

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1568

Press
~~Mis.~~

417. 418

Dated 30 - 8 - 1864.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
30th August 1864.*

No. 417. Read the following Proceedings of the Governor General of India in Council (Revenue Forests), dated Public Works Department, Simla, 8th July 1864, Circular No. 8.

Formation of Plantation by Village Proprietors.

Read the following:—

Circular No. 13, dated 23rd March, 1864.

From D. F. McLEOD, Esq., Financial Commissioner, to all Commissioners and Superintendents, Punjab.

With reference to the extract quoted in the margin, from enclosure of Circular No. 99 of

1855, communicating the instructions of the late Chief Commissioner on the subject of planting with trees portions of the lands newly thrown up from year to year along our rivers, I have the honor to request that you will report what has been heretofore accomplished in your division in this matter; and more especially what area of land has been secured during the

REVENUE.
(PLANTING OF TREES ON ALLUVIAL LANDS.)
“I am, therefore, to request that, in circulating the suggestion you will be good enough to draw the earliest attention of all Commissioners to this subject. The Tehsildars of divisions adjoining the rivers should, year by year, be instructed to watch for alluvial increments suited to this purpose. The details of the appropriation, including the compensation to the proprietors of the village with which the new land may be connected, and the sowing or planting can be arranged by the District Officers in the usual manner.”

present year for this purpose from the lands newly thrown up during the last rains.

2. I fear that, with the exception of a few localities, but little has as yet been done towards carrying out the Chief Commissioner's instructions; that these instructions have been very generally overlooked; and beyond occasional reference to the subject in Annual Reports, no distinct effort has been made from this Office to secure their systematic observance. The time has come, in my opinion, when this state of things should not be allowed longer to continue, and I consider it necessary therefore that more decided action be taken in regard to this matter.

3. With the increase of population and of enterprise now apparent more or less on all hands, the demand for timber is largely on the increase; while the sources of supply have been constantly decreasing. The more accessible forests on the Sutlej, Bias, and Ravi, and their tributaries, have been either almost entirely cleared or considerably impoverished; those upon the Chandrabhaga or Chenab have been very largely drawn upon during the last few years, and the supplies now available from the Jhelum and its tributaries are but small; while over the forests of the Upper Indus we have no control, and the timber to be looked for from them does not appear to be considerable.

4. The forests of the southern slopes of the Himalayas, and the lower hills are doubtless still available, but they are for the most part very inaccessible; and where the case is otherwise, very great demolition has been made even of these—and nowhere, in so far as I am aware, has any systematic effort been made as yet to secure the gradual renovation of what has been cut down. In many parts cultivation is gradually encroaching upon the forest, which must in consequence permanently disappear. While the avenues and groves which have been and are being planted throughout most part of the plains of the Punjab, valuable and important as they are in very many ways, will go but a small way towards supplying, as source from whence to procure timber, the place of the forests which are rapidly disappearing.

5. Further, in addition to the increasing demand for timber for building purposes, railway sleepers, workshops, and such like the demand for fuel to supply our railways and steamers, but more especially the former, has now been superadded; and this demand promises to become so serious, especially in those parts where there is no existing scrub or bar as to demand our most earnest attention. Even in the vicinity of Lahore, where a small forest covers a great portion of the country, a very large area has already been cleared to meet the requirements of a railway but 32 miles in length, and running two trains only per diem, sufficiently indicating what efforts will be required to maintain a constant supply hereafter; and where no such tracts exist, the difficulties to be apprehended are of course much more formidable. Already it is said that in parts of the Gangetic Doab and elsewhere, groves of mango trees, and plantations

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formed for ornament, shade, or fruit, are being largely cut down for fuel; and even this source promises to be so inadequate to meet the constantly increasing demand that one at least of the Railway Companies has been seriously thinking of taking up lands capable of irrigation from canals for the sole purpose of forming fuel preserves.

6. There can therefore be no question whatever, but that the matter is rapidly becoming one of the most serious importance; and that if vigorous measures be not adopted now, those who come after us will find themselves in very great straits. The Forest Department will, no doubt, address themselves energetically to the task of conservation, and of advising and adopting measures for extending the sources of our timber and fuel supplies. But it is certain that, as regards all but the inner forests of the Himalayas, they will be nearly powerless without the hearty aid and exertions of local officers.

7. I believe that, as urged in the Circular above quoted, no lands are so admirably adapted for enabling us to secure within a few years an almost unlimited supply, and that in the most accessible positions as the *belas* and *charrs* thrown up by our rivers. In connection with this subject, I would direct attention to the document noted in the margin. And I trust that I may confidently rely on the strenuous exertions of all officers to carry out the instructions, which have heretofore been issued, for securing an object which is, I believe, surpassed in importance by scarcely any other at the present time.

Paragraphs 151 to 153 of the Revenue Report for 1861-62.
Paragraph 113 of the Revenue Report for 1862-63.
For facility of reference extracts are subjoined to this letter.

Extract part paragraphs 151, 152, and 153, from the Annual Report on the Revenue Administration, Punjab, for the year 1861-62:

151. * * * The most important of the operations which have hitherto been carried on with a view of securing for the future a supply of good timber, are undoubtedly those of the Jhelum and Guzerat Districts in the Rawul Pindee Division; the Deputy Commissioners of both of which have supplied some interesting remarks which are in part quoted by the Commissioner.*

Mr. E. Thornton, when Commissioner of that Division, proposed that when lands suitable for plantations were newly thrown up by rivers, arrangements should be made for the appropriation of a portion to the growing of timber, and this was approved by the Chief Commissioner, as intimated to all officers by Financial Commissioner's Circular No. 99 of 1855. With the exception however of the above two Districts, I cannot find that the instructions conveyed in that Circular have been acted upon.

"152. When reporting lately upon the *Sissoo* forests of the Indus Kachchi, I urged in my letter No. 407, dated 21st July,† that more systematic efforts should be made for having those instructions generally carried out; and it will be gathered from the remarks to which

* The following is an extract from Commissioner's report.

"25.—The Deputy Commissioner, Jhelum, takes much interest in tree planting. 'Including the Islands of the river,' he says, '66 acres of land have had *Sheeshum* trees seed to the extent of 50 maunds, broad cast over it, in the manner prescribed by Mr. Thornton in one of his Circulars when Commissioner of this Division, which was circulated by the Judicial Commissioner. Great success has attended this broad-casting *Sheeshum* seed in some instances. On the Island near Jhelum, the young trees of 9 years' growth are from 30 to 40 feet high, and average almost 6 or 8 inches in the thickest part of the stem. There is another of these groves in an alluvial deposit at Khoora, and a fourth on an Island, Suggurpoor. At these four places there cannot be less than 100 acres of this most useful timber or getting up. I am yearly thinning out great numbers of the trees training them and fostering their growth, and this I may say with every success.

"26.—In Guzerat, Deputy Commissioner reports—'about a lakh of young trees have been produced and planted out during the year chiefly of the *Sissoo* and *Sirrus* species, which are best suited to the soil and climate of this District. I have considerably increased the nurseries formed on *Bela* lands in the rivers for the production of *Sissoo* Forests.'"

† The following are extracts, paragraphs 2 to 5 of the above letter.

2. * * * Now that attention has been fully drawn to this very valuable forest, I trust that by the careful observance in future of the measures approved by Dr. Cleghorn, any further deterioration will be effectually guarded against; and that instead of being diminished the forest will progressively increase.

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I have referred above that plantations are now rising on the Chenab and Jhelum, consequent upon Mr. Thornton's arrangements, and the interest taken in them by the District officers, very similar in character to those of Kachchi. These two Districts appear, however, to have no special advantages for the purpose, over many other Districts skirted by our large river—and what I would desire to see is the extension to the latter of the arrangements now in force in the former."

153. Lands of the character referred to are very unsatisfactory for purposes of cultivation, being so uncertain as to become a kind of lottery, in consequence of which the races occupying them are usually most improvident and inefficient cultivators; while their being cultivated involves the necessity of yearly inspection and survey, yearly remission, or yearly assessment; all tending to demoralize. If plantations of trees were raised, instead, upon those portions of the land likely to remain, which are the nearest to the river, all this would be avoided, while a product likely to become, ere long, more profitable than any field crops would be secured; and the plantation would probably at the same time tend to render the bank somewhat more permanent. It would not, I think, be necessary that Government should appropriate the land itself. The entire profit might accrue to the villagers, the only action of Government being to insist upon trees being planted instead of field crops, and enforcing the adoption of conservancy rules for their future preservation and improvement. Toon and other valuable timber trees might be grown as well as *Sissoo*, and I know no other means by which an abundant supply of really good timber during future years might be so speedily and effectively secured, and with so little of requirement from, or constraint upon, the people.

Extract paragraph 113 from the Annual Report on the Revenue Administration, Punjab, for the years 1862-63.

"113. In my last Report, I remarked at some length on the especial suitability of newly formed river lands for this purpose. In Jullundur, the Deputy Commissioner, Captain Elphinstone, who possesses qualifications for controlling such matters superior to those of any other officer in the Punjab, has taken action upon the suggestions there made, and I have no doubt will attain important results. In Ferozepoor it is said that some of the proprietors of such lands have undertaken to sow a portion with forest trees. In Dera Ismail Khan about seven acres are stated to have been thus sown within the year along the banks of the Indus, and at Jhelum it is stated by the Deputy Commissioner, Major Bristow, that 40 or 50 acres of fine young timber of nine or ten years' growth are now visible along the Jhelum; more systematic and authoritative action in this matter is however, I think, required—and I purpose addressing Government separately in regard to it.

3. It will be seen, that *Sissoo* has been artificially sown lower down the Indus, though it is as yet uncertain with what effect. I would observe in regard to these sowings, that even if they should be destroyed by the inundation during the present year in the localities in which they have been hitherto sown, this will furnish no valid argument against renewing, extending, and persevering in the process,—as there can be no doubt of the suitability of the soil, and by sowing in all available places some will no doubt be left from time to time uninjured by the river; and when once the trees have attained to a size which renders them valuable, should the river renew its inroads, the greater portion may always be removed in time to escape its ravages.

4. I think it probable indeed that if the lands newly thrown up from year to year in the portions of the river below the existing forest were not allowed to be brought under cultivation, but systematically reserved for the formation of *Seeshum* Forest, a spontaneous growth would speedily show itself, which would only require care and attention to mature into forest; and I believe it would be a wise measure to lay this down as a standing rule.

5. Nor is it to the Kachchi of the Indus alone that this remark applies. On the banks of Jhelum and in parts on the Chenab, forest tree seeds have been largely sown, under the auspices of Mr. Thornton when Commissioner, in the *Belas* newly thrown up—and the plantations thus formed are rapidly beginning to increase in importance and value. It is, I believe, to such localities that we must mainly look for the large supplies of timber of which the Punjab will, in the future, stand in need—and it will I think prove ultimately a gain to all parties if lands newly formed by the action of our rivers generally, where there is any prospect of permanency, be reserved for rearing timber, instead of being brought under cultivation, as is now usually the case, notwithstanding the issue of Financial Commissioner's Circular No. 99 of 1855

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RESOLUTION.—In this Circular all Civil Officers in the Punjab are requested to support the Forest Department in their task of conservation, and to advise and adopt measures for increasing the timber and fuel supplies in their respective Districts. The Financial Commissioner observes that Forest Officers will be nearly powerless, without the hearty aid and co-operation of local officers.

2. He urges Revenue Officers to establish plantations in the *belas* and *churrs*, that is the alluvial island or river margins, thrown up by the great rivers of the Punjab, which are found to be specially suited to the growth of wood, and ill-adapted to ordinary cultivation. The land thus planted would not be appropriated by the Government, and the entire profit would be left to accrue to the villagers, Government simply insisting that, instead of field crops, trees should be planted, and that proper conservancy rules were adopted for their future preservation.

3. His Excellency the Governor General in Council considers the course here suggested well suited for increasing the supply of timber and firewood required for public consumption, which can only be effectually done by stimulating the planting of trees by villagers. The Government, North-Western Provinces, it is understood, has already taken steps to try to induce the Zemindars to plant saplings in lieu of trees cut down for fuel; and the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor was drawn to the importance of providing for a future supply of fuel for railway purposes, in Resolution Nos. 93-94F, dated 28th June. It should be pointed out to that Government, that its co-operation with the Government of the Punjab is most necessary for extending the fuel supply of the Delhi line of Railway in every practicable manner, and the means now suggested seem well worthy of its attention.

4. Plantations, similar to those recommended, while they keep up a supply of timber, assist in ameliorating the climate, by arresting the extreme evaporation from the surface, shelter the cultivated fields, and at the same time yield both forage and pasturage.

5. The Governor General in Council is of opinion that the general object in view, might further be assisted, if, in addition to such measures as are proposed by the Punjab authorities, a limited area of land was allowed to be planted with approved sorts of trees, such as *Toon*, *Sissoo*, and the like, in every village free of assessment provided that when first planted such land was waste and not paying revenue. The Government of India would be prepared to give its assent to any reasonable proposals that might be made for giving effect to such a plan, subject to such further orders as may be deemed necessary in the Revenue Department.

ORDER.—Ordered, that the above Resolution be communicated to the several Local Governments and Administrations for information and guidance.

Ordered also, that a copy be forwarded to the Home Department for any further orders thought necessary, with reference to paragraph 5.

(Signed) E. C. S. WILLIAMS, Captain, R. E.,
Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

To the Secretary to the Government of Madras in the Public Works Department.

No. 418. ORDER THEREON, 30th August 1864, No. 1,568.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

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

Rev. 1864. Q1244
Secy of Govt for Ind.

Revenue.
Forests.

Circular No. 8.

To

8-2047

From

Secy. to Govt. of India,
in the Public Works Dept.

Dated Simla, 8th July, 1864.

Received 6-2 Aug 64.

RECORDED.

87568

On the formation of Plantations by Tillage
Proprietors.

26/17 & 18.

For 14-150 30 Aug 64

200 Aug 64 Rev