

No. 88. Read the following letter from the Conservator of Forests, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Ootacamund, 29th July 1871, No. 430:—

I HAVE the honour to bring to the notice of Government that the late orders of the Board, which directed that free passes for timber and firewood should be issued by village officers without any limit and without any control, are likely to cause the entire destruction of all woodland in our railway districts, and are affecting our revenue considerably. All our officers report that the system is fearfully abused and is leading to the utter destruction of the jungles. In Madura it has already been reported that the free felling has increased four-fold, but this only alludes to what is entered and accounted for—there is no check and no system whatever—and if a man wants a plough he can, I believe, get a license with which he can fell for a month, and he can sell all he cuts.

2. The Native revenue officials are of course delighted with the new state of things; they can get all their timber for nothing; they can even procure as much as they like for sale (our officers are powerless); and they can do a good stroke of

business in the way of bribery. Collectors will offer no objections;* their Tahsildars will tell them that matters are much improved, and that the Forest Department cannot now annoy the people, and they will not be troubled with complaints, etc., against the department.

* *Vide* letter of the Collector of Coimbatore, recorded in G. O., No. 1,267 of 20th July 1871.

3. This new state of things has come upon us at a time when, owing to railways and other causes, special legislation and very strict conservancy has become imperatively necessary to preserve our woodlands from disappearing altogether.

4. To prove to Government that my view of the present state of affairs is not only a departmental one, I forward herewith a demi-official from an Assistant Collector in the Salem Range, which is the result of observations during a tour he lately made in his district, the new plan is opening an immense field for bribery and illicit felling, and is virtually placing the forests in the hands of the Native revenue officials (the state of affairs prior to the introduction of forest conservancy).

No. 89. ORDER THEREON, 9th January 1872, No. 46.

Forests, No. 5.

REFERRED to the Board of Revenue.

2. Major Beddome quotes no particular order of the Board in support of his complaint, and the Government are unable to trace any relating to free passes save those issued in 1869 and 1870, with Major Beddome's concurrence.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government...

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

Exd. E. C. Shunker.

W. L. 6.

Referred to the 18.

Ref. Major McDermott quotes
no particular order of the 18.
in support of his complaint
and the Govt. are unable to
trace any relating to the
said horse issued in 1869
and 1870. to the Major.
McDermott's concurrence.

W. L.
9th Jan 1872.

14 - To Bd of Rev. sep 10 Jan 1872
13 - Conservator of Forests.

4th 20 July 1871 No 262-63
1871-72 March 1870 No 1735.

Rev 1871-72. Asst
Forest Department.
From No 2452
The Conservator of
Forests.

To The Secretary to Govt.
R. L.

Dated 29th Jan 1872
Received 2nd July 1871
No 430.

Enclosure No 1. S. L. H.
Subject

Report upon the
free passes issued by
Village officers for timber
& firewood. -

No 88-89

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