Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
25th September 1871.

No. 331. Read the following letter from the Commissioner of the Nilgiris, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Ootacamund, 14th September 1871, No. 68 :—

I HAVE the honour to furnish my Assistant's report called for in paragraph 5 of G. O., 14th June 1871, No. 1,055. On receipt of orders I will make over [illegible] reserved for fuel.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From C. A. GALTON, Esq., Assistant Commissioner of the Nilgiris, to the Commissioner of the Nilgiris, dated Ootacamund, 13th September 1871.

I HAVE the honour to furnish the report called for in paragraph 5 of G. O. No. 1,055, 14th June last.

2. On the 15th August I visited the tract of jungle marked C., D., E., on Colonel Morgan's map, in company with Colonel Morgan himself and Mr. Newman, the Forest Overseer.

We found five Iruler villages only situated within this tract, the sites of which are marked in red pencil. These villages are all situated below the slopes of the hills. I did not consider it necessary to go up the slopes, as Colonel Morgan informed me that it would not be necessary to reserve the jungles on the slopes for a distance exceeding half a mile, and that there were no Iruler villages within that tract.

In paragraph 13 of Colonel Morgan's letter of November (enclosure No. 1 to Proceedings of Madras Government of 2nd March), it is proposed that the "Forest Department should reassume charge of the forests to the foot of the hills, and for about one mile up the slopes;" and Mr. Newman's statement that there are nineteen Iruler villages within the tract in question was based on the supposition that a mile of the slopes would be required by the Forest Department. Colonel Morgan now informs me that it is not his intention to enclose the sites of any of the Iruler villages on the slopes, and accordingly the circumstances of the five villages at the foot only have to be considered, namely, Chengal, Kendapanny, Vellamaratvoor, Poralyoor, and Sottavoor.

3. The villages in question consist of only eight or ten houses constructed of hurdles and mud and thatched.

The Irulers themselves are a migratory race, seldom remaining longer than a year or two in any one spot. They migrate from village to village according as means of obtaining a livelihood present themselves from time to time.

They obtain their livelihood by watching the crops of the ryots and tending their cattle, for which they are remunerated by gifts of grain and cloths; also by working on the adjoining coffee plantations.

They cultivate small patches of jungle round their villages with raggy and other dry grains after a primitive fashion, and collect jungle-produce, such as honey, tamarind, soap-nut, horns, wax, roots for dyeing, etc.

They keep no cattle of their own except a few goats or sheep here and there.

They are employed to fell timber at times, but they do not appear to carry on any trade in fire-wood, and their own requirements in that respect are small.

4. It would be difficult to define exactly their forest rights. Such rights may roughly be divided under four heads :—

(1.) Rights of cultivation in forest tracts.
(2.) Rights of pasturage.
(3.) Rights of felling for sale or domestic use.
(4.) Rights of collecting jungle-produce.

It would appear that they have always exercised the first and last of the above rights without molestation, having been allowed to squat here and there, and scratch up a few acres of land round their villages and collect forest-produce throughout the jungles.

They do not appear to have exercised any rights of pasturage or felling.

5. It would be difficult to reserve any considerable tract of jungle without enclosing one or two of such villages, but as the inhabitants are few in number, and but little damage appears to be done by them, they might be allowed to remain where they are, and be employed in watching the jungles and felling under the Forest Department. Colonel Morgan informs me that he sees no

Although I was only allowed to inquire into the circumstances and forest rights of the Irulers, I conceive it to be my duty to point out how the ryots of the villages, north of the Bowany are likely, in my opinion, to be affected by the reservation of the tract marked C., D., and E, on Colonel Morgan's map, notwithstanding that the Collector of Coimbatore has raised no objection.

There are three villages inhabited by Okkalyars (the cultivating class) on the north side of the Bowany adjoining the tract in question, and likely to be affected by its reservation :—

Villages.	Population.	Head of Cattle.	Ayacut.	
			Nunjah.	Punjah.
			Cawnies.	Bullahs.
Nellithorai	400	1,000	438	578
Odenthorai, with its hamlets	599	455	746	486
Halhatty	100	500	Nil.	395

The inhabitants of these villages as well of a few others on the south side of the river resort to the jungles at the foot of the hills for firewood and for pasturage for their cattle.

7. It will be seen that the reservation of the whole tract marked C., D., E., on the map will leave no land available for extension of cultivation or for firewood and pasturage.

Now it is highly probable that when the line of rail is completed to Mettapolliem there will be a considerable increase in the population, and consequently an extension of cultivation and an increased demand for firewood. The Deputy-Tahsildar of Mettapolliem informed me that numerous applications for land between Mettapolliem and the foot of the hills have been made, but that his orders are not to comply with them until it has been finally decided what land will be required for State purposes.

The tract marked D. is especially suitable for cultivation, the soil is good, and it adjoins the Kullar river. I have no doubt that extension of cultivation will take place in that direction, and I think it should not therefore be handed over to the Forest Department.

The greater portion of it probably forms part of the Ayacut of the village.

I am also of opinion that that portion of the tract marked E., lying between the roads to Kotergherry and Kullar from Metapolliem, should be withheld.

8. It is difficult to form an estimate of the area which should be left for firewood and pasturage for the villagers. The jungles in the immediate vicinity of the villages have been thinned to such an extent that nothing but brushwood remains. I was informed that the consumption at Nellithorai is considerable, as the inhabitants use it largely for preparing the Areca-nut.

9. I think, however, a sufficient tract of country is available for a fuel-reserve, within a reasonable distance of Metapolliem, without interfering with the requirements of the villagers.

There is a considerable area of unoccupied land south of the Bowany, marked H. on the map. I was informed that there are no villages within that tract, except perhaps a few Iruler huts on the outskirts of it, and as I remarked above it would be difficult to find any considerable tract of jungle entirely unoccupied by Irulers.

The land to which I refer is equally near to Metapolliem with that marked C., and the only objection of which I am aware is, that there is no road on that side of the river; but as Colonel Morgan proposes in his letter to raft the firewood by river a bandy-road would not be required.

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10. In addition to this jungle all that portion of the tract marked C. from a point about two miles west of Nellithorai, and all that portion of the tract marked E. east of the Kotergherry road, and outside a limit of a mile or a mile and-a-half from the banks of the Bowany could be handed over to the Forest Department.

I have marked with a red pencil the tracts which, I think, could be made over for fuel reserves, and designated them H., K., M.

11. I believe considerable herds of cattle are brought from the Coimbatore and Pulney Talooks during the hot weather to the Chengal valley for pasturage, but that they are driven to the head of the valley near Gopinary, 20 miles from Metapolliem, so that the reservation of the localities mentioned would not affect their grazing grounds.

12. In conclusion I must state that I have shown this report to Colonel Morgan who does not agree with me on the following points :—

1*st.*—In regard to the advisability of retaining the tract D. D. for extension of cultivation, on the ground that it contains blackwood and a large quantity of bamboos, and is especially suitable for a plantation, the soil being rich, and the land being easily irrigable from the Kullar river.

2*nd.*—In regard to the withholding from the Forest Department that portion of E. E., which is situated between the Kotergherry and Kullar roads on the same grounds as above.

Colonel Morgan does not object to give up that portion of C. which I have excluded, nor to the allotment of H. for plantation purposes.

13. It is for the Government to decide with reference to G. O., 19th August 1870, No. 1,298, (Forest No. 14) and G. O., 4th February 1871, No. 2,354, (Forest No. 2) whether the general interests of the public demand that the land should be given over to the Forest Department for fuel reserves, or withheld for the requirements of the villagers.

No. 332. ORDER THEREON, 25th September 1871, No. 1,671.

Forests, No. 10.

ORDERED to be communicated to the Conservator of Forests.

2. The Government sanction the reservation of the tracts marked H., K., and M. by Mr. Galton in the map as "fuel reserves," under the control of the Forest Department, on the understanding that the Irulers are not to be excluded from them.

3. The Government are indebted to Mr. Galton for the thorough examination he made into the circumstances of the case.

4. The map will be lithographed in the Survey Office, the reserves being coloured red.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Conservator of Forests.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Collector of Coimbatore.
,, the Commissioner of the Nilgiris.
,, the Superintendent of Revenue Survey.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

No. 2973

1871

No. 65

Date 14th December 1871

Rec'd 15 — do —

Commissioner's Office,

Ootacamund.

To,

The Secretary
to Government
Rev. Department
Ootacamund

Enclosures. Copies

Railway

SUBJECT.

Land Revenue

Submitting
Mr. Galtons report called
for in para 5 of Government
Order 15th June 71 No 1055.

No 1871 25 September 1871