

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 3019

Press
~~Mis.~~

78 79

Dated

14 / 12. 1865.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
14th December 1865.*

No. 78. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Public Department :—

On further consideration of previous orders pro-
hibits the use of even public elephants on the } (Here enter 30th November 1865, No. 1,235.)
Neilgherries.

No. 79. ORDER THEREON, 14th December 1865, No. 3,019.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. GROSE,
Acting Under Secretary to Government.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
30th November 1865.*

No. 136. Read the following:—

MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE T. PYCROFT, dated 10 September 1864.

It seems, from the opinion of the Commissary General, quoted in the Quarter Master General's letter of 29th ultimo, that elephants and camels could not be sent up or down the Coonoor Ghaut exclusively by night, and that, if their passage up and down were so restricted, it would not wholly prevent accidents.

2. Under these circumstances, it appears to me that these animals should not be allowed on the Ghaut at all, or on any part of the Hills, except on very special occasions.

3. The Commissary General says expressly—letter of 6th August 1864—that none of the elephants or camels attached to Wellington are ever required for Commissariat purposes.

4. From Lieutenant Colonel Scott's letter, 29th August, it seems that it is really quite practicable to dispense with the use of camels and elephants, excepting when troops move. When this occurs, which cannot be often, the animals might be sent up from the Dépôt at Metapolliem, with such precautions, and such notice given, as would, as far as possible, guard against accidents. The same course might be followed in respect to bringing up materials for the Lawrence Asylum works, if such a mode of transport be really necessary.

5. Soldiers not sick, but not strong enough to walk up the ghaut, might be carried in contract transit carts—Quarter Master General's letter, paragraph 3.

6. My attention, as I mentioned before, was first drawn to the subject by seeing it stated in a newspaper that a lady had had an accident, in consequence of meeting an elephant on the ghaut. I have since received a brief account of what then occurred, in a note which I append to this. I understand, although it is not so stated in Captain Edgecome's note, that his wife suffered a good deal from the fall.

7. Mr. Smith, of the Coonoor Hotel, told me that as he was coming up, the Ghaut, after dark, in a Tounjon, he found himself on a sudden turn of the road almost under the feet of an elephant, and narrowly escaped being thrown over.

8. I have heard, too, that last year General McCleverty, riding up the Ghaut with two of his children, came suddenly upon an elephant, and was nearly meeting with an accident.

9. On the table land of the Hills, the movements of these animals would be no less dangerous than on the Ghauts, if not more so. Colonel Miller says—Memorandum 26th July last—that the orders to the Mahouts are to "avoid as much as possible passing along any public roads."

10. But they would be more dangerous to meet for parties on horseback, on bye paths or bridle paths than on wider roads.

11. Those who witnessed, three years ago, Dr. Sanderson's accident near Coonoor—when, in consequence of his horse having got across a bridle road and brought his hind feet on the rotten ground on the outer edge of the road, horse and man rolled over together—will not readily forget it. This might happen to any mounted man or woman meeting an elephant or camel on a bye path on the Hills.

12. In Calcutta, elephants and camels are not allowed to come within some miles of the town, for fear of accidents.

13. Some years ago, the Quarter Master General's camels were sent out of Madras for the same reason.

14. The resort of visitors to the Neilgherries increases every year, and with it the risk of accidents from these beasts. Their presence on the Hills or Ghauts should therefore, in my view, be proscribed altogether, except perhaps on the rare occasions to which I have adverted.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT.

No. 137. MINUTE by the Honorable T. PYCROFT, dated 31st October 1865.

Last year I brought to the notice of Government the danger likely to result from the employment of elephants and camels on the ghauts, roads, and bridle paths of the Neilgherries. I noticed some instances in which accidents had occurred, and others in which they had barely been avoided, in consequence of the use of these animals. It was stated by the Commissary General that they were never required for the purposes of his Department.

2. It was then ordered by Government, Military Department, No. 3594, 10th October 1864, that these animals should "not be allowed on the ghaut at all, or on any part of the Neilgherries, except on very special occasions, such as the movement of troops, or the transport of Camp Equipage for His Excellency the Governor and Commander-in-Chief, when on their tours."

3. I subsequently represented to Government, as within my own knowledge, that elephants were employed by private parties for their own use in the neighbourhood of Neddiwuttum, and an order was passed, Judicial Department, No. 1680, 23rd November 1864, directing the Magistrate of Coimbatore to prohibit their employment, by public proclamation, and to warn their owners of the responsibility, legal and moral, which would attach to them, should any accident happen from their neglect of the injunction.

4. During my recent short visit to Ootacamund, some eight elephants were picketted about the market place. They were, I believe, there for the purpose of carrying His Excellency the Governor's baggage.

5. Driving in my pony carriage with my wife, at about 1 o'clock P. M., I saw an elephant feeding on the rushes at the angle of the lake which runs up under Bishopsdown. To reach that spot from the market place, he must have crossed the cause-way near the market, or the Willow-bund, and passed some way along the lake road. Fortunately, as he was some feet below the road when we passed him, my pony did not observe him; but had we met him, on his return from feeding, at a sharp turn of the lake road, such as that under Cranley Cottage, my carriage would probably have been upset down the steep bank of the lake, and I (and my wife too) would have adorned a tale instead of telling it.

6. In fact, my friend Mr. Loch, on his way to my house a short time afterwards, did meet this very animal on his return to his pickets. Luckily Loch's horse-keeper caught sight of the elephant some distance off, and by shouting and gesticulating got the Mahout to keep him down near the edge of the lake, so that Loch's horse did not see him.

7. It is idle to say that the elephant should not have been taken out to feed where I saw him, that the Mahout should be punished, and the like. So long as the Mahouts are of the class they are, they will act as this one did, and the consequences may be very serious.

8. I found elephant's dung on the steep road leading from the lake to Awdry House, where I was residing, just in a spot where I should have been very sorry to have encountered such an animal on horseback or *en voiture*. This elephant had probably been out to the Avalanche with Tents and baggage.

9. I venture to submit, for the consideration of His Excellency, whether the use of elephants on such occasions might not be wholly dispensed with, seeing the results which may ensue from their employment. I have reason to believe that there is a strong feeling on the subject among the residents of Ootacamund.

10. I would now advert to a recent Order, Revenue Department, 2547, 19th October 1865, issued during my absence from Madras, by which Mr. McIvor, Superintendent Chinchona Plantations, is allowed the use of three elephants, to convey provisions to the Chinchona Plantation at Maikhondah.

11. I would in the first place observe that this Order is not very consistent with that of 23rd November last year, by which the use of elephants by private parties was prohibited. If Mr. McIvor is to employ elephants, why may not planters at Neddiwuttum, or elsewhere, do the same?

12. Next I would point out that for these three elephants to go from Ootacamund to Maikhondah, they must pass through the bazaar, across the Willow-bund, round part of the lake, up the road to Awdry house, thence by Fern Hill, Mrs. Havelock's house, Captain Hankin's, Mr. Rohde's, Major Farewell's, and Colonel Wood's, so far one of the most frequented thoroughfares about Ootacamund. Thence they must proceed for some miles along the Avalanche road. This is a mere bridle road; for a considerable distance it is cut out of the side of a steep range of hills, and has many sharp turns and places where, for a horseman to come suddenly upon an elephant, would be very dangerous.

13. It is nonsense for Mr. McIvor to talk of the difficulty of conveying grain to the Maikhondah plantation. Grain can be conveyed to any part of the Hills by coolies or bullocks. It may not be quite so convenient a mode of carriage, but the difference is not such as to warrant the peril to the necks and bones of the lieges. I presume that it is known that Mr. McIvor has land, or an interest in land, at Maikhondah.

14. It is true that the use of the elephants is asked for only "until the roads are opened," but this will not be for a good year at least—not improbably much more—and life and limb are not to be put in peril meanwhile.

15. I would submit to my honorable colleagues that the late order granting the use of the three elephants to Mr. McIvor be recalled, and further that the employment of these animals, or of camels, for any Civil purposes whatever, be wholly interdicted, and their use confined to the movements of Troops. The occasions on which they will be required for this purpose will be few, and due notice may be given, and proper precautions taken.

16. I trust that I shall not be deemed to have attached too much importance to this matter. It may be that the danger which I was not far from incurring may have made me more sensitive on the point, but I do feel that, unless the course which I have suggested be adopted, sooner or later some fearful accident will occur, for which we would reproach ourselves all our lives after.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT.

No. 138. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE H. D. PHILLIPS, dated 1st November 1865.

The late Order (19th October 1865, No. 2547) passed through the Secretary's office during the absence on the Hills of His Excellency the President and the Honorable Mr. Pycroft, when, of course, I was here alone. But the draft order had been received from the branch Secretariat at Ooty, and had on it either the approval or initials of His Excellency. When circulated to me, there were with it none of the papers which now form the packet adverted to in Mr. Pycroft's observations, and I was ignorant of the length to which this subject had gone. All that I had, in fact, ever seen of it was a printed order in the Public Works Department (?), prohibiting the passage of elephants up the Coonoor ghaut during the day time, or something to that effect.

2. Had I been aware of what had passed, or had I had an opportunity of perusing the papers now sent round, I should have felt compelled to doubt whether the arrangement recently suggested and ordered, for the convenience of the coolies working under Mr. McIvor, on the Maikhondah plantation, could have been accepted as consistent with the instructions and rules which the Government last year put in force.

3. Mr. Pycroft's observations show clearly enough, and leave no doubt on my mind, that frequent danger is likely to arise from permitting elephants to move about in the directions they must take to do what it is intended they shall do; and I certainly think it will be desirable to modify the authority in this respect which was given only a few days ago. Bullocks and coolies ought undoubtedly to be able to carry out all that be required for working the Maikhondah plantation; but if it be directed, that, for such purposes, elephants shall be used during the night only, it may be urged, and with reason too, as was done on the former occasion by the Commissary General—from Quarter Master General, 29th August 1864—that the cost of the torch oil will be considerable; and this, I apprehend, will more than absorb any little profit (if profit can be shown) arising from the non-use of bullocks and coolies.

(Signed) H. D. PHILLIPS.

No. 139. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE THE PRESIDENT, dated—November 1865.

I must say that I think Mr. Pycroft has very much exaggerated the danger likely to be incurred by the use of elephants for the purpose of facilitating the transport of various heavy articles on the Hills. I have not heard of a single accident arising out of their employment, except that which gave rise to the order prohibiting their employment during the day on the Coonoor Ghaut. There is very little, if any, danger, though there may be, as the proverb says, a good deal of fear. With regard to the order sanctioning the employment by Mr. McIvor, for a short period, of a few elephants to take out provisions and stores to Maikhondah, I can testify, from my own experience of the road, that the cost of coolies or bullocks would be very heavy until a new road is made; and I cannot but think that it would be unwise on the part of Government to expend a large sum of money in forwarding stores to a Government plantation, where a prison has been erected for a large body of convicts, and where the work will necessitate the location of some hundred or more men in addition, merely because, by the employment of a cheap means of conveyance, some person driving in a carriage, or riding upon a horse, may meet with an accident—a contingency which has not occurred, as far as

I can recollect, during the five years of my residence on the Hills. A similar objection might be made with equal justice to the employment of Railway Engines, and Bullock or Horse power substituted for steam, because horses or men might be frightened or run over occasionally.

(Signed) W. T. DENISON.

No. 140. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE T. PYCROFT, dated 7th November 1865.

I regret that His Excellency the President should think that I have much exaggerated the danger likely to arise from the employment of elephants on the Hills. I feel satisfied that the bulk of the residents at, or the visitors to the Neilgherries are of a very different opinion.

2. As to no accident, save one, having hitherto happened from such employment, I would remark that, in that one case, a lady was a good deal hurt, and might as well have been killed or desperately injured. I have heard of another instance in which a horse, happily a led horse only, was so terrified at meeting an elephant on the Coonoor Ghaut, a few years back, that he jumped over the precipitous side of the road, and was killed on the spot.

3. In my own case, only the other day, had I been driving that way an hour later, I might have met the elephant on a sharp turn of the lake road, with a steep slope down to the lake on one side; my carriage would not improbably have been upset, with serious consequences to myself and Mrs. Pycroft.

4. It is perfectly notorious that horses suddenly meeting elephants become frequently, from terror, quite ungovernable, and that the hill roads and bridge paths generally abound with sharp turns and precipitous places, where an elephant might be suddenly come upon, and it would be impossible to get out of his way. With this knowledge, are we to wait until some man or woman is killed or maimed for life, before putting down a practice so dangerous, and which, I may add, is only of recent introduction?

5. I fail to see any analogy between the alarm taken by horses at Railway trains and the danger from that of elephants on the Neilgherries to persons riding or driving on the roads there—not to mention that public roads run by the side of Railways for short distances only, and that the times for the passage of trains are usually pretty well known, conditions which do not apply in the other case—a Railway is a great public convenience, to which minor considerations must give way; whereas, on the other hand, the life or limb of any of the community on the Hills may be endangered for no more important end than that tents or heavy baggage may be carried, or grain be sent to a Chinchona Plantation, by one mode of conveyance somewhat more conveniently than by another.

6. It may be perhaps that supplies may be sent to Maikhondah more expeditiously and cheaply by means of elephants than by bullocks and coolies, although when the cost of the elephants' keep, pay of Mahouts, &c., be taken into account, this may be at least doubtful; but the question I submit is to be decided by other considerations than those of mere expedition and economy, and by the respect due to human life and safety.

7. My Honorable Colleague Mr. Phillips, I see, agrees with me, and would not have passed the Order of the 19th ultimo, had he been aware of the previous orders on the subject. I must therefore press that that Order be recalled, and that the use of elephants and camels on the Neilgherries be not permitted for any civil

30th November 1865.

purposes whatsoever. I would also suggest that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief be requested to forego the employment of those animals for the transport to or from the Hills of his own personal baggage, or that of his staff, or official records—the records in the Civil Department of the Secretariat are conveyed in the usual way in carts—so that their use be restricted to the sole case of the movements of Troops.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT.

MINUTE by the Honorable H. D. PHILLIPS, dated 10th November 1865.

It certainly appears to me to be desirable to adhere to the orders of Government first passed, against the use of elephants on the Hills. Were a total struck off the cost of hiring coolies and bullocks required for carrying supplies to Maikhondah, I incline to believe it will be found to be below that of the expenses, direct and contingent, of keeping and using Government elephants between that place and Ooty.

(Signed) H. D. PHILLIPS.

No. 141. ORDER THEREON, 30th November 1865, No. 1235.

The Governor in Council has had under his consideration the orders which have been passed with reference to the employment of elephants on the Neilgherry Hills. On the 10th October 1864, an Order was passed in the Military Department, No. 3594, forbidding the use of elephants on the Hills or Ghauts, except on very special occasions, such as the movement of Troops, or the transport of Camp Equipage for His Excellency the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief, when on their tours. Subsequently, on the 23rd November 1864, it was directed in the Judicial Department, that the foregoing prohibition which related to elephants, the property of Government, should be applied to the case of elephants or camels, the property of private individuals, and the Magistrate of Coimbatore was instructed to issue a Notification, warning the owners of such cattle of the responsibility, legal and moral, which would attach to them, should any accident happen from their neglect of the prohibition.

2. On the 12th October last, the Commissary General was directed, in the Revenue Department, to comply with a requisition made by the Superintendent of the Government Chinchona Plantations, for the use of three elephants for the purpose of conveying provisions to the plantation at Maikhondah. Colonel Hill has reported that the requisition cannot be complied with, there being no spare elephants available, but the Governor in Council is of opinion, on further consideration, that if the case were otherwise, the arrangement ought not to be allowed.

(True Extract).

H. J. Amhurst
Chief Secretary.

To the Revenue Department.

Ed. J. H. Burns.

*Note. To be substituted for the
Proc. bearing the same
date and already
communicated.*

22 November 1865
 10 October 1865
 10 " " 1865
 10 " " 1865

Nov. 1865
 No. of Govt. for
 1865. 3160.
 Proceeding of the
 Board of Govt. in
 the Public Works

Spent 30¢. Received
 Received 5¢. Received
 1865.

82-1235

On further consideration
 of petitions above pro-
 vided the many overburdened
 elephants on the highways

1865-1866

82-3019

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RECORDED

1865-1866