

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1332	<u>Press</u> <u>Mis.</u>
Dated 1-6-1866.	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
1st June 1866.*

No. 88. Read the following letter from the Conservator of Forests, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 27th March 1866, No. 1,696 :—

1. In continuation of my letter, dated 11th instant, No. 1,657, reporting the occurrence of a fire in the Anamallay Forests, and my departure to inspect the scene of conflagration, I beg to intimate that on the evening of that day, when riding to the village of Anamallay, I met Captain Beddome, with his Overseers and the Tahsildar of Polachy, returning from the forest; the fire being entirely extinguished and with wonderfully little loss, considering the intense heat of the weather and the high wind blowing at the time.

2. As several of Captain Beddome's party were suffering severely from fever and guinea-worm, requiring attention, and as that Officer assured me that nothing was to be seen except the blackened surface of the scorched ground with a heap of white ashes, where a stack of timber had been, I returned with the party to Polachy and Coimbatore.

3. **EXTENT OF LOSS.**—The actual loss of timber burnt is about 6,000 Rupees; the estimated value of the wood after transport to the coast would be about 18,000 Rupees.

4. **ORIGIN OF FIRE.**—About four or five days before the fire was discovered, several Chettys went through the forest to purchase Cardamoms from the Kadiis; it is supposed that in cooking food the long grass was carelessly set fire to, which spread through the whole forest.

5. **JUNGLE FIRES.**—Fires originating from lightning, carelessness, wilful burning to improve pasturage, or, more rarely, from the friction of bamboos, sweep over the hill sides every year, and great precautions are necessary to prevent loss by combustion of forest. It has been the custom to clear, with great trouble and considerable expense, round the timber depôts and outlying logs. The Duffadar states that efforts had been previously made, and money spent in clearing the brushwood; but Captain Beddome reports that the stack had been again choked by teak leaves blown on by the high winds.

6. **NATURAL CAUSES.**—It appears to me certain, after consulting the Collector of the District and the Inspector General of Police, that the fire arose from natural causes, and that the exceptional circumstances of the season favored the conflagration. Fires have been unusually prevalent all over the hills, extending to parts difficult of access as Hoolikuldroog and Lambton's peak.

7. **EXTRAORDINARY DROUGHTS.**—In my previous visits to the Anamallay hills, I never witnessed such excessive drought as this season. At Oodoomalpettah there is a great scarcity of drinking water; and at Polachy it was only at an early hour that bathing water was procurable. The fire was extinguished by digging pits in the channels of the mountain streams.

8. **CONCLUSION.**—The abolition of the Indian Navy, and the long period which elapsed before the Lords of the Admiralty decided not to take the Anamallay timber except at unremunerative rates, led to the forest being overstocked.

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It seems most important to devote our energies to clear this rented forest of the large stock of timber now on hand, and in future not to fell beyond two or three years' consumption.

It also appears that in unfrequented forests, planks and logs are much less liable to injury by fire when detached, than when piled into a stack; this practice shall be forbidden by Circular from this Office, except on banks of rivers where water is procurable and space valuable.

P. S.—The enclosed Bill for the batta and travelling allowance of Mr. Overseer Newman, who proceeded on emergency from Wellington, amounting to 54 Rupees, may, I hope, be sanctioned as a special case.

No. 89. ORDER THEREON, 1st June 1866, No. 1,332.

Forests, No. 6.

Ordered to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. GROSE,

Under Secretary to Government.

To the Conservator of Forests.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

N^o 1658.
Service Telegram

From Coimbatore
Conservator

To Madras
Revenue Secretary

Fire extinguished in Anamallay.
Damage does not exceed eighteen
thousand rupees.

Polachy
12 March /66

H. Cleghorn

Comd^g of Forests

823107.
 To the Honble Secy to the Govt of India
 at the Secy to the Govt of India
 at the Secy to the Govt of India

1866

For the amount of my pay whilst employed on special
 duty at the Anamallays from 8th to 15th March 1866 both
 days inclusive @ Rs 5/- per day
 To amount of expenses incurred in payment of a
 Common Cart with Bullocks from Wellington to the
 Anamallays and from thence to Wellington

30/ March 51

His Majesty's Government of India.

To, Secy to the Govt of India

30
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		Amount		
		Rs	P	D
March 1866.	To amount of my pay whilst employed on special duty at the Anamallays from 8th to 15th March 1866 both days inclusive @ Rs 5/- per day	30	.	.
"	To amount of expenses incurred in payment of a Common Cart with Bullocks from Wellington to the Anamallays and from thence to Wellington	24	.	.
Total Rupees		54	.	.

Wellington
 31st March 1866

M. M. M. Secy to the Govt of India
 Krishna Shalas

Enclosure in letter No
1696 of the 27th instant
from the Conservator of
Forests to Secretary to
Govt. R. D.

920

1696-88-89

Received June 11th 1886

Rev: 920/86

Rec: 20th March/86 130/13

Rev: 4P
Forest Department 1868
Per: 920
From: The Conservator of
Forests

The Secretary to Govt.
R. D.
Fort Saint George

Dated 27th March 1866
Received 28th
E-1-1 to 1696

Reporting that the fire
in the Annamallay Forest
arose from natural causes
and that the actual loss to
Government was about
6000 Rs.

N: 88-89

4 Copies to the Secy of Forests Dept. 11/6/86

W: 1332
Recorded
1st June 1886