

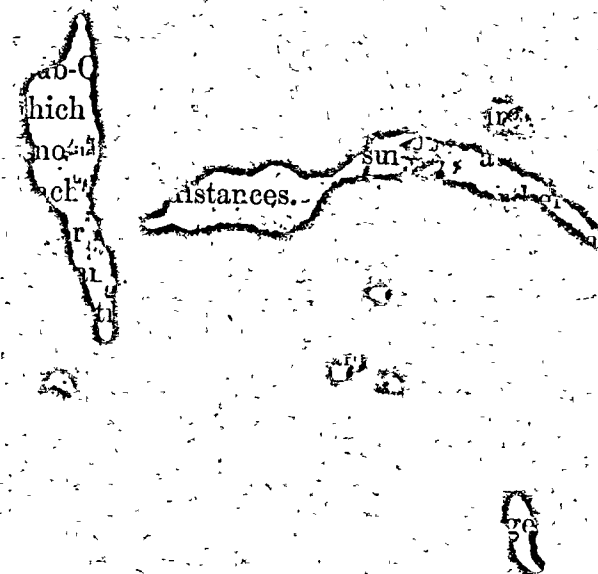
MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 594	Press ~~Mis~~
130-131	
Dated	8-3-1866.

Not to be folded or roughly handled



No. 130. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 20th February 1866, No. 1,203.

Read the following letter from the Collector of Tinnevely, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 18th December 1865, No. 485:—

1. With reference to the Government Order contained in the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 28th July 1865, requesting a report on the Alwar curichy forest, the right to the proceeds of which had been claimed by certain Cavalgars, I have the honor to state, that from what appears in the records, of the nature of Caval Maniem, it seems to have been more an exaction by a predatory class from the unresisting subjects of a weak Native Government, than a well considered remuneration for preserving peace and property.

2. As regards the Caval claims to this forest, the first notice appears in the Sub-Collector's letter to the Collector, dated 18th July 1837, reporting on a claim of certain Shanar Cavalgars to the same; they add nothing to adduce in support of their claim; the Maniem appeared excessive for the service supposed to be rendered; it was attached and a reference made for guidance as to the disposal of the claim. Further information was called for and furnished, shewing the value of the emolu-

ments, as per margin, repeating that no Sunnud or any evidence was forthcoming in support of the claim;

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The present value of these grain fees is now Rupees 818-1-7 as stated by Mr. MacGregor.

doubting whether the alleged object of destroying elephants could have been an inducement for the grant of a larger than usual Maniem, as other villages nearer the haunts of those animals "were not included in the same privileges;" the conclusion come to, was, that the claim only derived weight from being so long unchallenged, the matter never having come under notice before. The final disposal of the case by the then Board of Revenue, was that, as there had been so long undisputed possession, no disturbance of the same should be made.—*Vide* letter from the Board of Revenue to the Collector, dated 11th December 1837, No. 1,080.

3. Nearly a generation has passed, and the subject is again brought up, owing to a proposal on the part of the Conservator General to take charge of the said forests.

4. The Acting Sub-Collector has submitted a full report on the nature and extent of the forests which is annexed. The alleged dimensions of one hundred miles by thirty would not be represented in a sun, although measurements up and down hill might reach those distances. The most northern and southern limits, noted by the Sub-Collector, are not more than twenty miles distant as the crow flies, and the average breadth can hardly exceed fifteen miles.

5. A correct demarcation and survey of this forest for the establishment of a well-defined boundary between this District, and the Travancore State, is greatly to be desired, as, in progress of time, land on these hills, as well as timber, will increase in value.

6. The distance of great part of the interior of the forest, extending westwards, and the having to convey timber over an intermediate range, deducts much from its

value, in a working point of view. The timber is said not to be so valuable in quality as that procurable in the range further to the south. The more valuable kinds are reserved out of the Maniem, but some of the kinds appear to have been, notwithstanding, openly cut and stored in planks.

7. It seems, then, that, as all the most valuable timbers have been reserved by District usage, and any right to the contrary is disclaimed by these Cavalgars, the Caval service is a mere pretence, and the claim to the jungle produce originating in a species of black mail, levied under a weak Government and not coming under notice, or strict subsequent inquiry, has nothing but its long standing to recommend it; it would be desirable to leave the Cavalgars in possession of the emoluments ascribed to them by Mr. Bishop in 1837, a remuneration far above the average of other villages and over-sufficient for the non-entity of their services, and to take the forest under Government management, granting licenses to applicants on the payment of established rates, and with the proceeds, keeping up a small establishment, to conserve the forest.

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No grant was then forthcoming, in support of the Cavalgars' claim, but it was decided that their existing enjoyment should be left undisturbed, in consequence of the long period during which it had then been exercised.

As to the actual rights then enjoyed, the correspondence does not supply any definite specification, but Mr. Bishop, in the letter, dated 18th July 1837, states that no revenue had then ever been derived from these forests, and none has since.

Mr. Bishop, in his letter above quoted, estimated the revenue at 450 Rupees.

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They comprise all the land, up to the Travancore frontier, of which the old Alwarcurichy pass is the outlet, as well as two small tracts adjoining north and south, having each an outlet of its own.

As a rule, the Travancore frontier advances eastwards to the crest of the ghâts, in some places extending down the slopes and even into the plains on the eastern side, but here, on the contrary, British territory extends down the western slope to the Manimootto river, a distance of probably fifteen miles from the crest. Until within the last few months the land Custom chowkey and establishment were maintained for this pass.

For some years, however, it had been practically closed, as the Travancore authorities had withdrawn their chowkey, and goods could not, therefore, be cleared either to or from Travancore, without such a detour as to render the Pooliary route preferred as was probably the object of the step on the part of the Travancore Government.

The consequence is, that this tract is now very little known or visited except by the villagers in a few small hamlets at the foot, and these being interested parties, it has been found very difficult to obtain reliable information.

The demarcation and survey of the British and Travancore frontier has not been attempted, nor is it, I understand, contemplated; but these forests afford one of the many instances of the necessity for such an undertaking.

In all probability, the demarcation might now be effected, without dispute; but twenty years hence a question might arise involving thousands of acres, and the evidence now available will have disappeared.

Though the area is extensive, a great portion of the forest is at such a distance and elevation as to preclude the possibility of remunerative working, and in the case of the more westerly portions the timber has to be brought for a long distance up hill. Carts cannot be used, nor are elephants procurable, so that nothing but mere planks of the more valuable woods will pay carriage to market. Sawyers must be obtained from Travancore, there being few in this District.

The northern and southern extremities are at a high elevation, the former extending to the high points above Courtallum, and the latter nearly to the Agasteyar Peak above Papanassum. From these nothing but cardamums, honey, wax, and resinous substances can find their way to market.

Still a large tract of workable forest remains, dark heavy sholah, containing, it is true, a large proportion of valueless timber, but still a great deal of good.

The forest contrasts unfavorably with that on the Papanassum hills, where all the largest trees are of the valuable kinds—Kongu, Naugu and Mailay.

The Maniem has always been enjoyed by the four Head Cavalgars of Alwarcurichy for the time being, and at the time of the settlement of the question by the Board of Revenue, the Head Cavalgars were four Shanars.

These were, however, all dismissed for neglect of duty, in the year 1861, and four Marava Head Cavalgars appointed in their stead.

Of these, three were dismissed for misconduct in 1863, leaving only one incumbent at the time of the first proposition by the Conservancy Department to rent the hills.

This is the individual referred to by Mr. Banbury in paragraph 1 of his letter of June 28th 1865, as having consented to rent the forests, and at the time he did so he was in the enjoyment of the whole proceeds of the Maniem, though of this neither Mr. Banbury nor I was aware.

Subsequently, three other Head Cavalgars were appointed by the Superintendent of Police, on whom such appointment had in the meantime devolved.

These three persons are Shanars and the representatives of the original Maniemdars, and they have since their appointment shared the proceeds with the Marava.

It was these individuals* who petitioned against the renting of the forests, instigated doubtless by influential natives in the village, who found their profit in the existing state of things.

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From all the facts, I entertain no doubt that the timber trees have been systematically cut with the full concurrence of the Cavalgars.

The other rights in exercise are the collection of fees for common timber and charcoal, and the appropriation at a fixed price, greatly below the market value, of cardamoms, bark, resin, wax, &c., collected by the villagers.

Three or four years ago, the Cavalgars rented a portion of the jungle for coffee planting, and twenty acres were cleared and planted.

The Acting Sub-Collector, however, decided that they had no right to act thus, and prohibited further clearing, and this prohibition was upheld by the Collector on appeal.

As the Guddavanadi river, of which the water is all utilized, depends on the springs in these forests for its supply of water, it is very desirable that this prohibition should not have been relaxed.

To a small extent, also, the cultivation of forest Punjab has been carried on, rent being paid to the Cavalgars, but this wasteful mode of tillage, where the growth of centuries is sacrificed to one year's crop, should also be put a stop to.

The only points left to notice are the amount of the emoluments enjoyed, and the mode in which the service is performed.

The hill Maniem may be estimated at Rupees 1,200, and this is in addition to the ordinary village Caval fees, which amount to Rupees 818-1-7 which, as shewn by Mr. Bishop in the Tabular Statement accompanying his letter, dated 24th November 1837, are more than the neighbouring villages.

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They stated to me that they did so, paying them four Rupees each a month for the eight months, during which no produce is reaped, and leaving them to subsist on grain fees the remaining four months.

Velayuda Tevan was the only one whose story bore the test of personal inspection and muster.

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Of the remaining eleven, only eight were men regularly entered, who had executed engagements.

These under-Cavalgars, on inquiry, I found received no emoluments whatever derived from the hill Maniem, and no fixed pay.

The village grain fees are divided by the Head Cavalgars into four shares, and each Head Cavalgar again sub-divides his into eight, the under-Cavalgars receive each one-eighth, the Head Cavalgar appropriating two-eighths as well as, of course, the share of each under-Cavalgar not entertained.

The villagers are loud in their complaints of the negligence with which the duties are performed, resulting in the prevalence of petty thefts.

The Head Cavalgars have now agreed to rent the forest to Government, at a rent of 1,000 a year for the whole, or 400 a year for the ordinary timber, only reserving to themselves the cardamoms, &c.

As to the latter source of revenue, it may be here mentioned that in all the Government hills the Cardamom rents have been abandoned, and all are at liberty to make what they can by the collection of this spontaneous product.

The mode in which Cardamom revenue was before realized, and is now by these Cavalgars, is by waylaying the collectors, and obliging them to sell at a fixed price, and treating Cardamoms possessed without a pass as contraband.

The annual price demanded for the common timber is more than it would realize. I should not recommend the acceptance of the offer.

The existing arrangement has neither secured the safe keeping of the Government timber, nor the due performance of the village Caval duties, ample though the means are to effect both objects.

I think the proper course to pursue would be to take the Maniem under Government management, and rent the jungle produce, excluding timber trees, to the highest bidder.

From the proceeds, an establishment to be maintained for watching the jungles, as well as twenty-four under Cavalgars, at thirty-two Rupees a year each, the balance to be handed over to the Head Cavalgar.

The timber trees might be cut on Durkhast in the same way as in other Government forests in the District.

1. Submitted to Government, with reference to their Order of 26th July 1865, No. 1,736, Revenue Department.

2. Under the circumstances brought to notice in these papers there cannot, in the Board's opinion, be any question as to the right of Government to take this forest under the Conservancy Rules.

3. The Cavalgars have, it appears, enjoyed the usufructs of the wild products of the forest as remuneration for the Caval services performed by them in addition to the usual Caval fees. The amount of the latter is represented to be amply sufficient for the work performed by these office-holders, and as the Government have an inherent right to regulate the amount of stipend which they may see fit to pay to the holders of any office under them, it seems quite competent to them to prohibit entirely the interference of these so-called hereditary officials with the forest.

4. Perhaps, however, in consideration of the long enjoyment exercised by these servants, the Government may see fit to give them such compensation either in land or fees as may make up for the advantages which they will forfeit, if debarred from their customary privileges.

No. 131. ORDER THEREON, 8th March 1866, No. 594.

Forests, No. 4.

1. The Government concur with the Board, and direct that the forest tract in question be made over to the Forest Department as soon as the Conservator can make the necessary arrangements.

2. The Government must decline to shew any favor to the Cavalgars, their ordinary emoluments are ample, and they have neglected their duties as Cavalgars and permitted the spoliation of the forests. Their permissive enjoyment of the jungle produce of this tract will therefore cease at once.

(True Extract.)

Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
,, the Conservator of Forests.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

No 601.
Bds No 1203

The Ag Sub four
should be added
to number this
because of his letter
in conformity with
a new Reform
rule of procedure

WJ

2.3.06

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 20th February 1866.

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ENCLOSURE No. 1.

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Collector.

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(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Acting Sub-Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Copy to the Collector of Tinnevely.
" to the Conservator of Forests.

Exd. J. Wright.

W. 594
The pt. can direct
the W. and direct
that the Forest Dept.
in question be made
over to the Forest Dept.
as soon as the Order
of the Govt. can make the
necessary arrange-
ments.

W. 594 The pt. must de-
cline to show any favor
to the Caribos. Their
ordinary ^{ordinary} ~~the~~ ^{enrolments} are
ample and they have

1866.

Department.

No.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Dated 20th February 1866.

No. 1,203.

Submitting report of Collector of Tinnevely
on Alwaracurichy Forest, and recommending
that the forest be taken by Government un-
der Conservancy Rules.



9

8

The annual price demanded for the common timber is more than it would realize. I should not recommend the acceptance of the offer.

The existing arrangement has neither secured the safe keeping of the Government timber, nor the due performance of the village Caval duties, and though the means are to effect both objects.

I think the proper course to pursue would be to take the Maniem under Government management, and rent the jungle produce, excluding timber trees, to the highest bidder.

From the proceeds, an establishment to be maintained in the jungle, twenty-four under Cavalgans, at thirty-two Rupees a year each, the balance to be paid to the Head Cavalgar.

The timber trees might be cut on Durkust in the same way as in other Government forests in the District.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) A. WEDDERBURN,
Collector.

1. Submitted to Government, with reference to their Order of 26th July 1865, No. 1,736.
Revenue Department

the Government may see fit to give them such compensation as may be deemed proper for the advantages which they will forgo, if deprived from their customary privileges.
(The Copies and Extract)

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Copy to the Collector of Tinnevely.
to the Conservator of Forests.

Acting Sub-Secretary.

reflected their
interests as Civil.
posts and per.
mitted the
station of
the forests. Their
permission
enjoyment of
the jungle produce
of this tract
will therefore
be at once

Ed. J. WILKINSON

8th March 1866

To the Board of Revenue
to the Conservator of Forests

No 20 July 1865
473-47

20/4/98

10. 4. 1865

6/1/10

6/4-6-10

27-8-17

27

N^o 130 + 131

Per- 1866. Departm
Pro: of Govt for March

No. 601.
PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE

Dated 20th February 1866.

Dep^t 23-~~June~~

Per^t 26th

From the Off^{ce} Conservator
of Forests 12 April 1866 N^o 117
No. 1203.

Submitting report of Collector of Tinneve
on Alwarcurichy Forest, and recommend
that the forest be taken by Government
der Conservancy Rules.

N^o 591-8 March

Per^t 10-11

