

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	615	Press
	17-18	<u>Mis.</u>
Dated	23-4-	1868.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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

No. 17. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Military Department, dated 5th April 1860, No. 1,340:—

*Observing that the Order of Government in the
Military Department of 25th November 1859,
No. 4,183, provides for the Cooking ranges and
Storing Peat recommended by Dr. Cleghorn.* } (Vide Military Proceedings from 1st to 10th
April 1860, Nos. 153-154.)

No. 18. ORDER THEREON, 23rd April 1860, No. 615.

Ordered to be recorded.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,

Secretary to Government.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read again letter from the Collector of Coimbatore, dated 15th September and recorded in Proceedings of Government, dated 26th September 1859, No. 1,300.

Read the following letter from H. CLEGHORN, Esq., Conservator of Forests, to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department; dated Utakamand, 8th November 1859, No. 836:—

I have had the honor of receiving the Proceedings of Government, Revenue Department, dated 26th September, No. 1300, referring for report a letter* of the Collector of Coimbatore regarding the "urgent necessity" of conserving the Forests and Fuel of the Nilgiris Hills.

2. The subject has engaged my attention for a long period,† but it is attended with great practical difficulties. There can be no doubt that the Forests in the vicinity of the Hill stations have greatly suffered of late years, but private planting at least at Utakamand is largely on the increase. I have no doubt that in the course of the next ten years, the wants of the community so far as fuel is concerned will be in great measure supplied from private plantations. The great object in the mean time is to prevent the Government woods being destroyed.

3. The conservation of these is necessary to preserve the water springs, for shelter, &c., and I may here add that so long as persons can cut *ad libitum* in Government Forests without payment, the most powerful incentive to private planting is lost.

"Houses on the Hills.

7,420 including 273 European houses.

Population.

Europeans..... 2,500

Natives..... 34,500

East Indians..... 500

—and every European house has three & four fires daily."

(Signed) E. B. THOMAS,
Collector.

4. It is difficult to say exactly what the requirements of the Utakamand community may be. There are at present about 7,420 houses of all kinds, and I suppose about 4,000 fires are daily burning during great part of the year. For some six or seven years past, the main supply has been brought in from the Westward and in the side of the road to Pykara about 20 Sholas (large and small) have been very much thinned out.

5. At Jackatalla the consumption of fuel supplied by contract (from Government Forests of course) is about 5,000 lbs. daily, and this is exclusive of what the Engineer Department requires.

6. At Kúnúr and Kótagiri the demand is smaller.

7. In addition, much timber is required for building and other similar purposes; the whole of this necessarily comes from Government Forests.

Present Establishment.

‡ Forester..... Rs. 35

6 Peons, at 5..... = Rs. 30

8. With so great a demand conservancy is extremely difficult. The Establishments‡ at our disposal comprise only a single Forester and six 65 Peons, and is obviously insufficient.

9. I would now propose that, in communication with the Collector, I should at once mark all such Forests as should be wholly reserved for Government or public purposes. These would be marked in the Station Maps, and public notification be given of their reservation. When it became necessary to fell trees for thinning or other reasons, this should be done by my Department and under my orders.

10. During my visits to the Hills, I would inspect these reserved tracts, and give the necessary instructions. The sales of wood would be by public auction, and the proceeds would be credited to Government. I propose this measure because experience has shown the impossibility of preserving a Forest if woodcutters and cattle are allowed to enter it.

11. This being done, the question arises—How the other woods are to be dealt with? Many of the residents keep woodcutters on monthly pay; these men go and cut timber wherever they can; and if they would be satisfied with old and decayed trees, I should not complain, but unfortunately they generally select small trees as being more easily felled, and I am told, not unfrequently ring and fire good timber to ensure a future supply for their own use. The wants of

other residents are supplied by private traders, who in like manner appropriate Government timber.

12. Two methods of action have suggested themselves to me:—

I. That the tracts which are not reserved for Government purposes, as above proposed, should be periodically rented out by public auction to the highest bidder (as at Striharikottai), the timber to be cut close to the ground, and removed within a stated period upon pain of forfeiture. After being thus cleared, the tract to be replanted by my Department with fast-growing Australian trees, which need little care or trouble. The auction proceeds would admit of this being done, and would I think leave a surplus to meet the general charges of conservancy, and admit of further planting. The only objection to this plan is that it would overthrow the present custom of persons employing woodcutters. The result of the system would doubtless be that the renters would establish depôts for the sale of timber and fuel.

II. Another plan suggested, is that wood-cutters should be required to take out a licence from my office, paying Rupees 12 per annum, for a daily cooly load, and Rupees 48 per annum for a cart load. This charge would in reality fall upon their employers and would add little to the price of fuel.

The licensed cutters would be provided with a ticket, for production when required by my subordinates. The cost of wood is now $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 Rupees per cart load and 3 annas per man's load, so that these charges are light.

13. I prefer the first plan as the simplest and most effectual. It would of course be my care to let a number of lots amply sufficient for the requirements of the community without trenching on the supplies of future years, and to arrange the lots so as to preclude a monopoly,—an object which could always be attained by throwing fresh lots into the market.

14. With the funds thus procured, I expect to be able to entertain one if not two additional European Foresters. The expense thus incurred will be Rupees 35 for one Forester with six Peons at 5 Rupees= Rupees 30, and for two Foresters with three Peons each $35+65=100$. Without additional aid of this kind it is hopeless to attempt efficient conservancy.

15. I further propose to notify to the Collector from time to time such Forests, Sholas, &c., as I think should *not* be felled. I would suggest that these should be marked on the Station Maps as *reserved*, and some distinguishing mark should be placed round them for general information,—a measure which would cost little.

16. Any person cutting timber in such tracts should, according to circumstances, be prosecuted *at once* in a suit for trespass and damage, or treated as a case of petty theft of Government property, to be dealt with by the Magistrate. Unless such proceedings are checked by speedy punishment, as a matter of course they will recur and render my exertions futile.

17. Similar means should be adopted to check Coorumber clearings, Charcoal burning, &c., which at present are unrestricted, except that by order of the Collector they must not take place within three miles of the top of the Kúnúr Ghát.

18. I have above stated (para. 5) that the demand for fuel at Jackatalla is about 5,000 lbs. daily. This is supplied on contract made without any reference to the Collector or to me, and the Contractors cut in Government Forests without seeking permission. The Badagas again take under-contracts, as reported by the Tahsildár. The Rallia and all the jungles near Kúnúr have thus suffered much. I would propose that I should first be consulted as to the place where so large a quantity may be cut, and that this right of cutting in authorized places only should be let to the highest bidder. I should in such cases select proper places and restrain the Contractor from cutting trees below a certain size and trees of value for timber or fruit, as teak, blackwood, &c.

19. When large quantities of fuel are required for public purposes, as for instance the new Jail being erected at Utakamand, every effort should be made to economize the supply available. With this view, I have arranged with Mr. Rohde that the fuel for brick-turning shall be obtained by felling trees overhanging the trace of the proposed road to Karkúr, which sooner or later I presume is sure to be widened. In like manner, much wood may be available for the Jackatalla Barracks when the new Ghát is opened out from Kúnúr to the Railway Station.

20. I would also *very strongly* recommend economy in the use of fuel by employing improved kitchen ranges, and substituting *peat in part for wood*. The regulation allowance of fuel, I believe, is 3 lbs. per man. I understand that an improved range has been lately invented by a

Captain Grant in England, whereby a very large saving is effected. Dr. Duff, at Madras, has also produced a range which greatly economizes fuel, and I would urge the employment of either of these at the Barracks instead of the common open range now used. I would also make it a condition of the bakery and other contracts where much fuel is used, that these inexpensive ranges should be used by the Contractors. It is obviously unwise to continue the present ranges which consume so much fuel when we are pressed for wood and are in other ways trying to economize it. These remarks apply more to the Mainguard, Hospital and Barracks than to the "married quarters" where the open range probably has greater advantages.

21. As the price of wood will to a certain extent be increased by the alterations proposed, the residents will necessarily have recourse to the use of peat, which was strongly advocated by Lord Harris in his Minute on the Nilgiris.

I would recommend the early adoption of measures tending to the economical employment of this indigenous fuel.

ORDER THEREON, 20th March 1860, No. 425.

These papers relate to the very important subject of the supply of firewood for the stations on the Nilgiri Hills. The Collector brought the subject under the notice of the Conservator in an interesting and earnest letter, a copy of which forms one of the enclosures in that of the 15th September to Government. He called attention to the very extensive spoliation of the Forests, especially near Kúnúr, of which he had just been an eye-witness, and which the single overseer stationed there was quite powerless to prevent; and he predicted, from the rapidity with which, under this treatment, the Forests are fast disappearing, that unless some remedy is applied they will be destroyed in a few years. He also suggested means for arresting the evil.

2. Mr. Thomas's letter and its enclosures were referred to the Conservator for his report, and his reply is recorded above. It was made after local enquiry and careful consideration. Dr. Cleghorn confirms Mr. Thomas's statement as to the rapid diminution of the Forests; but he adds that private planting is largely on the increase, especially about Utakamand. After briefly alluding to the large demand both for firewood and building timber, and the utter insufficiency of his present establishment on the Hills, he recommends the following measures of conservation and supply as respects Utakamand:—

1st. That certain Forests should be marked out by him to be reserved for Government purposes; these woods to be managed by his Department, and the thinnings and fellings sold by auction.

2ndly. As respects other woods, he proposes two alternative plans, viz., either to divide them into lots, and rent out a certain number of lots every year by auction, the lots when cleared by the Contractors to be planted by his Department with quick-growing trees; or to adopt a system of licensing woodcutters, charging fees for the licences. Of these two plans he prefers the former.

3. For the purpose of carrying these measures into effect, and of preventing unauthorized cutting, he proposes to entertain one Overseer on 35 Rupees in addition to the one Overseer and six Peons now entertained. Thus each Overseer would have three peons.

4. At Kúnúr, where he already has an efficient Overseer and apparently some Peons, Dr. Cleghorn proposes no change, except the more systematic punishment of persons offending against the Conservancy rules.

5. The consumption of firewood at the Jackatalla barracks is large. Contracts for the supply are made by the Commissariat, apparently, without reference to the Conservator, and the Contractor parcels out his engagement to Sub-contractors. This practice leads to much waste, as well as depredation. Dr. Cleghorn recommends that Contractors should be permitted to cut wood only in places selected by him, and under rules to be prescribed by him.

6. In the last two paragraphs Dr. Cleghorn urges the economizing of firewood at the barracks by the use of improved kitchen ranges, and by the partial use of peat.

7. When recently at Utakamand, the Honorable the President gave careful attention to this subject, and discussed it fully with the Conservator as well as with numerous residents of the Hills. He was thoroughly convinced of the urgent necessity of conservancy, on the one hand to preserve the beautiful Shólas which now form the ornament of the Hill stations and of Utakamand in particular, and on the other to secure Government property from waste and spoliation, and to perpetuate the supply of firewood. After much discussion the following measures were agreed to as the best to be adopted in the case of Utakamand—they agree generally with those proposed by Dr. Cleghorn:—

8. First. The whole of the Shólas, or woods, in the neighbourhood of the station to be absolutely reserved, not only for their beauty, but also from fear of injuring the water springs; their limits to be marked; no private cutters to be allowed inside; old trees to be felled by servants of the department, and brought outside, and to be sold there by public auction. Trees to be planted where required, in vacant spaces.

The reserved woods at Utakamand. Secondly. Suitable woods at a distance from the station to be selected and marked out in lots of moderate size; and a number of these lots, amply sufficient for a year's supply, to be put up to auction annually. The Contractor to be permitted to clear the ground entirely within his lot or lots, with the exception of such trees as may be marked by the Conservancy Department previously to the sale.

Thirdly. The cleared lots to be planted, as required, by the Conservancy Department.

Fourthly. No private felling of any kind, or for any person, to be allowed in woods or on land belonging to Government.

9. These measures are now approved by the Governor in Council; and the Conservator will adopt the necessary means to carry them into effect, with no more delay than is necessary to prevent a failure of the supply of fuel during the transition, and to secure existing rights.

10. The Conservator is also hereby empowered to entertain the additional Forester asked for, as noticed above in paragraph 3; the cost to be charged to the unemployed portion of the monthly amount sanctioned by the Government of India for the Conservancy Establishments.

11. The Government cannot but entertain strong doubts, however, whether the Establishment when strengthened to this extent will be equal to the duties required of it. The woods are very numerous and extensive; and if the conservation is to be effectual, many persons will be necessary to detect surreptitious cutting, and to bring the offenders to punishment before the Assistant Magistrate. Considering how very little has been done in this direction hitherto by the existing Establishment, and how trifling is the present augmentation of it, the Government doubt the efficiency of the means proposed; and if Dr. Cleghorn, on further consideration, or after trial, shall be of opinion that the Establishment asked for by him is too small, the Government will be prepared to give favorable consideration to an application for an increase, duly supported by reasons.

12. The measures thus approved for Utakamand will be adopted also, so far as they may be necessary, at Kúnúr.

13. The measures proposed for adoption with respect to the Jackatalla Barracks, as detailed in paragraph 18 of Dr. Cleghorn's letter, and noticed in paragraph 5 above, are also fully approved, and should be carried into effect as speedily as this can be done with due regard to efficiency and the security of private interests.

14. The last two paragraphs of Dr. Cleghorn's letter will be communicated to the Military Department.

15. The Board of Revenue will take care that the provisions of this Order are fully made known to all ranks at Utakamand and the other stations concerned.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,

Secretary to Government.

To the Conservator of Forests.

„ Board of Revenue.

„ Collector of Coimbatore.

„ Chief Engineer.

„ Military Department.

„ Accountant General.

„ Civil Auditor.

} With the papers.

A. B. 20 March 50.

Nov. 17-18.
B. 10 Dec 50 of 26.
37-

Nov 615
20 March 50

20 March 50
20 March 50

Revenue 1850
May 30 50 of 26

1850

Proceedings of the
Military Department

Nov 50 of 26
20 March 50

Showing that the
order of 25th Nov 50
is not 25th of 25th Nov 50
for the 25th Nov 50
and 25th Nov 50
recommended by 25th
November.

Military Department.

1850.

Ordered to be communicated
to the Commissioner of the
Military Department.

The Governor will forward
the order of 25th Nov 50
as per margin, provided for the
recommendation in 25th Nov 50
by 25th Nov 50.

William 1850
25th Nov 50

The Revenue Department

20 March 50
20 March 50

20 March 50