M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-22

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 1902 — Press / Mis.-

21 - 22

Dated 2 - 10 - 1861.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 21. Read the following letter from Lieutenant J. MITCHELL, Officer in charge of the Government Central Museum, to J. D. SIM, Esq., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 23rd September 1861, No. 100:—

SIR,

1. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Government Order of the 18th September 1861, No. 1,842.

2. The letter of the Conservator of Forests affords no information as to the extent of the Herbarium or of the number of volumes of the Botanical drawings which he proposes to transfer to the Museum, and in its absence I am unable to state whether the Museum can afford suitable accommodation to what is doubtless a valuable collection, the proper resting place of which would certainly be the Museum.

3. But it may not be out of place on the present occasion to state, for the information of Government, the plan adopted at the British Museum for the preservation of its Herbaria, and which, doubtless being the best method known, should be adopted here.

4. The information is gathered from a work on the British Museum, published by Messrs. Chambers & Co. of Edinburgh in 1850.

5. The Botanical Section * is contained in two rooms which are not open to the public, but students of Botany or persons having special objects in view are admitted to the rooms on proper application being made to the Museum authorities. This precaution is necessitated by the peculiar nature of their contents, the specimens being for the most part such as would suffer from exposure.

* Of the British Museum.

"The Banksian Herbarium, being properly the true Herbarium of the Museum, constitutes "the chief portion of the entire Botanical section. The following extract from a paper in "Silliman's Journal by Dr. Asagray will show the manner in which it is kept:—"The Herbarium "of Sir Joseph Banks is probably the oldest prepared in the manner commonly adopted in "England, of which therefore it may serve as a specimen. The plants are glued fast to half "sheets of very thick and firm white paper of excellent quality, such as that employed for "Merchants' ledgers, all carefully cut to the same size, which is usually $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $10\frac{3}{4}$, and "the name of the species is written, in the lower right hand corner, and all the species of a "genus, if they be few in numbers, or any convenient sub-division of a larger genus, are "enclosed in a whole sheet of the same quality, and labelled at the lower left hand corner. "These parcels, properly arranged are preserved in cases or closets, with wooden folding doors "made to shut as closely as possible, being laid horizontally in compartments just wide enough "to receive them, and of convenient depth; in the Banksian Herbarium, the shelves are also "made to draw out like a case of drawers." This method is unrivalled for elegance, and the "facility with which the specimens may be found and inspected."

6. I have only to add that the Museum is becoming very much crowded, and that there is at present no room that could be appropriated to the reception of Botanical specimens. But, if the collection is small, room might (as a temporary measure) be found for one or two such cases, as above described, in the Museum Library, and on any future additions to the Museum buildings, provision could be made for the proper arrangement of a Botanical section.

No. 22. ORDER THEREON, 2nd October 1861, No. 1,902.

The Officer in charge of the Museum will communicate with the Acting Conservator of Forests and obtain the necessary information regarding the extent of the Herbarium or of the number of volumes of the Botanical drawings proposed to be transferred to the Museum from the Office of the Conservator of Forests. Lieutenant Mitchell will then submit a full reply to the Order of Government, dated 18th September 1861, No. 1,842.

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

R 18th September 61 Nos 190 & 191

Rec'd 1861 Dept
No 2280
Government Central Museum
Proc. of Sept 100 for October

From
Lieutenant J. Mitchell
Officer in charge of the
Govt Central Museum

To,
The Secretary to Govt
Revenue Department
Fort St. George

Dated 23rd Sept 1861.
Received 24th Sept 1861. No 100

Replying to Government
Order No 1842 of 18th Sept.
1861. Regarding the transfer
to the Museum of the
Herbarium and Drawing
of the Forest Department.

From the Conservator of Forests D/ 11th
Nov/61 C. No 2659

Nos 21 & 22.

Ill the an order
No 1902. 2nd October 61

Rec'd

No 1902

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ings proposed to be transferred
to the Museum from the office of
the Conservator of Forests. Lieut.
Mitchell will then submit a
full reply to the order of Govt
dated 18th September 1861 No 1842.

For Lt Col George
2nd October 61

Copy Officer in charge of the Central Museum
is acting Conservator of Forests