M.R.O. 1—88,000—16-10-29.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1205 Press ~~Mis.~~
37-28

Dated 3 to May 1869

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 3rd May 1869.

No. 37. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 17th April 1869, No. 2,619.

Read the following letters:—

From the Commissioner of the Neilgherries, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Ootacamund, 11th March 1869, No. 30.

FROM reading the last report of the Conservator of Forests, Dr. Bidie's account of the Coorg forests, and the Honorable Mr. Innes's letter to the Secretary of State, on Rain-fall and Vegetation, I am led to draw the Board's attention to certain circumstances in this district which seem to me to call for consideration.

2. Putting aside for the present the requirements of the inhabitants, Government is now spending on firewood—

	Per mensem. RS.	Per annum. RS.
For the Lawrence Asylum	54 × 12 =	648
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Wellington Barracks for eight months...	383 × 8 =	3,064
Do. for four months ...	767 × 4 =	3,068
Wellington Workshop	107 × 12 =	1,284
	Total ...	9,348

Rupees 9,348, at four per cent., represent a capital of Rupees 2,33,700.

3. The felling of wood here for fuel and for cultivation is going steadily forward; population is on the increase, and little or nothing is being done by Government, or by private individuals, to provide fuel for the future. This is a serious evil in itself; but if a diminished rain-fall follows upon diminished vegetation, the evil is greatly increased.

4. Nevertheless, there are few places more fortunate than this in the possession of capabilities, which would seem to render planting inexpensive and certain of success. On each side of the Pycara and Seegoor roads, within five or six miles of Ootacamund, there are barren tracts which are of little use even as pasture. In the Cantonments we have imported trees (the Australian Acacias) which grow in any situation with such rapidity and pertinacity that they can hardly be eradicated.

5. The Government has already four plantations of Australian trees: one near Wellington and three small ones to the west of Ootacamund; all of which are doing well, and cover in all 193 acres.

6. The rate at which planting is now going on does not keep pace with the felling. Year by year sholahs are destroyed to furnish Government and the inhabitants with firewood. The wants of the future for years must be supplied from the same source. The Government cannot refuse to sell wood while no other supply is available. The hills, especially to the east and north-east, are already nearly denuded of wood; whether this has had anything to do with the scanty rain-fall of the last few years I am not prepared to say; but there cannot be a doubt, I think, that the absence of wood renders the soil less retentive of water and less favorable to vegetable development.

7. To remedy this, it seems to me desirable that Government should at once set about planting, in a systematic way, of at least 2 or 300 acres near Ootacamund, and 3 or 400 acres near Wellington.

8. Dr. Cleghorn and Colonel Morgan have estimated that an acre of land, planted with Australian Acacias, will yield in twelve years 300 Rupees worth of wood; that is, about 100,000 pounds in weight. To be on the right side, say that the amount will not be obtained under fifteen years. The requirements of the Ootacamund Jail are 26,440 pounds per mensem, and of the Lawrence Asylum (even with its present number of inmates) 27,000 pounds per mensem.

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To supply this it will be necessary to cut seven acres a-year, (7 × 15 years = 105 acres). In addition we have the requirements of the inhabitants, until private enterprise has undertaken the supply. To meet this, as well as the Government demand, I have put the area at 2 or 300 acres, which Government should plant near Ootacamund. In the same way I calculate that the Wellington plantation should be extended to 3 or 400 acres, or to double that number, if it be in contemplation to station a full Regiment in the Barracks.

9. It seems to me impossible for Government to stand quietly by and see one sholah after another destroyed year by year for the necessary supply of firewood. No doubt such matters are better left to private enterprise if possible, and in old established countries, where money is often at one or two per cent., there is no difficulty; but it is otherwise here. Time presses and planting investments are always tardy in their returns, even where capital is forthcoming.

10. Steps certainly might be taken to make such an investment more attractive to private individuals, and I would suggest whether it would not be desirable to lay off, in ten-acre blocks, a certain quantity of grass-land, say 1,500 acres near Ootacamund, 1,000 near Wellington, and 500 near Kotagherry, on lease for seven years, rent-free, to private individuals, 50 acres to be the maximum to any one individual; the lease not to be transferrable, except with the consent of Government; the land to be resumed by Government after the seven years if not fully planted up. At the end of the seven years, if the conditions had been fulfilled by the lessee, he might be given a Title-deed in Form X. of Waste Land Rules, the land being thenceforth subject to the annual assessment of 1 Rupee an acre.

11. During the last week's settlement I met the Badagas of the Todanad Division, and they generally complained of the restrictions placed upon their felling wood by the Forest Department. The Badaga population of the division is about 18,000. I explained to them that their numbers were on the increase; that the late scanty rain-fall was possibly owing to their denuding the hills of wood; and that if they did not themselves plant, they might expect still greater restrictions, longer droughts, and scantier rain-falls.

12. They seemed willing to plant if Government would assist. No better plan occurs to me than that each group of villages (there are seventy-six in the division) should fence in and plant 10 acres in a convenient locality, Government supplying the seed and making over by deed the 10 acres, rent-free, for ever* for a firewood and timber plantation, resumable at any time if the whole area is not kept planted.

* I say "for ever," because they are now getting firewood and timber for agricultural purposes from Government forest gratis.

13. While on the subject of planting, I may also mention that I received the accompanying letter from Captain Richardson, asking if something could not be done to supply the Badagas with Quinine; and about the same time I read the Secretary of State's letter, dated 16th June † 1866, No. 22, pointing out the desirabilty of promoting the cultivation of Chinchonas by villagers in suitable situations round their houses.

† In Government Order, dated 20th July 1866, No. 1,840.

14. I consulted the Monigars of the villages, and they appeared to be prepared to carry out the Secretary of State's suggestion. The matter dropped till last week when I was agreeably surprised to find in three villages near Bilicul that they had strongly enclosed a well-selected piece of ground close to their villages, and had dug twenty or thirty pits, and made two long nursery beds. The Revenue Inspectors inform me that about twenty-five other such enclosures have been made in other parts of the hills.

15. The men on whose lands the three enclosures, I have myself seen, are situated, asked to have it mentioned in their Puttahs that they had set aside the piece as a "Dhurma Tope," and I accordingly entered it so.

16. The fact seems to me encouraging, and I hope the Board will urge the Government to direct the Chinchona Superintendent to have ready for me in May next 1,000 young plants for these topes.

Enclosure No. 1.

From Captain H. RICHARDSON, to the Commissioner of the Neilgherries, dated Ootacamund, 22nd December 1868.

Having resided for some years in the vicinity of Khulhutty in the midst of a number of Burgher villages, my attention has been drawn, and my sympathies excited, in consequence of the great mortality that is constantly going on amongst the people inhabiting them, principally caused from the want of medical advice and treatment.

2. I need not tell you that the Badagas or Burghers as they are called, are a very primitive people, jealous of the preservation of their own habits and customs, and shy of taking advantage of such institutions as are open to them, such as our Hospitals, etc., fearing that if one of their people died in such an institution they would not be able to regain the body to carry out their funeral ceremony of burning, which they perform some twenty-four hours after death.

3. I have found them ever ready to seek advice and assistance from any European residing in their locality, and they will at all times take any medicine prescribed, and follow the instructions given, and in my own experience, as far as my ability went, I have done all I could to administer to their necessities, but not being master of their language I found my intentions very often frustrated for the want of being able to make the necessary inquiries, and ascertain the symptoms.

4. For those reasons I have taken the liberty to address you on the subject, and trust I may be able to enlist your sympathies on behalf of those poor people, and through you the Government, and would respectfully submit the following suggestions for the consideration of those in autho-

1*st*.—The appointment of two *Native* Medical Officers, one to be located at Coonoor and one at Ootacamund, who should be required to pay periodical visits to all the villages in their district, to prescribe for the sick, and draw on the Ootacamund Dispensary for the medicine.

2*ndly*.—Wherever a respectable European is located in the vicinity of the Burgher villages a small supply of medicines might be deposited with them for distribution in urgent cases—the medicine, simple purgatives, such as Jalap, etc., also Quinine.

5. I feel I need not enter more fully on the subject than to draw your attention to the very sad state in which those poor people are placed by the wants expressed, as I know that if the suggestions thrown out are acted on they will be carried out much more efficiently, and in a much more liberal spirit than I would venture to advise.

Note.—Captain Richardson, who called upon me in person with my letter, explained to me that fever was the prevailing disease, and Quinine the great want.

8*th March* 1869.

(Signed) J. W. BREEKS,
Commissioner.

From the same Officer, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Ootacamund, 13th April 1869, No. 44.

With reference to paragraph 12 of my letter to the Board of the 11th March 1869, No. 30, I beg to forward an application from the Christian village of Nerekhambe for three or four cawnies of land, rent-free, for a firewood and timber plantation.

2. I went out with the Reverend Mr. Metz to see the ground applied for. It is situated on the slope of the hill on which the German Mission Church is built, and is covered with stunted scrub. The land is too precipitous for cultivation, and is about eight miles from Ootacamund. Under the circumstances I would recommend the application for sanction.

3. On reading over the rough draft of my letter of the 11th March I see I have written in paragraph 11, "The Badaga population of the *division* is about 18,000". For division *read* district.

Enclosure No. 1.—Petition.

In this letter the Commissioner points to the large consumption of firewood that is going on, and to the extensive felling of wood for timber as well as for cultivation; he states that little or nothing is being done towards replenishing the stock either by Government or private individuals.

2. The conservancy of the woods having now been placed under the Commissioner, he is at liberty to carry out his plans of planting to the full extent to which the funds admit. The Board are of opinion that an efficient conservancy will so raise the revenue as to provide ample funds for the purpose.

3. As regards private planting they wish to have the Commissioner's opinion as to the expediency of the introduction of the Tope Rules, which provide for land being taken up for *bona fide* plantation of timber and fuel trees free of assessment for twenty years. He should particularly refer to the probable operation of such rules with reference to plantations already formed, and if he is prepared to recommend the measure he should detail the restrictions that will be necessary to guard against abuse.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 3rd May 1869.

4. With reference to the establishment of village Chinchona topes, the Board are of opinion that every assistance and encouragement should be given to this useful measure; the land for them might be taken up rent-free in the name of the Jungle Conservancy Fund, and aid given in funds towards the expenses of fencing and obtaining seedlings. When no assistance is required the plantations could be formed under Rule II., Public Topes, Standing Circular, No. 121. This provides for their being entered as Public Topes for ever free from all assessment.

No. 38. Order thereon, 3rd May 1869, No. 1,205.

Miscellaneous.

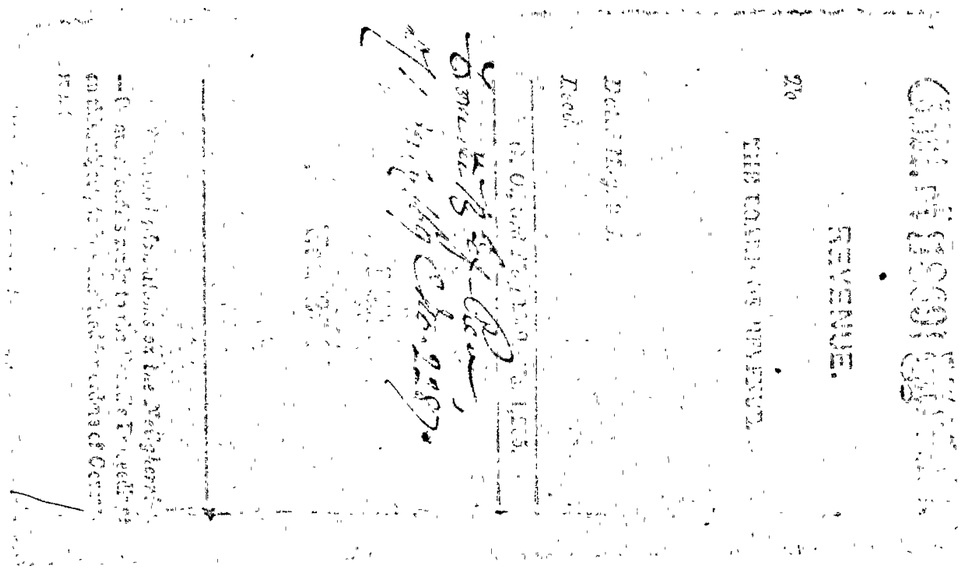
The Commissioner's reply to the Board's Proceedings should be submitted for the orders of Government.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.



No. 1205. R.D.

Proceedings of the Madras Govt
Under date the 3d. May 1869

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of the Board of Revenue
dt. 17th April 1869, No. 2619.

The Commissioner's
reply to the Board's
Proceedings ahmed
be submitted for the
orders of Govt.

RDS.

14 Copies to the Rd. with main Cycle Draft 4/

Recd. 4/5/69 Reg

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(True Copies and Extract.)

C. Alexander [signature]
Acting-Secretary.

20th July/69 No. 460-467

To the Commissioner of the Neilgherries.

Copy to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Revenue 1869. Ootacamund
Board of Revenue,
MADRAS.

No. 1296

PROCEEDINGS 17TH APRIL 1869, No. 2,619.

Desp. 21 Do
Received 22 Do

Encl. 1
Do

Rec 1215 8 May/69

APRIL.
No. 2,619.

Firewood plantations—on Neilgherries,—Commissioner informed that he is at liberty to carry out his plans in regard to formation of, and that every assistance and encouragement should be given to planting of village Chinchona topes, and his opinion requested as to expediency of introducing Tope Rules into District.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

—37—

C24 Apl/69 Reg

No. 2,619.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 17th April 1869.

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