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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	608	Press Mis.
Dated	2-6-	1880.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

2nd June 1880, No. 608.

No. 42. READ THE FOLLOWING PAPER:—

From Colonel R. H. BEDDOME, Conservator of Forests, to C. G. MASTER, Esq., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Ootacamund, 14th May 1880, No. 171.

REFERRING to paragraph 3 of the G.O., No. 412, of the 6th ultimo, I have the honor to inform you that I have lately inspected the deserted Chinchona Plantations at Melkoonda and the forests in their vicinity.

2. These two clearings are small patches out of a vast tract of stunted forest at a high elevation in a very wind-blown exposed portion of the Nilgiris or rather the Khoondahs. The upper clearing has an area of 23.99 acres, and the lower an area of 35.63 acres. The only other clearings are the now deserted Chinchona estate called "Carrington" (about 60 acres?) opened out by Colonel Fyers; Mr. Havelock's Tea estate called "Thea Shola;" and a new small clearing beyond the latter which belongs to Messrs. Shaw and Winch.

3. The whole tract of this forest is of wretchedly poor growth, and very different to the growth in the sholas on the plateau of the Nilgiris proper; the trees are only about 30 feet high, girth rarely more than three feet, and growth much contorted but exceedingly close and dense, and suggestive at once of a wind-blown exposed high elevation unsuited for planting, and quite similar to the forests about the higher portions of the Tinnevely and Travancore Ghâts.

4. Mr. Havelock's estate "the Thea Shola," the first reached from Ootacamund, is 18 miles from that station by a very indifferent bridle path (not practicable after heavy rain). Beyond this a good zigzag bridle-path has been cut by the Commissioner up the steep face of the high hill and through the forest at the back of Mr. Havelock's and over the top of the Betta; but this pathway would rapidly become impracticable during the monsoon unless a considerable sum were allotted for its upkeep. Beyond the top of the hill, and about three miles from Thea Shola

* Elevation about 6,500 feet; the Mikaur Betta close by having been determined by Colonel Saxton as 6,924 feet.

estate, the first* or upper Government plot is first reached; a little beyond this is the Carrington estate which consists of 275 acres of forest, of which only about 60 have been cleared; and further on, or about five miles from Thea Shola

† About 6,300 feet at its highest point, but descending 500 or 600 feet to the lowest portion cleared.

estate, the second† or lower Government plot, now quite impenetrable in some portions from the dense rank growth of brambles and other thorny plants.

5. The whole tract of these forests protect the water-supply of many small streams feeding the Bhavani river, and when we also take into consideration how exposed and unsuited the tract is for planting, and how inaccessible it is from Ootacamund or elsewhere, there can, I think, be no doubt that plantations should never have been contemplated within the area, and that in future no further alienation of forest should be allowed.

6. Government have ordered that the cleared portion (Government property) is to be planted in due course by this department; but it is not stated what is to be planted, whether Eucalyptus, Acacia or Chinchona. The cost of raising Eucalyptus or Acacia in such an out-of-the-way place and in a deserted clearing would be excessive, and cannot, I think, be contemplated, neither of these trees could yield anything but very poor growth in such exposed situations; but even if the finest growth could be secured, the trees would be valueless when grown, as it would not pay to take the timber either to Ootacamund or to Coonoor, and beams could not

even be brought down as far as Mr. Havelock's estate without a great expenditure for a good cart-road with an easy gradient. I will not say that Chinchona Officinalis could not be planted to a profit if a large sum could be allowed for upkeep, but no practical planter would attempt it if forest land were available at anything but prohibitory rates, and I should be exceedingly sorry to advise this course to Government knowing the enormous expenditure necessary for the upkeep of deserted tracts like these which have not been weeded for many years, and the very unsatisfactory results in almost all cases, besides the money necessary to open out even in unfelled portions of this forest (which would be very small as compared with the sum necessary for the deserted tracts) could be spent to far better advantage in tracts much more accessible.

7. Mr. Havelock has also lately rooted up all the Chinchona trees on Colonel Fyer's estate, and he informed me that the growth has been exceedingly poor, and that he had realized very poor prices for the bark.

8. I can only advise that the two cleared plots belonging to Government be left to nature; they will of course cover themselves with rank jungle, but whether this will after a long series of years give way to forest like that of the original growth I cannot say—we have no data to go on; the clearings are too small however to affect the water-supply in any way, but at the same time I would also advise that there be no further alienations in this forest tract, as I feel certain that any tracts cleared and opened would very soon share the fate of the two Government plots and the Carrington estate.

9. As to selling the two Government cleared plots I do not think purchasers could be found unless large tracts of the forest were also thrown in with them, and then the purchasers would direct their attention to the forest tract, not the cleared portions. If it were worth any one's while to purchase, I think Mr. Havelock would have been anxious to secure these plots, but he informed me that he had no inclination to purchase either.

10. Planting in the two Government plots commenced in 1867, and was concluded in 1870, soon after which the plantations were deserted and left to nature; expensive buildings were also erected (now in ruins), and there must have been a very considerable expenditure if all be taken to account from the commencement; all the Chinchona trees have now been grubbed up and the bark collected and sent to England. It would be interesting to have a debit and credit account of all expenditure and receipts connected with these plantations, and the reports on the quality and value of the bark will be looked forward to with interest as valuable data in connection with similar plantations.

No. 43.

ORDER THEREON, 2nd June 1880, No. 608.

Miscellaneous.

UNDER the explanation afforded by the Conservator the project of planting up the cleared portions of the abandoned Melkoonda Plantation may be given up.

2. The site, as already ordered, will not be sold, but will, like the rest of the woodlands in the district, be reserved and protected by the Forest Department.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Secretary to Government.

To the Conservator of Forests.
„ the Commissioner of the Nilgiris.

Exd. W. H. French.

40 Copies.

Office of Conservator of Forests
Cotacamund 14, 21 May 1880.

No. 171

From,

Colonel R. W. Reddome,
Conservator of Forests.

To, C. G. Master Esquire,
Secretary to Government,
Revenue Department,
Cotacamund.

Sir,

Referring to para 3 of the Govern-
ment Order No. 412 of the 6th ultimo I
have the honor to inform you that I
have lately inspected the deserted
Chinchona plantations at Melkonda,
and the forests in their vicinity.

2. These two clearings are small
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Shola"; and a new small clearing
beyond the latter, which belongs to
Messrs. Shaw and Birch.

The

Original

Obt. of 1880) 21/5/80.

REVENUE.

To

THE CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS,

- Ac., Ac., Ac.

Dated June 2nd.

Printed 11th.

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 2nd June 1880, No. 608.

JUNE.

Nos. 42-43.

Abandoned Chinchona Plantations at Melkonda,
Nilgiris.—Stating that under the explanation
afforded by the Conservator the project of plant-
ing up the cleared portions of the — may be
given up, and directing that the site, as already
ordered, is not to be sold, but will, like the rest
of the woodlands in the district, be reserved and
protected by the Forest Department.



3. The whole tract of this forest is of wretchedly poor growth, and very different to the growth in the sholas on the plateau of the Nilgiris proper; the trees are only about 30 feet high, with rarely more than 3 feet, and growth much contorted; but exceedingly close and dense and suggestive at once of a wind blown exposed high elevation unsuited for planting, and quite similar to the forests about the higher portions of the Vinnemully and Travancore ghats.

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* elevation about
6500 ft. - the hill
Betta due by having
been determined by
Col. Saxton as
6924 ft.

* about 6300 feet
at its highest points
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Beyond the top of the hill, and about 3 miles from Thea Shola estate, the 1st or * upper Government plot is first reached, a little beyond this is the Carrington Estate, which consists of 275 acres of forest, of which only about 60 have been cleared, and then on or about 5 miles from Thea Shola ^{estate} the 2nd or * lower Government plot, now quite impenetrable in some portions from the dense rank growth of brambles and other thorny plants.

5. The whole tract of these forests protect the water supply of many small streams feeding the Bhavani river, and when we also take into consideration how exposed and unsuited the tract is for planting, and how inaccessible it is from Ootacamund or elsewhere, there can I think be no doubt that plantations should never have been contemplated within the area, and that in future no further alienation of forest should be allowed.

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I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your most obedt. Servt.
J. D. D. D. Colonel,
Conservator of Forests.

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Under the explanation, offered by the Government the project by the Government the cleared portion

the Secretary to

Planting up the second part
of the abandoned doublets.
The station may be fixed up.

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No tile work was he told as

No title with last line of verse

about, entered our view in
the East Gate roadlands &
the Birch, the second &
protected by the forest-
land

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21 The Baroness of Strath
3 The Baroness of Strath

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