M.R.O. 14—15,000—17-9-24

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 740 Press ~~Mis.~~

483 484

Dated 29 — 3 - 1869.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 483. Read the following Proceedings of the Government of India in the Public Works Department, (Revenue—Forests), dated Fort William, 13th March 1867, No. 109 F :—

Forest operations in Port Blair.

Read again—

Resolution of the Financial Department, No. 1,835, dated 12th August 1865, sanctioning an allowance of Rupees 100 per mensem, for twelve months, to an Officer to be charged with the working of the forests in the Andaman Islands.

Read—

Letter from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, British Burmah, No. 803—11 F, dated 18th October 1866, forwarding reports from Mr. Leeds, the Conservator of Forests, British Burmah, and Major Ford, the Superintendent of Port Blair, on the forests of the Andaman Islands, with proposals for working them.

Read also—

Letter from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, British Burmah, No. 1,212—31 F, dated 17th January 1867, forwarding a report on the Forest Administration of the Andaman Islands for the year 1865-66, and asking for continuance of the sanction of Rupees 100 per mensem, with effect from the 22nd February 1866, to the Officer in charge of the forests.

Observations.—From the report of Mr. Leeds, the Conservator of Forests, British Burmah, the Governor General in Council regrets to learn that the forests near the Settlements on the Andaman Islands have apparently been indiscriminately cleared away without any reservation of trees for shade, shelter, or utility. The fact is not creditable to the Superintending authorities, and greater care must be taken in future. Mr. Leeds' suggestion that lines of main road should be made through the forests, with cross-paths preliminary to systematic working, seems to be worthy of adoption.

2. From the Administration Report for 1865-66, it appears that the operations were commenced in 1863, and were confined to the forest south of Aberdeen, under charge of Lieutenants St. John and Foord successively, for a short period, and are at present under Lieutenant Mathias, of the Madras Sappers and Miners. The establishment employed has been—

1 Overseer (an Eurasian prisoner).
1 Head Forester.
1 Assistant ,,
6 Sawyers.
11 Coolies.

But no information is given as to the cost, the outlay having been included in the general expenditure of the Island.

3. Mr. Leeds, after a brief visit to these Islands, proposes that a competent Assistant Conservator be appointed on a salary of Rupees 400 per mensem, with an establishment of 96 convict labourers of various grades; this proposal is approved by the Superintendent of Port Blair, and by the Chief Commissioner, who would raise the number of convicts to 100. Pending orders on this point, the Chief Commissioner applies for a continuance of the grant of Rupees 100 per mensem,

with effect from the 22nd February 1866, to the Officer at present in charge of the forests, but he considers that the services of a Forest officer are necessary, and recommends the appointment for favorable consideration. Having duly considered all the circumstances set forth in these papers, and remembering that the local consumption and external demand for Andaman timber are as yet limited, the Governor General in Council is of opinion that the requirements of the case will be met by continuing the services of the Lieutenant of Sappers as a temporary arrangement. In the event of an extension of forest operations, and the opening out of an export trade in timber, it may be advisable hereafter to appoint a Forest officer, but this would be premature at present.

4. The question relative to the amount of convict labor, which may be expected to be steadily available for forest work, will be referred to the Home Department. Upon this, the scale of prospective operations will, in some measure, depend.

5. The forests of these Islands contain many valuable descriptions of timber useful for building purposes, of which samples are seen in the collection recently transmitted by Lieutenant-Colonel Ford; and it is believed that iron-wood sleepers could be supplied to Indian Railways in large quantity. There are no data as to the cost of these sleepers, but a separate communication will be addressed by the Officiating Inspector General of Forests to the Superintendent of Port Blair on this subject. The East Indian Railway Company have expressed their willingness to take sleepers of Pyengadoe (iron-wood) in any quantity if the price can be arranged. An experimental consignment of say 500 sleepers of iron-wood, and an equal number of some of the more promising timbers should be sent to Calcutta, as well as to Madras, in a return Government store-ship. Before preparing sleepers in quantity, it should be ascertained whether the Railway Companies are willing to take them. Fifty pieces of bullet-wood might also be sent to the Arsenals of both Presidencies, where it is understood to be much prized for the manufacture of gun-stocks. Further action will depend on the reports being favorable.

6. Lastly, it is believed that Mr. J. Kurz, of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Calcutta, was deputed last year to examine the Flora of these Islands, and to identify the timber trees. It is desirable that his report should be submitted to this department by the Government of Bengal.

Order.—Ordered, with reference to paragraph 3, that this Resolution, with the papers read above, be forwarded to the Financial Department for consideration and orders, in reference to the continuance of the grant of Rupees 100 per mensem to the Officer in charge of the forests in the Andaman Islands.

Ordered, with reference to paragraph 4, that this Resolution be forwarded to the Home Department, with a request that information may be given as to the amount of convict labor (European, Burmese, and Hindoo) expected to be available for forest work, as upon this the scale of timber operations will mainly depend.

Ordered, with reference to paragraph 5, that this Resolution be forwarded to the Government of Madras for information, and to the Military Department for communication to the Inspector General of Ordnance.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
29th March 1867.

Ordered, with reference to paragraph 6, that this Resolution be forwarded to the Government of Bengal, in the Revenue Department, with a request that Mr. Kurz's report on the timber trees and flora of the Andaman Islands may be forwarded to this department.

Ordered that this Resolution be forwarded to the Chief Commissioner, British Burmah, for information and guidance.

(Signed) C. H. DICKENS, Colonel, R. A.,
Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 484. Order thereon, 29th March 1867, No. 740.

Forests, No. 10.

Communicated to the Military and Public Works Departments, Board of Revenue, and Conservator of Forests.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Military Department.
,, the Public Works Department.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Conservator of Forests.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

No. 7140

Communicated to the
Military and Public Works Department
Board of Revenue and Conservator
of Forests.

29th March 89

7 Copies Letter Military Dept. Dated 29
20 — Do Dept. S
14 — Stage Revenue
14 — Cons. of Forests