep, and during the rains is at times dangerous. It is questionable whether a feasible ghaut for carts could be ever made up this pass, but a ghaut passable for carts could be constructed up the old Daradaunputty pass; from the precipitous nature of the upper part of the mountains, a cart road from any other point would be an exceedingly difficult undertaking.

13. From the formation of many of the vallies on the upper Pulnis, large supplies of water might be advantageously stored.

14. An artificial lake at Kudaikarnal might be constructed at a moderate outlay.

15. Horned cattle thrive well at Kudaikarnal, and at the different hill villages. I have no doubt sheep would thrive equally well if kept at night in a warm building with a boarded floor. Horses are apt to get out of condition, the grass being too rank.

16. The grazing ground on the upper Pulnis is very extensive.

17. The introduction of the Toda buffaloe on these hills would be a great benefit to the Natives; as also would, an improvement in their breed of cattle.

18. There is good coffee ground on the slopes of the mountains of the upper range near Colacurry and in the vallies to the westward.

19. I had not an opportunity of visiting the Lower Pulnis, but, from all I could hear, the best coffee ground is in that direction. Mr. de Fondclair has a plantation near Perryoor—the only coffee estate on the Pulnis—the owner informed me that the plantation was in a very flourishing condition.

20. Dr. Cleghorn, the Conservator of Forests, on his visit to the Pulnis, left some tea seeds to be sown at Kudaikarnal ; when I left the hills the plants were an inch or two above ground and appeared fresh and healthy.

21. The wheat and barley grown on the hills is of a very inferior quality, good English or American seed might be introduced with considerable advantage, but as Mr. Clarke the Collector of the District informed me, that on one occasion the hill men, previous to sowing some superior wheat he gave them, *pounded it* under the impression that if it grew and thrived they would be extra taxed, some precaution may be necessary in introducing better grain amongst the ignorant hill tribes.

22. All European fruits and vegetables that grow on the Nílgiris would succeed either at Kudaikarnal or at Shembayanoor; excellent potatoes, in small quantaties, are now produced, and I have no doubt these mountains could supply the whole of India with this important esculent.

23. The Australian Acacias, and gum trees in the gardens at Kudaikarnal flourish equally as well as they do at Utakamund; should there be any prospect of these mountains attracting European residents, it might be advisable to commence planting these trees at once; a considerable supply of young plants and suckers might even now be obtained from the gardens of the settlement, and as these trees are very rapid in their growth, the deficiency of firewood now existing in the immediate neighbourhood, would be remedied.

24. In conclusion I beg to state that, in my humble opinion, the high range of the Pulni mountains would be a most healthy and suitable location for European troops; there is ample room for Barracks and plenty of water near Kudaikarnal on the undulating plateau to the south west between the most western house of the settlement, and the precipitous detached cliffs called the "tower rocks." There is, indeed, a scarcity of wood on the plateau itself, but there are large forests on the slopes of the mountains near at hand, down to which passes might be cut. Peat of good quality is found in the swamps.

25. There was no person on the Hills, during my visit, acquainted with the quality of clay necessary for brick-making, but as it abounds on the Nílgiris, it is in all probability to be found also on the Pulnis.

26. The gentlemen of the American Mission have built some of their houses of stone which is found in abundance in the neighbourhood of the settlement, in blocks from the size of an ordinary brick to that of one or two cubic feet, it is easily squared and is considered by them a good building material, though it is stated by others, to absorb too much moisture and never to dry thoroughly.

ORDER THEREON, 15th March 1860, No. 372.

The Honorable the Governor in Council has read with interest the brief account above given by Major D. Hamilton of the progress which he has made in carrying out the special duty to which he was appointed by the Order of 29th August 1859, No. 1326. It is to be regretted that circumstances should have occurred to interrupt the prosecution of the work, and it is trusted that Major Hamilton may be able to resume it on his return from foreign service.

2. Major Hamilton will be so good as to forward to Government his sketches and report when they have been completed.

3. Resolved that a copy of the report be furnished to the Director General, Medical Department, in reference to paragraphs 9, 10 and 11.

4. Resolved also that it be communicated to the Military Department, the Revenue Department and Department of Public Works.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To Major Douglas Hamilton.
To the Director General, Medical Department.
„ Military Department.
„ Revenue Department.
„ Public Works Department.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

Revenue 1860 Depart.
Pro: of Govt 31st March.

No 396

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Proceedings of the Madras
Govt in the Public Dept.

Dated 15th } March 1860
Recd 21st }

10/10

Communicating a letter
from Major D. Hamilton
giving a brief account of
the progress made on the
Pulni Hills in the special
duty to which he was
appointed -

No 458 & 59.

No 461

Recorded
26th March 1860.

Resp. in the P.D. -
N.N.