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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
13th August 1873.*

Read the following papers:—

No. 86. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 6th June 1873, No. 946,
(Forest No. 28.)

Read the following letter from A. WEDDERBURN, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, to J. GROSE, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 21st April 1873, No. 56:—

I HAVE the honour to forward an explanation* submitted by Mr. Douglas, Deputy-Conservator, Anamallay Forests, in reply to some strictures passed on

* No. 34 of 14th April 1873.

him by Major Beddome in papers already submitted direct to Government.

2. It does not appear from the Manual quoted that the Deputy-Conservator himself should personally measure the planks sent to the Bombay Government. Indeed, so far as can be gathered from the Manual, the forest rough measurement is not likely to exactly correspond with the subsequent exact measurement which was formerly taken by the Government Agent at Ponany (an office long since abolished), but now is taken at the Dockyard in Bombay; and apparently Mr. Douglas's frank admission of the subsequently known character of the Overseer has been held to constitute a previous knowledge of his untrustworthiness.

3. No real fraud appears to have been committed; only a faulty measurement to the advantage, and not loss, of the department.

4. It is not likely that the Bombay Government will take any more Anamallay timber; but, in all future sales, delivery should be made to an accredited Agent to prevent a recurrence of reclamation.

5. I think Mr. Douglas's explanation is valid.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From C. G. DOUGLAS, Esq., Deputy-Conservator of Forests, Anamallay, etc., Ranges, to A. WEDDERBURN, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, dated 14th April 1873, No. 34.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of a copy of a letter to your address, dated the 7th March, No. 1,726, from the Inspector of Forests, with your endorsement No. 36.

2. The letter in question refers to certain important discrepancies which have occurred in the measurement of the timber consigned to the Bombay Marine Department in 1871-72.

3. The Inspector considers me to blame, and charges me with a deliberate infringement of rules clearly laid down in a departmental publication for the guidance of forest officers. I beg, therefore, to submit a few observations explanatory of the circumstances of the case, in anticipation of the censure of Government which Major Beddome's view is calculated to evoke.

4. It is said that the forest officer has "always been expected to see personally to the measurement of all planks sent to the Bombay Government," and that "there are very clear rules laid down on this subject in the Forest Manual."

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5. I have diligently re-perused the Manual, but have failed to discover a single passage in which instructions for dockyard measurements are given, or, as it appears to me, anything expressed or implied from which an officer would infer that he was held bound to undertake such measurements personally. Suppose, for instance, a young officer, suddenly placed in charge of this range, just as a consignment of Bombay timber was about to be measured, what is there, I would ask, in the whole compilation which would enable him to conduct the operations in person, or to correct the errors of a subordinate?

6. I herewith forward the only two editions of the Manual I have ever seen. The earlier dated 1858,* and the later one, 1863.† If other editions are in circulation, I have not been supplied with them. Indeed, on the last occasion, when I applied, in a letter dated 28th June 1871, No. 108, for new copies for myself and establishment, I was told that none were available in a letter from the Central Office, dated 25th July 1871, No. 300.

* Marked A) to be returned.
† Marked B)

7. It will be observed that the section devoted to my range was compiled, in 1857, by Colonel, then Captain, Douglas Hamilton; i.e., fifteen years ago, when the duties appertaining to my range were fewer, simpler, and lighter than they now are. The department was then in its infancy, and the brief outline of principal operations then drawn up is quite inadequate to present requirements, barely serves, indeed, as a guide for even Overseers employed solely in the reserved forests, and certainly ought not to be considered a trustworthy standard by which to judge of a Deputy-Conservator's duties and responsibilities.

8. I am not singular in this opinion; for Colonel Morgan, while Officiating Conservator, brought to the notice of Government the shortcomings of the Manual, and suggested the publication of a revised one,—a proposal of which Government signified their approval. I expressed my opinion of the necessity as regarded my own range officially many months ago, when reporting on a variety of matters for the information of Government.

9. I have marked all passages in the Manuals which strike me as having the remotest bearing on Bombay transactions, *vide* pages 1, 3, 5, 19, and 21 of that marked A, and page 3 of that marked B.

10. I would, however, draw special attention to an official memorandum from the Officiating Conservator, bearing date 7th July 1866, No. 1,884, addressed to the Anamallay officer, and evidently copied by him into the Manual for easy reference. This memorandum is apparently intended as a calendar of operations, and, written as it was eleven years later than Captain Hamilton's rules, might reasonably be expected to enlarge on important subjects formerly omitted. Under the circumstances, it is not too much to say, I think, that rules for Bombay measurements are conspicuous by their absence.

11. When the Manual was published, the Chenatnair forests were rented by a contractor of Palghaut and the Sholakarai and Walliar jungles were worked by the Railway Company. The present state of these forests sufficiently indicates the amount of conservancy afforded them, or, in other words, shows that the department had little, or nothing to do with them. Bolumpatty was nominally under conservancy, but the fact of there then being only one Duffadar and one Peon in charge bears some significance, I think; for it has lately been discovered that an Overseer, on Rupees 50, and 5 Peons are insufficient, and a separate range officer is to be provided. It was not until 1868 that the Walliar reserve was acquired nor until a period subsequent to that that other reserves and plantations were formed. From correspondence recently before Government on the subject of the conservancy of the Palghaut and Bolumpatty Ranges, wherein their importance is set forth, it is evident that they have demanded most of the time I have had to spare from the Anamallay Range; in fact, of late years the annual visit,—of about a month's duration,—to the coast at the close of the working season, though a pleasant enough change to the officer himself, has ceased to be compatible with the amount of attention required by other ranges; all that is now feasible being a stay of a few days to set things on foot. In fact, to such an extent have field and office duties multiplied that I have never yet been able to avail myself of the recess of two

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months (April and May) which, for twenty years past, has been the privilege of the Anamallay officer, irrespective of leave proper, though I have been over three years in the appointment, and passed four hot, i.e., unhealthy, seasons in charge.

12. Formerly, when the Bombay Marine had an Agent on the coast, there was, of course, an object in being present and settling matters on the spot; but since that office was abolished,—a good many years ago now,—the Marine have had no opportunity of checking our lists until the arrival of the timber at the Dockyards. That no hitch has hitherto occurred speaks well for the department, and I most deeply regret that the first event of the kind should have happened under my auspices. I have, however, in no way departed from the course observed by at least my immediate predecessor, who held the appointment for about three years, and who invariably employed the same Overseer that I have.

13. As Major Beddome, however, considers me "greatly to blame, because I am obliged to confess that the planks were probably carelessly measured by an untrustworthy Overseer." I would wish it to be known that I employed an Overseer who then held an excellent character, and who had, for several years in succession, been engaged on this very duty. So far from having entrusted a subordinate with an important duty, *knowing him to be untrustworthy*, I detailed Mr. Lloyd for the work, firmly believing him to be the best hand for the purpose on my establishment. Major Beddome cannot surely intend to convey, by the words I have above quoted, blame for confessing the truth, or to hold me responsible for evil habits contracted by a subordinate who is, as it happens, placed beyond my immediate supervision and in a semi-independent charge. Mr. Lloyd has since been suspended, viz., in December 1872; but it was not until some months subsequent to the time when he took these measurements that the fact of his intemperance became known to me, and for some time previous many symptoms, which I now believe to be mainly attributable to drink, I mistook for the results of the repeated and severe attacks of Walliar fever from which he has suffered.

14. When I learnt, therefore, of the retrenchments made by the Marine Authorities at Bombay, I could not but judge of them by the light of facts concerning Mr. Lloyd, which had transpired since our measurements were taken.

15. Finally, I would observe that, though the discredit which so grave an error may reflect on the department is greatly to be regretted, it is essentially different from the nature of that incurred by defalcations such as have ere now happened in this and other ranges. The error is one of account only. Government have not been actual losers; no fraud has been perpetrated. The Bombay Government have been charged for 3,600 cubic feet of timber more than they ought to have been charged, and the Madras Government will receive so much less than they were led to expect. The mode of adjusting sales of this kind presents no opening for dishonesty. The Overseer could have had no earthly interest in charging for more or less timber than was delivered, unless he were in collusion with the tindals of the vessels in which the timber was shipped, and privy to an exchange of planks; but in this case proper receipts were granted in full for the quantity of timber loaded.

16. I shall be glad to afford any other information that you may think requisite.

SUBMITTED to Government, with reference to G. O. dated 16th April 1873, No. 408.

2. The Board agree with the Collector in considering Mr. Douglas's explanation valid.

REFERRED to the Inspector of Forests for his observations.

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

10th July 1873.

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No. 87. From Major R. H. BEDDOME, Inspector of Forests, to the Hon. R. A. DALYELL, Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Palamcottah, 15th July 1873, No. 1,836.

WITH reference to the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 946, of the 6th of June last, and to your docket thereon, dated 10th July, I have the honour to make the following observations:—

2. At the time of writing my letter, No. 1,727, of the 7th March last, I was under the impression that Mr. Douglas had sent Mr. Lloyd to measure and hand over the timber at the time of shipment (the usual manner), or in or about March 1872. Mr. Douglas's reports, since August 1871, being full of complaints of Mr. Lloyd's carelessness, I thought him very much to blame for trusting such an important work to this Overseer, particularly when he had a trustworthy European Overseer attached to the Anamallays. Mr. Douglas now informs me that Mr. Lloyd measured the planks prior to August 1871, so I am glad to say that he is exonerated from having originally entrusted the measurements of the timber to a man he knew to be careless or untrustworthy; but the fact still remains that the timber,—a consignment valued at some 40,000 Rupees,—was not handed over till March 1872, and then Mr. Lloyd's measurements were allowed to pass without any check, although long previously Mr. Douglas was reporting* this Overseer as "very inaccurate in his office-work, and as failing to carry out the plainest instructions."

3. Mr. Douglas dilates much upon the fact of the Manual not pointing out clearly how Dockyard measurements are to be taken. It, however, explains minutely how the measurements in the forest are taken (which is the Dockyard plan), and subsequently that the coast measurements are taken with great care and strictness; this is surely sufficient. Mr. Douglas was for two or three months in training under Captain Gosling at the Anamallays, and was supposed to have learnt all his duties under him; and I have myself personally explained to him how the officer used to be employed for a lengthened period at the coast, checking measurements and handing over the timber. He also admits that he knows of this "annual visit of about a month's duration," but that it had ceased to be compatible with the increase of duties. There has certainly been a great increase of duties in this as in every other range, but not such as to have prevented the officer from running† down to the coast for two or three days to check the measurements and hand over personally; and I should not have blamed Mr. Douglas if he had taken this precaution, nor could this inaccuracy of measurements have occurred if he had even taken the precaution of sending down the Head Overseer of the Anamallays (at that time a trustworthy European) to make this check.

4. The latter part of paragraph 12 of Mr. Douglas's letter to the Collector rather reflects upon the late Captain Gosling; that officer, however, always gave me to understand that he was most particular in handing over personally and in checking measurements; and I know that he was constantly going down to the coast.

* Vide Mr. Douglas's Report for August 1871, herewith forwarded.

† In former years there was no railway, and the officer had to march down.

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In former years the Head Overseer of the Anamallays used always to measure the timber, under the superintendence of the officer, with the Dockyard Authorities at the time of handing over; and as he has the superintendence of its felling and preparation, he is the proper man for this duty. Captain Gosling usually employed Mr. Lloyd, the Overseer of another range; but he probably had his reasons for so doing, and I know that he had, during most of his time, very indifferent men at the Anamallays (his own fault, however), and that Mr. Lloyd was actually assisting in the work up there at one time.

No. 88. ORDER THEREON, 13th August 1873, No. 841.

Forests, No. 1.

UNDER the circumstances stated in the foregoing letter from the Inspector of Forests, the Governor in Council feels himself precluded from withdrawing the censure on Mr. Deputy-Conservator Douglas, which is recorded in the Proceedings of Government, under date 16th April 1873, No. 408.

2. The over-measurement was too excessive to be possible with reasonable supervision.

(True Extract.)

R. A. DALYELL,
Officiating Chief Secretary.

To the Board of Revenue.
the Inspector of Forests.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

16 April 1873 No. 67. 68

Recd 10/73 Sept
No. 1746
1873.

Referred to the Inspector
of Forests for his
observations

Board of Revenue,
MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS, 6TH JUNE 1873, No. 946.

Sept. 14 June 73
Encl.

Adalyall
10 July 1873 Ag. Secy to Govt

~~1873~~
~~15 July 73~~

Received 18 June 73

JUNE.
Forest No. 28.

Timber.—Letter from Collector of Coimbatore forwarding explanation of Deputy-Conservator of Forests, Anamallay Range, in reply to strictures passed on him by Conservator with reference to discrepancies in regard to measurement of timber consigned to Marine Department of Bombay, submitted to Government.

Referred

SO-13 August 73 No 841

13 Aug 73 & 13 Aug 73

No. 1746-2155

5
V
H

Per. B. of Rev. & Inspector of Forests
Certain discrepancies in regard to
measurement of timber
from the Anamallay consigned to
the Marine Dept of Bombay.

6 June & 15 July 73. No. 946 & 1873

Yours
W. P. 1

No. 841 - 13 Aug 73

Under the circumstances
stated in the foregoing
letter from the Inspector
of Forests the G. in C. feels
himself precluded from
withdrawing the case
on Mr Deputy-Conservator
Douglas which is recorded
in the Proc of Govt under
date 16 Apr. 1873 No 408.

Lot

L. B. of Revenue
Inspector of Forests
with Encl.

I would add
2 "The over-estimate
made was the cause in
the loss of the timber
to the Government

M.S.

Ln 86/28

90

Certain discrepancies
found to measurement of
from the Quamash
- signed to the Marine D.
of Bombay -

Circ

Delivered

c. 8 Augth / 23 12 13 Augth