M.R.O. 1—32,000—15-10-29.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1579 Press Mis.

161-62
Dated 17-10-1870 N2

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 161. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 1st September 1870, No. 5,553 :—

Read the following letter from the Conservator of Forests, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Ootacamund, 25th June 1870, No. 2,193.

As the seigniorage upon firewood has lately been raised to 1 Rupee per bandy-load, it becomes necessary to raise the price of the unreserved jungle-timbers, when cut as timber, from 1 Rupee per bandy-load, the present rate, to 2 Rupees, or the result will be that all the better kinds of jungle-timbers, and those most valuable for building purposes, will be cut on firewood licenses, and the inferior timbers will rarely be brought out at all, and in time it will be difficult for our department to meet the requirements of the general public and the agricultural population. I have the honour therefore to request the sanction of Government for raising the seigniorage on the bulk of unreserved jungle-timbers, when cut as timbers, from 1 Rupee, the present rate, to 2 Rupees, and also for raising the price of those specified timbers, now bearing a seigniorage of 2 Rupees per bandy-load, to Rupees 2-8-0. The Collectors of Cuddapah and North Arcot are both opposed to this increase, but I do not well see how it can be avoided, and it would be better to reduce the rates on firewood than to keep the seigniorage rates as they stand at present.

2. It also becomes necessary to raise the price of head-loads and bullock-loads of firewood to 9 Pies and 3 Annas, respectively; the present rates are only 3 Pies per head-load which is altogether out of proportion to the seigniorage on the bandy-load. I have already addressed Government on this subject,* and now request sanction for this alteration in our rates which has already been put in force by order of the Board in forests under the Collectors. In North Arcot a custom has prevailed of allowing all head-loads to be taken *for sale* free of any taxation; this cannot be allowed in a district traversed by the railway unless it is the wish of Government to give up all revenue on firewood, as a systematic trade in head-loads at once springs up to the entire exclusion of the use of bandies.

* *Vide* my letter, No. 2,148, of 4th June 1870.

3. Mr. Yarde also points out that the present seigniorage on bamboos is only 8 Annas per bandy-load, that it is out of all proportion to the present rates on fuel, as a bandy-load of bamboos sells at 6 or 7 Rupees, or more than double the rate of fuel. I think that this seigniorage should therefore be raised from 8 Annas to 1 Rupee per bandy-load in the districts of Cuddapah, North Arcot, and Salem, or the present rate may lead to its extermination, as it might, and probably is, largely brought out for fuel purposes; the water-supply in parts of these districts is much dependent in the preservation of this plan. Split or prepared bamboos should also bear a double rate of seigniorage to those in the rough, as is the case with timber, as it takes two to three bandy-loads of rough bamboos to make one of prepared; the present rates are the same; this should be altered, and prepared bamboos should bear a double seigniorage.

4. Charcoal is at present rated at 8 Annas the bandy-load, whilst firewood is at 1 Rupee; it takes three to six bandies of wood to make one of charcoal; so it

is quite apparent that this rate must be altered: I propose a seigniorage of Rupees 1-8-0 per bandy for this article, 4 Annas per bullock-load, and 1 Anna per man's load.

REFERRED to the Board of Revenue for their observations.

OOTACAMUND,
7th July 1870.

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

THE Conservator of Forests makes the following proposals:—

1.—That the price of unreserved jungle-wood cut as timber shall be raised from Rupee 1 to Rupees 2 a bandy-load.

2.—That the price of reserved timber shall be raised from Rupees 2 to Rupees 2-8-0 a bandy-load.

3.—That the price of head-loads of firewood shall be raised from 3 Pies to 9 Pies, and the price of bullock-loads from 1 Anna to 3 Annas.

4.—That the seigniorage on bamboos shall be raised from 8 Annas to 1 Rupee.

5.—That the seigniorage on split bamboos shall be double that on rough bamboos.

2. If the Order of Government, 19th July 1869, No. 2,093, fixing the seigniorage on 1,000 lbs. of fuel at 1 Rupee is final, and is to be everywhere the basis on which all rates are calculated, the Conservator's proposals are logical, and must be accepted; but the Board have facts before them which suggest the desirability of re-considering that Order in the case of many localities. The Collector of South Arcot in reporting on a petition against the enhanced rates says: "I may add that when lately in Kullacoorchy the poorer classes, who depend very much for their subsistence on bringing firewood into the larger towns, complained that their occupation had ceased with the increased tax. If it be practicable, I beg to recommend that the new rates do cease, and that the old ones be again enforced in this district." The Assistant Conservator of Forests in Kurnool, reporting on charcoal seigniorage, says: "I think in a district like this, where there are some 2,000 or 3,000 square-miles of forest, and only a local demand to meet, that 8 Annas is the utmost that should be charged for firewood, and 1 Rupee for charcoal per bandy-load." Writing on the same subject the Acting Collector of Madura says: "Further inquiries and experience have confirmed me in my opinion that the present rate of seigniorage on firewood is most oppressively high, and that my views are generally concurred in by Revenue-officers of all grades throughout the district."

3. The Board fear that the present rates, which are enforced in the Revenue Department, though not too high in some parts of the Presidency, are oppressive in others. The price of wood varies so greatly that while the seigniorage bears but little proportion to the selling-price of wood when sold, for instance, to the Railway Company, it is greater than can be realized by a firewood cooly in a remote up-country town.

4. In their Order of the 13th August 1870, No. 1,252, Government express their readiness to consider proposals for the reduction of seigniorage which "have reference to a particular locality, and not to a particular branch of industry," and state that "the circumstances of particular localities will be separately considered, if brought forward, in fixing the rate of seigniorage."

5. The Board accordingly resolve to call upon all Collectors to report on the subject with reference to the circumstances of their districts.

No. 162. ORDER THEREON, 17th October 1870, No. 1,579.

Forests, No. 5.

THE Government resolve to await the result of the Board's reference to Collectors.

2. The prices of firewood and charcoal should be ascertained if possible.

(True Extract.)

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

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

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Copt. of {1870} Wadrus.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

&c., &c., &c.

Dated October, 17th.

Recd.

G. O, 17th October 1870, *No.* 1,770.

Encl.

OCTOBER.

Nos. 161-162.

Seigniorage on Firewood.—Result of the Board's reference to Collectors on this subject awaited. Board to ascertain the prices of firewood and charcoal, if possible.

1679

1. The Govt. resolve to await the result of the Board's reference to Collectors &
2. The price of firewood & charcoal shall be ascertained if possible

17 Octr

14 Folios Bk of Rec. Book 18
13 — Cons. of Encls.

R- 19 July/69 No 418-19.
- 27 June/70 - 326-27.
- 13 Aug-Sept/70 - 238-39.

Rev 1870. Sept

Board of Revenue,

MADRAS.

No 965

PROCEEDINGS, 1ST SEPT. 1870, No. 5,553.

Desp 9 Sept/70.

Encl.

Received 11 Sept/70

SEPTEMBER.

No. 5,553.

Seigniorage—charged on firewood.—Collectors requested to report on subject of reduction of—, with reference to circumstances of their districts.

Sp 1579-7 Octo

With order

Epis 8/70 R13