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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

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596-97.

Dated 27—4— 1868.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 27th April 1868.

No. 596. Read the following letter from the Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, to the Secretary to Government of Madras, dated Calcutta, 31st March 1868, No. 74:—

1. Several letters and articles having recently appeared in the newspapers, in which statements of supposed facts are put forward with all detail, it seems to me necessary to submit to His Excellency the Governor a few remarks on these statements. I acknowledge most fully the perfect right which the authors of these statements have to form any opinion as to the fairness or unfairness of my reports, but I am desirous to avoid, as much as possible, the mischief which invariably results from the publication, with all the air of circumstantial truth, of erroneous statements, which are thus repeated again and again, until it is almost impossible to remove the impression they produce.

2. Should His Excellency think it desirable, it might be well that the accompanying Memorandum should appear as the original report did.

ALLEGED DISCOVERY OF COAL ON THE KISTNA RIVER.

1. In the "Englishman" newspaper (Calcutta) of the 27th March 1868, was published a letter copied from "The Madras Times," of what date I do not know, signed "Burnt Shale," referring to the alleged discovery of coal on the Kistna river in the Madras Presidency, and I see that several other letters on the same subject have also appeared, which seem to call for a few remarks. I should be sorry to interfere with the opinions of the writers as to the "unfairness" of my reports. But statements of supposed facts made in this way obtain circulation, and it is exceedingly difficult to remove the impression afterwards; errors are thus repeated again and again, and years afterwards the same discovery is supposed to crop up, and these erroneous statements are again referred to. The letter referred to is, further, throughout expressed in phrases identical with those frequently used by Colonel Applegath, and if not written by him, is stated to represent his views.

2. I have, therefore, with reference to the statements so put forward, so far as these statements relate to supposed facts, to note—

1st. It is said, "the exploring party did find a large bed of what Colonel Applegath "calls 'burnt coal,' and Mr. Oldham 'burnt shale.'" I found nothing of the kind, either in large or small bed; I did not see a trace of any such rocks, visible any where in the field.

2nd. "Burnt outcrops" of coal were carefully looked for, as they had been stated to occur. As I said they are easy of recognition, and they must have been seen if they existed, I found nothing of this kind.

3rd. What is said to have been found was, "a substance rich enough to support "combustion and to burn, &c." I found nothing whatever; Colonel Applegath [illegible] nothing whatever, which would burn or support combustion, excepting some old [illegible]

4th. It is said that "Colonel Applegath did at last so far prevail as to get [illegible] "to work." This is obviously intended to imply that I was opposed to the employment of men; on the contrary, I knew nothing whatever of them, or of their work [illegible] the slightest communication or reference to me, Colonel Applegath brought with him [illegible] workshops at Bezwara all the necessary appliances for blasting, &c. These he used [illegible] as he wished, and without the slightest interference from me. It was not perfectly [illegible] in doing so; he was simply asked to point out [illegible] the substance he said he had found in 1851, and he would have been entirely justified in proving its existence in any way he thought best. I had nothing to say to his methods. I would [illegible] thoroughly have rejoiced to see the occurrence of the coal established. And seeing [illegible] pit recorded by Colonel Applegath in his original papers was not more than [illegible] ple time and opportunity to re-open it, if he thought it necessary.

5th. The statement with respect to "Coal on the Godavery" is of a similar character. I can only repeat what I have said before, that coal is not known to exist on the Godavery. I never said there was no coal on the Godavery, for precisely the same reason that, until lately, I never said there was no coal at Juggiapett, simply because the district had not been examined. It is not, however, yet known to exist there; thin shales, useless as fuel, and of totally different character from coal-shales, have been found at intervals for more than quarter of a century. The coal alluded to as "large beds of indisputable coal on the Godavery" is really on the Wardah, 80 miles, (by the river 120) from the nearest point of the Godavery. It might with almost equal accuracy be asserted that coal exists at London, because it was really found near Liverpool; or that Lahore, for example, was on the Indus, because it really was on the Ravee, which Ravee flowed into the Chenab, and then the Chenab united with the Indus. It is not easy to deal with statements so utterly hazy in their geography.

6th. I had with me the original plans of Colonel Applegath, and I not only carefully went to every locality shewn on these plans, as the site of his labors, but to every place which he indicated as likely to be in any way interesting.

7th. The exact locality of most of these was found, and very readily, for the original bore-holes, where Colonel Applegath's blasts had been put in, remained. There was nothing to prevent his re-opening these to any extent he wished.

8th. I see in another newspaper a statement that coal has been found by Mr. Charles Oldham near Cumbum, at six feet from the surface. I am not aware of the fact, and Mr. Charles Oldham is equally ignorant of the occurrence of coal, or of the chance of its occurrence in the vicinity of Cumbum.

30*th March* 1868.

(Signed) T. OLDHAM,
Superintendent Geological Survey of India.

No. 597.

ORDER THEREON, 27th April 1868, No. 1,125.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered that the above letter with its enclosure be laid on the Editors' table.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintendent Geological Survey of India.
" the Board of Revenue.
" Major T. Applegath.
" the Editors' table.

Exd. T. O'Connor.

2

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obed.t Servant
Thomas Oldham
Supt. Geol. Survey of India
Geol. Sur. Office
1 Hastings Street
No. 1125.
Ordered that the above letter with its enclosure be laid on the Editors Table.
27th April 68.
1 Copy Letter Supt. Geological Survey of India Records
1 Copy 1 Hastings Street
1 — Major Applegath
4 — Editors Tables