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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. / B.P. No.	1340.	Press / Mis.
Dated	17-10-1874	196. .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

1340

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
17th October 1874.

No. 240. Read the following Memorandum on the subject of Control and Audit of Forest Accounts by the Officiating Inspector of Forests to the Government of Madras, dated 17th September 1874 :—

THE subject has come under consideration on account of a Resolution of the Government of India (recorded in Madras G. O., Revenue Department, No. 610, dated 19th May last), directing that "the forest accounts of Madras for the last quarter, for which they have been furnished by the Conservators, be re-audited by the Accountants-General, and the result of such re-audit reported for the information of the Government of India." In this Presidency the Board of Revenue has been placed in the position of the Conservator "in these respects," *i.e.*, the control of the money-expenditure of the department (*vide* G. O., No. 1,290, dated 6th September 1872, paragraph 3); and all that would appear necessary to comply with the Government of India Resolution is that it, *in its position of Conservator*, should submit to the Accountant-General the forest accounts for the last quarter for re-audit, etc.; I cannot, therefore, see why the question of any transfer of control and audit, still less of office establishments, should have resulted from the order under consideration. I have, for some time, been giving the subject of the control of forest expenditure careful consideration, and acting on the advice of the Acting Secretary to Government in the Revenue Department purpose shortly to submit proposals for securing a more effectual check and regulation of departmental expenditure which I consider is much needed; and I am, therefore, anxious that no step should be taken by Government, pledging them (so to speak) to any particular line with regard to the control of forest expendi[illegible] for the future, until I have had an opportunity of conferring with the Board and submitting my views through them.

2. The Resolution of the Government of India with regard to the Draft Forest Manual now before the Board and myself (*vide* G. O., No. 1,035, dated 18th August 1874) expresses exactly what I should like to secure with regard to forest expenditure in this Presidency, viz., that "the Conservator (Inspector) should have full control over the outlay for conservancy and working, but the formal audit be entrusted to an independent authority relieving Conservators of the control of establishment charges and the *adjustment* of accounts." At present salary and contingent bills go direct from the Collector's Account Offices to the Accountant-General, where they are checked and audited; but bills for working charges go to the Board, who check the items *quâ* Conservator. I have no doubt that their audit though slow is most efficient as regards the details of account, requisite sanctions, vouchers, etc.; but it is impossible that they can check or control the outlay on working charges, such as felling, carting, planting, etc., etc., which must require professional knowledge and an intimate acquaintance with the details of working, etc., as carried out in each forest. Collectors as Conservators of their districts are also supposed to check forest expenditure; but I do not see how they can be supposed to know much about it, and certainly have no means of comparing the expenditure as placed before them by their Forest Assistant with what it should be and may be in the adjoining district. As an instance of what I mean I may state that since assuming charge of the Inspector's Office, I have ascertained, though under existing arrangements I suppose it was not strictly my duty to do so, that planting Casuarinas in North Arcot cost Rs. 40 and in South Arcot Rs. 200 per acre. There is evidently something wrong, and probably some mistake in account; but I do not see how it would

ever have been brought to light if I had limited myself strictly to inspection and reporting on results as Colonel Beddome was ordered to do. Again in Madura there is a dead-lock as regards forest operations, the Deputy Conservator having, during the past eighteen months, steadily exceeded his budget-estimates, and spent the whole budget allotments and a good deal more under one head "Felling and Carting of Timber," leaving nothing available for reserves, planting, etc. This could not have been done had the accounts been scrutinised even occasionally by a professional eye, and still less if, instead of the system of "Permanent Advance" in favor with the Board, the forest officer had been working on quarterly allotments granted on estimates previously submitted of his probable expenditure under each head of working. These are all matters of detail which I merely state in order to show that the whole system of forest accounts requires revision to render the control and audit really efficient.

3. The Accountant-General proposes* that the whole control and office establishment for accounts should be transferred to him. The Board consider† it should be left with them as "the office having the control of the administration of the department." I consider that the control should rest with the Inspector or Conservator-General of Forests (aided by an Assistant who should eventually be one of the junior forest officers, and have charge of the Inspector's Office generally) either as a distinct office or as representing the Revenue Board; whilst the final audit would probably be best entrusted to the trained office[illegible] Genl's Department who would check totals under each head, and see that the accounts were properly kept and adjusted. I would respectfully suggest that meanwhile the orders of the Government of India be complied with, *i.e.*, that the forest accounts for the past quarter be submitted to the Accountant-General for re-audit by the Board of Revenue in their position as Conservator, and that the Accountant-General, the Secretary or a Member of the Board, and myself be directed to confer on the subject and submit joint proposals for the future management of the forest accounts in this Presidency. I do not see anything in the Resolution of the Government of India which renders any other action or expression of opinion necessary. It is the Accountant-General alone who has opened the subject.

* G. O., 23rd July 1874, No. 917.

† Board's Procs., 21st Aug. 1874, No. 2,338.

(Signed) C. WALKER, Captain,
Officiating Inspector of Forests.

No. 241. ORDER THEREON, 17th October 1874, No. 1,340.

Forest, No. 10.

THIS memorandum from the Inspector of Forests, which was submitted before G. O., dated 25th September 1874, No. 1,215, was passed, will be forwarded to the Board of Revenue for consideration in consultation with the Inspector.

2. There did not appear sufficient reason for postponing reply to the Government of India on the question which had been put by them, relating as it did to the final audit which should in any case remain with the Board of Revenue.

3. The Inspector's memorandum relates practically to the supervision of expenditure in the districts before it comes up for audit, and in matter of departmental

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
17*th October* 1874.

administration and detail the Inspector should have a recognised position under the Board, under which all account of expenditure incurred of a character which may be termed working expenses and all proposals to incur expenditure under this head should pass through his hands, between the Collectors or special officers and the Board.

4. It is necessary to give the Inspector as little to do in this respect as is consistent with his proper supervision of actual working, and it will be easy to classify the kind of business which would pass through his hands in such a way that all routine and fixed charges would go direct to the Audit Office, while all accounts, which involve fluctuating rates and the like, pass through the Inspector's hand for check and remark.

(True Extract.)

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

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

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Govt. of India.

REVENUE.

To

The BOARD OF REVENUE.

&c., &c., &c.

Dated October 17th, 1874.

Read

Encl.

G. O., 17th October 1874, No. 1,310.

OCTOBER.

Nos. 240-241.

Audit and Control of Forest Accounts—Forwarding, with observations, to the Revenue Board, the memorandum of the Inspector of Forests regarding the— For consideration in connection with this office.

M

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1 There is noth in this memo that
the Board & they are
India as the reference as to the
audit of Forest accts. should be
duction — The final audit should
with the Board of Revenue — Under the
Forest Conservator & a position
that is not quite unintelligible or difficult
in my estimation for or as head of the
Rev. Admn: of that Province is a
part — Because the Board can
best conduct the Audit — & best de-
lings with the Inspector about correspon-
ffices acct. The land upon which
of the acct. ffice is situated & on
Forest acct. — In this sense is the
Dy. Chief Secy. put initially

3 The Inspector's memo deletes
practically & the supervision &
expenditure in the Forests before
it comes up for audit — and is

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Section of departmental arrangements to enable the Inspector to have a recognized position under the Board and that all acct. of expenditure in carried of a character that may be termed working expenses — and all proposals for new expenditure under this head, to pass thro' his hands. between the Collection of Inland Revenue & the Board

It is necessary & give the Inspector as little & do in this respect as is consistent with his proper duties of supervision of actual work — and it will be easy & classify the kind of business that shall pass thro' his hands in such a way that all routine & petty charges shall be disposed of without reference — while all accts. shall in other respects & the last pass thro' the Inspectors hands for check & remark

5 It is directed the Board to arrange their communication with the Inspector & Subord-proposals

6 Sanction granted in favor of making effective & practical use of the Inspector's time in the field — The Board of Inland Revenue is in no way a executive Department & a headless department — but must continue from week to week & supervision — Our Collectors are our great executive Revenue Departments must be continued & protected — but Supervision & Control is a certain sense & the Inspector as the executive head of the Dept. under the Board

24/9 Dd.

Revenue Department.

(5)

Memorandum on the subject of Control of Audit of Forest accounts by the Offg Inspector of Forests to the Govt of Madras

The subject has come under consideration on account of a Resolution of the Govt of India (received in Madras G.O. No 610 Dated 19th May last) directing that the Forest accts of Madras for the last Quarter for which they have been furnished by the Conservator be re-audited by the Accr General & the result of such re-audit reported for the information of the Govt of India — to the Presidency Board of Revenue has been placed in the position of the Conservator "in these respects" re the Control & the money expenditure of the Dept Vide G.O. No 1,290 Dated 6th Sept 1872 para 3 & all that we appear necessary & comply with the Govt of India Resolution is that the Dept, in addition to the Forest accts for the last Quarter for re-audit be furnished by the Conservator should submit to the Accr General the Forest accts for the last Quarter for re-audit & I cannot therefore see why the question of any transfer of Control and audit (still less of office establishments) should have resulted from the order under consideration. I have for some time been giving the subject of the Control of Forest expenditure careful consideration and, acting on the advice of the A.G. Secretary & Govt in the Rev. Dept, purpose shortly to submit proposals for securing a more effectual check & regulation of Dept. expenditure which I consider is much needed and I am therefore anxious that no steps should be taken by Government tending

them (so to speak) to any particular line with regard to the control of forest expenditure for the future - until I have had an opportunity of conferring with the Board & submitting my views thro' them -

The resolution of the Govt of Cochin with regard to the draft forest manual now before the Board (myself, Order G.O. No. 1035 dated 18th August 1914 expresses exactly what I should like to secure with regard to forest expenditure in this Presidency viz that "the Conservator (Inspector) should have full control over the outlay for Conservancy & working, but the formal audit be entrusted to an independent authority relieving Conservators of the control of establishment charges & the adjustment of accounts. At present Salary & Establishment bills go direct from the Collectors acct officers to the acct General where they are checked & audited - but bills for working charges go to the Board who check the items qua Conservator. I have no doubt that their audit etc is most efficient as regards the details of account, agreement to sanctions, vouchers &c - but it is impossible that they can check & control the outlay on working charges such as felling, carting, planting &c &c - which must require professional knowledge and an intimate acquaintance with the details of working &c as carried out in each Forest - Collectors as Conservators of their districts are also supposed to check Forest expenditure but I do not see how they can be supposed to know much about it & certainly have no means of comparing the expenditure as placed before them by their Forest assistant with what it should be & may be in the adjoining Districts - as an instance of what I mean I may state that since assuming charge of the arrangements I suppose it was assumed by the undersigned that do no Kani planted Cardamoms on 4-acres cost Rs 40 - & on 5 acres Rs 200 per acre - There was evidently something wrong & probably some mistake in account but I do not see how it would ever have been detected if I had limited myself strictly to inspection & reporting on results

Again in Travancore there is a clear line between Forest operations & Conservation - Forest Officers do the Conservation part (applies chiefly to Teak) - steadily expended but Budget estimates & spent the whole Budget allotment + a good deal more under the head "felling & carting of timber" leaving nothing available for working, planting &c - This could not have been done had the accounts been scrutinised even occasionally by a professional eye & still less if instead of the Board the Forest Officer had been trusted on Quarterly Allotments granted on estimates previously submitted of his probable expenditure under each head of working - These are all matters of detail which I merely state in order to show that the whole

7/1340.

Expedient of Inst. accounts requires revision to render the control & audit really efficient.
The accountant General proposes that the whole control and office establishment for accounts &c be transferred to them. The Board consider it should be left with them as "the office having the control of the administration of the Dept." I consider that the Control &c rest with the Inspector or Conservator General of Forests (aided by an assistant who should eventually become one of the junior Inspectors & have charge of the Inspectors Office generally) either as a distinct office or as representing the Revenue Board whilst the final audit would probably be best entrusted to the trained staff of the Acc. Generals Dept. who would check totals under each head and see that the accts were properly kept & adjusted —
I would respectfully suggest that meanwhile the orders of the Govt of India be complied with & that the Inst accts for the past quarter be submitted to the Acc. Genl for re-audit & the Board of Revenue in their position as Conservator, and that the Acc. General, the Secy as a member of the Board & myself be directed to confer on the subject & submit joint proposals for the future management of the Inst accounts on this Presidency — I do not see anything in the Resolution of the Govt of India which renders any other action or expression of opinion necessary — It is the Acc. General alone who has opened the subject —

Campbell for the Chief Secy
Govt of Bombay

Revenue Department.

No. 1340.

Proceedings of the Madras Government

Under date the 17th October 1874

Read the following

From The Offg Insp.r of Forests

Memorandum on the subject of the audit and control of Forest Accounts } Dated 17th Sept.r 1874.

This Memorandum from the Inspector of Forests which was submitted before G.O. dated 25th Sept.r 1874 No. 1215 was passed, will be forwarded to the Board of Revenue for consideration in consultation with the Inspector.

2. There did not appear sufficient reason for postponing replying to the Govt of India on the question which had been put by them, relating as it did to the final audit which should

No. 3200.

Received 18th October 1874

From

The Offg Insp.r Forests

dated 17 Sept.r 1874

Subject Memorandum on the subject of the audit and control of Forest Accounts

Encls

C.D. No 1340. 17 October 1874

Memorandum on the subject of the audit and control of Forest Accounts

C.D. 19/10/74. Rec.d

should in any case remain with the Board of Revenue.

3. The Inspector's Memo: relates practically to the supervision of expenditure in the Districts before it comes up for Audit - and in matter of departmental administration and detail the Inspector should have a recognized position under the Board - under which all account of expenditure incurred of a character which may be termed working expenses and all proposals to incur expenditure under this head, should pass through his hands - between the Collectors or special Officers and the Board.

4. It is necessary to give the Inspector as little to do in this respect as is consistent with his

proper supervision of actual working - and it will be easy to classify the kind of business which would pass through his hands, in such a way that all routine and fixed charges would go direct to the Audit Office - while all accounts which involve fluctuating rates and the like pass through the Inspector's hand for check and remark.

8/132

1st To the Board of Revenue Dir & Nos
3rd The Inspector of Forests