Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 11th December 1873.

No. 134. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 21st October 1873, No. 2,151, Forest No. 65 :—

Read again Board's Proceedings, dated 21st March 1872, No. 479.

Read also the following replies of Collectors to Board's Proceedings, dated 21st March 1872, No. 479 :—

From	Ag. Collector of	Ganjam,	dated 5th June 1872, No.	888.
,,	,,	of Vizagapatam,	,, 23rd April ,, ,,	349.
,,	,,	of Godavery,	,, 13th June ,, ,,	168.
,,	,,	of Kistna,	,, 31st May ,, ,,	1,582.
,,	Collector	of Nellore,	,, 3rd April ,, ,,	643.
,,	,,	of Cuddapah,	,, 7th Oct. ,, ,,	166.
,,	Ag. Collr.	of Bellary,	,, 3rd May ,, ,,	130.
,,	Collector	of Kurnool,	,, 4th ,, ,, ,,	145.
,,	Ag. Collr.	of Chingleput,	,, 22nd July ,, ,,	306.
,,	Collector	of North Arcot,	,, 13th March 1873, ,,	165.
,,	recorded in	Board's Proes.,	,, 5th July 1873, No.	33-1,205.
,,	Ag. Collr.	of South Arcot,	,, 3rd June 1872, No.	156.
,,	,,	of ,,	,, 15th ,, ,, ,,	173.
,,	,,	of ,,	,, 4th April ,, ,,	129.
,,	Offg. Collr.	of Tanjore,	,, 16th Oct. ,, ,,	223.
,,	Ag. ,,	of Trichinopoly,	,, 1st Nov. ,, ,,	318.
,,	Collector	of Madura,	,, 8th April ,, ,,	121.
,,	,,	of Tinnevelly,	,, 23rd July ,, ,,	118.
,,	,,	of Coimbatore,	,, 17th ,, ,, ,,	102.
,,	Collector	of Salem,	,, 13th Aug. ,, ,,	1,010.
,,	,,	of South Canara,	,, 19th April ,, ,,	103.
,,	,,	of Malabar,		

In July 1871 Major Beddome brought to the notice of Government that the recent orders of the Board, permitting Village Munsifs to issue free passes without limit and without control for timber and firewood, were likely to cause the entire destruction of woodland in railway districts, and were affecting the revenue considerably; and he further dilated, in strong terms, on the evils of the system.

2. On this letter being referred to the Board, they asked Major Beddome to cite the orders to which he alluded, and he, in reply, named Board's Proceedings, dated 13th February 1869, No. 957, 6th October 1869, No. 7,406, and 28th September 1869, No. 7,103. The two first mentioned were approved by G. O., dated 9th January 1872, No. 46, R. D. Government, and directed a check on the issue of passes by examination of the quantity taken by each ryot; and the third sanctioned certain rules, in the main proposed by Major Beddome himself, providing restrictions under which the power of granting free passes might be confided to Village Munsifs. Thus, it appears that Major Beddome's description of the orders of the Board as providing no check or control was incorrect.

3. The Board, however, on receipt of his letter, called on all Collectors to report as to the working of the system, and as to the means taken to prevent abuse. The replies above recorded show that the account given of abuses was considerably exaggerated.

4. The system of free passes for wood for ryots' use seems not to exist at all in Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Kistna, Godavery, Bellary, Chingleput, Tanjore, Tinnevelly, Malabar, or Canara. It is reported that in Nellore, Cuddapah, Kurnool, and Coimbatore, there is no abuse. The Collector of Kurnool, which is one of the districts to which Major Beddome's complaint specially applies, states that the system has been in operation since 1869, and has worked satisfactorily; and that it is the interest of the villagers, in which the jungle is, to prevent illicit cutting. Remarks to the latter effect are made by the Collectors of Trichinopoly and Cuddapah. The Collectors of Madura and Salem submit copies of the rules in force in their districts. The former remarks that Major Beddome's description is greatly exaggerated, but admits that the rules have been loosely worked in one taluq. The latter thinks that the rules may be violated sometimes, but not to anything like the extent that Major Beddome supposes.

5. The only districts from which reports in any degree endorsing Major Beddome's statements have been received are North and South Arcot and the Nilgiris. The Collector of North Arcot seemed to have written without sufficient deliberation, and the Board are in correspondence with him as to the abuses said to prevail in the supply of fuel to Vellore. On the Nilgiris, it is said, more wood was frequently cut than was entered in the free pass, or required for the purpose for which the pass was granted. Steps were being taken to check this evil.

6. The Collector of South Arcot states that free passes are abused, and that the ryots have to bribe every one [illegible] to get their wood cut. The Assistant Collector, in a similar strain in regard to Tirukoilur, says that the quantity so cut has increased in these years, and that there is little or no supervision. He says, however, that if the rules were properly worked, they [illegible] system appears to be that a certificate is given to the ryot by the Village Munsif, and taken to the Tahsildar for counter-signature, whereupon it becomes a free pass. The Tahsildar signs often without any inquiry; and sometimes the passes are for twenty and twenty-five bandy-loads. There seems to be no check as to the issue of passes. The Collector promises that this state of things shall have his early attention. The Sub-Collector, Mr. Lister, however, who has had considerable experience in the district, and used, as Head Assistant, himself to supervise the system, states that there was not and is not under him any abuse of the privileges of the ryots.

7. The Board, on a perusal of the reports as a whole, are satisfied that there is quite sufficient restriction placed on the free cutting of wood by villagers, and that the abuses are not such as to cause any anxiety. Those which prevail in South Arcot are simply the result of maladministration, and will disappear if simple precautions of check are enforced. The Board do not think any change advisable at present. The system is still in its infancy, and after the forests have been some time longer under the charge of the Collectors, these officers will be in a position to speak with more authority and decision on the subject. It will suffice at present to furnish all Collectors with a copy of one of the best Codes of Rules, that used in Madura, for adoption as far as it may be suited to their districts, and to suggest to them to watch carefully the working of the rules, and to see that the prescribed checks are enforced. Copies of the Madura Rules will accordingly be printed and circulated to all Collectors.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
11th December 1873.

No. 135. ORDER THEREON, 11th December 1873, No. 1,394.

Separate Revenue, No. 6.
Forests.

THE instructions issued by the Board appear sufficient for the present control of these Free Passes.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

MADURA FORESTS.

RULES UNDER WHICH FREE FELLING IS ALLOWED.

A PERMIT must invariably be obtained before entering the forest or jungle for the purpose of felling or removing timber, etc., and parties found felling or removing timber, etc., without such permit will be dealt with as ordinary offenders, although they may otherwise be entitled to fell free. The following are authorized to issue free passes under the Forest Conservancy Rules:—

The Collector of the district.
The Forest Officer in charge.
All Revenue-officers in charge of a division or part of a division.
All Tahsildars and Deputy-Tahsildars.
Forest Overseers.
Natamgars of villages as per list published in District Gazette *(for quantity not exceeding 3 head-loads)*.

A supply of free licenses in duplicate, signed and sealed by the forest officer in charge, will be supplied to each of the above; the original to be issued to applicants, and the duplicate at once sent to the Forest Duffadar or Maistry in charge of the taluq in which the felling is to take place, to enable him to recover the original on the expiry of the "vayida," and check the quantity felled with that entered in the pass. It is advisable that all officers issuing free licenses should keep an abstract register of the same, or, what will answer the same purpose, note on back of application (which should invariably be required in writing), and state the amount of kist, etc., paid by the applicant, the quantity and description of timber for which free pass was issued, date, etc., etc., in order to prevent the same party obtaining a further pass before adequate time has elapsed.

2. Felling on free passes must be restricted to unreserved forests or jungles (*i.e.*, those which have not been notified in the Gazette as reserved), the name of the forests or adjoining village, vayida, and by whom to be checked, being clearly entered by the issuing officer. If there is no forest peon or Tannah within a convenient distance, the village Natamgar will check and recover the pass.

3. Government ryots are entitled to cut the following free under the Forest Conservancy Rules:—

Timber, unreserved classes, and bamboos for erection of their houses when destroyed by fire or other exceptional causes.
Do. do. for their sheds and kottais.
Do. do. for all agricultural purposes.
Head-loads of firewood (for all villagers *bona fide for own use*) no pass required.
Bandy-loads of firewood, in exceptional cases, on obtaining free permit.

4. In cases where there is any doubt as to quantity, etc., to which an applicant is entitled, or when it is considered advisable to allow timber of the reserved classes, reference should be made to the forest officer in charge, who will settle the matter in consultation with the District Collector, or, if necessary, refer to the Conservator of Forests for special orders. In such cases, the referring officer should invariably state his opinion and reasons for the special grant.

5. In granting timber for agricultural implements, etc., the amount of kist paid and nature of the soil should, of course, be borne in mind. The average requirements are found to be as follows:—

3 Plough shares, 1 Yoke, 2 Poles, 2 Plough handles, 1 Paramboor, 1 Vullaky, 1 Harrow, 3 Hand sticks for driving bullocks,	Per annum for each pair of bullocks; average cultivation 2 and-a-half cawnies nunjah, or 4 goolies punjah.

For re-duction of ordinary house, the following may be considered ample, and the applicant is required to pay for any excess by taking out a license or purchasing from the Government Timber Depots:—

30 Posts of sizes.	
30 Brace sumoors.	
5 Cross beams.	A third-house of 4 Anganams.
240 Rafters (bend loads).	
32 Bundles of reapers	
5 Bundles (head-loads) of bamboos for back-yard.	A thatched house of the above dimensions.
10 Posts.	
12 Small beams.	
104 Rafters (hand-loads)	
16 Bundles of reapers.	
5 Bundles (head-loads) of bamboos for back-yard.	

6. Special instructions have been issued to the Forest Department subordinates that they are in no way to interfere with felling or tree licenses, merely accepting them on the data cited and noting quantity of timber allowed and felled, bringing to the notice of the Tahsildar any excess which they may consider occurs to the validity allowed, or irregularity in the felling and disposition actually brought, any damage done to the forests, breach of forest rules, etc., and it will be for the Overseer to realize into and refund, and other acts of the native in connection with the Taluq Tahsildar, subject to the right of the Deputy-Conservator for settlement with the Collector. All officers granting trees, permits are, therefore, required to be careful, and avoid what is found on inquiry to be really necessary, and to warn the people that abuses of the privilege will render them liable to forfeiture for a term of litigation, and on a repetition to criminal prosecution under the Malabar Penal Code.

C. T. WALKER,
Dy. Conservator of Forests.

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Proceedings, 21st October 1873, No

Received 1st Nov

OCTOBER.

Forest No. 65.

Wood.—Free Passes for cutting
of Collectors on the working of the syste
reviewed and submitted to Government
Board's opinion on the subject.—Con
rules in use in Madura for regulating th
of these passes, furnished to the Colle
other districts for adoption as far as
be suited to their districts.