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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	36	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	10.4.1874	~~1900~~

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From Major R. H. BEDDOME, Inspector of Forests, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue,
dated Ootacamund, 23rd December 1873, No. 1,971.

With reference to the G. O., No. 1,225, of the 31st of October last, and to the Proceedings of the Board, dated 12th December 1873, I have the honour to inform you that I am very glad to see that Government have reduced the seigniorage rate on firewood for general consumption from Rupee 1 to Annas 6 per 1,000 lbs. (though I should have preferred the 8 Anna rate). I always thought the higher rate too much, except for the larger sort of firewood in use for the locomotives.

2. In all our railway districts strict rules will have to be put in force to prevent firewood from being cut at the cheaper rate and sold to the railway.

3. With reference to the question of permitting villagers to cut firewood free for the manufacture of the produce of their own lands, I think that it should be allowed for all operations of a petty nature; but where sugar-boiling and such like operations are on a large scale, and consequently carried on by wealthy firms or individuals, or coming under the denomination of factories, I would advocate a small seigniorage, which might, however, be less than the 6 Annas, say one-third or half, but I doubt if it would be a good policy to give it quite free. At any rate the order should be explicit, and rules should be put in force to prevent firewood cut on such terms or cut free ever being sold beyond village limits or thrown into the market. This is an important question, and has always been the source of a great loss in revenue; and as I have often pointed out it is not so much the ryots' privileges as the abuse of these that affects our revenue and denudes our forests; the cordial assistance of the Revenue authorities can alone keep this in check. Iron smelting furnaces, sandal-wood oil stills, and such like operations, will continue, I presume, to pay a firewood seigniorage as at present; but the orders should be concise on these points.

4. I cannot see my way to anything like a good system of Forest Conservancy, or any efficient check on smuggling, or harmony in working and all absence of jealousy, etc., as long as some portions of our jungles remain under the Revenue authorities. Apart from those under the Forest Department in one and the same district a double system can never answer, and I see no difficulty in amalgamating the two administrations under the new organization; and there need be no difficulty in keeping the accounts distinct for such like tracts which are not considered imperial to Local Funds.

5. In the same Proceedings the Board protest against my dictum that privileges must disappear before railways. I never intended to imply that any such rights should be suppressed, but that the wherewithal to supply them would soon cease to be forthcoming in the vicinity of railways, except under a strict conservancy, which we have never attempted. Year by year I feel more certain that a Forest Act of some sort must be brought into force, so that certain rules can be strictly enforced. I have no wish to see the agriculturists treated otherwise than liberally; but I am very anxious that their rights should be fully understood by all our officers, and not abused or exceeded as they too often are now. Though Forest Conservancy commenced in this Presidency we have for some years now been far behind the other Presidencies in anything like system and in Forest rules and their observance. Let our rules be as liberal as Government or the Board may wish to make them, but let them be fully understood by our department and the Revenue authorities, and give us the power of seeing that they are fully acted up to.

6. In paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Board's Appendix 1 in the same Proceedings it is implied that I should have perceived that when 1 Rupee was charged as seigniorage on the bandy-load that 3 Annas and 9 Pies should at once have been imposed on the bullock-load and head-load. The Board may not be aware that the bandy-load is generally timber of considerable size, similar to that supplied to the railway, and often logs and beams, and that the bullock-loads and head-loads are generally refuse, often dried sticks picked up in the jungles, and that in many districts head-loads (bullock-loads are rarely used anywhere) were previously not taxed at all. If I had been consulted I should not have proposed such high rates upon this inferior article, and I think that the Board should have consulted the Head of the Forest Department previous to sending out

such an order. The order, even after it was passed, was never sent to my office, and having no knowledge of what went on in the Jungle Conservancy Department, it was only by accident that it came to my knowledge about a year after it had been put in force. This is one of many instances that prove how unsound this double system of conservancy is.

7. I may here mention that the use of cattle dung as fuel seems to be a favourite practice, and not always consequent upon a scarcity of wood. I have lately seen it in force in densely wooded parts in North Canara, where any amount of wood was procurable for the mere trouble of picking it up, and I have observed it elsewhere under similar circumstances. It is a practice that should be discouraged by advice, and by Forest officers and the Revenue officials pointing out the greater value of the article as manure; but I do not see how its discontinuance could be insisted on if the people will not listen to advice.

8. In Appendix 2 under the head "Madura," the Board quote the Collector's observation that trees standing in the jungles are of no more value than the surrounding rocks. If many Collectors hold similar views we cannot expect much conservancy under their administration.

9. With reference to paragraph 5 of the same Government Order, I would recommend that Government should do all in its power to purchase up all private tracts of forests in our railway districts; unless this is done it will be a most difficult matter to regulate the supply of fuel to the railways, or to place it on a system with respect to annual reproduction, and smuggling can never be completely put a stop to.

10. I would also recommend that the seigniorage on railway fuel be raised to Rupees 1-8-0 per 1,000 lbs. (after due notice) for the next three years; the question to be again considered at the end of that period.

11. With reference to the prevention of rapid deforestation, and the general question of fuel supply to the railways, the subject is a difficult one until we have correct data as to the area of our fuel reserves in each of the railway districts and the annual reproduction per acre or per square mile, and also the annual reproduction of firewood in tracts outside the reserves within 12 miles of the line. The Board are aware that we have very considerable railway fuel reserves, and I have hoped long to have had maps prepared showing the area reserved in each district and data as to the probable annual reproduction, etc.; but I have been thwarted in this in various ways, and the sanctioned area is not yet even given over. I would now advise that the Collectors and Deputy Conservators in each range should draw up a full report on this subject, together with maps and a memorandum showing the present condition and character of each reserve, and its area, soil, rate of growth, etc., etc., besides a report upon the fuel supply available for railway purposes outside the reserves within a given distance of the line; we shall then be in a position to say that the annual reproduction in each district is so many tons, and that if this is not sufficient for the railway that they must supplement it with coal.

12. No system of this nature can, however, be brought to anything like perfection unless we get the control (by purchase or lease) of all private forests near the railway line.

13. With care a strict conservancy, a fair expenditure, and the cordial assistance of the Revenue authorities, I do not despair of supplying all the railway requirements without much deforestation, or even without cutting beyond the annual reproduction. Most of the fuel trees in these tracts grow again rapidly from the stools: the Acacia (or Albizzia), Amara (Turangi), and the Alangium (Alangi), the principal fuel trees in many of these tracts throughout Salem, North Arcot, and Cuddapah, are fit for cutting again after about eight years, and many others have nearly as rapid a coppice growth; and it must be borne in mind that much of this style of jungle is of little or no value except for fuel and agricultural purposes, implements, fencing, etc., and that for years previous to the introduction of railways it was not utilized.

14. We already have nurseries and conservancy to a certain extent in many of these tracts, and many of them are fenced in and cattle and fire excluded. The railways are paying us

large sums already, and if the seigniorage is increased by 50 per cent. (this will be adding about Rupees 1-4-0 per ton to the present price which varies from 4 to 6 Rupees the ton) we shall be able, and we ought to largely increase the expenditure for the up-keep of these reserves, and this must be impressed upon Collectors. Nurseries must be regularly kept up in all the tracts and bare spots planted up, broad-cast sowing must also receive attention, and worthless vegetation and thorny useless plants must be eradicated to give place to the more valuable fuel. Fencing and ditching must receive every attention, and fire must be kept out at any cost and cattle except under certain rules and supervision.

15. I do not take our firewood plantations into consideration here: they are in their infancy and could not be looked to for any supply for many years. I have always reported that I did not anticipate their ever paying. I have just returned from visiting some of those in the Bellary and Cuddapah ranges, and I am more than ever convinced that they will be failures. I allude to those at Ghooty and in the Cuddapah and North Arcot Districts on poor soil in bare open ground with little or no water available. The expenditure on these has been reduced to a minimum for some time past, and I am inclined to recommend that it be still further curtailed. What has already been planted should be taken care of, but I would discontinue all planting out in pits and trenches as too expensive for fuel requirements, and confine operations to broad-cast sowing during favourable weather. In these remarks I do not include our Casuarina plantations in the sandy beds of rivers, as these will, I am sure, be financially a success, or plantations along the padugays of the Cauvery and in the tank beds and channel and river banks in Tinnevely, etc., where the soil is good and moisture available; but it is unnecessary to take these at present into consideration in connection with the railway fuel supply, as their yield will be nil for some years at least.

16. When the reports and maps of the different reserves, etc., are ready, and the area of these and other available tracts clearly laid down, I should like to consult personally with the Board and advise as to the annual reproduction, etc. In G. O., No. 1,417, of the 13th instant, Government appear to be under the impression that details are available as to the description of wood that had been cut each year since the formation of these reserves, the quantity of fuel obtained per acre, etc., but as yet, or at least till the date of my last visit, I have not seen them. I have since we have taken them over. All railway fuel has been brought from open woods by contractors who cut without departmental supervision, as the railway credit us with the seigniorage on all delivered, and smuggling, etc., is not possible; there could be no reliable data derived from such operations, and they are of too straggling a nature to admit of any.

Ed. J. Tulloch.

The Board of Revenue

May 4 1880

30/3 Revenue Department

Proceedings of the Madras Government
Read the following
Revenue Department

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
Dated 27 March 1874

Read G.O. dated 27 February 1874
No 2 by Rev. Secy. recording letter from Insp.
of Forests submitting a further explanation
regarding his reports on Railway Fuel
revenues and plantations, and awaiting
the final report submitted by the Inspector
to the Board of Revenue.

A copy of the Report will be
submitted to Government.

It will be disposed of when the
Board are in a position to reply to
G.O. 31st October 1873 No 1225 para 5.

2. (Dene Extract)
The Secy to Govt. R.D. (Ls) J. Grose
with copy of letter from
Insp. of Forests 22 Dec 73 No 1971 Secy.

Order thereon 10 April 1874 No 36

Recorded
(Dene Extract)

2. (Ls) C. G. Massey
The Board of Revenue As Secy to Govt.

Rev. Secy
1026/74

Revenue Department
 Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
 dated 27th March 1874.

Read G. O. dated 27th February
 1874 No. 269, Revenue Department re-
 -cording letter from Inspector of Forests in-
 submitting a further explanation regarding
 his Reports on Railway Fuel-reserves and
 Plantations, and awaiting the full report
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 31st October 1873, No. 1225, para 5.

(True extract)

W. H. W. W.
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 W. H. W. W.

J. G. G.
 Secretary
 The Secretary to Government
 Revenue Department with copy of letter
 from Inspector of Forests dated 23 December
 1873, No. 1971.

Revenue 1874 Declaration
 No. 36
 In of the Revenue Board
 7 to March 1874.

29 Aug 1946 # 257-52

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Daniel W. Chandler
 1874

Submitting & Sent.

36.

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