M.R. O. 1—82,000—18-12-29.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 3184 Press ~~Ms.~~

357-52
Dated 21-12- 19 68.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 351. Read the following letter from the Officiating Conservator of Forests, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Camp at Ootacamund, 17th December 1868, No. 1,076 :—

1. About two years ago, Mr. Cadell, when Collector of South Canara, proposed that some of the firewood jungles near the town of Mangalore should be handed over to the Revenue Department; I was on a tour at the time in the district, and as there was only an Overseer in charge, I agreed with Mr. Cadell that he should take over charge, and that we should dispense with the services of several Duffadars and Peons who had charge of these jungles under our department. Dr. Cleghorn, who was then in the Presidency, sanctioned the arrangement, but remarked that these jungles should again be brought under the department if an Officer was appointed to the district.

2. An Officer has been lately appointed to the district, and I have since applied to the Collector for the transfer of the jungles, but the Assistant Conservator now reports* that the Acting Collector, Mr. Thomas, is gradually farming out the whole of the forests in the plains as firewood tracts, and that he appears to think that our department has only charge of the ghaut forests, and that all the forests of the plains are under the Revenue authorities, though the jungles originally handed over to Mr. Cadell by our department were only some tracts near Mangalore.

* *Vide* letter No. 222, of the 26th November 1868, enclosed.

3. South Canara is essentially a forest country, fine timber of many valuable kinds growing in many instances close down to the seaboard, it is one of our most valuable districts, and the revenue last year was over 40,000 Rupees : it is very important that the whole of the forests should remain under the special department. Mr. Thomas has no establishment to work with, and his present proceeding will cause great loss to Government and the rapid destruction of the forests in the plains, simply to swell the receipts of his Jungle Conservancy Fund. Large tracts of forest in the plains of this district are quite as fine as the ghaut forests, so that the timber will be felled by the contractors for sale, and until the forests of the plains disappear there will be no sale for timber from the ghaut forests.

4. Under these circumstances, I request sanction for resuming charge of the so-called firewood forests, and that the Duffadars (who are still borne upon the sanctioned scale of establishment) may be re-appointed. The value of South Canara as a forest district can hardly be overrated, our establishment was lately increased by the appointment of an Assistant Conservator, but I am anxious to place conservancy on a still better footing when this question is settled.

From the Deputy Conservator of Forests, South Canara, to the Officiating Conservator of Forests, Ootacamund, dated Mangalore, 26th November 1868, No. 222.

1. I have the honor to bring to your notice that the practice of farming out firewood jungles, which has been introduced by the Acting Collector, and is being gradually extended all over this district, is a source of great loss to the revenue of the Forest Department, and in fact clashes with the interest of Jungle Conservancy.

2. I cannot say by whom the forests were divided into firewood and ghaut forests ; the former being placed under the Revenue Department, and the latter under the Forest Department.

I consider any such division useless, and one or other department should have sole charge of all forests, both timber and so-called firewood forests.

3. At any rate, I am of opinion, from the reports of my Overseers, &c., that the renters of these firewood jungles bid for them as much for the timber that is in them as the firewood. The former often of valuable kinds; Banapu, Tirwa, and the like, they cut into planks and expose for sale.

4. As long as the Revenue Department have charge of those jungles, I cannot of course interfere, but I trust that measures may be soon taken for uniting all the jungles of the district, and placing them under the charge of the Forest Department, who are their legitimate guardians.

No. 352. ORDER THEREON, 21st December 1868, No. 3,184.

Forests, No. 14.

The Board of Revenue will be requested to call for Mr. Thomas' observations on the Acting Conservator's proposals on his return from leave, and will be good enough to submit them to Government with their own opinion.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

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

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

Govt. of India.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated December, 21st.

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 21st December 1868, No. 3,184.

DECEMBER.

Nos. 351-352.

Firewood Jungles in South Canara.—Board of Revenue to call for the Collector's observations on the proposal to transfer them to the Forest Department.

From H. S. THOMAS, Esq., Acting Collector of South Canara, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Mangalore, 5th September 1868, No. 828.

In replying to the Board's letter, dated 9th May 1868, No. 3,438, I have the honor to state that the rules therein referred to are not in force in this district, others having been specially sanctioned, under Order of Government, dated 20th May 1865, No. 1,065.

2. Under these rules, the agriculturalists have had nothing to complain of so long as the supply of fuel and timber lasted. In the neighbourhood of the Ghauts, fuel is still in superfluous abundance, the jungles being extensive, and the population scanty. In the neighbourhood of the Coast community if interest has led, as I think it always does, to wasteful use, if not abuse, and consequent disappearance of woods. Almost all woods but Kumakis have thus disappeared. The Kumakis also are now invaded by the Public Works Department, and the feeling of instability of interests thereby induced is leading to their destruction for the purposes of realization by their former protectors, the Kumaki holders,

3. I am of opinion that the end must be that the forest privileges of the agriculturalist will become merely nominal, and that it is only a question of time when that end will come. When it does come, the agriculturalist must be the greatest sufferer. I, therefore, do not think that the permanent interests of the agriculturalists are well considered in the present forest rules. In my humble opinion the sounder principle would be a low assessment and no bolstering, forest privileges being commuted once for all by a reduction of assessment, and that done, more thorough arrangements made for conservancy either by Government or private enterprise.

4. Forest privileges and forest rules are in my view a relic of times when the wood was so extensive, and the population, means of carriage and of export so scanty, that the liberty of helping himself was not only the arrangement that naturally grew out of the position, but the most convenient that could be made for the cultivator. Now circumstances are so altered that I think it is commencing to be a short-sighted and suicidal policy. The increased demand seems to call for increased attention to the means of supply.

5. I am separately submitting proposals for this district, involving a commutation of forest privileges for a slight extension of Kumaki privileges on a light assessment.

Vide my letter of this date, No. 827.

6. In these proposals, I have not gone the length of making the proposed commutation imperative, but in the neighbourhood of the Coast where forest privileges have by the disappearance of forest been virtually taken away from the cultivator, I have proposed to offer for his acceptance, privileges which amount to an equivalent. Whether it will be advisable to make the acceptance of such an equivalent compulsory on all, is a question that I thought best to leave for future consideration, there being no pressure as yet in the interior.

Enl. G. A. Turton.

I have the honor to be

Sir

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Your Most Obedient Servt

F. Ch. Maddison Major

Offg Conservator of Forests.

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No. 3184.

The Bd of Revenue will be requested to call for Dr Thomas' observations on the Ch: Conservator's proposals on his return from leave, and will be good enough to submit them to Govt with their own remarks & opinion

List

PWD. 11 Copies Fifty PWD Despatches re 13 — Offg Conservator of Forests

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21st December /68

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