M.R.O. 14—18[illegible]—27-9-24

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 2021 Press ~~Mis.~~

36.37

Dated 3 — 11 — 1864.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 3rd November 1864.

No. 36. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 28th July 1864, No. 4,781.

Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government, dated 12th July 1864, No. 1,219, Revenue Department :—

ABSTRACT.—Communicating a Despatch from the Secretary of State for India, reviewing the Report on the Forest Department for 1862-63, and requesting the Board, in communication with the Officiating Conservator of Forests, to make the necessary inquiries regarding the Coomeri cultivation, and to report the result.

1. Communicated to the Collectors of Malabar and South Canara with the request that they will report how far the Coomeri clearings are generally reputed to affect the health of the neighbouring residents, and how far their discontinuance has been observed to be accompanied by increase of fever in the locality.

2. The Board observe that Major Showers is not correct in his facts. North Canara Balaghat was formerly considered *most unhealthy*, so much so that no European Officer ever resided there, except on urgent duty, and it was deemed matter of course that the annual visit to the Balagbat Talooks for the settlement should be accompanied by several deaths among the Circuit Cutcherry servants.

3. The climate improved in later years ; but the Board believe that it is not more than thirty years since the first European residence was built at Sirci. That the station has within the last few years again been very unhealthy is unfortunate ; but the same periodicity of climate in hill tracts but slightly elevated above ordinary fever range is by no means confined to North Canara, or to localities where Coomeri is prevalent. The Shevaroy Hills are proverbially liable to these periods of good and bad climate. The Wynad exhibits much the same phenomena. The late season, it may be observed, has been *most* unhealthy in Wynad, but no such causes as interruption of clearings can be assigned there.

4. Coomeri in the Mysore jungles was prohibited some twelve years ago ; but it is not known that any increase of sickness has resulted. The idea that in North Canara the cessation of Coomeri caused the fever finds no favor with those Europeans who have long experience of the country ; and it is very questionable whether the native residents who are not biassed by the desire to return to this profitable and wasteful system of cultivation would advocate the theory. It is scarcely possible that in those immense tracts of forest the small extent of Coomeri clearing could produce any perceptible effect on the climate, and that effect if produced ought to have been equally observed in a minor degree of strength when the cultivation of a particular spot was abandoned for eight or twelve years in the ordinary course of the Coomeri system. The Board however are not prepared to say that Coomeri may not have been too strictly prohibited in North Canara, where the extent of Jungle is enormous, where in many parts the timber is valueless from inaccessibility, and where a forest clearing may often grow into a permanent farm. There is no doubt that clearings should be encouraged in many parts, and the permanent re-clamation of forest land was fascilitated in every way when North Canara belonged to the Madras Presidency. It is not likely to have been less favorably viewed by the Bombay Officers. Coomeri however is *not* a permanent clearing, but only a very temporary one ; and when relinquished in the second or third year the character of the growth that replaces the original jungle is far more unhealthy.

No. 37. ORDER THEREON, 3rd November 1864, No. 2,021.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,

Under Secretary to Government.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

No. 4,781.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 28th July 1864.

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1. Communicated to the Collectors of Malabar and South Canara with the request that they will report how far the Coomeri clearings are generally reputed to affect the health of the neighbouring residents, and how far their discontinuance has been observed to be accompanied by increase of fever in the locality.

2. The Board observe that Major Showers is not correct in his facts. North Canara Balaghat was formerly considered *most unhealthy*, so much so that no European Officer ever resided there, except on urgent duty, and it was deemed a matter of course that the annual visit to the Balaghat Taluks for the settlement should be accompanied by several deaths among the Circuit Cutcherry servants.

3. The climate improved in later years; but the Board believe that it is not more than thirty years since the first European residence was built at Sirci. That the station has within the last few years again been very unhealthy is unfortunate; but the same periodicity of climate in hill tracts, but slightly elevated above ordinary fever range is by no means confined to North Canara, or to localities where Coomeri is prevalent. The Shevaroy Hills are proverbially liable to these periods of good and bad climate. The Wynaad exhibits much the same phenomena. The late season, it may be observed, has been *most* unhealthy in Wynaad; but no such cause as interruption of clearings can be assigned there.

4. Coomeri in the Mysore jungles was prohibited some twelve years ago; but it is not known that any increase of sickness has resulted. The idea that in North Canara the cessation of Coomeri caused the fever finds no favor with those Europeans who have long experience of the country, and it is very questionable whether the native residents who are not biassed by the desire to return to this profitable and wasteful system of cultivation would advocate the theory. It is scarcely possible that in those immense tracts of forest the small extent of Coomeri clearing could produce any perceptible effect on the climate, and that effect if produced ought to have been equally observed in a minor degree of strength when the cultivation of a particular spot was abandoned for eight or twelve years in the ordinary course of the Coomeri system. The Board however are not prepared to say that Coomeri may not have been too strictly prohibited in North Canara, where the extent of Jungle is enormous, where in many parts the timber is valueless from inaccessibility, and where a forest clearing may often grow into a permanent farm. There is no doubt that clearings should be encouraged in many parts, and the permanent re-clamation of forest land was facilitated in every way when North Canara belonged to the Madras Presidency. It is not likely to have been less favorably viewed by the Bombay Officers. Coomeri however is *not* a permanent clearing, but only a very temporary one; and when relinquished in the second or third year the character of the growth that replaces the original jungle is far more unhealthy.

(A true Extract.)

Secretary.

To G. A. Ballard, Esq., Collector of Malabar,
„ to G. L. Morris, Esq., Collector of South Canara,
} with one spare copy of Government Order and its enclosure.

Copy to Captain R. H. Beddome, Officiating Conservator of Forests.
„ to J. Shaw, Esq., Acting Principal Inspector General, Medical Department.
„ to J. D. Sim, Esq., Secretary to Government, R. D.

Exd. R. H Lee.

Pro: 12th July/64. N204 & 205

Rejoinder to Enqy 4/11th July/64

Key Mus

Revenue 1864. Department)
Pro: of Govt for Mad.

No. 2792.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Dated 28th July 1864.
Despatched 24 Aug.
Received 25th do.

No. 4,781.

Requesting the Collectors of Malabar and South Canara to report how far the Coomeri clearings affect the health of the neighbouring residents, and how far their discontinuance is accompanied by increase of fever in the locality.

R. 2021.
Recorded
3d November/64 J DS

No 36 & 37.

Copied/Sent/Sub Sec.