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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	251	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.

Dated 21-2-1876 196 . .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
21st February 1876.*

No. 246. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. BEDDOME, Conservator of Forests, Madras, to the Hon. D. F. CARMICHAEL, Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 31st January 1876, No. 113 :—

In the G.O., No. 1,662-A., dated 19th November 1875, reconstituting the Conservator of Forests the professional head of this department, I observe that I am to be held specially responsible for the economical working of the department.

2. On my return from England I find that the revenue from most of our ranges has fallen off rather than increased during the last two or three years, although the expenditure has enormously increased, and that in many ranges very considerable sums have been spent apparently without any controlling check or supervision; in the Coimbatore Range, for instance, fuel carriage down the Cauvery has been going on at a very large average loss per annum.

3. Establishments, too, have increased very much, and this, I much fear, without due consideration as to whether the revenue authorised the increase.

4. In short, during the last three years I find that the net revenue has decreased to an alarming extent, the forests having been worked at an average annual profit of only Rs. 1,144; whereas during the previous three years they were worked at an average annual profit of Rs. 1,09,055; this is shown by the actuals for the last six years which are as follow :—

	Receipts.	Working Charges.	Establishment and Contingencies.	Total Charges.	Difference between Receipts and Charges.
	RS.	RS.	RS.	RS.	RS.
Under the Conservator of Forests	1869-70... 4,95,789	1,46,908	1,39,783	2,86,691	2,09,098
	1870-71... 3,39,762	1,56,779	1,38,081	2,94,860	44,902
	1871-72... 4,18,882	1,94,814	1,50,902	3,45,716	73,166
Average...	4,18,144	1,66,167	1,42,922	3,09,089	1,09,055
Under the Board of Revenue	1872-73... 4,18,767	3,03,735	1,74,412	4,78,147	— 59,380
	1873-74... 4,49,541	1,75,370	1,77,814	3,53,184	+ 96,357
	1874-75... 3,64,326	2,21,864	1,76,008	3,97,872	— 33,546
Average...	4,10,878	2,33,656	1,76,078	4,09,734	+ 1,144

5. Much of this may be due to increased salaries and establishments and to larger expenditure on conservancy and plantations, and if this were the sole cause, it would be a move in the right direction; but I fear very much is attributable to reckless expenditure and want of any proper check or supervision.

6. I think it right, also, to point out that the rapid rise of several of our Overseers into the ranks of the Deputy Conservators and to salaries of 500 Rupees (including fixed travelling allowance) has not been brought about at the recommendation of this department. With a view to the economical working of several of our less remunerative ranges, certain Overseers were promoted by Dr. Cleghorn and myself to be Sub-Assistant Conservators with independent charges, but it was never intended that these men should rise to such high salaries or be classed with our trained officers; in fact, their status and education did not authorise it.

7. Government have now replaced the department under the control of the Conservator, and I think they may, in future, rely upon there being a proper check and supervision kept upon the expenditure. The Conservator is now to be held responsible, and he accepts the position.

8. The following may be given as some of the causes of the smallness of our forest revenue:—

(1.) The restrictions imposed by Government on the collection of minor forest-produce.

(2.) Smuggling in Government forests.

(3.) The proprietors of private forests recklessly denuding their forests and thereby under-selling Government.

(4.) The want of proper Forest Laws and passes, &c., by which the owners of private tracts can steal from Government forests under cover of their own licenses.

(5.) The abuse of the free pass-system.

(6.) The sale of our valuable timbers at unremunerative rates; for example, years ago our Anamallay Teak sold at an average of Rs. 2-8-0, or Rupees 3 per cubic foot, the Collector of Malabar fixing the rate from the prevailing market-rates. I now find that although the cost of felling, transport, &c., has enormously increased, and the actual cost of laying down our Teak is Rs. 1-6-6 per cubic foot, which does not include the value of the timber as it stands in the forest, and which contractors are willing to estimate as at 8 Annas per cubic foot, the Department Public Works have been getting, and are expecting to get it, at Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 2 per cubic foot.

(7.) The crediting of what is properly "Forest Revenue" under other heads, such as "Land-revenue" or "Jungle Conservancy," &c.

9. Government have now a Forest Act under consideration, and a Committee is sitting to draft the same. It is expected that most of these abuses will be effectually put a stop to under this Act.

10. This Act will also provide for bringing all our forest tracts under the supervision of one department and under one uniform system.

11. All this and demarcation may be the work of some time, but when once commenced the progress should be steady; whereas hitherto our attempts at conservancy have been most desultory.

12. Government have also lately obtained the sanction of the Supreme Government for a still larger increase to our establishment (*vide* G.O., No. 39, of 11th January 1876), amounting to Rupees 2,112-8-0 per mensem. If a Forest Act is introduced and effective conservancy is initiated into this Presidency, and all tracts are brought under the supervision of this department, I believe the whole of this increase will be necessary, and I have no doubt but that the increase to the revenue will be such as fully to authorise it; but we must not rush blindly into large increased expenditure in any district until we feel our way and until something is settled as to the preliminaries of demarcation, and what tracts we are to have charge of, what revenues we may expect, and what per-centage local conservancy will pay us for managing their tracts, &c.

13. Amongst other matters I have had my attention called to the great decrease of revenue in the South Canara District, and the increased expenditure on account of special establishments and allowances, amounting to Rs. 282-8-0 per mensem, sanc-

tioned by G.O., No. 626, dated 20th April and Board's Proceedings, No. 139/1,954, of 14th July 1875. On further inquiry I find that most important orders were passed on the subject of the South Canara forests in October 1874, G.O., No. 1,361, and 20th February 1875, G.O., No. 271, with regard to which the Officiating Inspector of Forests appears to have been in no way consulted; and that an inquiry and settlement of claims has since been proceeding at considerable expense, and which monopolises the time of the Deputy Conservator and all his Overseers, with the progress of which the Officiating Inspector has not been kept informed. I have no doubt that Government were well advised in instituting the inquiry, and a legal definition and settlement of private rights, without which true forest conservancy can never be initiated or carried out, is what this department has been asking for, for years. I glean, however, from my Deputy's demi-official letters that claims which appear to him monstrous are being preferred and allowed on what he rightly or wrongly considers very slight foundation, and that the result of the inquiry and settlement, if carried out as it has been commenced, will leave Government without an acre of forest in South Canara, either in the plains or line of ghauts. Mr. Cherry quotes one instance in which "*upwards of 740 square miles of well-situated ghaut and lowland forest, containing a wealth of bamboos, Poon-spars, and other good timbers; besides, two cardamom tracts are claimed by a single family on the ground of long enjoyment and previous payment of Rs. 12-8-0 per annum for the privilege of cutting kumari.*" I do not, in the least, wish to place Mr. Cherry's opinion or my own in opposition to the views of Government, but I deem it my duty to bring to the notice of Government what the effect of their orders is likely to be, and to call attention to the remarks of the Board of Revenue in paragraphs 7 to 12 of their Proceedings recorded with G.O., No. 1,361, which seem to me to express the true meaning of the references by early Collectors as to "all land being private property," &c. It is certain that if matters are allowed to take their course, every acre of forest-land in South Canara will be claimed, and, under Mr. Webster's interpretation of the orders, given up, and that the Government Solicitude on account of "valuable forests, admittedly the property of Government" as expressed in paragraph 10 of G.O., No. 1,361, will be unnecessary, as there will be none coming under that category.

14. The Government of India have recently (G.O., No. 661, dated 29th April 1875, Revenue Department) called special attention to the necessity of preserving the ghaut-forests in Coorg which dovetail with those of South Canara; and I view with much concern the probable destruction of the latter, which is certain sooner or later to ensue if they are handed over as private property.

15. I confess, also, that I am unable to understand how the right to "kumari" a few acres annually, or to grow pepper vines on the trunks of the forest trees, can be held to justify a transfer of the exclusive proprietary rights in large and valuable tracts of forests to private individuals.

16. The Bombay Government have recently successfully resisted claims of a somewhat similar nature to forests in North Canara, and the District and Supreme Courts have upheld their action in the matter. I venture, therefore, respectfully to request that Mr. Cherry may be permitted to appeal to the Civil Courts on behalf of Government as represented by this department on some typical case in which he considers that undue claims have been put forward and admitted. This course appears

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
21st February 1876.*

to me the only one likely to settle matters satisfactorily and secure a legal opinion on the value of the claims such as I have alluded to, which, if adverse to Government, must be followed by our at once suspending operations and removing our establishments from the South Canara District, and so saving Government considerable and unremunerative expenditure.

17. Reverting to the financial question I find that the whole cost of this inquiry, which so far has resulted only in loss of valuable forests to the State, is being borne by this department, and that, besides the services of a Deputy Conservator on Rs. 500 a-month, the Collector has an extra clerk in his office on Rs. 80 a-month, three Revenue Inspectors on Rs. 30 each, and that extra batta, amounting to Rs. 112-8-0 per month, has been sanctioned to the Foresters and Revenue Inspectors. I cannot, as at present informed, see the necessity of this expenditure, or the justice of its being debited to this department; and as I am held specially responsible for the economical working of the department, I trust that Government will be pleased to relieve us of this extraordinary expenditure at an early date.

No. 247.

ORDER THEREON, 21st February 1876, No. 251.

Forests, No. 12.

THE Government decline to enter upon a discussion regarding questions already and recently decided after mature

deliberation respecting the Forest Department.

2. Lieutenant-Colonel Beddome can, of course, submit specific recommendations where he finds unnecessary expenditure is being incurred, or in regard to the well-being and economical working of his charge.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Conservator of Forests.
„ the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

No. 400

From The Conservator of Forests No. 113.

Dated 31st Jan'y /76

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FOR ORDERS.

I would record with the observation that the Government disapprove of the tone and object of this desultory and querulous communication and decline to discuss with Colonel Beddome in this general way ^{matters} which have been duly considered while Colonel Beddome was absent from India.

I may note that the statements in Paras 2 to 6 are intended to impugn & impose measures deliberately adopted by Govt. in 1872 by placing the Conservancy of the Forest under the Collectors and Revenue Department because

Obdt. of 1876 ~~Adras~~.

REVENUE.

THE CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

to, to, to.

Dated February, 21st.

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 21st February 1876, No. 251.

FEBRUARY.

Nos. 246-247.

Economical Working of the Forest Department.—
Declining to enter upon a discussion with the
Conservator of Forests regarding questions decid-
ed after mature deliberation. Informing Colonel
Beddome that he can submit specific recom-
mendations where he finds unnecessary expenditure
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Conservator of Forests regarding questions raised after mature deliberation. Informing Colonel Beddome that he can submit specific recommendations where he finds unnecessary expenditure is being incurred, or in regard to the —

because Colonel Beddome had proved himself so thoroughly inefficient that his mismanagement could no longer be tolerated. We have been recently encouraged to entrust more to the Department under other management (Capt Campbell Walker) we shall see with what consequences since the direction has reverted to the former.

Para 8 It would be futile to go through all the alleged causes of what Colonel Beddome terms "the smallness of our Forest Revenue". Each and all have been discussed over and over again on their respective merits, & so far as reasonable and desirable & susceptible of better management, have been undergoing that process at the hands of Government and Captain Campbell Walker. The Chetors. As regards Canara, this is not

not the place or way to discuss the ²⁵⁷ deliberate policy of Government; in respect to which the proceedings now in course in the District are thoroughly satisfactory and will place the rights of the people so cruelly assailed by the Forest Department on an equitable footing.

Q/2
affecting the military movement
linking of the department. Mr
Govt decline to enter upon a discussion
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have been already dealt with
in any of the papers - Mr

MR
I entirely
agree

I should simply record with the remarks that (d. B. vide of course submit specific recommendations should be found necessary & so on upon any point of unnecessary expenditure ^{should} ^{be} ^{avoided} ^{only} ^{to} ^{avoid} ^{any} ^{excess} ^{but} ^{on} ^{other} ^{matters}

Office of Conservator of Forests
Madras 31st January 1876

No 113.
From

L^{te} Colonel R. A. Beddome
Conservator of Forests.

To,

The Honorable D. F. Carmichael
Secretary to Government
R. D.

Sir,

In the Government Order No
1662 A. dated 19th November 1875. reconsti-
tuting the Conservator of Forests the pro-
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ponsible for the economical working of
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2. On my return from England I find
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has fallen off rather than increased during
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No 251

The Govt decline to enter
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ration, respecting the Forest
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2. Mr. R. Beddome can only
submit specific recommendations
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20th Feb 1876

For orders
21st February 1876

27 To the Conservator of Forests No. 251 Feb

246-247

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3. - Establishments too have increased very much and this I much fear without due consideration as to whether the Revenue authorized the increase.

4. - In short, during the last three years, I find that the net Revenue has decreased to an alarming extent, the Forests having been worked at an average annual profit of only Rs. 1144; whereas during the previous 3 years they were worked at an average annual

annual profit of Rs. 109,055. this is shewn by the actuals for the last 6 years, which are as follows.

		Receipts	Working Charges	Establishment & Contingencies	Total Charges	Difference between Receipts and Charge
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25/4
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I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your Most Obedient Servant,

P. S. Addomey Esq. Colonel
Conservator of Forests.

Ans: 1876: 241
1875-76. \$400
I wish to be paid in full

From
The Committee of
the Society of
the Secretary to the
A. D.

Walter 31

Received 21/12/76

Concluded from

Chas. 21/12/76

Submits certain of

specimens with reference

to E. G. 1662 A of 19 1/2

November 1875.

29/12/76. \$400/2/36.

W. M. O. & Co.

N. 246