M.R.O. 14—5,450—22-10-25.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No.	1285	Press ~~Mis.~~
212-13 Dated	9-5-	1868.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 9th May 1868.

No. 212. Read the following letter from the Collector of Salem, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Salem, 19th March 1868, No. 21 :—

1. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Proceedings of Government, dated the 20th February 1868, No. 482, in which I am requested to give my opinion on certain particulars, with reference to the report of the Forest Department on the Zavadi and Yelligherri Hills, dated 21st December 1867, No. 439.

2. There can be but one mind, I should think, as to the desirability of Forest Reserves being demarcated, and to me it would seem that the sooner the Reserves were taken up, the better for the interests of Government, as the Hill tribes could then, promptly, be prohibited from cultivating patches of ground upon which valuable timber exists.

3. A great deal of cultivation now goes on upon these hills, generally in the most fertile parts, and not unfrequently adjoining that which the Forest Department would wish to include in their Reserves (forest).

4. It is most advisable to have the tracts as large and as *compact* as possible, and to do this it would, in some cases, be found necessary to include different plots where various villages and cultivation exist. To carry this out would of course require care, so that the tribes may have no reason to complain. This work, I would consider, is simply that of a Collector; consequently, if the demarcation is so nearly connected with the Revenue Department, it should not, I think, work alone, but conjointly with the latter.

5. I would propose, with reference to these hill villages, that fixed boundaries should be raised, allowing at the rate of two acres per head, this would permit sufficient cultivation in alternate years, the invariable custom of the people. "Podugal" lands are those which have been once cultivated, and then given up; from the time that they are so given up, no "Teervah" is paid. Accordingly, those lands with the Sandal-wood, &c., upon them, decidedly belong to Government.

6. It must be understood that cattle are only precluded from entering *reserved demarcated lands*. It would be impossible to prevent grazing upon the forest tracts. During the extremely dry months, it has been the standing custom for the ryots to drive their cattle to the hills in order that they may be kept alive, the want of fodder in the low lands compelling them to act thus. I am certain that it would never meet with the wishes of Government to interfere with such old established habits.

7. In paragraph 10, the Deputy Conservator deprecates the present system of the "indiscriminate" collection of forest products. I am at a loss to understand what Mr. Walker may mean, and I can only assure him that whatever is rented out by the Revenue Department is done with the greatest care. I would altogether oppose the letting out of the products of the forests by the Conservancy Department singly. My reason is for this, that should the rents fail to be paid, reference would have to be made to the Collector, and I think certainly it would be less trouble were he to have the matter in his hands from the beginning. The proceeds undoubtedly of the forests should be credited to that department. The Forest Department might facilitate the work by giving an approximate value of the products of the several forests.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
9th May 1868.

8. Hitherto, on these hills, it has not been the custom to make Durkhast for cultivation. Should it be necessary to change this, I think that the Collector would be fully qualified to dispose of the application without intervention, provided always that the Forest Demarcation Reserves have been carried out. I trust that I have clearly shewn how intimately connected the Forest Conservancy is with the Revenue Department, and how impossible it would be for the Collector to see after the interests of the people and the district were his hands tied by the Forest Department working independently of him.

No. 213. ORDER THEREON, 9th May 1868, No. 1,285.

Forests, No. 5.

Ordered to be referred to the Board of Revenue for their remarks.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
„ the Collector of Salem.
„ the Officiating Conservator of Forests.

Fxd. S. T. Augustin.

No 1285

9th May 68

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Cr. No. 431-32

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