M.R.O. 1—89,000—16-10-29.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2999 Press ~~His.~~

214-215

Dated 20th November 1869

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 214. Read the following letter from the Officiating Conservator of Forests, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Camp at Mangalore, 13th November 1869, No. 1,800 :—

In returning the Draft Act and Memorandum of the Inspector-General of Forests, submitted for my observations with the Government Order, No. 2,795, of the 14th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that the Act in question appears to have been very carefully drawn up, and to embrace all questions on forest matters that may be likely to arise; and it will enable Government to legalize our Code of Forest Rules without any infringement on the rights of the inhabitants.

2. I have before stated that the Penal Code seemed sufficient, except in cases of simple trespass (a very important matter). A suspicion, however, seems to be springing up in the minds of many of the Civil authorities that our Forest Rules cannot be enforced without some special legislation, and that, even in the strictest reserved tracts, we cannot treat the unauthorized removal of timber as *theft*, punish for *mischief*, or put a stop to *fires*. I am afraid, therefore, that without an Act constant difficulties may be thrown in our way, and that it will eventually result in Government being compelled to legislate specially, or give up all thoughts of conservancy in any strict sense, such as is in force in European countries.

3. There can be no doubt that at present our Department is on anything but a satisfactory standing, and that our Rules, though acted up to in some districts, are more or less ignored in others; and that the Civil authorities, and even our own officers, are very doubtful how to act in many cases. An Act would settle all this, and place the department on a proper footing.

4. Nothing at the present time can, I think, be more important than the clearly defining and laying down the existing rights of the ryots and inhabitants, and the tracts in which they exist, for which object the Draft Act gives facilities. Unless village-jungles are taken care of by the State, they must entirely disappear before railroads, and the consequent enormous demand for fuel, and increase of cultivation. The same rights will then be claimed in what are now reserved forests; so that the sooner the question is taken up the easier it will be, and delay will tend to the gradual extinction of what now properly may be considered State-forest.

No. 215. ORDER THEREON, 20th November 1869, No. 2,999.

Forests, No. 12.

ORDERED to lie over, pending the receipt of the Board of Revenue's reply to the G. O., under date 14th October 1869, No. 2,795.

(True Extract.)

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

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Govt. of Madras. 1869

REVENUE.

To

Dated November 20th.

Recd. Encl.

G. O., 20th November 1869, No. 2,999.

NOVEMBER.

Nos. 214-215.

Forest Act.—Observations of the Officiating Conservator of Forests on it, ordered to lie over, pending the receipt of the Board's reply to the order on this subject.