Read the following papers :—

No. 60. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 18th August 1870, No. 5,358.

Read again Board's Proceedings, dated 30th June 1870, No. 4,575.

Read also the following papers :—

Proceedings of the Madras Government, dated 22nd June 1870, No. 917, Revenue Department.

ABSTRACT.—*Forest Contracts.*—Replies of Collectors of Coimbatore and South Arcot to be submitted on the Acting Conservator's letter on this subject.

Letter from the Collector of South Arcot, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Cuddalore, 7th July 1870, No. 172.

WITH reference to the Board's Proceedings, dated 4th instant, Miscellaneous No. 30, I have the honour to forward copy of the communication * from the Assistant Collector in charge of forests, alluded to in my letter to the Board, dated 22nd February last, No. 50.

* Dated 16th February 1870, No. 173.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From H. T. KNOX, Esq., Assistant Collector in charge of Salem and South Arcot Forests, to the Collector of South Arcot, dated Salem, 16th February 1870, No. 173.

IN reply to your letter, No. 115, dated 7th instant, I have the honour to inform you that the contracts for the supply of charcoal in the Trinomallay Taluq will expire on the 31st March 1870.

2. As great inconvenience has been caused by these contracts in the Salem District as well as in South Arcot, I have thought that it will be best to give up this practice and revert to the former method of the collection of the seigniorage.

3. As the contracts now stand I have no power to order free passes for charcoal for agricultural purposes to be granted.

4. As the contracts have so little time to run I think that it would be useless to attempt to make any arrangement with the contractors who would be very unwilling to come to reasonable terms ; besides, by the time an arrangement was made, its necessity would probably have ceased.

5. In December 1867 Captain Walker ordered that free passes should be granted but once in the year, unless in the case of such necessity as the destruction of a house by fire. I was not until now aware of this order which is quite opposed to the wishes of the Government in these matters, and I have directed that it be cancelled and free passes granted at any time.

From the Acting Collector of Coimbatore, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 12th July 1870, No. 167.

WITH reference to the Board's Proceedings, dated 4th ultimo, No. 3,805, on the subject of forest contracts, I have the honour to state that if the contractors can only be made to conform to the conditions imposed on them by the officers of the Forest Department, I have no objections to offer to the system. I have lately been in personal communication with Major Beddome and Colonel Morgan

regarding this and other matters connected with the working of their department, and they have promised to afford me every assistance in protecting the interests of the ryots. On the other hand, I will take care that the latter do not abuse the privileges which they enjoy to the detriment of public interests and forest revenue.

THE letters from the Collectors of South Arcot and Coimbatore will be submitted to Government, with reference to Government Order, 22nd June 1870, No. 917.

2. Both Collectors are of opinion that the contract system, adopted by the Forest Department with regard to firewood and charcoal, is not objectionable *if* the contractors can be forced to respect the ryots' privileges. This adds very little to the information which was already before the Board.

3. It seems to the Board that the dangers of the contract system have their primary origin not in the greed of the contractors or the ignorance of the ryots, but in the feeling of the officers of the Forest Department, that so long as their department succeeds and keeps right orders on record, any trouble which may befall the people is of little account. Thus both Major Beddome and Lieutenant Walker are convinced that the ryots of Trinomallay had no substantial grievance, though they admit that the contractors levied an illegal tax per plough; and it has since come out that the inconvenience caused by the charcoal contract there was so great as to prevent its being renewed when it ceased on the 31st March, and that free passes were only granted once in the year, except for very exceptional reasons.

4. In his letter recorded with Government Order, 22nd June 1870, No. 917, Major Beddome asserts that privileges hitherto in existence must disappear before rail-roads.

5. In a letter recorded in the same Proceedings, and the general tone of which is to be regretted, Lieutenant Walker states that the Trinomallay contractor was bound in no way to interfere with the rights of ryots and villagers to cut head-loads of firewood free and without permission, and bandy-loads of firewood, agricultural implements, etc., etc., on free passes issued by the division and taluq officers; but it appears from Mr. Knox's letter that at this very time an order was in force which was issued by Lieutenant Walker in 1867, and which required that free passes should be granted but once a year.

6. The Board hope that the discussion which has now taken place will have a good effect, and they will not object to the cautious use of the contract system, it being, however, distinctly understood that the contractors are carefully watched, with the knowledge that abuses which have occurred before may occur again. The Collector should draw the attention of his Tahsildars to the subject.

7. There is a question raised in this correspondence which must be settled. It is as to whether any ryots have a right to charcoal free of seigniorage. The Board consider that where the privilege prevails, as it apparently does in Trinomallay, it must be recognized.

No. 61. From Major R. H. BEDDOME, Conservator of Forests, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Ootacamund, 27th October 1870, No. 2,362.

WITH reference to paragraph 5 of the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 5,358, of the 18th of August last, I have the honour to forward the enclosed* letter from Lieutenant Walker, which he has requested me to lay before Government. It will be seen that he denies having ever issued such an order as has been laid to his charge by Mr. Knox; it also appears that at the time the complaints were made by the ryots, the issue of free passes was entirely in the hands of the officers of the Land Revenue Department.

* No. 207, dated 2nd September 1870, forwarding extract from District Gazette containing Lieutenant Walker's orders.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From Captain C. WALKER, Deputy-Conservator of Forests, Madura and Tinnevelly, to the Conservator of Forests, dated Parcacoolam, 2nd September 1870, No. 207A.

WITH reference to Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 5,358, dated 18th ultimo, I have the honour, in forwarding copies of the orders regarding free-felling which were in force when I was in charge of South Arcot Forests, and which I have just received from the Assistant Conservator now in charge, to request that Mr. Assistant Collector Knox may be called on to produce the order which he refers to in his letter, No. 173, of the 16th February, to the address of the Collector of South Arcot.

2. I am convinced that no such order was ever issued, and you will please to observe and bring to the notice of Government that it is quite opposed to the spirit of all my orders on the subject now forwarded at my request by the Assistant Conservator, and that when the complaints referred to were made we (*i.e.*, the Forest Department) had nothing whatever to do with the issue of free passes which was entrusted *entirely* to the officers of the Land Revenue Department.

3. I need only add for your information that I am not aware of the existence of any exceptional privilege with regard to charcoal in the Trinomallay Taluq as the Board seem to imagine; I never heard of it although I was for five years Forest Officer in the South Arcot District.

No. 62. ORDER THEREON, 4th March 1871, No. 389.

Forests, No. 2.

THE Right Honourable the Governor in Council is satisfied of the inexpediency of giving the right of felling firewood jungles to contractors. Not only does the system lead to encroachment upon the just rights of the people, but it must inevitably lead to the eventual destruction of the jungles leased. It is very unlikely that contractors can be so controlled as to insure their working these jungles on a proper system, and the ordinary license and voucher plan—the Forest Department marking the trees to be reserved, or otherwise securing this object—appears to the Government to be far preferable.

2. The Conservator of Forests will report at once to what extent the system of leasing jungles to contractors has been followed in each range, and what provisions are made in the existing contracts for the purpose of protecting the customary rights of the people, and to insure the jungles being felled on a proper and re-productive system.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
4th March 1871.

3. Major Beddome will also submit his views on the subject of the ryots' supply of charcoal referred to in the closing paragraph of the Board's Proceedings.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

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

No. 2362.

Office of Conservator of Forests,
Camp, Ootacamund
27th October 1870.

From

Major R. H. Beddome.
Conservator of Forests.

To

R. A. Dalyell Esqre
Actg Secretary to Government
R. D.

Sir,

With reference to para 5 of the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue No. 5358 of the 18th of August last, I have the honor to forward the enclosed letter from Lieut. Walker, which he has requested me to lay before Government, it will be seen that he having denies, ever issued such an order as has been laid to his charge by Mr. Knox, it also appears that at the time the complaints were made by the ryots, the issue of free passes was entirely in the hands of the Officers of the Land Revenue department.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your Most Obedt. Servt.

R. H. Beddome Major
Conservator of Forests.

No. 207 dated 2nd September 1870. forwarding Extract from District Gazette containing Lieut. Walkers orders.

1870

№ 389

Pro: of the Madras Govt
Under date the 4th March 70
Read the following
Pro: of the Board of
Rev.

№ 18th Augt/70
№ 5358.
Letter from Conservator of Forests
№ 2706/70.

The Board

The Govt in Council
is satisfied of the expediency
of giving
the right of felling
firewood, jungles
to Contractors, solely
for the system
of Forest Conservancy
to lead to unnecessary

I. O. L.

I shall say
" is satisfied
of the expediency "

N. A. V.

Pro = 1870 =
Extract Despatch from
Govt of India
№ 3357
Re Conservancy of Forests.
Forwarding Copy of
Pro: of Govt of India
Dept of Agriculture &c
№ 389 of 1870

Ordered, 2nd
Recorded 1st October
Collector
№ 2362.

Encl. Copy Pro: 2 Oct
Subject
Submits, for Letter from
Govt of India
Govt Pro: quoted
Reference to Board's Pro:
№ 5358 dated 15th Augt 70
Laying down Rules &c

Pro Collector 17 Oct 70

upon the just rights
of the people, but
it must inevitably
lead to the eventual
destruction of the
jungles leased. It
is very unlikely
that Contracts
can be so controlled
as to insure them
working these jun-
gles on a pro-
per system, and the
ordinary license
& quicker plan
appears to the
Sport & the far
preferable.—

2 The Conserva-
tor of Forests
will

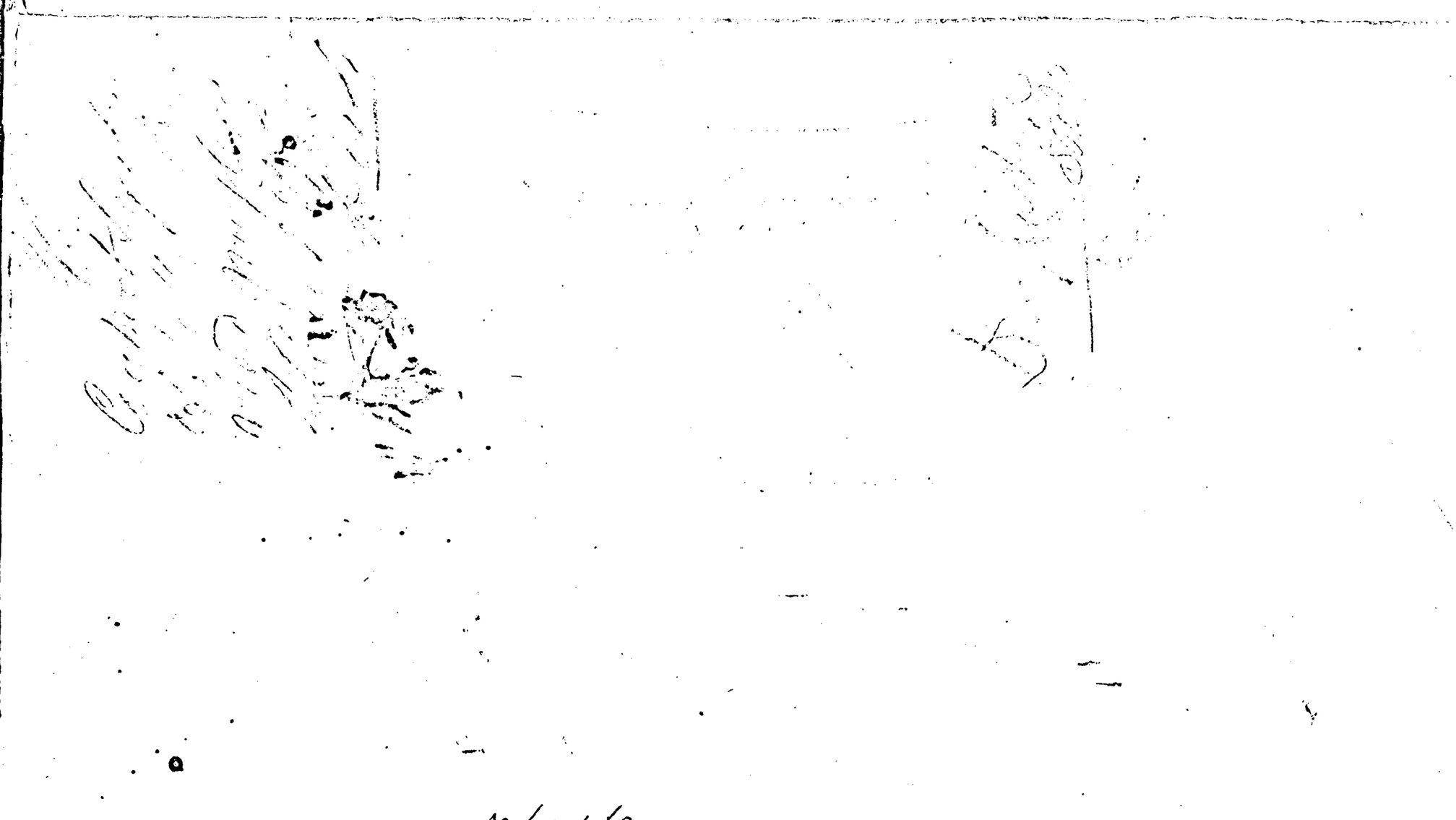
[illegible]

with be requested
to report at once
to what extent
the system of leas-
ing jungles & Con-
tractors has been
followed in each
range, & what pro-
visions are made
in the existing
Contracts for the
purpose of pro-
tecting the ex-
isting rights of
the people, and
to insure the
jungles being
felled on a pro-
per & reproductive system.

3 Major Beddome
will also submit his

his views ~~at length~~
on the subject of
the recent supply
of charcoal re-
ferred to in the
closing para: of
the Bd^rs Proc^s —

14 Toilet Brushes Doz^d 6
13— Cases of Sweets with Quakers



№ 60 + 62

Govt. of 1871 Madras.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

&c, &c, &c.

Dated March 4th.

Recd. —

G. O., 4th March 1871, No. 380.

MARCH.

Nos. 60—62.

Contract system of felling firewood jungles.—Proceedings Board of Revenue and letter from the Conservator of Forests on this subject, with orders thereon.