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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

589

Press
Mis.

Dated

9-5-1876

196

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 66. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 26th April 1876, No. 1,055, Forest No. 33 :-

Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. BEDDOME, Conservator of Forests, to C. A. GANTON, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Ootacamund, 2nd April 1876, No. 468 :-

ADVERTING to the report of the Commission appointed under G.O., No. 1,102, dated 28th August 1874, to consider the expediency of a change in the present rules for the sale of waste land on the Nilgiris, I have the honor to submit a few remarks for the consideration of the Board of Revenue, and request that the same may be submitted to Government.

2. I see no objection to the sale of any shola land on the plateau (not including of course those tracts reserved round the different stations for aesthetic considerations or for the supply of firewood or other Government purposes) except where sholas protect springs and the source of streams, but great care should be exercised in alienating these, and I would strongly advise that all the sholas protecting the more important springs and streams should be reserved, or at least only indented upon with reference to their annual reproduction and not felled out entirely and burnt. The rule, which the Committee propose for leaving a belt of fifty yards on each side of the streams is, I am sure, perfectly futile. I have seen this tried in many parts of our moist mountain forests in the Wynaad, Coorg, the Anamallays, Travancore and Tinnevely Ghauts, and hills of Ceylon, and it has always been a failure. Even wider belts than this left between estates have rapidly died out when the surrounding forest has been cut. Our moist forest evergreen trees (shola) will not stand the sudden change of conditions and exposure to wind brought about by the felling of the rest of the forest and they die out rapidly. I am sure that almost every competent planter in this Presidency who has had experience in this matter would endorse these views; it is true that at all our hill streams where not running through shola are fringed with a narrow belt of shola trees mixed with rhododendrons, but then these have grown up under these conditions and been acclimatized to the exposure; besides no planter would fell shola forest for plantation purposes without burning it, and the fire would without any doubt destroy a great portion, if not the whole, of this belt, so that if not unintentionally it would be a very easy matter intentionally to evade the reservation of the fifty yards and no one could be held responsible.

3. Mr. McIvor says that the felling of the sholas will increase the water-supply; but almost every one who has given the subject any attention thinks quite the reverse, and we have the example of many other countries where there is great lamentation over the failure of the water-supply on account of the destruction of hill forests; but even admitting that it is all theory and a matter of doubt, we know that our streams will continue to run if our hill forests protecting their sources are not destroyed, but we do not know what conditions may obtain if these forests are destroyed; and is it wise of Government to risk injuring the supply of water in the Bhowany and Cauvery and the irrigation of Tanjore just to drive a small revenue from the shola land on the Nilgiri plateau?

4. For the same reason I consider that all, or nearly all, the forest in the ravines of the slopes protecting rivers and streams should be also reserved; if not, we shall at

58/2
Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
20 April 1876 at 450.

Minutes

There is little of practical value in the Conservators letter. I have always held that Rules for the reservation of 50 feet ~~to people & buildings~~ along the sides of streams, fringes of Shola on ridges and the like restrictions are useless and vexatious. The Conservator shows that

Original
Sd/-
Govt. of 1876. Muziris
REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Nov. 1876. No. 580.

Nov. 1876.

Part of Land on the Nigra. - Recording of
order to be over for the present. Proceeding
the Board of Revenue regarding the question of
the reservation of a change in the present rule
of the side.

that they are futile
from natural causes
for we cannot meddle
with those shallow
decrepit old things
which we call Sholah
without demonstrating
the bootlessness of the
whole thing. I myself
would remove the blot
from the rules and
permit no reservation
whatever without
well-defined and
Cogent reasons shewn
in each case. I won't
admit in general
assertions of desirability
to interfere with
all.

all sholah land
being put to a useful
agricultural purpose.
Arbor culture on the
Hills would be greatly
advantaged by this
course. I should ^{not} ~~imply~~
solemnly order planting
along Hill-brooks in
order to prevent
draught or floods
in Tanjore. Trees
no doubt consume
a great deal of
water, but I do
not think that
their thirst on the
one hand or its
absence

absence on the other
will really affect
irrigation below

27th W. Wilson

Reservations of the land
on Nilgiris

Col. Widdowes letter
into Ministry by Mr. W.

W. Wilson

This question
will form part
of discussion of
waste land sales
& I presume what I
have to say will be
whole subject comes
before Council

Sanctified by the Hon. Secy. 5 May 1876

Revenue Department

7/5

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue

Held 20 April 1876

Read in following

No. 468

From Lt. Col. R. H. Beddome

Conservator of Forests

To The Secretary to

Board of Revenue, Madras

Sir

Adverting to the report of the Com-
mission appointed under Government
Order, No. 1102, dated 28th August 1874,
to consider the expediency of a
change in the present rules for the
sale of waste land on the Nilgiris, I
have the honor to submit a few re-
marks for the consideration of the
Board of Revenue, and request that
the same may be submitted to Government.

2. I see no objection to the sale of
any shola land on the plateau (not
including, of course, those tracts reserved
round the different stations for

aesthetic considerations or for the supply
of firewood or other domestic purposes)
except where sholas protect springs, &
the source of streams, but great care
should be exercised in alienating these
and I would strongly advise that all
the sholas protecting the more im-
portant springs and streams should
be reserved or at least only indentured
upon with reference to their annual re-
production and not felled out entirely
and burnt. The Rule which the
Committee propose for leaving a
belt of 50 yards on each side of the
streams is I am sure perfectly feasible.
I have seen this tried in many parts
of our moist mountain forests in
the Wynnad, Gong, the Anamallay,
Travancore, Sumnerly Ghats, and
hills of Ceylon, and it has always been
a failure. Even wide belts thus left
between estates have rapidly

of course
the sholas
form a
belt
of forest

As a rule the
decree of trees
is very small

decide not, when the surrounding forest
has been cut, our moist forest evergreen
trees (shola) will not stand the sudden
change of conditions and exposure to wind
brought about by the felling of the rest
of the forest and they die out rapidly.
I am sure that almost every Coffee
planter in this Presidency who has had
experience in this matter would endorse
these views, it is true that almost all
our hill streams, where not running
through shola are fringed with a narrow
belt of shola trees mixed with *pisidia*
- trees, but these have grown up
under these conditions and been acclimatized
to the exposure, besides no planter would
fell shola forest for plantation purposes
without burning it, and this would
without any doubt destroy a great
portion if not the whole of this belt.
so that, if not unintentionally, it would be
a very easy matter intentionally to
evade the reservation of the 50 yards.

and no one could be held responsible.

3. Mr. Mac Don says that the falling of the Sholas will increase the water supply, but almost every one who has given the subject any attention thinks quite the reverse and we have the example of many other countries where there is great lamentation over the failure of the water supply on account of the destruction of hill forests; but even admitting that it is all theory and a matter of doubt, we know that the streams will continue to run if our hill forests protecting their sources are not destroyed, but we do not know what conditions may obtain if these forests are destroyed; and is it wise of Government to risk injuring the supply of water in the Bhawany and Cauvery and the Irrigation of Tanjore, just to derive a small revenue from the Shola land on the Nilgiri plateau?

2 run with
them

4. For the same reason I consider that all or nearly all the forest in the ravines of the slopes protecting rivers and streams should be also reserved; if not, we shall at some seasons have higher & more sudden floods than we now experience, and greater drought at others.

5. The Board are probably aware that a great impetus has lately been given to Tea Planting on grass land. I should be sorry to give an opinion whether this will prove a success and be permanent, or whether the plants will rapidly die out after a few years, as all coffee, however carefully planted on grass land has done; but I understand that it has been a great success in Darjeeling, where other conditions as to latitude, climate, elevation and soil prevail; and as far as it has gone, it appears quite a success here, and the plants are thriving well; and tea planters argue that as they are not allowed to flower and fruit, they do not exhaust themselves.

or require much depth of soil, be this all
as it may, it is a fact that there are now
interminable applications for grants of land
and shola will be required in connection
with this for the supply of fuel, and I
see no objection to the grant of any of the
sholas for this purpose on such conditions
that will ensure their being only indicated
on the said reference to the reproduction,
and not used for planting purposes and
subjected to the necessary clear burn.

Office of Secy of Forest

Cochin

3 April 1896

I have

(2) R. H. Meddome M.L.

Conservator of Forests

Submitted to Government in continuation
of the Board's Proceedings, dated 10 April
1896, No. 968.

2. In the foregoing letter, the Conservator
of Forests strongly agrees with reference
to the recommendations of the committee
appointed to consider the provision
of the waste land rules on the Nilgiris
that all the sholas protecting the river

important springs and streams should
be reserved or at least only indicated upon
with reference to their natural reproduction
and not filled in entirely or burnt. He
considers the proposal to provide for the
retention of a belt of wood fifty yards wide
round the sources of streams and along
both banks perfectly feasible as provided
by experience elsewhere and suggests
that sholas should only be granted on
condition that they are to be used to meet
the requirements of the planter in respect
of wood for fuel &c. and not to be cleared
for planting. The reservation of all or
nearly all the Forest in the valleys on
the slopes is also urged.

3. There is some force in the Con-
-servator's argument as to the utility of
the proposed stipulation for the reservation
of natural belts, and the Board would
suggest that a provision be inserted
in the rules to the effect that where the
indigenous growth in the required belts

cannot be prevented from injury by fire
pressure in other cases, the natural wood
should be replaced by plantations of
sustainable trees. It will doubtless require
some question of authority especially
at first to secure attention to this rule
but considering the interest involved,
it is not unreasonable in itself, and
though compliance may entail some
trouble it is certainly not impracticable.

4. The Board doubt the advisability
of alienating forest or pholao subject to
such conditions as those suggested
at para 5 of the Conservator's letter,
Where land is not absolutely reserved,
the only restrictions really practicable
and desirable seem those indicated
in the preceding paragraph. For the
rest the Revenue and Forest authorities
must take care that both in a static
and far more important climatic

9.
considerations, ample reserves of natural
forest are most strictly and resolutely
maintained. C. L. Beddome is by
this time in receipt of a copy of the
Proceedings quoted above and he will
lose no time in pointing out to the
Commissioner what additions he
would make to the reserves.

(True copy attached)

W. H. Patten
Secretary.
The Secretary to Government R.D.

[Signature]
Superintendent

1854

Revenue 1890 2 parts

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Revenue of the
12 mid of Revenue

Under 20 April 1890
April 20
April 21

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Recorded; to be
over for the present.

9 May 1896 23 1/2 - 2/3
deducting 1/2

Each with usually, the
from cases of death, many
hundreds in the report of
the Commission was appointed
to examine the expediency
of a change in the present
rules for the sale of land
leased on the Philippine

14 To the Board of Commissioners

Book 4 in the 1890's 1890's
1890's 1890's

23-8-17

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.
Government Records.

Revenue Department.

G. O. (Printed).

Dated 9-5-1876.

No. 589.