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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue, DEPARTMENT

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Dated 14 12 1867 ~~197~~.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 260. Read the following lett m the Conservator of Forests, to the Secretary to Government, R Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 25th October 1867,

1. I have the honor to forward, nsideration and orders of Government, a Report by Lieutenant C. J. Deputy Conservator, on the Kolla Mallays and the Kolroyen Mallays, tw of hills in the Salem District.

2. This report is interesting in co ion with that submitted, by the same Officer, a year ago on the Jevadi and Ye Hills, of the same district, recorded in the Proceedings of Government, date May 1866, No. 1,173.

3. I am not aware of any publis ecord relating to these ranges. I remember to have seen the MS. Proceedi of the Geological Survey, when Mr. Bruce Foote examined the mountains of t Salem District. It might be useful to print Lieutenant Walker's report, with an extract of the Geological Memoir, for permanent record in the "Journal of Scien ce" or "Quarterly Journal of Medicine."

4. Government will doubtless refer to the Board of Revenue for their opinion as to the best mode of dealing with the Poligars. I would simply urge the advisability of obtaining a long lease on reasonable terms, with a view to securing the conservancy of the adjoining Government forest. This policy has been recommended by Her Majesty's Secretary of State.

5. Lieutenant Walker proposes, in paragraph 31, to establish Chowkies in the boundary between the Government and Poligar forest. This arrangement is to involve no additional outlay, and might, I think, be approved.

From Lieutenant C. J. WALKER, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Salem and South Arcot, to the Conservator of Forests, dated Camp at Jevadi Hills, 12th October 1867, No. 131.

1. I have the honor to submit a Report on the forest resources, &c., of the Kolla Mallays, and part of the range of hills known as the Colroys, in the Salem District.

2. The Kolla Mallays are situated principally in the Namkul talook, but extend some distance into the Rasupuram Sub-division of the Salem talook on the north, and the Ahtur talook on the east. On the south-east and south they extend nearly to the boundaries of Trichinopoly District. The area may be roughly stated as 150 square-miles.

3. These hills have been seldom visited by Europeans, and the climate is considered very unhealthy by the natives of the plains. I can, however, see no ground for this idea. Fever is doubtless prevalent at some seasons, as the height of the hills, which varies from 2,500 to 3,500 feet above the level of the sea, is doubtless that at which fevers prevail, still the inhabitants state that, as a rule, they enjoy good health, and their physique is not that of men who are subject to attacks of fever of a virulent description.

4. The plains and valleys on the hills are extensively cultivated, the principal crops being Buller* (black†) Raggy, Kodra‡ (hill-rice) Bajira, § and a little rice (Dhan). The hills are very well supplied with water, many streams running all the year round. The soil is good, and would, I think, be favorable for the growth of Teak.

* Lablab vulgaris.
† Eleusine coracana.
‡ Panicum (?)
§ Penicillaria spicata.

5. There is little timber of value on the upper portions of the hills, all having evidently been felled years ago, when the land was cleared for cultivation. On the slopes, Dindugay

(Conocarpus Latifolia), Naga *(Conocarpus—* ... Kadukai *(Terminalia chebla)*, and Chita- ... tagong *(Cedrela Toona)*, are found in some ... Jack and the common sorts of junglewood are plentiful.

Sandalwood is found on the upper part ... and the number of young trees exceeded my expectations. There are, roughly speak... thousands in the various Nads, and all are healthy, although many have been damag... drivers and others, who cut off the bark (which they chew instead of betel), and e... re the trees for want of better employment. The sandal is now strictly conserved, cleared ... rs, &c., and will form a source of revenue in future years. The wood is inferior to that ... a Denkenikotta and elsewhere, but is still valuable. 281 maunds sold last year from ... Depôt realized Rupees 3-8-0 per maund. A small quantity of billets and roots is ready f... his year. A Forest Map of these hills, shewing the sandalwood tracts, is being prepared.

6. Colroy Hills.—These hills are of la... xtent (probably about 300 square-miles), and situated in the Utengerry and Ahtur talooks o... m and Kullucoorchee talook of South Arcot.

7. They are not known to natives as the "Colroys," or "Colroyen Mallay," that name being confined by them to two Poliputs, known as Peria and Chinna Colroyen.

8. The climate here also has invariably been reported as deadly, but I can see even less reason for this belief than in the case of the Kolla Mallays. The highest point must reach to 4,500 feet above the sea (my highest encampment was 3,915 feet), but I observed roughly up to 4,300 feet, and the inhabitants are all strong and robust. I have little doubt that the bad character of the climate is propagated by the hill-men to prevent the intrusion of strangers, and that those few natives from the plains who have ventured up, doubtless find the "pickings" to be derived so lucrative, that they do all in their power to encourage the belief.

9. The upper portion of the hills is all Poliput, being divided amongst five Poligars, viz., Peria Colroyen and Chinna Colroyen, in the Salem District, and Ariyagovinden, Karoomagovinden, and Jedyagovinden, in the South Arcot District.

10. Report says that these hills were originally inhabited by men of "Beder" caste, who left on the advent of some "Swami," and were replaced by the present holders, who came from Conjeveram and settled on the hills. In the records of the Inam Commission is a report of a stone in the enclosure of the Kuna Ramen Coil (within the limits of Peria Colroyen), the writing on which is stated to be 900 years old! and to establish the giving of the land at that date to the present proprietors.

11. The Collector and I carefully examined this stone, and we are of opinion that it must be considered as utterly devoid of credit. It is fully exposed to the action of the sun and rain, and it is well known that no stone could remain thus exposed for such a number of years without the letters becoming almost, if not altogether, illegible, whilst some of these, *especially the dates*, are clearly and distinctly cut.

12. I did not in the present tour visit the Poliputs of the South Arcot District, but confined my visit to the Peria and Chinna Colroyen.

13. It is these two Poliputs which have given so much trouble, and presented so many obstacles to forest conservancy in the Salem range, from the timber and forest products having been leased to contractors who issue licenses and tickets. Much of the timber, &c., felled on their permits is, to our knowledge, felled in Government forests, though it is difficult, if not impossible, to bring legal proof.

14. The contractors lately laid claim not only to the forests on the top but on the slopes of the hills, owing to the Survey Department having placed their boundary stones round the foot or the boundary of the village cultivation in the plains.

15. The Poligars, however, have never, that I am aware of, advanced any such claim, although in South Arcot they enjoy certain rents from the plains as village or Kavelli Manniums.

16. To effect some better arranger... interests of the department was the main object of my visit; and the Collector, wh... settle some points in connection with the Inam Commission, kindly timed his visit ... any me.

17. The Poligar of Chinna Colroyen ... being in hiding from his creditors, but we saw and conversed with his son, an intellig... ty or twenty-two years of age.

18. The Poligar of Peria Colroyen (... vinden) appeared to have no knowledge of his own affairs, and has been apparently ... hands of the present holder of the timber contract, who, it is generally believed, was ... ip with the late Tahsildar of Ahtoor talook, Teagaraja Pillay, in this and other ... received his aid in obtaining such contracts on favorable terms.

19. There appear to be no documents ... nd regarding boundaries, &c., but, as before said, the Poligar has never advanced a clai... but the summit of the hills, and it may be taken that the 'water shed,' or natural bou... s the true limit on the south and west, and this view is strengthened by our finding in tw... .3 stones evidently cut, which had been placed at the top of the downward slope, and in one case thrown down doubtless with a purpose.

20. On the north and east the boundaries are the limits of the other Poliputs.

21. There is no ripe timber on the upper portion of the hills. Naga, Dindugay, Kadukai, and Chittagong saplings are found in some numbers, and a few young sandalwood trees.

22. There are large numbers of "*Rottlera tinctoria*," from which the valuable "Kupila podi" is obtained, and the amount realized by the contractor from this forest product alone in the Chinna Colroyen, during last year, is stated to have been Rupees 2,000.

23. This man (who has the contract for both Poliputs) pays Rupees 100 for that of Peria, and Rupees 120 for that of Chinna Colroyen *per annum*, the former agreement being for twenty years, of which four have expired, and the latter for five, of which three and a half have expired.

24. The Collector has proposed settlement by paying the Poligars a fixed annual sum of about Rupees 500 in excess of their respective estimated rentals, which the Government would henceforth collect. The Peria Colroyen Poligar is desirous that this plan be adopted, but the Chinna Colroyen Poligar appears to prefer the payment of a yearly quit-rent, leaving his forests to this department.

25. I beg particularly to request that you will bring to the notice of Government, how valuable such, or indeed any, definite arrangement would be in the interests of this department, which is that mainly interested in the matter. The proposed plan of an annual payment to the Poligar is, I think, the simplest and best mode of settlement, both in the interests of Government and the Poligars themselves, but it is of paramount importance that those forests should be brought under conservancy as early as possible.

26. Not only would the remaining forest on the top of the hills be preserved from destruction by the interlopers, whose only object is personal gain, but we would save the Government forests on the slopes, which are well wooded, from being denuded by illicit felling on the passes granted by the contractors, to prevent which would necessitate the employment of a very large preventive establishment.

27. In our hands the forests would not only be carefully conserved for the present, but form an important source of revenue for the future. Not to mention climatic considerations and the decrease in water-supply, which will ensue if these forests are recklessly felled.

28. It is true that the contractor's lease is, in one case, (that of Peria Colroyen,) a long one, but if the Government become the landlord, I have no doubt he will be ready to sub-let at a rate which, if not remunerative at present, will at least prevent the loss of capital which is going on.

29. As there is literally no ripe timber (such as he is bringing into the market) within the contractor's limits, I have directed him not to issue permits till the matter is settled, and I hope that you will approve of my action, and that the Government will not deem that I have exceeded my powers in this important matter.

30. I shall furnish a report on the Sou ot Poliputs after inspection. I am now in communication with the Collector of South A subject.

31. Meanwhile, I request the sanctio ient to establish Tannas or Chowkies on the boundary of these Poliputs, through which t en by contractors must pass and be checked.

32. I have arranged with the Contra ia Govinden Nad, who passes most of his timber through the Salem District, viâ Cot e there are valuable Government forests.

33. Every means shall be adopted to unnecessary inconvenience to the contractors, and the Chowkies will be changed fro time to the various paths, leading from the forests, to enable them to work all the port h lie within the limits of his contract, the sole object being to exercise a necessary chec vent damage to Government forests.

34. I shall arrange so that no extra esta t will be required.

No. 261. ORDER THEREON, 14 ecember 1867, No. 2,977.

Forests, No. 7.

1. The Government have perused Lieutenant Walker's report with much interest, and approve the establishment of the so-called Chowkies, to check off the actual loads of timber exported from the Poliems, and thus prevent traffic in illicitly felled Government timber under the pretence that it comes from the Poligars' forests.

2. The arrangement is to cause no extra expense, and appears to be one which the Forest Department were competent to carry out without any reference to Government.

3. The Board of Revenue will call on the Collector of Salem to report on the claims set up by the Poligars' contractor to fell timber on the slopes of the hills, where the Poligars themselves have hitherto asserted no such right.

4. The Survey Department avowedly placed their marks in such localities at the limit of the culturable plains, without thereby professing to define the outer boundary of the villages concerned; and there is no doubt that the 'water-shed' is the universally recognized line of main division between villages on and adjoining hill ranges in this country. To place the line of separation at the base of the hills, would deprive the villages lying immediately at their foot of all control over their sources of water supply, and in great measure of their timber reserves, while the boundary itself would be indefinite and liable to constant dispute. The position of the 'water-shed' admits of no doubt.

5. The Government fully recognize the desirability of obtaining the control of the forest tracts on the plateau by renting them from the Poligars, and desire that the Collector and Officiating Conservator will, in communication, endeavour to effect a satisfactory arrangement for the purpose.

6. The Government understand Lieutenant Walker's suggestion to be that a lease shall be taken from the Poligars, saving the existing rights of the present contractor, and that the latter be induced to relinquish his contracts for a reasonable compensation. The arrangement appears unobjectionable if it can be effected, but it is observed that the contract for the Peria Colroyen forests has still sixteen years to run, and it would be essential that the cession of this contract should be secured to make a lease to Government from the Poligar of any value.

7. The Government, however t that considerable improvement can be effected in the present stat and they have full reliance on Lieutenant Walker's intelligent and nistration of his charge, to do all in this direction that is feasible.

(Tr

d) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Officiating Conservator of Forests.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Inspector General, Medical Departmer
,, the Curator, Government Museum,
the Literary Society
the Agri-Horticultural Societ

copy of the Report on the Jevadi and ellagiri Hills.

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Revenue 8th Dep.t

Pro of Gov.t for December

N.o 2977

Pro of the Madras Gov.t
of the December 1867