

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2636

Press

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118-119

Dated

7 — 11 — 1867.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
7th November 1867.*

No. 118. Read the following letter from the Officiating Conservator of Forests, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 30th October 1867, No. 357:—

1. With reference to paragraph 2 of the Orders of Government, No. 2,517, dated 25th of October 1867, I have the honor to offer the following explanation.

2. In Major Michael's report upon the Annamallays he brings to the notice of Government that Teak and other valuable timber trees grow in the vicinity of Poonachy, though the trees are "one and all stunted, and of no great value," and he recommends that this tract should be reserved, whilst all the other forest is made available for Coffee, Tea, and Chinchona; and Government in their Order No. 1,154, of the 1st of July, ordered the reservation as proposed. By this reservation I understood that the tract in question was not to be given up for cultivation of any sort, but not that our department was precluded from working it to the best advantage for the State. When Mr. Lowry made his offer for the Teak and Blackwood, I much regret that I did not remind Government that this tract had been reserved; it was an oversight on my part, but as much of the Teak was annually being burnt, the fact of the reservation would not, I think, have prevented Government from acceding to Mr. Lowry's request.

3. I first visited this part of the Annamallays in 1858 (nine years ago,) with Dr. Cleghorn and a large exploring party. I was then in charge of the Annamallay forests, and we both of us at that time carefully examined these forests, and considered the possibility of working them to any profit. There was a large amount of fallen timber, and many of the full grown trees were long past their prime; we considered it a great pity to see so much timber wasted, but were of opinion that it could not be brought to market with a profit. Dr. Cleghorn in his report upon the

• *Vide Forests and Gardens of Southern India, page 291.* expedition wrote as follows:—"The value* of the standing wood is about 50,000 Rupees, and of fallen timber at

least Rupees 5,000." By this estimate, (which I believe was a very correct one at the time,) it will at once be seen that an attempt to work the forests would have been a failure financially, as the cost of a road may be set down at 25,000 Rupees, and the working charges at two-thirds of the selling price of the timber. Dr. Cleghorn subsequently tried to get offers for this timber, and he would at that time have taken an offer of 1 Anna per cubic foot; the only offer, however, was from a Native of the Coimbatore district, who agreed to remove the timber if he might take it without any payment. I visited these forests subsequently at different seasons, five or six times, before I gave Mr. Lowry the contract in 1865, and I observed that very much of the fallen timber was annually burnt, and that over-ripe trees were constantly being blown down. When Mr. Lowry made his offer, I considered it a very favorable one, and that it would not be fair for us to trammel his operations by any strict agreement as to time, &c. No Company was even thought of at that time, and I entered *personal supervision* in the agreement on purpose that it should not pass out of his hands. I did not consider the matter as one of sufficient importance to bring in any detail before Government, and at the time I probably quite forgot the fact of this tract having been reported on by Major Michael, and the Government order of reservation. I may remark, however, that Major Michael reports that the trees are "one and all stunted, and of no great value."

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4. I have lately made a thorough exploration of these forests, and I am convinced that no Company would ever pay, even if a road was made by Government; the value of the forest is not such as to authorize the purchase of plant and the pay of a Superintendent, &c. When Mr. Lowry made the offer of 2 Annas per foot, it was understood that he would have to bear the expenses of the road. As the road was necessary in connection with the Coffee estates, I considered that he could afford to pay the 2 Annas seigniorage and yet make a small profit; but I still consider the rate very favorable for our department under those circumstances. Only the timber above the top of the ghaut was given; parts of the valley are very inaccessible, and would be worked with great difficulty, and when the timber had been brought to the foot, it would be fifteen miles from Polachy, to which place there is no road, but only a jungle track, very sandy in some places, rocky in others, and intersected by one large river and several deep nullahs, none of which are bridged. Polachy is twenty-six miles from Coimbatore, which latter place would be nearest market. I should not have accepted Mr. Lowry's offer, if I had known that there was a chance of the road being made by Government. Operations might then have been carried on in this forest from time to time by the Government Forest department, which is located in another part of the Annamallays. Mr. Lowry's attempt to form a Company upon the agreement I had given him was very unfair; it occurred just as Dr. Cleghorn returned from Bengal, six months ago. Mr. Lowry has been attempting to work the forest before the road was made, he has got into difficulties, and has not now funds to go on with, hence the proposal for a Company.

5. I trust that this explanation will satisfy Government that it has been my wish to act as I thought best for my department.

No. 119.

ORDER THEREON, 7th November 1867. No. 2,630.

Forests, No. 7.

The Government accept Captain Beddome's explanation.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,

Secretary to Government.

To the Officiating Conservator of Forests.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

W. 2630. ✓
J. G. N. accept
Capt. Beddome's
Explanation. D.H.
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