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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	735	Press
<u>B.P. No.</u>		<u>Mis.</u>
Dated	14.4.1875	196 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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KUMRI CULTIVATION, MYSORE.

[Index Nos. 10 to 14—Progs. Nos. 5 to 9.]

No. 10.]

No. 183, dated Bangalore, the 22nd June 1871.

[No. 5.]

From—Major W. R. JOHNSON, *Offg. Secy. to the Chief Commr. of Mysore*, P. W. D.,
To—*The Secy. to the Govt. of India*, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

REFERRING to your letter No. 237F, dated 17th May 1870, on the subject of kumri cultivation in Mysore, I have the honor, by direction of the Chief Commissioner, to forward herewith, for the information of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council, copies of reports as per margin from the Conservator of Forests, who, it will be seen therefrom, has duly carried out the instructions conveyed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the letter under reply, and has supplied as full an account on the several points adverted to in those instructions as could probably be furnished, considering the character of the subject and the difficult nature of the country that had to be traversed in collecting the materials therefor.

No. 1507, dated 14th March 1871.
No. 369, dated 6th June 1871.

2. The map appended to the first of these reports shows the limits of the tract in which it is proposed that the cultivation in question shall be permitted, and the Conservator draws attention to the circumstance that, with some specified exceptions, kumri in Mysore is not carried on on the ghauts or higher line of hills, but below and to the eastward of them.

3. In paragraph 5 of this report the Conservator describes the limits as marked on the map within which he is of opinion that kumri may be permitted, an essential condition being that it shall nowhere extend beyond a line run six miles to the eastward of, and parallel to, the Mysore frontier. He deprecates its being allowed south of the Hossangalis Ghaut, which he has fixed as the limit in that direction.

4. In paragraphs 8 to 13 of his report, the Conservator describes the tracts in which kumri has been carried on, and the general character of the timber growing in them, which he considers of little intrinsic value, and such as would never command a ready sale. The kan and forests noted in the margin, he proposes, shall be preserved from kumri depredations and attempts made to work them.

Sampunjee Holloy Kan.
Himny Forests.

5. The rivers and streams draining the tracts in question are described in paragraphs 6, 7, and 14 of the report, and it will be observed that most of them, rising in the higher line of ghauts, run to the eastward.

6. The decayed and more or less ruined condition of the gardens and other cultivation (not kumri) in this neighbourhood is commented on in paragraphs 15 to 17 of the report, and the complaints of the people on the subject of the prohibition of kumri are fully entered into in paragraphs 18 to 20. It will be seen that they urge that the forbidden cultivation may be allowed only on the lands formerly used for it, and aver that no new lands would be required for the purpose, and that the Conservator remarks with surprise on the effective manner in which the Government orders putting down kumri had been enforced.

7. In paragraphs 21 and 22 of his report, the Conservator considers the probable results of the re-introduction of kumri in the tracts under advertence as regards (1) the change it would cause in the condition of the forests, and (2) its effects on drainage of the country, and he is of opinion that these results will not be injurious in either respect, though he expresses his views with diffidence on the second point.

8. Finally, the Conservator concludes (paragraphs 23 and 25) that, so far as forest questions are concerned, kumri cultivation may be re-introduced on certain conditions specified by him.

9. In paragraph 25 the Conservator estimates the number of able-bodied men who would engage in kumri cultivation, if it be sanctioned, at probably about 500, who, with their wives and children, would add from 2,000 to 2,500 to the population; but this is confessedly not to be depended on. The enclosure to his subsequent letter, No. 369, shows that the Deputy Superintendent estimates the number of men at 190, and of villages or hamlets willing to engage in this cultivation at 22, one of the latter of which, the Conservator states, is situated beyond the line six miles from the frontier he proposes to make the eastern limit. Lieutenant Vansomeren, however, still considers his estimate that which will probably prove to be nearest the truth, as it was arrived at from the statements of men on the spot.

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10. On a full consideration of all the circumstances of this class of cultivation, as thus and previously reported, the Chief Commissioner recommends that it be permitted to be re-introduced within the limits proposed by the Conservator, and on the conditions specified by him, the cultivation being strictly restricted to the lands formerly used for the purpose, and any fresh clearances being interdicted. It may not be possible to enforce the second and third conditions; but as they appear to be important to the preservation of the land from wasteful injury which they will probably prevent to any serious or general extent, the Chief Commissioner would retain them. The eastern limit of the cultivation will have to be marked off as forests; and a list of the other virgin kans and forests it is desired to preserve as State prepared by the Revenue Department.

11. With respect to the rates of assessment that should be imposed on this cultivation, the Superintendent of Revenue Survey has not yet reported on the subject, none of the survey parties being employed in that quarter. The rates of assessment formerly levied might be imposed, if the above proposals be approved, until the survey operations reach the kumri tracts, when they would be revised and fixed with due consideration to the rates levied on other kinds of cultivation in the neighbourhood.

12. In conclusion, I am to express the Chief Commissioner's regret for the unavoidable delay that has occurred in procuring the information required to complete this report, and to state that Lieutenant Vansomeren (who has taken much pains and gone through much exposure and fatigue in his efforts to effect this object) could not have carried out his enquiries in that unhealthy locality at an earlier period.

No. 11.]

No. 1507, dated Camp Sangor, the 14th March 1871.

[No. 6.]

From—Lieutenant G. J. VANSOMEREN, Conservator of Forests, Mysore and Coorg,
To—The Secy. to the Chief Commr. of Mysore, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

I HAVE the honor to submit the report called for by the Government of India on the

Govt. of India's Order No. 237F, dated Simla, 17th May 1870.

Para. 5.—"The Conservator of Forests should be instructed to examine the forests in question; to report upon the trees they contain, and the probable changes in the condition of the forests which would follow the re-introduction of kumri clearings. He should state by which streams and rivers the tract of country in question is drained; whether the clearing of the forests is likely to have any injurious effect connected with the drainage of the country; the retention of the soil on the sides of mountains and in valleys, and the washing down of silt and sand."

Letter, General Revenue, Forest, No. 1321-53 of the 3rd June 1870, from Secretary to Chief Commissioner to Conservator of Forests, conveying instructions on the above orders.

probable result of the re-introduction of kumri in certain portions of the Nuggur Division of Mysore. The correspondence alluded to is marginally noted.

2. The map alluded to in paragraph 6 of the Government of India's orders is, by paragraph 2 of your letter (marginally noted), directed to be supplied with my report, which I now do.

3. The orders to report on the subject of kumri cultivation reached me in the rains; and as the whole of that part of the country is exceedingly unhealthy for some time after the south-west monsoon (the Chief Commissioner having approved of my inspection being deferred till February 1871), I began my inspection on the 21st February, and completed it on the 11th March. Owing to the weather being dry, I was enabled to go very lightly equipped, and walked the whole tour; thus going to many spots where it would have been difficult to take horses. The red line on my map shows the actual route I followed; the green coloring, the forests and evergreen kans; and the brown coloring, the spots in which kumri cultivation was formerly practised.

4. It will be noticed that, with the exception of the country south-west of Savantancuttay and near Govardanagerry Droog, kumri in Mysore is not on the actual ghauts, but below and to the east of them. During my tour I went to the boundary on the Hossangadi Ghaut and down the South Canara country at three different points, viz., two miles down the Muddoor Ghaut (an old bullock path), five miles down the Cooloor Ghaut (a made road), and about three miles down the Hagewaddy bullock pass. This gave me an opportunity of seeing the South Canara kumri, which is of far greater extent than that in Mysore, and has been carried further up the sides of the ghauts; but nowhere did I see any kumri on the tops of the ghauts. The Mysore boundary in many places is east of the actual ghauts.

5. The map now submitted shows the tract of country traversed this tour, and in a portion of which kumri may (if sanctioned) be permitted. This portion is situated in the talooks of Nuggur and Sangor, and lies north of the Hossangadi or Hyderghur Ghaut, and south of the Gairsoppah Ghaut; is bounded on the west by the limits of the Mysore Province,

Tract of country to which kumri may be allowed.

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and east by a line which should run parallel with the Mysore boundary at a distance from it of six miles, as proposed by Major Hay, Superintendent of Nuggur (see paragraph 10 of letter, General Revenue, Forest, No. 1600—9 of 21st June 1869, from Chief Commissioner of Mysore to Secretary to Government of India, Public Works Department).

6. The drainage of this tract of country runs either directly west, through the ghauts, or falls into the Sherawutty river, which, rising in Cowlidroog, runs north through the Nuggur and Sangor talooks to the Gairsoppa falls, when, turning west, it falls into the sea at Honore.

7. The drainage of the Yeddooor country, south of the town of Nuggur, goes south, and eventually west; while the whole of the drainage of the country in the Cowlidroog and Coppa talooks is eastwards, feeding the two great rivers, the Budra and Toonga, or their affluents. On the ghauts bounding these two last-named talooks, the practice of kumri cultivation was never very prevalent; and as the Budra and the Toonga are both practicable for floating operations, and it is under contemplation to fell timber and fuel along and in the neighbourhood of these rivers, I would deprecate any kumri being allowed south of the line I have mentioned in paragraph 5, viz., the Hossangadi Ghaut.

8. Between the Hossangadi and Muddoor roads is a vast mass of forest on the ghauts and in the Mysore country. East of this are small patches of kumri, and to the west, in the South Canara side, the low lands are kumried throughout (see map). I could get no one to accompany me, or show me the way through this forest. It is excessively precipitous; and, though the subordinate revenue authorities did their best to get me guides, no one would go in: one and all declared that it was pathless; that no one ever went there for any reason whatever. No one could take me further than to the top of Moolgoota, on the outer edge, and from which a spur runs down to Hossangadi. I had an opportunity of seeing the tree vegetation of a part of this forest from the Hyderghur Ghaut on the south, and from the Muddoor Ghaut on the north. In the portions visited, I saw ebony in abundance, bullagi (an iron wood), some wild jack, but no poon; and I may here state that, with the exception of a few trees in the Kadu Mullige kan between Cooloor-munnay and Hooloor-munnay (Nos. 11 and 12 in map), and a few near the Hinny Ghaut in the vicinity of the Falls (No. 20), I saw no poon in the whole of my tour.

Poon excessively scarce.

9. Between the Muddoor Ghaut and the Hogewaddy Pass there has been much kumri in patches. Large extents of kan land have been left untouched, and kumri has been confined chiefly to the sholas on the hills, with the exception of the jungle on the Yeddamallay and Cajjy Banays (No. A B), where a large block of forest has been laid low under the axe.

10. In the pocket between the Hogewaddy Pass, immediately to the north of the Hogewaddy kan itself (one of the finest bits of forest scenery in the country), and Savantancuttay, the whole of the jungles have been kumried. The same may be said of the narrow slip of Mysore territory which, projecting itself into the Canara country, terminates in the Govardanagerry Droog. North of this are the Hinny forests and large kans, and but little kumri.

11. The vast majority of trees seen by me in these forests and kans, though used by the inhabitants of the country, are of but little intrinsic value. Even were the forests accessible, the timber would never, I think, command a ready sale. The better kinds, such as ebony and bullagi, are extremely heavy woods, and the cost of carriage would be so great as to preclude all hope of a fair return of revenue.

12. In those portions which were kumried many years ago, and which have since grown up, and in the kans to the east, I noticed the following useful trees:—Nundy (*lagerstromia mic.*), black wood, *dalbergia*, *lat* *scarce*, *honay* (*pterocarpus marsupium honaloo*), a *terminalia*; and in the low forests near the Serohulli river two or three kinds of *dyospyros* and some *oodina woodier*, and here and there patches of stunted mutty (*terminalia tomentosa*).

13. As I have already stated in paragraph 10, the whole country between Hogewaddy and Savantancuttay may be considered as having been under kumri. Throughout these was a dense undergrowth of thorny shrubs, among which, in several spots, thousands of wild plants had sprung up. Immediately to the east of this will be seen on the map a large patch of green. This represents the Sompanjee Hollar kan, a large tract of forest in which poon and other valuable trees are fairly abundant. This kan, and the Hinny forests further north, will both be preserved from the depredations of the kumri cultivators, and attempts made to work them by floating wood down the Serohulli and Gairsoppa rivers.

Hinny forests.

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14. The chief rivers draining the tract of country under report are the Guryat, the Serobulli or Venecatapoor, and the Sherawutti, the course of which I have already described. The Guryat and Serobulli both run due west, through the ghauts. The great majority of the streams run eastwards. The Muddoor river, when I crossed it, was dry, and so were the streams on the Cooloor Ghaut. I may here mention that, with the exception of the large rivers, the majority of the streams in the trigonometrical map could not be recognised. They seem to have been laid in very roughly.

15. Between the town of Nuggur and the village of Calasosy there are several patches of paddy cultivation, and some Areca nut gardens. Between Calasosy and Murgatoora and Nagawaddy, Nos. 3, 9, and 13 in map, paddy was very rare, the chief cultivation being that of the Areca nut-tree. Between Nagawaddy and Carnee, No. 15, paddy flats and Areca nut gardens were again intermixed, and north of Carnee the Areca nut gradually disappeared, and I saw none at all north of Hogewaddy, but large paddy flats were frequent. The cultivators of paddy throughout depend entirely on the monsoon rains for the necessary supply of water.

16. Throughout the whole tour, I passed through but one occupied kan near Calasosy. The rent paid for it to Government is Rupees 4. It contained some wild pepper vines, and several beina moras or sago palms. In several unoccupied kans I noticed sago palms, and here and there wild pepper vine; but these were few and far between. Some few of the kans in the north, which I did not actually pass through, but only saw, were said to be occupied, and paid a trifling rent to Government.

17. All the Areca nut gardens which I saw were carelessly tended, full of weeds, and with broken water-courses; and I nowhere saw any betel vines trained up the trees, as is so commonly the case in other parts of the country. Thare-kooly and Genasina-kooly, Nos. 5 and 6, were entirely desolate, and the gardens at Kaddoo-Kodoo, No. 4, were all but abandoned. At Holpsoora, one of the larger villages in that locality, the gardens, though better than at the spots just mentioned, were much in want of careful looking after. At Cooloor-mannay the gardens were surrounded with old kumri, covered with dense small growth, and the owners complained bitterly of the order prohibiting kumri.

18. Throughout my tour I was accompanied by several of the most influential men of the villages through which I passed. They were all either Haiga Brahmans or Jains. They one and all begged that the old state of things, when kumri was allowed; might be re-introduced, and I received several petitions from the inhabitants of the different villages, and several Mahrattas (actual kumri cultivators) preferred requests of a like nature. I had several conversations on the tour with these men; as a rule, I found them moderate in their demands, and careful in their statements. In one or two instances, where some men made absurd statements, they were at once silenced by the others. One and all held that the stoppage of kumri cultivation had largely reduced the population of the country; that paddy fields and Areca nut gardens had all suffered from want of sufficient labor; and that, while they themselves had been put to great inconvenience and loss, the Government had suffered directly by loss of revenue, and indirectly by the loss of inhabitants, in the country. The Mahrattas whom I met were all anxious to get back to their old work; and if it is true (as doubtless was the case) that these Mahrattas were practically slaves or bondsmen, they do not appear to have been at all unhappy under the old regime.

19. The chief grievance is undoubtedly the loss of labor. While speaking with a number of men at Hallapoor on this subject, several coast coolies passed. These men had been hired by a Chetty to carry loads. I engaged them to take my things on the next stage, and they said "Oh! we should have to pay each man 1 rupee, and were returning."

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20. The whole of the petitioners asked only that the old kumri lands might be given back to them; that they would amply suffice; and that no new land would be touched. I was surprised to find how well the Government orders putting down kumri had been obeyed in these out-of-the-way parts. From what I saw I should think there has been very little unauthorized kumri. The latest fellings were at Haggary, near Watikee, and were about five or six years old.

21. I have been directed to state my opinion as to (1) "the probable change of condition in the forest which would follow the re-introduction of kumri;" and (2) "whether the clearing of the forests is likely to have any injurious effect connected with the drainage of the country, the retention of soil on the sides of mountains and valleys, and the washing down of silt and sand." With regard to the first point, I think that the effect of the re-introduction of kumri will be to increase the number of deciduous trees in the adjacent kans and forests: Mundy, black-wood, honay-mutti, sumpaghy, honoloo and other terminalia, amongst them *terminalia bellerica* and the *nelli emblica officinalis*, and a few scattered specimens of *bilouara* and *bagay* (*acacia odoratissima* and *speciosa*), were noticed in old grown up kumri clearings, and on the skirts of the adjacent kans. The first named six kinds of trees and the two acacias are all useful woods; at the same time, with the exception of the honoloo and some few of the mutty and acacias, most of the trees just mentioned were ill grown. With reference to the second point, effect on drainage, &c., I give any opinion at all with very great diffidence. As I have already reported, and as the map will show, kumri clearings in many parts are so interspersed with untouched forests, especially in the country from near Muddoor to Hogewaddy, that I do not think any ill effects need be feared from the wash of soil off mountain sides. Having come into the Mysore country after the promulgation of orders abolishing kumri, I can have had no opportunities of drawing any conclusions from observations of the former state of things as compared with that now existing. Again, the effects of silt and sand being washed down the ghaut streams, would be felt more in the South Canara country below the ghauts. I had an opportunity during my tour of meeting Mr. Webster, the present Acting Collector of South Canara, who, owing to his having formerly served in the same province as Assistant Collector, is well acquainted with it. He told me that he had paid much attention to kumri in all its bearings; he could not say that there was any perceptible change in the rivers and streams which come down from the ghauts, and that the rainfall and its effects seemed to him much the same as in former years.

22. I could only form any independent conclusion from the following observations: The town of Nuggur is surrounded with several fine old stone bridges. It lies in a basin surrounded by hills, on several of which kumri was formerly practised to a small degree. I could not see anywhere that the piers of these bridges had accumulated sand round them, though such accumulations would be largely aided by the broken trees and bamboos which, washed down the streams year by year, had piled themselves up in heaps against some of these bridges, notably that of Hileconjee.

23. The conclusion at which I arrived after my tour and much consideration was that, owing to the inaccessible nature of the forests and country generally, and to the small quantity of timber possessing any market value to be found in these forests, kumri might, as far as any forest questions are concerned, be again allowed on the following conditions:

- (1.)—That none but old kumri lands be allowed to be opened out again.
- (2.)—That no other grain than ragi be allowed to be cultivated on these clearings, and no more than two successive crops be taken off each piece.
- (3.)—That after two crops have been taken, the land be allowed to be quiet for ten years.

24. It was formerly the practice to take two crops of ragi, and follow them in the third year by a crop of same (*panicum miliare*); this latter crop thoroughly exhausts the soil, and the jungle will not again grow up for 20 to 25 years; thus tempting the kumri cultivators to seek virgin land.

25. I have been directed to state, in conjunction with the district officer, the number of villages and of inhabitants who would be allowed to cut kumri if finally approved. This is a most difficult question to answer. I believe the number will fluctuate yearly; but as nearly as I can estimate from the very widely differing numbers given me by the chief men, about 500 able-bodied Mahratta men will be employed. These, with their wives and children, will bring about 2,000 to 2,500 people into the country. At present the greater portion of the labor which would be attracted by the re-introduction of kumri is not in the country; and in West Nuggur, several places, which figure in the trigonometrical map as villages, consist of one house owned by a Haiga Brahmin or Jain, and three or four miserable hovels, in which the few laborers he now employs find a precarious shelter.

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18. Throughout my tour I was accompanied by several of the most influential men of the villages through which I passed. They were all either Haiga Brahmins or Jains. They one and all begged that the old state of things, when kumri was allowed, might be re-introduced, and I received several petitions from the inhabitants of the different naads all to the same purpose, and several Mahrattas (actual kumri cultivators) preferred requests of a like nature. I had several conversations on the tour with these men; as a rule, I found them moderate in their demands, and careful in their statements. In one or two instances, where some men made absurd statements, they were at once silenced by the others. One and all held that the stoppage of kumri cultivation had largely reduced the population of the country; that paddy fields and Areca nut gardens had all suffered from want of sufficient labor; and that, while they themselves had been put to great inconvenience and loss, the Government had suffered directly by loss of revenue, and indirectly by the loss of inhabitants, in the country. The Mahrattas whom I met were all anxious to get back to their old work; and if it is true (as doubtless was the case) that these Mahrattas were practically slaves or bondsmen, they do not appear to have been at all unhappy under the old régime.

19. The chief grievance is undoubtedly the loss of labor. While speaking with a number of men at Hallapoor on this subject, several coast coolies passed. These men had been hired by a Chetty to carry loads up the ghauts, and were returning. I engaged them to take my things on the next stage, and of course asked why soopari cultivators could not get up men from the coast, where they are abundant, and work up their gardens. They said "Oh! we should have to pay each man 4 annas a day, and they would go away whenever they chose. How could we make any money out of our soopari?" This confession showed me the exact truth of the case. If kumri were allowed, the men who cultivate in that fashion are obliged either to wait or return from their crops. The soopari cultivators who are, without exception, almost all Haiga Brahmins or Jains, make small advances to the Kumbaries or Mahrattas, and then, by supplying them with rice, clothes, &c., get them into their power, and always ready for work. This, though perhaps a species of slavery, is no worse, I conceive, than what goes on all over the country more or less, the Soukar in the plains taking the place of the Haiga Brahmins in West Nuggur; and of the two, the little finger of the Soukar is, I should say, thicker than the loins of the Haiga Brahmin.

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20. The whole of the petitioners asked only that the old kumri lands might be given back to them; that they would amply suffice; and that no new land would be touched. I was surprised to find how well the Government orders putting down kumri had been obeyed in these out-of-the-way parts. From what I saw I should think there has been very little unauthorized kumri. The latest fellings were at Haggary, near Watikee, and were about five or six years old.

21. I have been directed to state my opinion as to (1) "the probable change of condition in the forest which would follow the re-introduction of kumri;" and (2) "whether the clearing of the forests is likely to have any injurious effect connected with the drainage of the country, the retention of soil on the sides of mountains and valleys, and the washing down of silt and sand." With regard to the first point, I think that the effect of the re-introduction of kumri will be to increase the number of deciduous trees in the adjacent kans and forests: Mundy, black-wood, honay-mutty, sumpaghy, honoloo and other terminalia, amongst them *terminalia bellerica* and the *nelli emblica officinalis*, and a few scattered specimens of *bilouara* and *bagay* (*acacia odoratissima* and *speciosa*), were noticed in old grown up kumri clearings, and on the skirts of the adjacent kans. The first named six kinds of trees and the two acacias are all useful woods; at the same time, with the exception of the honoloo and some few of the mutty and acacias, most of the trees just mentioned were ill grown. With reference to the second point, effect on drainage, &c., I give any opinion at all with very great diffidence. As I have already reported, and as the map will show, kumri clearings in many parts are so interspersed with untouched forests, especially in the country from near Muddoor to Hogewaddy, that I do not think any ill effects need be feared from the wash of soil off mountain sides. Having come into the Mysore country after the promulgation of orders abolishing kumri, I can have had no opportunities of drawing any conclusions from observations of the former state of things as compared with that now existing. Again, the effects of silt and sand being washed down the ghaut streams, would be felt more in the South Canara country below the ghauts. I had an opportunity during my tour of meeting Mr. Webster, the present Acting Collector of South Canara, who, owing to his having formerly served in the same province as Assistant Collector, is well acquainted with it. He told me that he had paid much attention to kumri in all its bearings; he could not say that there was any perceptible change in the rivers and streams which come down from the ghauts, and that the rainfall and its effects seemed to him much the same as in former years.

22. I could only form any independent conclusion from the following observations: The town of Nuggur is surrounded with several fine old stone bridges. It lies in a basin surrounded by hills, on several of which kumri was formerly practised to a small degree. I could not see anywhere that the piers of these bridges had accumulated sand round them, though such accumulations would be largely aided by the broken trees and bamboos which, washed down the streams year by year, had piled themselves up in heaps against some of these bridges, notably that of Hilloonjee.

23. The conclusion at which I arrived after my tour and much consideration was that, owing to the inaccessible nature of the forests and country generally, and to the small quantity of timber possessing any market value to be found in these forests, kumri might, as far as any forest questions are concerned, be again allowed on the following conditions:

- (1.)—That none but old kumri lands be allowed to be opened out again.
- (2.)—That no other grain than ragi be allowed to be cultivated on these clearings, and no more than two successive crops be taken off each piece.
- (3.)—That after two crops have been taken, the land be allowed to be quiet for ten years.

24. It was formerly the practice to take two crops of ragi, and follow them in the third year by a crop of same (*panicum miliare*); this latter crop thoroughly exhausts the soil, and the jungle will not again grow up for 20 to 25 years; thus tempting the kumri cultivators to seek virgin land.

25. I have been directed to state, in conjunction with the district officer, the number of villages and of inhabitants who would be allowed to cut kumri if finally approved. This is a most difficult question to answer. I believe the number will fluctuate yearly; but as nearly as I can estimate from the very widely differing numbers given me by the chief men, about 500 able-bodied Mahratta men will be employed. These, with their wives and children, will bring about 2,000 to 2,500 people into the country. At present the greater portion of the labor which would be attracted by the re-introduction of kumri is not in the country; and in West Nuggur, several places, which figure in the trigonometrical map as villages, consist of one house owned by a Haiga Brahmin or Jain, and three or four miserable hovels, in which the few laborers he now employs find a precarious shelter.

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26. I now submit this report as it stands, and will, with the permission of the Chief Commissioner, submit, with all practicable despatch (after consulting the Deputy Superintendent), the return alluded to in the preceding paragraph.

27. If kumri is to be again allowed in old clearings, it will be necessary to mark off, by stones, the extreme eastern limit to which it may be extended. The subordinate revenue authorities should make a list of all virgin forests and kans, and the Forest Department should mark off by stones the Sompanjee Mollay and Hinny Forests.

No. 12.] No. 369, dated Bangalore, the 6th June 1871. [No. 7.]

From—The Conservator of Forests, Mysore and Coorg,
To—The Secy. to the Chief Commr. of Mysore, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

I HAVE the honor at length to report on the question asked by the Government of India as to the number of men likely to cultivate on the kumri system in Nuggur, if that system were again introduced.

2. I had the honor of submitting my report on the matter in my letter No. 1507 of the 11th March last; but not having obtained the opinion of the Deputy Superintendent, Shimogah District, till yesterday, I was unable to answer the question earlier.

3. The Deputy Superintendent has sent me in a list of the villages and the number of men willing to cultivate. He gives no opinion as to the number of men who are likely to be employed.

4. I submit a copy of his list, and beg to state that I visited the villages marked with a cross (+). Many of them are mere hamlets, and some, viz., Kolor-munnay, Oomblimadikay, munnay are Brahmins, who will employ, as they told me, 25 men. The four men at Kolor-house at Hallapore (a Jain Brahmin) will employ 10 men and their families.

5. According to the Deputy Superintendent's list, 190 men are "willing to cultivate;" they inhabit 23 so-called "villages." As I have already reported (see paragraph 25 of my letter referred to above), much of the labor will have to be imported, and it is impossible to fix on any exact number. I still incline to hold to my opinion already expressed, and which was formed on estimates given me by men on the spot, that about 500 able-bodied Mahrattas will be brought into the country, and that with their wives and children they will increase the population by about 2,000 to 2,500 souls.

6. The village of "Bobagy" is named in the list of the Saugor Talook. Bobagy is some way from the ghauts; and far beyond the line I would propose to draw as the eastern limit, viz., six miles from the Mysore western boundary. It should be, I think, clearly understood that, though villagers living beyond this line might be allowed to cultivate on kumri, their kumri holdings would invariably be within the line.

List of Villages affected by the proposed permission for the Kumri cultivation on the Ghauts in the Nuggur and Saugor Talooks.

NUGGUR TALOOK.

Cubnad Magani.

		No. of men willing to cultivate.
1	Kolor-munnay	4
+	Kattinaholay	2
+	Hallapore	4
+	Kodakodu	2
5	Oomblimadikay	2
+	Genasinakooni	2
7	Hiraymanay Bellakka and its hamlets	3
	Residents of Nuggur Magani willing to cultivate	11

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE, REVENUE AND COMMERCE, AUGUST 12, 1871.

Index No. 14.] Kumri cultivation, Mysore. [Pros. No. 9.]

SAUGOR TALOOK.

Soolnad Magani.

1	Bobagy	...	...	...	15
+	Hebballi	...	...	...	5
	Tele	...	...	...	4
	Kaltinakara	...	...	...	15
5	Alooroo	...	...	...	10
+	Chennagonda	...	...	...	15
	Valuru	...	...	...	12
+	Ikki-bilalu	...	...	...	10
	Soukana Shanbogue	...	...	...	8
10	Merantoo	...	...	...	15
+	Kodanahulli	...	...	...	10
	Karana	...	...	...	15
	Maloor	...	...	...	16
+	Ib-bulalu	...	...	...	8
15	Karla	...	...	...	10

CAMP CHENUGERY; }
The 31st May 1871. }

H. M. ELLIOT,
Deputy Superintendent.

No. 13.] [Map showing the localities where Kumri was practised on the Nugar Ghauts—Not to be printed in Proceedings.] [No. 8.]

No. 14.] No. 121, dated Simla, the 9th August 1871. [No. 9.]

From—A. O. HUME, Esq., C. B., Secretary to the Government of India,
To—The Chief Commissioner of Mysore.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 183F, dated 22nd June last, recommending that the re-introduction of kumri cultivation into certain portions of the Nuggur Division of Mysore may be permitted on certain conditions; and in reply to state that, while the Governor General in Council does not entirely agree with your proposals, His Excellency is willing to admit of their modification so far that, when the operations of the revenue survey are extended into the district in question, a certain portion of land in each village, not exceeding the total area under other cultivation, may be marked off, for disposal to village laborers, for the purpose of kumri cultivation, and allotted in proportion to the other cultivated land of each holder, in the same manner as a certain amount of land is allotted to each Wurgdar in Madras for this purpose. In both North and South Canara kumri cultivation is strictly limited, and is gradually diminishing. If, therefore, the above arrangement is adopted in Mysore, and the survey officers mark off the tracts for kumri in each village in concert with the forest officers, His Excellency in Council believes that no injurious effects need be apprehended by the re-introduction of kumri into the province within the tract in question.

REFERENCE TO PREVIOUS CASES.
P. W. D. Forest Dept., May 1870, Nos. 13 to 17.

REFERENCE TO LATER CASES.

1871.
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
REVENUE AND COMMERCE.

FORESTS.

August, 1871.

Index Nos. 10 to 14.

Proceedings—August 12—Nos. 5 to 9.

Kumri cultivation, Mysore.

KEEP-WITHOUT PRINTED.

- Note by Major Pearson, dated 5th July 1871.
Secretary, dated 7th July 1871.
Honble Mr. Strachey, dated 8th July 1871.
His Excellency the Viceroy, dated 9th July 1871.
Honble Mr. Stephen, dated 11th July 1871.
Honble Genl. Norman, dated 12th July 1871.
Honble Sir R. Temple, dated 15th July 1871.
Honble Mr. Ellis, dated 23rd July 1871.
His Excellency Lord Napier, dated 25th July 1871.
Honble Mr. Strachey, dated 26th July 1871.
His Excellency the Viceroy, dated 29th July 1871.

KEEP-WITHOUT NOT PRINTED.

LIST OF PAPERS.

- No. 10. From Chief Commissioner of Mysore (Public Works Department), dated 22nd June, No. 183F, forwarding copies of reports from the Conservator of Forests on the above subject.
Nos. 11, 12 and 13. Enclosures to above.
No. 14. To Chief Commissioner of Mysore, dated 9th August, No. 121, sanctioning the re-introduction of kumri cultivation under certain conditions.

No. 1600—9 R.—F., dated Bangalore, the 21st June 1869.

From—L. B. BOWRING, Esq., Chief Commissioner of Mysore,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, P. W. Dept.

I HAVE the honor to submit the following remarks regarding Koomri cultivation, referred to in your letter No. 171F, dated 12th April 1869, the delay in replying to which has been due solely to my not having till to-day received any answer to a communication made to the Madras Government on the subject.

2. The orders prohibiting Koomri in Mysore were absolute, and have, as a rule, been most beneficial; but in North and South Canara, appertaining to the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, it has been partially permitted under certain restrictions, and there is therefore a diversity of practice on either side of the border, which is to be deprecated.

3. There is little to be added to the correspondence on the subject of this wasteful mode of cultivation, which has been repeatedly and ably discussed by competent authorities. In his letter of 7th December 1858, and in his work on the Forests and Gardens of Southern India, Dr. Cleghorn sums up the advantages and disadvantages of the system. The question immediately under reference is that of the Wurgdars in the frontier talooks of the Nuggur Division, to the East of, and close by, the ghats, who complain that while Koomri is prohibited in their holdings, it is permitted in the adjoining territory. This complaint is correct; but the real grievance is as follows. Formerly, these farmers, some of whom pay Rs. 1,000 to 2,000 of revenue to Government, possessed numerous slaves, who, since British administration in Mysore, have been released from their bondage, and many families have left their old masters, taking service in coffee plantations and elsewhere, so that the farmers have an actual difficulty in tilling their lands. Hundreds and hundreds of acres are to be seen lying fallow in these frontier talooks owing to the want of labor, and the Wurgdars are not disposed to pay these hinds six or seven a month, which they can earn now in coffee plantations. Consequently, the means of the Wurgdars have been much straitened; the aid which they procured from the migrating Mahrattas and others, who cultivated Koomri within their holdings, having been not only remunerative to them, but useful in a variety of ways.

4. I believe this is the root of the matter, to which it may be added that the Mahrattas themselves have presented frequent petitions to be allowed to cultivate Koomri within such tracts. Of course, it may be said that these wandering tribes ought to settle down as regular cultivators; but my experience of Lumbanis, Korchars, Kormurs, and other rovers, is that they have but small idea of becoming fixed residents anywhere, either as agriculturists or townsmen, and such crooked bows can never be bent straight in my opinion.

5. The frontier under reference is for the most part extremely inaccessible. From the Mysore side it can only be reached in three or four marches over most difficult country; while, on the Canara side below, gullies, ravines, and low hills covered with jungle present formidable obstacles. Any timber grown in these wurg-lands is absolutely valueless to Government. For climatic reasons, and for preventing the rain deposit being carried with velocity down the sides of hills bared of their natural forest clothing, the destruction of jungles near the ghats is of course to be deprecated.

6. What is really required is a uniform mode of action. If Koomri is prohibited in Mysore, it should be prohibited in Canara. If, however, it is allowed there, under certain

restrictions, it should be allowed in Mysore. The Madras system is shown in the accompanying letter No. 4225, dated 12th June 1869, from which it would appear that in wurg-lands,

- 1st.—Koomri is forbidden in virgin forest, or forest uncultivated for more than 9 or 12 years;
- 2nd.—One acre of Koomri is allowed for each four annas of Koomri rental entered in the wurg or puttah;
- 3rd.—Government may plant on any spot cleared for Koomri, which will then cease;
- 4th.—Ryots must cultivate within their own village boundaries;
- 5th.—Assessment is one Rupee per acre;
- 6th.—A block of forest is allotted to each wurg for Koomri, which is eight times as large as the annual clearing allowed.

Koomri in Government land is not carried on, except under special permission sparingly given.

7. In North Canara of the Bombay Presidency, it appears that there are 4,035 acres of Koomri cultivation, and I have myself observed extensive clearings closely adjoining the Mysore frontier. No land not koomreed within the last eight years is granted, and the cultivation appears to be confined to localities similar to the Mysore frontier wurgs, that is, three or four miles inland above the ghats and crests of the hills, the jungle of which is useless. Permission to cut Koomri is only given to those who are habitually dependent on this mode of cultivation, such as the Mahrattas above-mentioned, most of whom have now gone into Canara from Mysore. It appears that half an acre is allowed to each adult, and quarter to each child of a family. The assessment is said to be fixed at 17 per acre (query, one rupee?). The number of applicants was, in August 1863, 4,599, whose families aggregated 34,115 souls, and the number of acres then granted was 11,351, since reduced apparently to 4,035.

8. It appears from the above that, while in Mysore, Koomri has absolutely ceased (save where, in remote spots, it is carried on clandestinely), in Bombay the practice is diminishing, and in Madras is rarely permitted, except in wurg-holdings, in which it is sanctioned on certain conditions. It may be said, therefore, that the general action has been to suppress concurrently Koomri cultivation, and the only point for consideration is the position of the Wurgdars above-mentioned.

9. In consequence of numerous complaints preferred by these farmers, during a tour which I recently made along the frontier of the Nuggur Division, some of the petitions were sent by me for enquiry to the Superintendent of the Division, whose report on the subject No. 338, dated 4th March 1869, is annexed. Captain Hay refers in paragraph 8 of his letter to the grievances of the Wurgdars. I set aside the complaint as to the alleged increase of wild animals, for, though this was always asserted to be a fact, I have been unable to satisfy myself that it is wholly correct, or, at any rate, that it has not been greatly exaggerated. The diminution in the number of agricultural laborers in the Wurgs is, however, indisputable, as stated by me in paragraph 3.

10. Captain Hay recommends that Koomri should be permitted within a belt of country averaging six miles from the crest of the ghats, which closely corresponds with the area in North Canara within which it is tolerated. Within this range, the rain-fall is so heavy as to render the cultivation of ordinary dry crops on the same land impossible for a successive series of years, and therefore even when cleared, permanent cultivation cannot be carried out on such lands. I do not myself advocate Koomri in virgin forests, and I think that it should be confined to old clearings which have been cultivated and abandoned. In any case, permission should only be given on written applications, and the limits should be marked off in each case, and puttahs given as proposed by the Superintendent, the Forest Conservator being made acquainted with the nature and extent of each holding. An assessment of one Rupee per acre would be ample for the year during which the land is cultivated; but it appears doubtful whether any dependence could be placed upon realizing rent for the years when the land might lie fallow, although the Deputy Superintendent, in paragraphs 5 to 7 of his letter, does not appear to anticipate any difficulty in this respect.

11. The alternative would be to maintain the existing prohibition against all Koomri cultivation in Mysore, but in this case such cultivation should, in my opinion, be also prohibited in North and South Canara.

12. I am unwilling to trouble the Government with the voluminous correspondence regarding this custom which has taken place in the Madras Presidency, and the Supreme Government is, doubtless, in possession of Dr. Cleghorn's Report on the subject in the letter mentioned in paragraph 3.

13. Should the Government desire further information before passing final orders in the matter, the Forest Conservator, who will, in the course of his duties, visit the Nuggur Division after the rains, might be instructed to report more fully upon it in concert with the Superintendent, and the Superintendent of Survey, the operations of whose Department will probably be extended to the Sagara Talook next year.

No. 4225, dated Madras

12th June 1869.

From—J. GROSE, Esq., Sub-Secretary to
To—The Officiating Secretary to the Chief

Board of Revenue, Madras,
Commissioner of Mysore.

With reference to your letter of the 29th Secretary to Government, I am directed to forward on the subject of Koomri cultivation in South Canara.

il 1869; No. 548—5, addressed to the Chief a file of papers containing full information on is made between Circar Koomri and

2. You will observe that a great distinction is made between Circar Koomri and Wurgdar Koomri. Circar Koomri is Koomri carried on in forests which undisputedly belong to Government. It was placed under the following restrictions in 1847:—

- (1.)—Koomri prohibited within nine miles of the sea-shore, and three miles of the bank of any river.
- (2.)—Only jungle tribes to cultivate: each half acre only.
- (3.)—The assessment to be one Rupee an acre.

3. In 1859, Government ordered that Circar Koomri should never be carried on except with the previous permission of the Collector, that such permission should be given sparingly, and never for spots in timber forests. There are probably not a thousand acres now cultivated as Circar Koomri in the whole District.

4. Wurgdar Koomri is carried on by Wurgdar estate-owners in the Southern part of the District, who have Koomri shist or shamil* entered in their wurgs or puttahs. They claim an absolute proprietary right to the forests and waste lands of their villages, and urge that they cannot be legally forbidden to cultivate Koomri to any extent within the boundaries of what they call their estates.

5. This claim to forests and waste lands has never been admitted; but it has been considered that the right to cultivate Koomri had gained some degree of validity by long prescription, and hence Wurgdar Koomri was allowed to continue when Circar Koomri was stopped.

6. The following are the chief rules regarding it now in force:—

- (1.)—Koomri is forbidden in virgin forest or forest uncultivated for more than nine† years.
- † Or twelve.
- This rule is grounded on the fact that forest renews itself in eight† years, and on the hypothesis that the right to cultivate is limited to a block of forest sufficiently large to give the Wurgdar his annual Koomri, that is, eight times the extent which may be cultivated in a year.
- (2.)—One acre of Koomri is allowed for each four annas of Koomri shist or shamil entered in the wurg or puttah.
- (3.)—Government may plant on any spot cleared for Koomri, and no Koomri is afterwards allowed in a place so planted.
- (4.)—No ryot can cultivate on any spot except within the boundaries of his own village, or of that in which by the Government accounts he is entitled to cut.
- (5.)—The assessment to be one Rupee an acre.
- (6.)—A block of forest is allotted to each wurg for Koomri, which is eight times as large as the annual clearing allowed.
- (7.)—Before clearing permission must be obtained.

7. Questions as to the right of these Wurgdars to cultivate Koomri to any extent, as to the size of the blocks of forest to be assigned to the wurgs for Koomri, and as to the rules under which Koomri shall be carried on, are still under consideration. Hence the file of papers which is sent herewith ends somewhat abruptly.

No. 638—255, dated Camp Hurriharpore, the 4th March 1869.

From—A. C. HAY, Esq., Superintendent, Nuggur Division,
To—The Secretary to the Commissioner of Mysore.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of your docket No. 5337—119 of the 12th January, forwarding three urzees from the Mahratta Koomri cultivators and certain ryots of Saralaholay regarding the removal of restrictions on

and Savantuncutté Maganics of the Saugor Talook, Herewith returned. Koomri.

2. I referred the question to the Deputy Superintendent of Shimoga and the Officiating Conservator of Forests, whose replies are enclosed, and from which it would appear that the Deputy Superintendent is in favor of permitting Koomri cultivation in lands already cleared, while the Officiating Conservator objects to it *in toto*.

3. Koomri cultivation has certainly both advantages and evils; and almost all that can be said on both sides is to be found in the correspondence in Dr. Cleghorn's Forests and Gardens of Southern India, pages 126 to 144, which is worth perusal, as it was in a great measure owing to Dr. Cleghorn's opinion that Koomri was abolished* in Nuggur.

* See letter to Secretary, No. 81, dated 5th May 1817.

From Secretary, No. 39, dated the 19th May 1817.

4. In paragraph 2 of his letter to the Secretary to Government of 17th August 1853, (page 137), he observes that, in addition to climatic considerations, the chief evils of this rude system of culture are the destruction of valuable timber, and rendering land unfit for coffee cultivation. I do not think it necessary to consider the last of these objections, as it is very questionable whether coffee would succeed in the localities where there is most desire to resume Koomri cultivation.

5. The principal climatic consideration is the theory that extensive clearances of jungle diminish the rain-fall, but late opinions on this point seem to throw doubt on this idea, as Dr. Bidie, in his papers on the effect of forest clearing in Coorg, considers the forests the consequence and not the cause of the rains in the Western Ghats, and Dr. Cleghorn does not believe that the clearance of 20,000 acres in Coorg could affect the rain-fall.

See proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 25th January 1869, reported in Overland Mail, dated 29th January.

6. Both these authorities seem to think that extensive clearing ought to be carefully watched to guard against injurious effects to the drainage of the country.

7. As to the destruction of valuable timber, there are many places along the ghats, the approach to which is so inaccessible on both sides that it is impossible to say what time may elapse before the wood could be turned to profit in any way; and in such cases, the objection to felling for Koomri cultivation is not greater than it would be to entire clearance for coffee, except that the cultivation is of a lower order and less permanent in character.

8. The writers of petition No. 5974, who are ryots, represent several evils which have resulted from stopping Koomri, some of which are notorious as matters of fact. One is the increase of wild animals, and the consequent destruction to the crops of the land under regular cultivation; another the loss of the services of the Mahrattas who lived by Koomri, and were of great assistance to the Wurgdars.

The latter is an evil yearly felt with greater intensity, and the causes are so well known to the Commissioner, that I need not enter upon them. In whatever talook the cultivation is restricted to the original productions of grain and soapari, it is found annually more and more difficult to retain the resident laborers, or to obtain others from a distance, except at excessively high rates of pay.

9. I therefore think that if localities are carefully selected, and proper restrictions as regards felling imposed, Koomri to a limited extent may be permitted without objection, and perhaps with advantage.

10. In determining in what localities the trial should be made, I think it will be expedient to adopt the principle suggested by Colonel Anderson when Superintendent, Revenue Survey, Southern Mahratta country (see Extract A, page 111 of Dr. Cleghorn's Forests), except that I would confine Koomri to a belt of country averaging six miles from the crest of the ghats.

11. The first point for settlement with regard to other restrictions to be imposed is, whether Koomri cultivation should be allowed only on ground already cleared to be cultivated and assessed on the system described and recommended by the Deputy Superintendent, Shimoga, or whether it might be extended to virgin forests.

12. In the first of these cases I do not see that the Forest Department can raise any legitimate objection; and, in point of fact, the system is partly recognized and followed, though to what extent I cannot, without delay, obtain very definite information.

A great deal of old Koomri cultivation has been attached permanently to Wargs, and lightly assessed, at the rate of six annas for 3,200 square yards, and this seems to have been done more or less in Saugor, Nuggur, and other talooks, in addition to Sorub and Shicarpore, in which talooks alone the Koomri was formerly incorporated with the land revenue. As Major Onslow remarked in letter No. 98, dated 9th June 1817, the cultivation may, under such circumstances, be considered permanent as regards assessment, though it may be intermittently practiced on the Koomri system of cropping. If this extent of land be excluded, the remaining tracts of old Koomri must be those temporarily cultivated and abandoned by Mahrattas and others; and to their re-occupation in this way, and assessment as proposed by Lieutenant Cumming, I see no objection.

For these regular application should be made to resume cultivation, and they should be given only after inspection by the talook officials, who should state boundary marks, distances, and approximate area, as in the case of applications for coffee jungles. Regular pattahs should be issued and assessment, and a register should be kept, extra Assistant Conservator of Forests. I look upon encroachments on the surrounding forest, or persons a place already cleared as a means of clearing fresh

by Mahrattas or any others who desire to resume cultivation, and they should be given only after inspection by the talook officials, who should state boundary marks, distances, and approximate area, as in the case of applications for land so given, showing the boundaries from which should be furnished to the Assistant Conservator of Forests. I look upon encroachments on the surrounding forest, or persons a place already cleared as a means of clearing fresh

13. Lastly, I consider that no fresh forest application to the revenue authorities, and inspection of Forests.

ought to be felled and cleared without sanction of the Assistant Conservator of Forests.

No. 1091, dated Bangalore, this 20th February 1869.

From—LIEUT. G. J. VAN SOMEREN, Offg. Conservator of Forests, Mysore and Coorg,
To—The Superintendent of Nuggur Division.

I HAVE the honor to reply to your docket No. 4 of the 30th ultimo.

It refers to a petition from certain Mahrattas and others of the Saugor Talook, asking to be allowed to fell land for Koomri cultivation.

2. The petitioners say that they are now deprived of their only means of sustenance, and state that Rs. 500 can be paid by them annually.

3. I am strongly of opinion that Koomri cultivation should be prohibited, except under very special circumstances. I have lately obtained the Commissioner's sanction to my allowing the Coorooburs employed by this Department in felling wood, to Koomri land in the reserved forests; but, owing to the circumscribed limits of the reserved forests, the careful watch that can be kept over them, and the fact of the Assistant Conservator in charge having to select the land first, it is impossible to allow this wasteful style of cultivation without much damage to the interests of Government. The advantage gained is our keeping the men in our forests. Without some such inducement we should lose the only labor available, and our felling operations would be brought to a stand-still. But this case is widely different from that sent by you for my opinion. I have been lately travelling through the South and West of Coorg, and it was pitiful to see the waste of forest caused by Koomri cultivation in Coorg, and more especially in South Canara and Malabar. From the top of the Cudantharki Ghaut in South Coorg, miles of country are to be seen covered with nothing but low brush-wood, the remains of fine forests. Here Koomri has been carried on, and is still being carried on, but in a less degree, owing in a great measure to the land being impoverished and the crops smaller. There was no counterbalancing advantage to be perceived. A few small hamlets are met at great distances from each other, and there are no signs of real prosperity and improvement in the surrounding country. The same can be said of that portion of Coorg on either side of the Thodankana Ghaut. To the South of the Ghaut the evil is not so perceptible, as for the last three or four years Koomri has been much checked, and, owing to the difficulty of access, fewer people have resorted there; but to the North, around Chembu and on the road to Sumpajee and Cootoor, the forest has been almost entirely ruined. Here and there, where the land is low and flat, and water is obtainable, paddy has been cultivated; (a very small portion of land carries dry crops), groves of areca nut and coconut trees planted, and small but well-built and clean villages have sprung up. This is, I think, due entirely to the steady cultivation of one spot, and the regular habits thereby induced.

4. Koomri cultivation in any form is opposed to the first principles of forest conservancy; and though the effects of destroying good forest land in Saugor or Nuggur may not be very apparent for some few years, it is not to be supposed that these intrinsically rich talooks will always be so unprovided with roads as they are now; when they become more accessible, the wood growing in them, besides being valuable in itself, will largely conduce to the general prosperity of the surrounding country.

5. On the other hand, if ryots can be induced to take up land for regular cultivation, much land, now covered with forest, could advantageously be given up to them, to their gain and that of the Province generally.

6. I see that the petition of the Mahrattas is supported by the ryots of some adjoining villages who say that they will suffer if the Mahrattas are not allowed to Koomri. The Mahratta Gowlies are chiefly (if I am not mistaken) herdsmen who wander about with large droves of ill-bred small cattle, and who lead a lazy, reckless life not calculated to make them useful dwellers in the land. The ryots doubtless obtain their services at a very low rate, and find it convenient that the Government should help to support these men in idleness, and keep them in the country during the season when they have no work for them.

7. I am therefore decidedly of opinion that Koomri should be more and more stringently prohibited in such cases as that now under consideration.

No. 559, dated Shimoga, 29th February 1869.

From—P. G. Canning, Esq., Deputy Superintendent, Shimoga District.
To—The Superintendent, Nuggur Division.

With reference to your letter No. 811, dated 29th ultimo, calling for a report on Koomri, I have the honor to state that I delayed answering the letter until now, as I was anxious to obtain all the information I could on the subject.

2. I now beg to report that in my old Koomri jungles, and not allowed to enter from this office, no harm whatever will ensue on the ryots.

3. I consider the tract within which Koomri cultivation should be allowed should be contained within a line taken from Jogur to Talgooppa, and thence through Elaire to Nuggur, Yedloor, and Agoemby on the East, and the Ghaut line on the West.

4. I may mention that, in consequence of Koomri having been stopped, many people have left the District, and it was only last week that I received a private letter from the Collector of North Canara, in which he told me Koomri was allowed there, and that some of our men had crossed the border to take up Koomri land within his Collectorate.

5. Regarding assessment, I would impose one Rupee per acre for the years in which the lands are cultivated and 8 annas per acre for the years during which the lands lie fallow.

6. The custom is to cultivate two years, and to let the jungle grow for five, and then cultivate again for two years, and so on.

7. Thus, in seven years, they cultivate two years. The total assessment they would pay as above would be Rs. 4-8 for the whole time, or Rs. 2-4 per acre for each crop. This, considering the heavy crops they obtain, is not excessive.

8. Finally, I may mention that the jungle in the tract in which I have recommended that Koomri may be allowed is not of a valuable character, and is generally very inaccessible.

9. The enclosures are returned.

Literary, Artistic, and Scientific.

A MEETING of the Royal Geographical Society was held on January 25th, the chair being taken by Sir Roderick J. Murchison, Bart. Among the gentlemen present were Sir George Grey, Bart., late Governor of New Zealand, Sir Andrew Waugh, Sir Thomas Fremantle, Bart., Admiral Sir William Hall, Colonel Grant, Consul Cameron, Dr. Raw, Dr. Cleghorn, Mr. J. Ferguson, F.R.S., and Mr. P. P. Blythe. After some routine business had been transacted, Mr. Clements Markham read a paper by Dr. Bidie, "on the effects of forest clearing, especially with reference to the District of Coorg, on the Western side of India, chiefly on the Eastern aspect of the Western Ghats."

"The rain in Coorg is almost entirely derived from the South-West monsoon, between June 1st and September 1st. The clouds are caught by the Ghats, and Dr. Bidie considers the forests as the consequence, and not the cause, of these rains; but the Natives complained that since the cutting down of the forests, the District had become hotter and drier, and the rice crops have been injured or destroyed from a failure of water in streams that used to run throughout the year. The effects upon climate and upon drainage of the destruction of forests were of much importance and operated slowly, increasing from year to year. The spots selected in Coorg were chiefly on the flanks and crests of low hills, the sides and bottoms of ravines, and the slopes of passes running down the Western Ghats. Such localities were generally densely wooded, and, being full of springs, might be called the fountains of the country. The undergrowth and vegetable mould was a great absorbent, and, aided by the shade of the forest, formed no unimportant reservoir for maintaining the water-supply. Palestine and other Eastern countries had been rendered desolate by the destruction of forests; and in France and America, many Districts had suffered want of water from a similar cause. In Mauritius, the matter had been taken up by Government in consequence of the cultivation of sugar-cane having become unpredictable from want of water. In clearing forests for coffee-growing, the trees and undergrowth were burned on the ground, which was thus so dried that the rains washed it off, or cut water-courses through, so that the streams were filled up in the rainy season, and ran dry at other periods. The destruction of the trees also rendered the climate hotter, and altered the constitution of the atmosphere, as the vegetation absorbed many noxious gases. Forests obstructed the passage of drifting fog, and used much of its moisture. The fauna and flora of a country were also much changed by deforesting, and at times certain insects so multiplied as to become pests. In such cases, however, frequently the birds which fed on these insects also increased so as to diminish this nuisance. After alluding to the fact that certain kinds of wood were now becoming scarce, Dr. Bidie went on to recommend that the Government should preserve a certain amount of

forest, especially in the higher regions, and that they should carefully ascertain whether land were fitted for coffee-growing before permitting it to be cleared. He also recommended that 20 or 30 yards in breadth should be preserved under timber along the banks of the rivers and streams."

"The President said the paper was one of great importance, and the question was important to us in England. In Russia, the water supply had become inconstant owing to the clearing of extensive tracks, and much injury had resulted. In Constantinople, some time since, the want of water had been felt, and the Sultan had stopped the cutting down of forests on the mountains, since which preventive action the water supply had improved. Dr. Cleghorn said that he had traversed the region of Coorg four or five times during the last 20 years. The question of the effects of the removal of forests depended upon two considerations, which should be kept distinct. The one was the drainage, and the other the effects upon rain-fall. At the present time about five Europeans in a month went up into Coorg to plant coffee. They took on an average 150 acres each, and invested, he supposed, about £1,500 each in the business. He thought the calculation of 20,000 acres, as already cleared, was about right. The amount might be greater. He did not believe that this quantity of clearing could affect the rain-fall. The question of drainage was entirely different, and had been brought before the Government by Colonel Lawford and Major Sankey in 1866, when large reservoirs were proposed to keep up the supply in rivers. It was true that the Natives were almost entirely of opinion that their country was becoming sterile from the deforesting. He thought the Forest Conservators and the Canal Officers should co-operate and carefully watch the changes that were being effected in the country. Mr. George Campbell said that it would be difficult and doubtful as to policy to stop the influx of British Capital. He recommended the scheme of Sir Arthur Cotton for storing up the waters, by building large dams of fit places across rivers. Mr. Clements Markham said, he objected to the destruction of forests indiscriminately. He had seen a large tract denuded of its timber, and after this had been done it was found to be too rocky to admit of its being planted with coffee."

2
Rev. No. 2116/70

No. 237 F, dated Sirga, 17th May 1870.

From—The Government of India, P. W. Dept.,
To—The Chief Commissioner of Mysore.

I AM now directed to acknowledge your predecessor's report No. 1600—9 of the 21st June last, on the subject of kumri cultivation in the Nuggur Division of Mysore.

2. As Mr. Bowring correctly observed in paragraph 8 of his report, the general action of Government in Madras, Bombay, and Mysore has been to suppress concurrently kumri cultivation on land which is under the control of Government. In Mysore, this description of cultivation has ceased, whereas in the adjoining Provinces of Bombay and Madras it is still permitted to a limited extent. In private states, however, which are not under the control of Government, as in Malabar, it is believed that the practice continues without restriction.

3. His Excellency the Governor General in Council fully acknowledges that the prohibition of kumri in Mysore may have caused some hardship to certain classes of cultivators. But it would appear from the records on the subject that this measure dates back as far as 1817, and under these circumstances it is not clear how the prohibition of kumri cultivation can be held to have been the sole or even the principal cause of the emigration of the laboring classes complained of by the Wurgdars of the Nuggur Division.

4. It is admitted on all sides that it is desirable to prevent the destruction of Forest by this kind of cultivation, and it appears also to be admitted that this practice encourages unsettled habits, and stops the progress of civilization. His Excellency in Council therefore cannot but regard its proposed re-introduction into Mysore as a retrograde measure, which should, if possible, be avoided.

5. Final orders on this subject will be passed in the Foreign Department; but before the question can be finally considered, it appears necessary to have further information regarding the area and the population which would be affected by the measure proposed. As suggested by Mr. Dowering, the Conservator of Forests should be instructed to examine the Forests in question, to report upon the trees they contain, and the probable changes in the condition of these Forests which would follow the re-introduction of kumri clearings. He should state by which streams and rivers the tract of country in question is drained, and whether the clearing of the Forests is likely to have any injurious effect connected with the drainage of the country, the retention of the soil on the sides of mountains and in valleys, and the washing down of silt and sand.

6. The whole subject should be considered and discussed by the Conservator, and in concert with the District Officer he should report on the number of villages and inhabitants who would be permitted to cut kumri if the measure were finally approved. The Superintendent of Revenue Survey should be requested to submit specific proposals concerning the conditions and rates of assessment, as compared with other kinds of cultivation, under which kumri might be permitted in the tracts in question. Finally, it would be desirable to have a tracing of the Atlas Sheet of the Trigonometrical Survey, on which should be indicated the limits of the tract in which kumri is proposed to be permitted, together with a statement of the boundaries proposed to be fixed.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.
REVENUE—FORESTS.

To

THE SECY. TO THE GOVT. OF INDIA,
FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

No. 233 F.

Dated Simla, the 17th May 1870.

Received

Rev. No. 2116/70

*Communicates observations and orders on the
subject of koomree cultivation in the Nuggur Division
of Mysore.*

No. 230F, dated Bangalore, the 9th August 1871.

From—Major W. R. JOHNSON, Offg. Secy. to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore,
P. W. Dept.

To—The Secy. to the Govt. of India, Dept. of Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce.

In continuation of this Office No. 183F. of the 22nd June last, on the subject of Koomree cultivation in Mysore, I have the honor, by desire of the Chief Commissioner, to forward copy of letter No. 680 of the 5th ultimo, from the Survey and Settlement Commissioner, on the same subject, and, in so doing, to state that the letter in question has been unfortunately mislaid and overlooked in the Office of the Secretary, General Department, and has only just come to notice.

No. 680, dated Dharwar, the 5th July 1871.

From—COLONEL W. C. ANDERSON, Survey and Settlement Commissioner, Mysore.

To—The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore.

WITH reference to your letter No. 352 of the 22nd ultimo, I have the honor to offer the following remarks.

Koomree has special attractions for the class of people who resort to it; they will neglect all other kinds of cultivation even when freely available, and devote themselves to this alone. The reason is plain: the profits are far greater to the cultivator, and the expense is less than in the case of any other description of cultivation. No ploughing or cattle are requisite in any of the tillage preparations, nothing is required but an axe or bill-hook and a pair of arms expert in wielding them. The labor of a month in April and May in cutting and burning the forest, and ten days or so in June to sow, with a similar period in October or November to reap, will provide the cultivator and his family with subsistence for the year, if he can retain for himself the fruits of his labors.

2. The destruction of wood is of course very great, the only question is whether it is always worth preserving, and how far it can be preserved consistently with the attainment of other objects which it would not do to put entirely out of sight.

3. As a forest question, pure and simple, there is no advantage whatever in Koomree; the wood can hardly be turned to a worse purpose. Bad and comparatively worthless as it may be for timber purposes, and inaccessible for firewood and other minor uses, yet it has its use for climatic purposes, and it must be remembered that the denudation of a country in which the fall of rain is very heavy, is the most certain way to cause sudden and dangerous floods in the rivers draining the denuded area; the rain-fall rushes into them at once instead of being checked in its passage by the vegetation. Again in the hot weather the supply of water in these streams will be very mischievously affected by the permanent denudation of the wooded tracts near their sources, and such a denudation does occur in a country where Koomree cultivation has been persistently followed. The bare state of the hills in the Rutnaghery and parts of the Tannah Collectorate of the Bombay Presidency is a proof of this, the ground being bared and the trees almost entirely extirpated.

4. To suppose that any counteraction to malaria is caused by Koomree clearings interspersed in forest tracts is a pure delusion, and such an idea can only have been advocated by persons who fancied that a clearing once made in such tracts always remains, and is a cleaner and more open space than virgin forest in the same locality. They can never have seen the state into which a Koomree clearing in the jungles in the ghâts passes in even two years after it has been cultivated. It must be remembered that Koomree is ordinarily cultivated for one or at most two years, the second year's crop being inferior; in very rare cases a very small return is obtained in the third year. In fact, if fresh jungle could be procured to fall every year, the same land would hardly be used two years in succession. After cultivation the land is abandoned and is not re-cultivated till the lapse of at least fifteen years; if the supply of forest is abundant, it will even be left untouched for twelve or thirteen years. Two years after cultivation in a Koomree situated in a forest tract the jungle has generally sprung up again, not to any height indeed, but in a dense tangled mass of wood undergrowth and creepers hardly pervious to man, beast or indeed air, and much more dense than ordinary virgin forest in the same locality. In the point of preventing malaria, therefore, there is certainly no advantage in Koomree excepting it is allowed to be so persistently cultivated as to extirpate the forest entirely.

5. It must further be remembered that we hardly at present know what strain may be placed upon our existing forest resources, which it will require much care and economic management to increase or even to keep from decrease, while it is certain that the demand for wood must increase not only from the general progress of improvement in the country, but from the extension of railway communication, and the consequent demand for good timber for sleepers and for fuel for firewood. Wood may be inaccessible now, because it is now worth while to devise systematic means on a large scale to float it down rivers, or bring it in other ways to market. But the great demand for sleepers and fuel for engines may alter all these circumstances, and we should, in my opinion, be prepared for any contingencies which may arise, and nothing can be more certain than that we shall not be prepared if the supply of wood is materially reduced in the meantime.

6. Further it may be objected to Koomree cultivation that it is an idle and demoralizing mode of getting a livelihood. The people availing themselves of it have the most decided aversion to any other kind of harder work, they will readily act as beaters to shooting parties for very small, almost nominal, pay, as that falls in with their own habits, but nothing short of an absence of other resource will induce them to work at making a road even for full fair wages. Feeling the want of a *kumlee* (Native blanket) they will move from the jungle into the rice Districts for a few days to help to reap, but having acquired a sufficient quantity of rice in payment to purchase the coveted article they will refuse to work any more and return to their jungles an idle life.

7. But we must to some extent take these people as we find them, and not expect to change their nature at once. We may perhaps gradually wean them from their present habits by the tendency of the measures we may adopt; we certainly cannot drive them to the courses of the more civilized classes by prohibiting altogether the mode of cultivation to which they have hitherto looked for a livelihood. The only result of this would be that much misery would be caused, and these people would be driven to move to some other tract where they might for a time, and till their depredations on forest attracted attention, continue the course of life to which they are accustomed.

8. These people who live by Koomree on the western ghats are generally Maharrattas by origin, and are in the last degree barbarous and ignorant. They are ordinarily in the hands of the Koolkurnee or Shanbog, who makes all their arrangements as to where they shall cultivate; he sometimes himself acts as money lender, and sometimes is associated with one to make the most out of the ignorance of these wild people. They do not thus work entirely for themselves; the lion's share of the fruit of their labor goes to the Shanbog, or the money lender, and much of the cry which is continually raised about the extreme destitution caused by restrictions on this kind of cultivation comes, not from the people themselves, who will, if pushed to extremity, leave the neighbourhood or turn to some one of the other available means of obtaining a subsistence, but from those who literally work them to their own profit the Shanbogs, whose influence is always in connection with the amildar's office.

9. For the last eighteen years I have constantly had to deal with Koomree and its cultivators in the Bombay Presidency, and we have found that one plan of working best meets all the difficulties.

10. The plan is to fix certain limits within which Koomree shall be entirely interdicted as not absolutely necessary to the subsistence of the people, or where the forest is of such value that the preservation of it becomes the prime consideration.

11. On the other hand certain limits are fixed, within which it is considered that some Koomree is necessary to the subsistence of the people, and where portions of forest at any rate can be found which are for various reasons of inferior value. As a general rule a distance of about six miles from the crest of the ghats will approximately define the line within which it is necessary to allow some Koomree, also on the face of the ghats and for some little distance from the foot according to the locality.

12. The area given should be restricted within as narrow limits as possible,—from half an acre to about one acre per head according to the locality will probably prove a sufficient allowance, and to provide for the annual rotation about eight to ten times the area considered to be annually necessary for cultivation should be assigned. On the area of the assignment a low annual rate all over is placed, which sometimes one representative, in other cases more than one, agrees to be responsible for in the name of the whole village. The limits of the assigned tract of land is marked by conspicuous boundary marks, so that no doubt can exist as to where it begins or ends.

13. The chief difficulty in working this system is in the improvidence of the people who are very apt, driven on by the greed of those who work them, either to themselves exhaust in two or three years the tract intended to supply permanent cultivation in rotation, or more probably to sub-let as much as they can to people of other villages, and especially of other jurisdictions; and thus in a year or two, having no land which will produce a crop, they raise a howl of destitution. Notwithstanding that the most positive warning

has been given in the first instance that more land will not be given if the assignment is prematurely exhausted, when it comes to the pinch, and a pitiable tale of starvation is told, it becomes very difficult to procure a steady and unflinching adherence to the orders originally given.

14. It has been proposed to divide the assignment into eight or ten blocks, one of which only should be allowed to be cultivated each year, the full rate being levied on the cultivated block only, and not the lower rate on the whole area set apart for Koomree. This plan looks promising in theory, but the execution is difficult; it must be almost, if not entirely, left to Native supervision, and I am not aware that it has ever worked successfully. The local influence of the Koolkurnee or Shanbog is generally able to override and influence all Native supervision, if indeed the supervision is not entirely left in his hands. But here the officers of the Forest Department should be able to show their activity and utility as this kind of cultivation and its control might fairly be placed under them.

15. It is clear that if every village received an assignment fairly sufficient for its wants, no pressure on any one tract could occur, and to a considerable extent this can be provided for within the limits of one jurisdiction. But the case is different where the tracts in which Koomree is practised are on the borders of Provinces under different systems of rule, and unfortunately this is the common case. In the Southern Mahratta country we find the Koomree country on and near the ghats contiguous to the Sawunt Waree boundary and to that of the Portuguese territory of Goa; in North Canara and Belgaum we also march with the Goa frontier; again, North Canara marches with South Canara and with Mysore. In this complication of boundaries, one of the great difficulties of working any system arises. When any restrictions are put on in the Belgaum Collectorate the people move into North Canara or into the Goa territory, and watch their opportunity to return and call for a Koomree again in Belgaum; when pressure comes in their new location, or when they see a favourable opportunity, the same plan is pursued between North Canara, Mysore, and South Canara. Some regulations are constantly being laid down in each of these British Districts with the view of either greatly restricting or altogether prohibiting Koomree; but there is no uniformity of system, and consequently the regulations must be more or less strict at one time, or more or less easily evaded in different Districts. In the Goa Territory Koomree is cultivated without restriction, and nearly all the forest has been cleared away. The class of people depending on this kind of cultivation is very numerous there, and they may be looked upon as enemies of all forest within their reach.

16. But there can be no reason why some common system should not be arranged between Bombay, Madras, and Mysore territories; and, as far as I have read, the desire is unanimous in the case of all those Governments, namely, to restrict this species of cultivation as much as possible. It must be borne in mind that no forest can long stand the depredations of these people, and the increasing legitimate demand for timber. If Koomree is kept down we may hope in the course of nature that the number of people depending upon it will be gradually drawn off into other and more civilized modes of life, in furnishing them with a full supply of forest to Koomree, even though it is of little value to the Government supplying it. The race of Koomree cutters is kept up, and the future result will be that they will prey upon the forests of adjacent governments.

17. It is therefore most desirable both to restrict the quantity everywhere, and to put such a high rate of assessment upon it as shall certainly not offer any premium on this kind of cultivation. I would not advocate a rate lower than Rs. 1-8 per acre on the area actually cultivated in any year for the first year, and Rs. 1-4 on the second year of cultivation. At this rate this cultivation will be sufficiently remunerative, but it will perhaps deter the Shanbogs or Koolkurnees and the money-lenders from interesting themselves in it more than in any other kind of cultivation.

18. Without reference to the practice of cultivation hitherto, Koomree should be rigidly and entirely prohibited within five miles of any made road, of any track passable for carts, and of any river available for floating timber. In these situations the existing wood, or the chances of future supply, are too valuable to allow the interests of the whole community to be sacrificed.

19. I have gone at some length into this subject, and beyond the precise question addressed to me in your letter under reply, as it is a matter in which I take a very great interest, and have had more experience in dealing with for many years back than falls to the lot of most. I have now under reference an expression of desire on the part of the Bombay Revenue Officers for some united action of the Governments of the adjacent territories under different jurisdictions which all meet in the vicinity of the north-western point of Mysore, and the present appeared to me a favourable opportunity for bringing the subject forward.

117
No 340/1 F.
Government of India
Public Works Department.
Revenue Forests.

To
The Secretary to the
Govt of Madras & Bombay
Revenue Department.

Sindia 8th July 1878.

The undersigned is directed to forward
of the Government of Madras and Bombay
the papers noted in the margin relative to
Koomri cultivation in Mysore.

* Form C. Commr. of
Mysore. No 1600-7 dated
21st June 1869.
P.W.D. No 237 F dated
17th May 1870

Sd/-
Under Secretary to the Govt of India

2
3105/71

117
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Sd/-
Under Secretary to the Govt of India

2
3105/71

C 1: 272

15

From

J. Georgegan Esq.
Under Secy to the Govt of India
Department of Agriculture,
Revenue and Commerce.

To

The Secy to the Govt of Madras
Revenue Department
Sindia the 14 September 1871

(Forests) Sir

In continuation of the Memorandum
from the P.W. Department No 310 S. dated
8th July 1870. I am directed to forward for the
information of His Excellency the Governor
in Council the papers noted in the margin

From Chief Commr Mysore No 183 S. dated 22nd June 1871	relative to
To Ditt No 121 dated 9th August 1871	Roomree
From Ditt No 230 S. dated 9th August 1871	Cultivation

in allypore. It is hoped that in respect
to the practice of Roomree uniformity of
action may be arrived at by the
several

No 2116

Received 1870

From
The Secy to the Govt
of Madras

Dated 8th July 1870

No 3640 S

Forwarding for
information custom papers
relative to Roomree cultu-
-tion in Bangalore

No 8073517

1871

Recd by the Secy to the Govt of India
the 18th September 1871

several Gorts interested therein along the
Ghat Ranges of Western India.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your most obedient servant

W. J. P.

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

27-

But I have
to the Government
of India and
the Govt.

Revenue Dept

735

17

Precursor

to Madras Government

Under date the 14th April 1875

Read the following papers:

Govt of India. Public Works Dept.

Among certain papers
relative to Koomeri Cultivation in
Mysore

} H. E. 8: July 1870 No 340/17.

Govt of India. Dept of Agric. Pers. & Com.

Among papers on
Koomeri cultivation in Mysore

} 14: Sep: 1871 No 272

There are two of the papers
referred to above. The former
deposited in Mysore. The latter
question was disposed of on 14th
of 23rd Feb. 1874 No 1361.

Recorded & be

Koomeri
question L9 - 14-45-
been disposed of in G.O.
of 23/10/74 No 1361.

13/4/75

Rec: 1871 Dept
No 3105

From
Govt of India
Agric. Pers. & Com.
No 272

Dated 14th July 1871
Rec: 27: }
Memo 2

File of the papers received from the
Govt. of India on 11th January 1875.

According
certain papers relating
to Koomeri cultivation
in Mysore.

March 1875

2.7: March 1875.

in Room 100

17.00

17.00

17.00