

1833

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
23rd October 1871.*

No. 229. Read the following letter from the Conservator of Forests, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Ootacamund, 18th October 1871, No. 609:—

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I have lately inspected the railway fuel plantation operations recently commenced under Mr. Lowrie in South Tinnevely.

2. Under the advice and assistance of the Collector, Mr. Lowrie has made a complete tour and gained a considerable knowledge of the country in the vicinity of the proposed new line of railway.

3. On the banks and padugay lands of the Tambrapoorney and its tributaries and along the channel-banks and on the banks of the river-fed tanks (in number nearly 600), there is abundance of rich land available for planting. Some lakhs of large thorn-trees (*Acacia Arabica* and *Acacia planifrons*) and innumerable seedlings are already growing over the tracts in question, and the Collector sees no objection to a sufficient area of this land being taken up for our fuel operations as long as Mr. Lowrie works under his orders (as he is now doing); and he is of opinion that simple reservation and conservancy of existing trees and seedlings and the exclusion of goats will be sufficient without any planting; Mr. Lowrie and I feel certain that fencing will generally be required, and that it will be often necessary to supplement by planting; and the Collector sees no objection to this. It is therefore proposed to fence in such tracts as require it, and, with a view to supplement the indigenous growth, to form nurseries and sow broad-cast, or in trenches and pits, etc., as Mr. Lowrie may think necessary. If this is carried out there will not, I feel sure, be any difficulty in raising sufficient timber for all the railway requirements in addition to local wants.

4. The sites selected by Lieutenant Walker for plantations, and mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 8 of my letter, recorded in G. O. No. 1,064 of 15th June last, have been condemned by Mr. Lowrie, and I feel sure it would be worse than useless to attempt to plant any of these or similar tracts. There are several small plantations formed by the Revenue authorities in different parts of the district on land of this nature, and they are complete failures. The trees, though they have been regularly watered and cared for at considerable expense, are only 2½ to 6 feet in height after a growth of some three years, and they have almost all an unhealthy and stunted appearance. The following is Mr. Lowrie's report upon the six tracts in question:—

Block No. I., 40 acres...	{	Deep good soil on the edge of a tank, but quite bare of any trees whatever.
" " II., 150 "		Hard grayelly soil without a shrub of any sort growing on it. Much exposed to the south-west monsoon. No water available. No trees could be grown on it.
" " III., 100 "		Two-thirds of these 900 acres are the same as Block No. III. The wind is so high that one can hardly stand at times. The remaining 300 acres have a slightly better soil, but not adapted to the growth of trees.
" " IV., 600 "		
" " V., 200 "		

Block No. VI., 1,000 acres. { 30 acres of this block (at present under cotton cultivation) is good and adapted for the growth of trees. The remaining 970 acres is worthless soil with a hard, red, gravelly bottom quite unfit for the growth of trees.

5. It is clear, therefore, that we must give up all idea of attempting ~~to plant~~ any of these tracts except No. 1 Block, and that will probably not be required, as equally good sites are available with standing timber on them.

6. The soil in the vicinity of Tuticorin seems quite unfit for the growth of Casuarina. There is always a regular substratum of hard sand-stone a few feet below the surface, and in almost every instance, where the tree has been tried, it begin to turn yellow after a few years' growth and gradually dies off. We do not propose therefore to attempt any plantations of this tree, but to give all our attention to conserving and supplementing the indigenous growth of the babul and umbrella thorn-trees; and, in this, failure will be almost impossible as long as we have the assistance of the Revenue authorities, and can keep goats out of the reserved tracts.

7. I annex copy of Mr. Lowrie's report upon the first seven blocks selected by him, with the sanction of the Collector, in the vicinity of Palamcottah. The total area is only 441 acres; but it will be seen that there are nearly a lakh of trees of different sizes growing in the different blocks besides many lakhs of seedlings.

Register of Railway fuel-reserves in the first Sivillipari Circle, Tinnevely District, showing approximately the area and number of trees in each reserve.

No.	Name of Village.	Description of land.	Survey number.	Description of Tree.	Number of Acres.	NUMBER OF TREES.			Remarks.
						1st Class.	2nd Class.	Seedlings.	
1	Sivillipari ...	Block of land on left bank of the Chittravathy river, 1/4 mile north of the village.	.....	Babul ...	6	150	200	1,000	A small bank might be thrown up all round this block, and a hedge of some quick-growing tree raised during the rains. The soil is good, and the vacant parts might be planted or sown with Babul to advantage.
2	Do. ...	Block of land on left bank of the Tambrapurni river, south side of village, and extending up to the junction of the two rivers.	.....	Do. ...	60	2,500	5,000	Large numbers of seedlings are springing up all over the block.	About six or seven acres of this block, containing many of the finest trees, belongs to the Village Moonsiff states, to a temple on the portion of the land between the road and the junction of the rivers (about 40 acres). There are only a few young trees growing, but as the soil is good, forest may be easily raised.
3	Kalliyoor ...	Tank-bed, 1/4 mile north-east of village.	.....	Do. ...	70	5,000	10,000	Numberless seedlings are springing up round the edges of the tank-bank and amongst the large trees.	The soil here is excellent and well adapted to the growth of Babul trees. Bare spots exist all over the block, but these may be sown very successfully after the cracks and fissures in the soil have been partially filled up by a few showers. A fence of some suitable plants should be raised all round this block. Two men have been engaged from 10th August 1871 to look after this preserve.
4	Do. ...	South side of village from ancient along the river and channel-banks to Vullanad.	.....	Do. ...	150	15,000	35,000	There are but few seedlings to be found near the large trees, the ground being densely shaded, but towards Vullanad thousands of seedlings are growing up.	This is a magnificent tract of jungle. The trees on the part nearest the village are fully grown, and would now yield a very large quantity of excellent fuel. This tract might be supplemented by sowing and planting. Two men, who look after the ancient and canal in this neighbourhood, are also in charge of one portion of the above tract.
5	Vallnad ...	Rajencolum tank-bed about 1/4 mile north of the village.	.....	Do. ...	60	.....	20,000	Numberless seedlings are springing up.	There are no very large trees in this tract. The jungle is a good deal scattered and patches without trees exist. These patches might be very easily planted and sown, as the soil is good. This tract should also be fenced.
6	Manakarry ...	A strip of land between tank-bank and channel-bank close to the village.	.....	Do. ...	25	.....	4,500	Quantity of seedlings are springing up.	This block is only partially covered by trees, but the soil is deep and good, and the vacant parts may be successfully sown during the rains. A man has been appointed for this block, and has been ordered to construct check fences at intervals of 100 yards along the whole tract to prevent cattle trespass.
7	Kongala Cooreche.	Block of land close to the village.	.....	Umbrella thorn.	70	2,000	.....	Very few seedlings.	This is a very fine block of jungle, consisting nearly wholly of large wide spreading trees, very many of which would now yield from 3 to 4 bandy-loads of wood. At present at least 2,000 tons of first-class firewood could be cut from this reserve. Sixty acres are already fenced in and a man in charge. The other ten acres might be fenced also, and the block supplemented by planting.

Total number of acres ... 441
Do. of first-class trees... 24,650
Do. of second-class trees... 74,700
First-class trees, from 20 to 35 feet in height.
Second-class trees, from 10 to 20 feet in height.

(Signed) J. LOWRIE,
Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, Tinnevely.

PALAMCOTTAH,
18th August 1871.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
23rd October 1871.*

No. 230. ORDER THEREON, 23rd October 1871, No. 1,833.

Forests, No. 19.

THE Government are glad to receive
so promising a report of the prospects of
fuel-supply in the Tinnevelly District,
and are confident that the Forest Department will receive every assistance from the
Collector and his subordinates.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
„ the Collector of Tinnevelly.
„ the Conservator of Forests.
„ the Public Works Department.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

*Office of Conservator of Forests
Cotacamund 18th October 1871.*

N^o 609

From

*Major R. H. Beddome
Conservator of Forests.*

To,

*W. Hudleston Esq^r
Secretary to Government.*

Sir,

R. D.

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you that I have lately inspected
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I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your Most Obedt. Servt.

W. H. D. M. A. J. S.
Conservator of Forests

Dec 1871-72. Repts
of
House & Department
of
Agriculture
from
the
Conservatory
of
Arts
&
Manufactures

To
the
Secretary
of
the
Department
of
Agriculture
Washington
D.C.

Dated 15th
December 1871
Received
of 1500-2000
London No 1.5

Subj
Reports upon the
Railway Fuel Plantations
from specimens in
the
Museum
of
Natural
History
London

Mr. Gladstone
Secretary of the Treasury
London
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the above subject. I have the honor to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours truly,
Wm. E. Gladstone

14th Dec 1871
Wm. E. Gladstone
Secretary of the Treasury
London

23rd Dec 71

Gobt. of {1871} Madras.

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated October 23rd.

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 23rd October 1871, No. 1,833.

OCTOBER.

Nos. 229-230.

Railway fuel plantations in Tinnevely.—
Conservator of Forests' report on —, with
remarks.