

## MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

*Revenue* DEPARTMENT.

|              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| G.O. No. 576 | Press<br><del>Mis</del> |
| 87.88        |                         |
| Dated        | 5. 4. 19 1864           |

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,  
5th April 1864.*

No. 87. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 12th March 1864.  
Read the following letter from P. GRANT, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, to W. HUDLE-  
STON, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Goodooloor, 2nd March 1864,  
No. 36:—

SIR,

1. I have received Proceedings of the Board dated 16th November 1863, No. 7,270, calling for my "opinion as to the best means of encouraging planting of fuel," and "of collecting agricultural statistics in minute detail," also a reminder from the Board dated 19th ultimo on the same subject.

2. Since the receipt of the Board's Proceedings the subjects above alluded to have engaged my attention, but before writing on them it was my wish to gain further information by personal observation whilst moving amongst the people during the course of the annual settlement. During the last three weeks I have had the desired opportunity.

3. With regard to the collection of statistical information, I decidedly think that this should be made village by village, correct information about one village will be more valuable than general information about half a dozen. The course I would propose is to obtain the Survey Maps and Registers of some of the lately surveyed villages, then to select any one village and Map in hand, to ride over or visit each field, and note down on the map the nature of its soil. This might easily be done with the aid of a pencil red at one end and blue or black at the other. All the soils for practical purposes might be brought under four heads. A red mark on the field would indicate red soil, a black mark would indicate a black or regur soil, a black and red cross thus X might indicate a mixed soil, and the field's left blank would show that they were sandy or inferior soils. The sub-divisions of the principal kinds of soil are practically unnecessary, and have led, in all our old settlements, to much trouble and vexatious interference on the part of the subordinate Revenue servants, without whose aid (seldom given gratuitously I fear) no Ryot can tell whether the land he wishes to cultivate is 1st, 2nd or 3rd class, red or black, as the case may be.

4. By following this course we shall start with a correct survey and Register of the village, with definite knowledge of the soils composing its various fields, and the basis on which all future observations are to be made will be known. Careful enquiry will afterwards enable a person to arrive at fairly correct results; but to do so, he should be able to devote his undivided attention to the subject in order that each branch of it may receive due consideration. As to manure the natives pay but little attention to it so far as their outlying dry fields are concerned, the chances of a fair monsoon are so small that they would often lose money by undergoing the expenses of conveying it to them. It is far different, however, when water is to be had; both the rice and garden lands are well attended to, in the latter case, especially in this District, an abundance of manure is applied; in fact, whenever the supply of water is certain, either from surface irrigation or from wells so as to ensure a good crop, the natives are far from backward in their application of manure; what they require in this District is a reduction in the number and rates of assessment on dry lands, and the only grounds on which this can be refused is a temporary sacrifice of revenue, but sooner or later the reduction and simplification of assessments must be made, if the poorer portion of the population is to improve; until this is done it is useless to attempt agricultural improvements of any kind; the people are so poor that they have not heart to try them. In England, a farmer takes a farm and begins immediately to attend to his manure; in India, the Ryot gets some land and his first thought is water give him this, and he will soon develop into a producer of all kinds of farm produce and live stock: water may in a great measure be said in this country to be to land what manure is in England. As to fuel, the real way to encourage the planting of trees, will be to improve the condition of the people; wherever they possess wells, it will be observed that they have planted trees to a greater or less degree; but as trees are scarce generally in the District, it would doubt prove advantageous to establish nurseries of

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young trees in different parts of it, so that the people might know where to look for and obtain them without difficulty. Nurseries of young Coconut trees for sale might also be established. I have reason to believe that they would be bought up by thousands at a price sufficient to cover the original outlay expended in their formation. Whilst Government are so anxious about the extension of the planting of trees in the low country, I would earnestly direct their attention to the felling of the forests which has taken place within the last 20 odd years, and is still being carried on for the rain fall over the country in the vicinity of all the hills has undoubtedly been much affected by it. Talk of rain to the Ryots, and they will tell you how it has decreased of late years, this is the case particularly in the villages 3, 5 and 6 miles distant from the hills, but more especially in those which are or used to be within the influence of the south-west monsoon. In the Bolampetty Valley the other day, the Ryots pointed out to me certain villages to the east to which the south-west monsoon now extends, and those villages which formerly came within its influence. There is a distance of six miles between them. This failure of rain is a matter of fact, falling within the experience of the present generation, and is to be attributed wholly I believe to the demolition of the forests on the hills and the low country. It therefore becomes a question whether the sale of forest lands on the Neilgherries is not likely to affect the water supply on which the irrigation of Coimbatore, Salem, Trichinopoly and Tanjore Districts is so dependent. The whole of the springs which supply the Bowany, the Moyar and very many other streams, are to be found on the Koundahs and Neilgherries in the Sholabs and forests, and as these are cleared away, the springs dry up. The process is not only not slow but it is certain, and every tree that is felled tends to accelerate it, as the more the hills are denuded of forest, the less power they have to attract the clouds and rain, the feeders of all the springs. How much depends on the Cauvery river? And yet I suspect, that the country in which it is cradled, if I may use the expression, has for years resounded with the sound of the axe. A commission to report on the probable effect of the demolition of the forests now going on in South India on the future supply of water is, I consider, a subject deserving the serious consideration of Government.

Mr. Grant's letter will be embodied with the other replies to the Board's Circular Orders and dealt with hereafter, but the subject which he notices at its close, viz., the destruction of forest and decrease of rain of late years in the neighbourhood of the hills, is so important that the Board resolve to refer these points for the consideration of Government at once; and meanwhile they request Mr. Grant's particular attention to the Order of the Supreme Government directing that the utmost caution be used in disposing of forest land under the rules for the sale of waste.

No. 88.

ORDER TREASURY, 5th April 1861, No. 570.

1. The only part of the Collector's letter which needs notice from Government at present is that which relates to the injurious effect of the extensive clearance of forest during the last twenty years on the rain-fall in Coimbatore and the adjoining Districts.
2. The appointment of a Commissioner to enquire into the subject would lead to no useful result; it may safely be assumed that the denudation of a country does affect its water supply, and measures may at once be taken to counteract this result.
3. It is impossible for Government to prohibit all further cultivation of Coffee, &c., on the Neilgherries, but the rules recently sanctioned for the sale of waste land give the Collector and Conservator of Forests ample power of reserving forest tracts for public reasons, and Government have repeatedly enjoined caution in selling such tracts, and have laid great stress on preserving trees along the margin of springs and streams and the crests of hills above a certain elevation. Mr. Grant should lose no time in carrying out those instructions, and the Conservator of Forests will be instructed to co-operate with him. The same course should be adopted elsewhere, in every District, if it has not already been done.
4. The Government have lately learnt from the Collector that the Lamb's Rock Sholah has been almost destroyed, and the spoliation of Government forests seems still to be very prevalent.

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5th April 1861.*

This must be effectually stopped; the Government desire that in every instance of wilful trespass of this kind the Forest Department will forthwith prosecute the offender criminally, whether he be a Native or an European. Captain Beddome will report how it is that such spoliation remains undetected till discovery is almost useless.

5. But along with the conservancy of Forests, the restoration of those which have already suffered from indiscriminate felling in past years should be carried out. The fast growing Australian Acacias, the Casuarina, Sal and other trees should be planted out extensively, and the improvidence of past years be thus in some measure corrected.

6. Government have already expressed their willingness to establish nurseries of trees for distribution to the people, and Mr. Grant will be requested to bring forward some definite propositions for encouraging the people of his District to plant.

7. The rules allow of waste land for private plantations being taken up free of assessment for 20 years, with a guarantee that at the end of the period the land assessment only will be charged. In Madras a large extent of land is now being taken up on these terms, and Casuarina plantations are rapidly extending along the coast. It may be hoped that with land offered on the liberal terms above mentioned and facilities for obtaining seed and plants, private planting will be taken up in Coimbatore and other Districts. Land might also be advantageously assigned near village sites for the formation of village topes.

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

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,  
11th April 1864.*

No. . . . . Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue:—

Submitting letter from the Collector of Coimbatore, bringing  
to notice the destruction of Forests and decrease of rain of  
late years in the neighbourhood of the Hills. } (Here enter 12th March 1864.)

No. . . . . ORDER THEREON, 11th April 1864, No. . . . .

1. The only part of the Collector's letter which needs notice from Government at present is that which relates to the injurious effect of the extensive clearance of forest during the last twenty years on the rain-fall in Coimbatore and the adjoining Districts.

2. The appointment of a Commissioner to enquire into the subject would lead to no useful result; ~~soluble difficulties for a series of years~~ are wanting, and it may safely be assumed that the denudation of a country does affect its water supply, and measures may at once be taken to counteract this result. It is impossible for Government to prohibit all further cultivation of Coffee, &c., on the Neilgherries.

3. The rules recently sanctioned for the sale of waste land give the Collector and Conservator of Forests ample power of reserving forest tracts for public reasons, and Government have repeatedly enjoined caution in selling such tracts, and have laid great stress on preserving trees along the margin of springs and streams and the crests of hills above a certain elevation. Mr. Grant should lose no time in carrying out these instructions, and the Conservator of Forests will be instructed to co-operate with him. The same course should be adopted elsewhere, in every District, if it has not already been done.

4. The Government have lately learnt from the Collector that the Lamb's Rock Sholah has been almost destroyed, and the spoliation of Government forests seems still to be very prevalent. This must be effectually stopped; the Government desire that in every instance of wilful trespass of this kind the Forest Department will forthwith prosecute the offender criminally, whether he be a Native or an European. Captain Beddome will report how it is that such spoliation remains undetected till discovery is almost useless.

5. But along with the conservancy of Forests, the restoration of those which have already suffered from indiscriminate felling in past years should be carried out. The fast growing Australian Acacias, the Casuarinas, Sal and other trees should be planted out extensively, and the improvidence of past years be thus in some measure corrected.

6. Government have already expressed their willingness to establish nurseries of trees for distribution to the people, and Mr. Grant will be requested to bring forward some definite propositions for encouraging the people of his District to plant.

7. The rules allow of waste land for private plantations being taken up free of assessment for 20 years, with a guarantee that at the end of the period the land assessment only will be charged. In Madras a large extent of land is now being taken up on these terms, and Casuarina plantations are rapidly extending along the coast. It may be hoped that with land offered on the liberal terms above mentioned and facilities for obtaining seed and plants, private planting will be taken up in Coimbatore and other Districts. Land might also be advantageously assigned near village sites for the formation of village topes.

(True Extract.)

To the Board of Revenue.  
" Conservator of Forests.

Secretary to Government.

Editor Table

Revenue Department  
Proceedings of the Madras Govt.  
Under date 11th April 1864

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I quote  
into! 12  
JP

~~a series of years~~  
~~are wanting, and~~  
~~agriculturists all over~~  
~~over the world are~~  
~~proverbially laudators~~  
~~temporarii in cain~~  
~~as in every thing else~~  
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 be assumed that the  
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 country does affect  
 its water supply, and  
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 be taken to counteract  
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 possible for Govt to  
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 cultivation of Coffee  
 & on the Nilgherries.  
~~nor would such a step~~  
~~entirely meet the object~~  
~~in view for trees have~~  
~~a limited period of~~  
~~existence and die out~~  
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no doubt there is  
 the high authority of  
 British Govt

but very propagandist

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<sup>casuarina would grow well in the district</sup>  
Sal should be tried - the timber is very valuable and it seems from a <sup>Govt</sup> report of Mr. J. A. Brown on the Indian forest - that it is easily raised.

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tricts. Land might +

Instructions can be  
prepared in accordance  
with this Memo.

U

JP

+ also be advantageous  
assigned near village  
sites for the formation of  
village tops - and

Mr Dykes in 1860  
took some Cassia  
plants to Valence  
& I have since sent  
him seed - He writes  
me now - the 3<sup>d</sup> year -  
that the people along  
the coast are apply-  
ing for them in large  
quantities - and  
he has this year  
planted out some  
4000 near on Salt  
Stations!

I D S

I thought he would be  
able to Cassia seed for  
distribution there are  
hundreds of bushels at  
Gandy Park

M

JP

14 copies to the Dept of Public Works 6 April  
14 copies to the Dept of Agriculture

No. 137-138  
 10-12-62  
 — 63-66  
 6-11-63  
 Mis No. 15  
 6-12-63

Revenue 1864 Dept.  
 No. of Govt for April  
 No. 576.

No. of the Madras Govt.  
 Dy. 5 April 1864.

From the Off. Commissioner of Forests  
 C. N. 942 Dy. 11 April 1864  
 From 12 April 1864  
 From 20 April 1864

No. 87 188.

No. Board of Revenue  
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 Collector of Coimbatore bringing  
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 with orders thereon.

6 April 1864 R.P.