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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.

838

Press

B.P. No.

Mis.

Dated

22. 6. 1976

196

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 235. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 11th May 1876, No. 1,235, Forest No. 44 :—

Read the following letter from H. S. THOMAS, Esq., Collector of Tanjore, to C. A. GALTON, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Vallam, 25th April 1876, No. 1,590.

I HAVE hit upon a plan of reboisement which I do not remember to have seen in any forest propositions which has, to my mind, economical and other recommendations, and which easily compromise the difficulty about not interfering with the grazing cattle. I have the honor, therefore, to report it in case it should be useful to other Collectors. It will be understood that I write specially with reference to this dry side of Southern India, and withdraw nothing of what I have written in South Canara. Not a few tracts reserved for jungle have once been forest and have on them just a few mature trees, but are mostly covered with scrub and useless thorn, especially the latter.

2. A closer observation, however, will show a great number of seedlings of useful sorts which are just alive and no more; which have perhaps only a single tiny leaf to show; which have been again and again trampled down and bruised by cattle and nibbled to the very earth, or within half an inch of it, by cattle and goats; and which, under such circumstances, have not the remotest chance of ever becoming a tree.

3. These useful sorts have, equally with the useless thorn, been sown broadcast by wind and birds, and have equally taken root in all directions, and would equally have grown up if the cattle had let them. The thorns only obtained immunity by reason of their thorniness and being untasty. These thorns then I utilise for the preservation of the better sorts.

4. The watchmen are instructed to look about for spontaneous seedlings, and to surround each one separately with thorns.

5. To make a fence round them with upright posts and thorns tied together with creepers or creeper back is not only laborious and therefore expensive, but soon falls to pieces under the action of white-ants, and some passing cow takes off the leader and a year's work is thrown back at a bite. Thorns are, therefore, simply strewed and piled roughly, just as they are cut, in a ring round each seedling, at an inside distance of a good 6 feet or more from it and to a height and thickness of some 2 feet or $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet. They get matted together and no wind disturbs them and no cow can push through or strain over them.

6. A man does four or five of these a day with ease. I dare say six or eight or more could be got out of him with superintendence. But with me it has been a beginning.

7. Having watchmen to keep up over the Mokasa jungles, between Tanjore and Vallam, necessarily for the prevention of theft, I have simply given them this extra duty, and without the expenditure of a single extra rupee I am preserving 900 trees a month, say roughly 10,000 a-year.

8. At least one Member of the Board knows this to be a hard, dry unpromising soil as could well be desired, and the year is unexceptionably dry one; yet

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
22nd June 1876.*

without a single drop of water, and with nothing but the thorn protection above-mentioned, the seedlings are throwing out leaders beautifully.

9. As they get on they are pruned up one-half by the senior watchman so as to get straight stems for timber.

10. The reason why these young spontaneous seedlings need no water is, I presume, because each one of them represents the 1 in 100, which, from being a healthy seed and from lighting on a favorable spot and frequently from having undergone the process of passing through a bird or a monkey, is a victor in the struggle for existence. They are certainly much hardier than artificially nurtured and planted seedlings.

11. This system is thus not only economical, but it in no way interferes with the grazing of cattle, which can range the forest as freely as before.

12. It also benefits the existing trees by clearing them of the thorns and thorny creepers with which they are choked.

13. It can also be continued steadily all the year round, and is confined to no special planting season.

14. When a fence is put round a considerable area, some cow-herd will inevitably make a sly gap here and there; before it is discovered hundreds of succulent leaders will have been bitten off, and an immense amount of injury is done in a single day; much more when the watchman is normally indolent. But where only a single seedling and only a few yards have been enclosed by an individual ring and the rest is open, it is not worthwhile to make a gap.

15. Even here, however, women will take fire-wood, but no system is absolutely perfect, and it is ordinarily very awkward fire-wood to carry off, so that there is very little trouble in this direction.

16. There are in districts which I could name large hill sides which are open to the grazing of innumerable cattle, and which might be advantageously treated in this manner. Here in Tanjore what I am doing is being done out of Mokasa funds in a jungle about three miles long, and I am anxious if in funds to apply it in other places for Jungle Conservancy purposes, and specially to the valuable iron wood tree on our coasts.

17. It will be remembered please that it is in the very heat of an unusually hot season, in a fairly hot district, when wells are running dry everywhere, that I am writing of seedlings of—

Margosa (*Melia Azidarachta*),

Vagai (*Mimosa flexuosa*, Rottler),

Shellai (not known),

flourishing without pitting and without water.

COMMUNICATED to the Conservator of Forests and to all Collectors.

2. The Board are obliged to Mr. Thomas for his interesting letter; they will be glad to hear the result of this experiment after a further lapse of time.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Acting Secretary.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
22nd June 1876.*

No. 236.

ORDER THEREON, 22nd June 1876, No. 838.

Forests, No. 11A.

RECORDED.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.
„ the Editors' Table.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

FOREST No. 44.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 11th May 1876, No. 1,235.

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Boyl. of 1876

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Dated June, 22nd.

G.O., 22nd June 1876, No. 838.

JUNE

Nos. 235-236.

Seedlings.—Recording Proceedings of the Board of Revenue regarding the preservation of — by growing thorns around them.

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(A true Copy and Extract.)

W. J. Lewis
Acting Secretary.

To the Conservator of Forests.

.. all Collectors.

Copy to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
for communication to the Press.

Rzd. W. J. Lewis.

The term "Mokasa" means land or village
administered by a Zemindar, or a Poligar for protection
travellers — or more generally to some of his own
relatives or military retainers.

219244
280 405
1876. 12 Jan

BOARD of REVENUE,

MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS, 11TH MAY 1876, No. 1,235.

219244
280 405
1876. 12 Jan

219244
280 405
1876. 12 Jan

219244
280 405
1876. 12 Jan

Received 19 June 1876

MAY.

Forest No. 44.

Seedlings.—Communicating to Conservator of Forests and to all Collectors proposals of Collector of Tanjore for the preservation of — by throwing thorns around them, and requesting Mr. Thomas to report the result of the experiment after a further lapse of time.