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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18th January 1873.

No. 131. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 17th December 1872, No. 2,398:—

Read the following letter from R. K. PUCKLE, Esq., Collector of Tinnevelly, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 4th November 1872, No. 518:—

I HAVE been in communication with the Chief Engineer of the Great Southern India Railway relative to Fuel Reserves, and have ascertained that the Railway Company are not prepared to pay more than 5½ Rupees, a ton, for dry wood of a certain size delivered at any two stations between Madura and Tuticorin.

2. Now the market price of firewood of any size is from 8 to 12 Rupees a ton in all the large towns of this district, and I could undoubtedly realize more than the railway offer on the spot where the wood is felled without incurring the cost of cartage. Our Fuel Reserves, moreover, would be spread over a very large area, and cartage to two given stations would cost 1 Rupee, per ton, for 5 miles, within which distance but a portion of the Fuel Reserves might lie.

3. Under these circumstances, I think it impossible to supply the railway with fuel, and request the orders of the Board as to whether such Reserves as have been already formed shall be kept up.

4. The arrangements made are cheap and efficient as far as the growth of fuel is concerned, and consist of conserving the spontaneous growth of the Babul [illegible] long river channels etc. The establishment consists of an Overseer supplied by the Forest Department on a salary of Rupees 60, and a few Watchmen, etc., as per margin, drawing altogether about as much more per mensem.

	Rs.
1 Writer	15
2 Moniagars	20
2 Peons	12
12 Watchers	30

5. Even if we cannot sell wood to the railway, it would be a pity, I think, to give up a system of conservancy that will shortly add much to the resources of this part of the country, and as we have ample funds for Jungle Conservancy, I propose taking over the establishment employed on the Fuel Reserves and paying them from the Jungle Conservancy Fund. The only difficulty will be regarding the service and pension of the Overseer, Mr. Theobald, who is now a Government servant, and who is naturally unwilling to give up Government employ. He might perhaps be retained on his present footing, though paid from Local Funds.

IT appears from this letter that the Chief Engineer of the Great Southern India Railway has informed the Collector of Tinnevelly that the Company will not be able to pay more than Rupees 5½ a ton for firewood delivered at two specified Railway Stations, that this price is below the market value of the wood and the cost of production, and that the Collector believing that the Railway Company will not be customers proposes to keep up the Reserves for the people and maintain them from the Jungle Conservancy Fund.

2. As regards the price which the Railway Company will have to pay there can be no doubt that it must be commensurate with the cost of reproduction. In

a letter from the Under Secretary of State for India, to the Secretary Madras Railway Company, recorded with Government Order, 23rd January 1871, No. 141, the following passage occurs:—"It has always been maintained by His Grace's predecessors and himself that the Railway Companies must enter the market for the Government wood whether timber or fuel on the same terms as any other customer, and that the Government are to obtain a fair profit for this product in the same manner as any other landholder would."

3. But the Board altogether question the correctness of the assumption that the Company will not pay more than Rupees 5½ a ton. The cost of coal being from Rupees 30 to Rupees 40 a ton, and 3 or 4 tons of wood being equal to 1 ton of coal, it follows that the Company will find it advantageous to get wood at any price less than Rupees 10 a ton. It may be that they will be able at first to get wood for small prices from Zemindars but they will be dependent on the Government Reserves before long.

4. In any case the proposal to withdraw the Fuel Reserves from the control of Forest Officers is inadmissible. These Reserves form one of the most important parts of Forest Conservancy. They were established by Government after the most careful consideration and the Forest Department was materially strengthened with special reference to them.

5. These Proceedings will be submitted to Government with the observation that it is very desirable that the principles on which the price of wood in the Fuel Reserves is to be fixed and its probable amount should be ascertained.

No. 132. ORDER THEREON, 18th January 1873, No. 65.

Forests, No. 12.

THE Fuel Reserves were formed primarily and chiefly to meet the requirements of the railways and to arrest the rapidly-impending denudation of the country; but it was never intended that the railways should have a monopoly of the wood on their own terms. The reserves should certainly be maintained, and no change is necessary in their management. The Collector should solve the difficulty about prices by felling the wood departmentally and selling it in convenient lots, notifying the sales in the District Gazette and sending special and timely notice to the Railway Officers who can buy the wood or not as they think fit. When the reserves are more fully advanced periodical sales can be held.

2. With his Jungle Funds the Collector can follow the same course, forming reserves in each village or group of villages, taking care always to leave sufficient waste for pasturage, extension of cultivation, etc.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.
,, the Public Works Department.
,, the Inspector of Forests.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

18th Jany 1873.
(3)
Forests 65.
Revenue No. 4063
G.O.

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2. With his Jungle Roads
the Collr can clear the
Jungle Forming
Factories in each Village
or group of Villages - taking
care not always to leave Sufficient wool for the Factory, by
extension of cultivation - his
wards do

I. D. S. [illegible]

Govt. of {1873} Madras.

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REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated January 18th.

Recd. Encl.

G. O., 18th January 1873, No. 65.

JANUARY.
Nos. 131-132.

Fuel Reserves in Tinnevelly District.—Proceedings Board of Revenue submitting the Collector's letter relating to the sale of fuel, with orders thereon.

14 To the Board of Revenue dated 20 Jany
21 " the Public Works Dept 5
3 " the Inspecting Vessels 5

C. 8th Jany/73 R 13th Jany/73