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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

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2885
From the Forest Revenue Commission
appointed under G. O. dated 16th January 1878
N^o 82.

To The Secretary
to the Board of Revenue
Madras.

Sir,

With reference to G. O. N^o 82 dated the
16th January 1878, directing that a Commission
be formed to go through the Divisions of
Sodanad, Parangana and Kunda of the
Nilgiri District, for the purpose of selecting
and reporting on the Forests to be reserved
in each, we have the honor to report that
we have inspected the whole of the wood-
lands in the two first named Divisions, and
beg to submit the conclusions at which we
have arrived regarding them.

We have postponed the examination
of the Kunda Division until after the South-west
monsoon, as there are no applications for waste lands
in that Division we considered it advisable to dis-
pose of the other portions of the Hills first.

In making our selection of
the

the Forests to be reserved, we have been guided by the following considerations.

- 1st Water supply.
- 2nd Fuel supply.
- 3rd Shelter and pasturage for Soda Buffaloes.
- 4th Supply of soap for Chinchona plantations.

3^d. As regards the 1st point, without considering the possible effect of trees on rainfall and climate, we have considered as beyond dispute the fact that wood lands exercise a most beneficial effect in the retention of water and the regulation of the supply, and that any extensive denudation near the sources or along the courses of streams must, if necessary, be followed by destructive floods and equally fatal droughts.

The accompanying maps show that very nearly every shola is close to a stream, and on this consideration alone we think that only a very small portion of the wood land remaining in Sodanad and Parangana should be given over to the planters' axe.

4th. For Fuel, the public will have in future to depend mainly on Australian plantations; only such sholas as are within 6 or 8 miles of the Settlements, and within easy access of roads could be utilized for firewood.

5th. The sholas in the immediate neighbourhood of Soda mounds we consider should be retained in the hands of Government, we have not therefore recommended any so situated being made available for sale.

6th. As regards moss for the Chinchona plantations, the Superintendent states that all the sholas in West Sodanad, within a radius of about 6 miles of the plantations do not produce more than enough moss for the Mediwattum and Pankara Gardens.

We are not however of opinion that any wholesale reservation should be made on this account; if the Superintendent's statement is correct, and so large a tract of woodland is required for the production of moss, then the Government plantations

plantations can serve no useful purpose as models or as encouragement for the growth of the bark, for no private proprietor could command the requisite supply of mops. It appears moreover still to be a moot point whether coppicing is not as advantageous as moping, and for purposes of experiment a much smaller area of Chinchona than is now under cultivation, would suffice.

7/ We have taken aesthetic considerations into account only where we found shalas in close proximity to main lines of communication, in all such cases we consider that the woods should be reserved.

8/ The first division inspected was Ladanaid, this is the largest of the Naids, and in its western part contains more wood than the others, excepting portions of the Gundaas.

9/ The Ladanaid boundary extends from the crest of the Hills over the Aucklerlong valley on the west, northwards down to the Mogar at the Dypore and Wainad trijunction, thence eastwards for about 18 miles along the Mogar

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Mogor river, then southwards from the river to the Orange Valley, and on to the Pallia plantation, 4 miles west of Fatergherry, then westwards along the high ridge above Wellington to the settlement near Dodabek. The boundary then runs from the other side of the settlement near Fair Lawns, along the Avalanche road for some distance, then westwards along the high Gramachettu and Betmand ridge to Inkurli and Nidgherry Peak.

10/ The area within these limits is about 306 square miles of which 159 square miles are on the plateau; the Northern slopes from the Nediwattum Chinchona plantations to the Orange Valley, and the tract between the foot of the slopes and the Mogar (measuring 147 square miles) form the remaining portion of this Division.

11/ Regarding the Mogar Valley tract, we would not propose to reserve any thing there, the country has a most evil and well deserved reputation for extreme unhealthiness, and extensive clearings of the scrub and jungle would be beneficial; the growth on the stream margins should alone be left intact.

12/ The village of Maenagudi on the Mysore road lies in this tract, also the Government Chandalwood plantations & or 5. Coffee estates, and a few hamlets, the portion of this tract lying to the East of the Signir road is almost altogether incultivated and uninhabited, the remains of some deserted villages there seem to show that the country was once not so unhealthy as it now is.

13/ The Northern slopes are for the most part unculturable, being precipitous, rocky and not well wooded, the only trees are on the margins of ravines and these should as usual be reserved; but with these exceptions any application for land either on the slopes or in the valley might be unreservedly complied with.

14/ The Kodanad plateau, extending as it does for more than 30 miles from East to West, presents in its different parts great variety of wood land aspect, the Western portion is fairly covered, while the country East of the Signir road is absolutely bare of wood, if we except a few small sholas on the main road to Katergherry, and adjoining the Kodanad mounds by Kulkalhatta.

E. Tolana

15/ The very small extent then of wood that still remains in East Kodanad should be strictly reserved, it covers not more than 500 acres.

W. Tolana

16/ Regarding West Kodanad, a portion adjoining the CoTacamund Settlement and extending to Sandy Bullah, Briss Shola, Governor's shola and Fair Lawns, has been given up for public recreation purposes (G.O. No. 4 January 1878); it is for the most part bare, the few small sholas in it must be reserved.

17/ North of this tract, and between the Paikara road and the Northern crest of the Hills, are the villages of Sholur, Kalkhatti &c and the Kausandla Tea Estate; the unoccupied land in this part is fairly wooded and some of the sholas are very fine; on every account it seems advisable that nearly all of them should be reserved; they are at the sources of two large streams flowing into the Moyar and into the Bowani; they are within easy reach of the Settlement; there are several Badaga villages and Kodanad mounds near

near them, and they are the only sholas from which moss can be obtained for the "lucoid" Chinchona plantations, when the Paikara river is in flood. We have marked off 3 of these sholas which can with the least disadvantage be made available to applicants.

18/ The tract adjoining the above on the west contains the Paikara and Nedivattam Chinchona plantations and the Glenmorgon estate, there is but little wood land unoccupied here, and almost the only good shola left is about to be put up to auction, on Mr. Shubrick's application. There is one other fine shola at the crest which has been applied for, but it should not be granted as it immediately adjoins the Chinchona gardens and is close to the Paikara river, the other small sholas are all on streams.

19/ The next section of West Gleditsia lies south of the road between Paikara and Nedivattam, and West of the Paikara river, its southern extremity being Mukurti Peak, it takes in both sides of the Vellangiri range

of Hills, and a large portion of it is occupied by the tea plantations under the care of Mr. Seare.

The outer limits of these estates, as required under 8 applications, embrace an area of 4076 acres, but nearly the whole of the forests within them have been cut out as reserves, 1278 acres in all. We think that a small portion of these wood lands may be granted to the proprietors of the estates, and have marked on the map those we propose to give.

There are a few good sholas near to Nedivattam, and some to the south of Mr. Seare's Southern most estate, but these are all immediately at the heads of streams on which the whole of the Ouchterlong Valley is dependent for water, and we were credibly informed that even now the supply of water there during 2 or 3 months of the year is barely sufficient for pulping and other purposes.

We are of opinion therefore that all the wood lands on the Western crest excepting the portions marked off in the map, and surrounded by Mr. Seare's plantations, should be strictly reserved.

There

There are also a few small sholas on the Eastern slopes of the Vellangiri range, all at the heads of tributaries of the Paikara river, these should also be reserved.

20/ Eastwards from and near Ankurte Peak is some extent of scattered forest, each piece at the head of a small stream, and as the basin in which these sholas are situated forms the source of the Paikara river, this tract should be reserved.

21/ The Paikara valley is curiously bare of any growth. Between the river and the Paikara road are some good sholas but on account of their proximity to the main road and in consideration of the requirements of the Soda mundam and near them, we cannot recommend that any of them should be made available for sale.

22/ Between the Paikara river and Governor's shola there is no wood land of any extent the small scattered sholas should we think be reserved.

23/ The neighbourhood of Kiri mundam is fairly wooded; while proposing to reserve the greater part of the wood land in that direction, we have marked off some which

S.E.
Toda mundam

might with comparatively small disadvantage be made available for sale under the waste land rules.

24/ The last and most important section of Soda nad to be considered is the South Eastern portion, from the Kurumund river on the west to Nanjanad and Governor's shola on the East, and from the Kurumund road on the North to the Kunda boundary on the South. This tract contains more and finer wood lands than any other part of Soda nad, and inasmuch as it lies within comparatively easy distance of the Ootacamund settlement, the sholas on it are of special value, some of them have been acquired and the wood felled; the bare hill side so prominent on the South West of the station over Nanjanad, is the result of an application of the late Mr. Mc. Ivor, which forms the subject of Board Proceedings 6th November 1870 No 3045.

25/ The sholas in the Western portion of this tract are at the sources of the main stream and the affluents of the Kurumund river, a very important tributary of the Paikara; the rest of the sholas are in basins from which

which rise many small water courses, which join, and flowing Southwards under the black bridge on the Analauche road, form an important affluent of the Kunda river.

26/ In consideration of the importance of keeping the sources of water supply protected, we feel bound to recommend that nearly the whole of the wood lands here should be reserved, and we think that if those sholas which we have marked off, or to be considered available for sale, be cleared, the limit has been reached to which denudation can be carried without great disadvantage.

27/ If our propositions with respect to Sodanad be accepted, the proportion of Reserves to the whole extent of wood lands on the plateau will be as follows.

	acres
1. Total area of Sodanad. —	101,760
2. Area of Government Forests —	11,700
3. Area of Forest proposed to be reserved —	10,800
4. Area of Forest proposed to be made available for sale. —	950

We thus recommend that nine tenths of

the whole be reserved, and in making this recommendation we wish to add our opinion that this is the minimum extent that should remain in the hands of Government. There can be no doubt that denudation is in the highest degree detrimental to the regulation of the water supply, and that the clearing of each shola, however small, does some harm; in this view we think it would be better even that all the remaining wood lands on the plateau should be reserved, than that the area we now propose to give up for planting should be extended.

28/ The Paranganad Division which we next inspected, extends from Sodanad on the west to Kallar. Pungu, Sami's Peak and the Moyar on the East, and from the Moyar on the North to the Coonoor River on the South.

It embraces exclusive of the Coonoor and Kobergherry Settlements, 91 square miles of plateau and 40 of slopes.

29/ Nearly the whole of the plateau is absolutely bare of wood land of any kind,

Paranganad

kind, in every direction nothing but cultivated and fallow valleys, and rocky, unculturable hill sides meet the eye. At the crest and on the slopes alone a few sholas remain.

30/ The wood land in the valley of the Laxoor river above the ghaut, Government have already ordered to be strictly reserved, and the large sholas commencing near Lady Cummings seat and extending both sides of the Burliar stream, should also for obvious reasons be reserved, the clearance of these would probably result in the destruction of portions of the ghaut, and in all communication with the Hills being interrupted after every heavy fall of rain.

31/ On the Valley of the Saint Catherine and Kobergherry streams there is hardly any wood land left.

Near Kobergherry and Kodanad a very few fine sholas remain, we are of opinion that too much has already been cleared and granted for clearing in this direction, the reasons

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that induced Government to direct that all the remaining wood lands in Brekenad should be strictly reserved, apply with even greater force to the Paranganad Division, and whatever still remains should be reserved.

32/ There are one or two points to which we would, in conclusion, request the attention of Government. Of these, the first in importance is the desirability of very largely extending the Government plantations on these Hills; there can be no doubt that in every direction Forest has been felled without any regard to ultimate consequence, and that however much we may now class as "Reserve", the process of denudation will go on as surely as ever, even if more slowly; we saw numerous instances of sholas partially destroyed by fires, and this cause of destruction will continue to operate.

We are of opinion that the Government should without delay proceed to apply the remedy for the acknowledged evils resulting from extensive clearings, we

34/ We regret we have been unable to submit our report earlier, each member of the Commission had his own ordinary duties to attend to, and it necessarily often happened that those duties prevented one of our members from proceeding on inspection, and the others had to wait till his services were again available.

We have &c

Signed R. W. Barlow.

Sq. Commissioner

Signed J. G. Clarke

Deputy Supt. Parkways.

Signed R. S. Jago Major

Deputy Commissioner of Forests.

True copy

Members of the Forest Revenue Commission.

W. C. Clarke Secy

Deputy Superintendent Parkways.

Chas. W. Barlow
C. W. Barlow

we think that judgment in the selection of sites and care & liberal outlay for the first 3 years are all that are required to ensure success, and, when successful, such plantations must give a very considerable direct return, besides conferring indirect benefits, the extent of which it would be difficult to estimate.

33/ Regarding the demarcation and survey of the Wood Land which the Government may decide are to be reserved, we would suggest that this be deferred until the question of grazing and other communal Revenue has been definitely decided, if a number of small pieces of Shola and swamp are now permanently demarcated and surveyed, and it be afterwards determined to reserve also the interlying plots of grass, then considerable expense will have been unnecessarily incurred and much time wasted. One of our members dissent from this suggestion. Memo of dissent is attached.

Para 33. I am of opinion that the Forest Reserves should be marked at once, and not be delayed till the question of grazing and other communal reserves has been decided, which will probably take a considerable time. Most of the difficulties of the land question and fraudulent occupation of Forests, have arisen from the delay and uncertainty antecedent to obtaining land in fair course. I propose with the consent of my colleagues on the Committee when settling the Khudias that we mark on the sketch maps, what we reserve instead of what we recommend to be available for public occupation. On the Divisions already settled, my difficulties as Commissioners are great, till stones are put round what is considered Forest to be reserved. It is in my opinion of the first importance that applications for land should not be delayed for an indefinite period, and though, I now know, that the Commission has decided that certain Forest is available for occupation, still as regards the rest, the question

question constantly arises what is forest
 The gradations between forest and light forest
 and scrub are numerous, and difficult to
 be decided, and opportunities for fraud can
 only be put a stop to, either by demarcating
 all reserved forests distinctly as soon as possible,
 or by holding the Waste Land Rules in
 abeyance in frequent cases for some time
 to come. The latter course I most strongly
 deprecate.

Nilgiri Commissioner's Office
 Ootacamund 26 July 1878
 R. W. Barlow
 Commissioner
 (True Copy)

In Case
 Deputy Sup. Secy.

Copy
 Comd. Hq.

No 3525/78

2865
 11

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
 Ootacamund. 12th August 1878

No. 98

FROM R. W. Barlow Esq
 COMMISSIONER, NILGIRIS.

TO C. G. Hunter Esq
 Secretary to Government Revenue Dept.
 Ootacamund.

SIR,

Referring to my No 89 dated the
 30th March, I have the honor to submit
 for the information of Government, a
 copy of the report of the Forest
 Commission and its enclosure, forwarded
 to the Board of Revenue on the date,
 with reference to G. O. Revenue Depart.
 ment No 82 of 16th January 1878.

I have the honor to be
 Sir
 Your Obedt. Servant

M. Barlow
 Commissioner

M

\$11-8-78-1877 84
 - 5-2-78-79.
 - 16-1-78-16-64
 - 4-1-78-13-14
 - 18-2-78-213-25

Mo

20th November 1878 No. 1852.
 25 Nov 78.

Dodged with reference to G.D.

No 2885

c 18 Nov 78 18/11/78
 c 16-9-78 18/9-78
 R 30-8-78 18/9-78
 R 3-9-78 18/9-78

Commissioner's Office,
Goulburn.

Received 1878 Oct 11
 No. 73 No. 35205
 D^y 12th Sept 1878.
 G.D. 13-11-78

SUBJECT.

Enclosures

11/11/78

C. G. Smith & Co.
 Secretary to Government
 New South Wales

Copy

A. G. Smith & Co.
 Secretary to Government
 New South Wales

Commissioner's Office

9 Oct 78 52 of the 11th

January 1878

A. G. Smith & Co.
 Secretary to Government
 New South Wales