



ANNALS OF THE  
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DIRECTOR OF INDIAN

# REPORT

of the

# Forest Grievances Inquiry Committee

## Part II

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PART II-A

*List of Grievances brought forward District by District*

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## PART II-A

## LIST OF GRIEVANCES BROUGHT FORWARD DISTRICT BY DISTRICT

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## East Khandesh District

*I—Grazing and Grass*

(a) Complaints regarding these are more numerous than any others received. The system of closure recently introduced in the Scrub Forests came in for a good deal of criticism, not so much on account of the additional closure involved as on account of the extra grazing fees payable to the purchasing contractors. Under this system, instead of three-fourths of the whole area being open during the whole year to grazing on payment of a fee of annas four per animal, half the whole area is now so open. In the other half the grass is sold to contractors and the area is closed to grazing for eight and three months with and without cutting of grass respectively; for the grazing in this half the contractor charges fees up to a maximum of Re. 1 per head.

(b) Some petitions are received asking for grazing at the rate of annas 2 per head, the rate charged up till about three years ago; and some people ask for free grazing.

(c) Exemption from payment is asked for all cows and for calves up to 1½ years old; for cattle passing through the Khandesh forests on their way to graze in Holkar territory; and for cart bullocks of people going into the forests to collect grass.

(d) Some complaints are received that the grazing area in certain places is not sufficient, and the suggestion is made that the District and not the Taluka should be the grazing unit. It was said that at Edalabad the number of cattle now was very much less than it was 25 or 30 years ago.

(e) It is requested that villagers near the boundary of two talukas should be allowed to graze their cattle in both talukas.

(f) Some people urge that there should be no distinction between village and non-village cattle, or between agricultural and non-agricultural cattle, as it is desirable to encourage cattle-breeding in the District.

(g) Closed forest is not fenced as a rule, and paths passing through closed forest along which cattle have to pass on their way to grazing and water are not fenced: these should be fenced, to prevent cattle from straying into closed forest.

(h) It is asked that no forest should be closed within a mile of any village, to prevent the hardship of cattle accidentally straying into the neighbouring forest being impounded. It is pointed out that when a few cattle out of a herd stray into closed forest the whole herd is often impounded. In cases where cattle are impounded it is complained that the owners have to pay not only pound fees but in addition compensation of Re. 1 and sometimes even Rs. 2 per animal to the Forest

Department. It is suggested that instead of compensation being levied so much per head of cattle a *panchnama* should be made at the place where the trespass occurred and compensation levied according to the damage done to the forest.

(i) In forest villages fees should be charged only on such cattle as actually graze in the forests, and not on all the cattle of the village, as is the practice at present.

(j) Where cattle camps are established during the rainy season it is the custom for the Forest Department to charge "hut fees" on the huts built by the herdsmen and "chula fees" to cover the cost of fuel used by them. It is requested that these fees should be abolished, or, if not abolished, charged at a fixed rate per hut and per chula, and not at a fixed rate per occupant of the hut.

(k) Complaints are received regarding the lack of water facilities in forest, which prevent the cattle from making full use of the available grazing.

(l) As regards grass, the commonest complaint received is regarding the sale of grass in the scrub jungle Sub-Blocks and Kurans to contractors without any restriction on the price which the contractors may charge to the public. It is said that in normal years the contractors charge Rs. 2, Rs. 3, Rs. 5 per cartload, and in a year of scarcity like the present the price goes up to Rs. 10 and even higher. It is requested that grass be sold on permits at annas 4 or annas 8 per cartload or that a maximum rate chargeable by the contractors be fixed; the maximum rate suggested varies from annas 4 to Rs. 3 per cartload, and annas 2 to annas 4 per headload.

(m) Other suggestions made are that the Kurans should be sold to the villagers themselves; or to agricultural Associations; or to Taluka Local Boards.

(n) In the Satpudas, where people have to go long distances for grass, it is requested that the period of the permits, should be lengthened, and that permits should be made available for any of the forests in the Satpudas.

## II—Anjan leaves

These are used as fodder especially in times of scarcity. Monthly permits are issued at the rate of Rs. 3-8-0 per headload and Rs. 28 per cartload, under which the holders are allowed to remove leaves in headloads or cartloads for the period of one month. It is requested that leaves should be allowed free, or that the rate of fees should be reduced.

## III—Fuel and Thorns

It is a common complaint that villagers have now to purchase fuel from coupe contractors instead of being able to get it on permit as was formerly the case. It is said that the contractors charge Rs. 3 or 4 per cartload for fuel in their coupes; the Forest Department should issue

permits at annas 8 per cartload, and not at Re. 1 or Rs. 2 as is now the case where there are no coupe contractors. Some people even ask to be allowed to take fuel free of charge.

Similarly the contractors in the scrub jungle area sell thorns at high rates; either the Forest Department should charge nominal rates or should limit the price which may be charged by the contractors.

#### *IV—Fires*

(a) Many requests are received that the system of communal punishment on account of fires should be stopped; that the responsibility of forest villagers for the protection of the forests should cease, and that, instead of punishing villagers for not helping, a system of rewards in the way of concessions to persons who help in protection should be instituted.

(b) It is suggested that the distinction between forest and non-forest villages be abolished, as forest villagers are frequently punished for not helping and seldom get the benefit of the concessions nominally allowed to them.

(c) Instances are cited in which some people from a village gave help but in spite of this the whole village was punished by the enhancement of grazing fees. At Hingone 18 people went to put out a fire out of a population of 3,000 to 3,500; at Dahigaon 32 people out of a population of 1,000 or more; at Marud people also helped; but in all these cases no concessions were given and the whole village was punished.

(d) Lists of people who help to put out fires are drawn by the Round Guard; these should be drawn up by the Police Patil or countersigned by him.

(e) The work of clearing and burning fire-lines should be paid for on daily wages at market rates, and villagers should not be punished for not carrying out this work.

(f) The rules regarding the burning of rab in fields should be extended so as to include the burning of any rubbish in fields, under the same precautions.

#### *V—Permits and Passes*

(a) The system tried last year in Chopda Range of selling by auction the right of collecting fees on fuel, grass, bamboos, and minor produce comes in for some criticism and it is urged that the old system of the Forest Department selling such material on permits should be reverted to, as the contractors charge excessive rates.

(b) There is a general request that Village Officers should be authorised to issue transit passes for wood, thorns, etc., from malki lands.

#### *VI—Miscellaneous.*

(a) Requests are made that the following materials should be given free to agriculturists:—Wood for agricultural implements; wood for mending carts broken down in forest limits; earth, stones, grass, fuel.

(b) A suggestion is made that the Indian Forest Act should be provincialised, so that the Legislative Council should have control over its provisions.

### VII—Complaints regarding individual villages

(a) The villagers of Talai, in Erandol Taluka, complain that the Collector some years ago gave out 36 acres of grazing land for cultivation, and that there is no grazing ground available for them now.

(b) The villagers of Kandari in Jalgaon Taluka complain that excessive compensation was levied on some of them for clearing out an old ditch or bund which served the purpose of preventing rain water from the hills from flooding their fields.

#### West Khandesh District

Many of the grievances brought forward in this District are similar to those of East Khandesh. They are summarised below, reference being made to the serial numbers of similar grievances in the East Khandesh Statement, and new grievances being briefly described.

#### I—Grazing and grass

See East Khandesh I b, c, d, e, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n.

(o) At Chimtana, from which village people have this year to go very long distances for grass, they ask to be allowed to cut and take the grass before paying for the permit, as this would entail only one visit to the forest naka instead of two.

(p) At Chimtana the people complain that there is great delay in the issue of grass permits; one man named Ananda Nagho alleges that a Brahmin clerk at Chadwel asked him to pay Rs. 2 for a permit for a cart-load of grass.

(q) The people of Chimtana complain that they have to pay a grazing fee of annas 8 to the Forest Department, and annas 2 to the Revenue Department.

(r) There is a complaint from Nawapur that where formerly cattle were allowed to graze on Government waste lands on payment of one auna per acre many of these waste lands have been afforested and the people have now to pay annas 4 per head of cattle.

(s) From Nawapur it is requested that wide publicity be given to the fact that grass and reeds are allowed free to Bhils under the North Tapti Code.

(t) It is requested that no coupes except teak coupes be closed, and that the period of closure be reduced to five years.

(u) It is requested that closed forests should be opened during the hot weather, April to June.

(v) It is requested that grazing fees be recovered later in the monsoon than at present, and remitted altogether if the rains fail; also that the checking of the number of cattle after payment of fees should not be allowed to cause hardship to the people.

(w) Tilaris (Sheep graziers) ask to be allowed to graze their sheep all over the forest. On the other hand villagers ask that sheep be not allowed in forest, as they spoil the grazing for cattle.

(x) The system of giving rewards to forest subordinates out of the compensation levied in grazing cases should be abolished, as it leads to subordinates impounding whole herds of cattle when only a few of the herd have been trespassing.

### II—Anjan Leaves

See East Khandesh II (a).

(b) In West Khandesh the rate charged varies, and at Laling it was found that it was Rs. 4 per headload per month with a maximum of Rs. 60 per cartload per month. Complaints are made that this is too high, and requests are made that daily or weekly permits should be issued. Anjan leaves should be given free in times of scarcity.

(c) Requests are made that Anjan trees in coupes should not be cut, with a view to preserving the supply of leaves.

### III—Fuel and Thorns

See East Khandesh III (a).

(b) Some villagers request that coupes be sold to them instead of to contractors.

### IV—Fires

No complaints have been received regarding communal punishment as in East Khandesh.

See East Khandesh IV (e) and (f).

(g) It is requested that people should not be expected to go to a greater distance than five miles to extinguish a fire.

### V—Permits and Passes

See East Khandesh V (b).

(c) It is requested that village officers be empowered to issue permits and passes for fuel and thorns from forest.

(d) It is complained that in Nawapur Petha villagers cannot get passes to remove the fruits of Mahua trees growing on their lands; they are therefore forced to sell their fruits to the Government Mahua contractor at annas 2 per measure, whereas the market price is annas 7. It is requested that the village officers be empowered to issue passes for Mahua fruits.

### VI—Miscellaneous

See East Khandesh VI (a).

(c) Many requests are received to give out forest land for cultivation. On the other hand many requests are received against doing this, as the grazing ground is already insufficient in many places, and the giving out of more forest land for cultivation would increase the hardship.

(d) Permission is asked to shoot wild animals which damage the crops. It is also requested that forest in Nawapur Petha be cleared to a distance from the fields, to lessen the damage from wild animals.

(e) It is requested that when material is attached in offence cases the cart should not be detained, as this causes loss and inconvenience to the owner of the cart.

(f) It is complained from Nawapur that Government sells by auction all trees on land which has been under cultivation for a number of years. It is requested that Government should sell Royalty trees only (teak and blackwood), and that these trees should be offered to the occupants at a fair price.

### Thana District

#### I—*Grass and Grazing*

(a) Complaints are received about the insufficiency of the grazing area in some places near the Coast and requests are made that closure of coupes should be abolished or reduced from 10 to 3 or 5 years, and that unsold coupes should not be closed; also that the District should be the grazing unit for agricultural cattle.

(b) Requests are made that all grazing should be free. Some ask that Patils be authorised to issue free grazing passes, others ask that such passes be altogether dispensed with.

(c) No forest near villages or water should be closed; closed forest should be fenced, as should also all paths going through closed forest.

(d) Goats and sheep should be allowed to graze in forest.

(e) Complaints are made regarding the doubling of pound fees and regarding the exaction of compensation in addition to pound fees for cattle trespassing in closed forest.

(f) Grass should be allowed free from closed forest.

#### II—*Timber*

(a) Dead standing and fallen timber should be allowed free to forest villagers.

(b) Material remaining in the coupes at the end of the contract period should be allowed free to cultivators.

(c) Fruit trees in coupes should not be cut.

(d) The number of coupes should be reduced, as the cutting of them interferes with cultivation work.

(e) Timber should be given free for houses, cattle sheds and agricultural implements. Where there is difficulty in getting it depôts should be established, and put in charge of the Patils if necessary.

(f) Complaints are made regarding delay in executing free grants of timber, and that trees of inferior species are given.

#### III—*Fuel*

(a) Complaints about the difficulty of getting branchwood under 6 inches girth from coupes, as the contractors and Forest Department use it. Requests to raise the girth limit to 10 inches, and to allow removal up to the end of May instead of March.

(b) Fuel should be allowed free or on permits at annas 8 or Re. 1 per cartload as formerly; the Coupe contractors now charge as much as Rs. 10 or 12 per cartload for it; the manufacture of Gul is much handicapped by the high price of fuel.

(c) Fuel from thinnings should be given free or at nominal rates.

(d) More fuel depôts should be opened and lower rates charged.



*IV--Bamboos*

The gardeners of Bassein and Kelve Mahim ask that—

- (a) bamboos be not auctioned to contractors for export.
- (b) bamboos and karvi be given to them free or on concession rates on permits.
- (c) rates for bamboo permits be fixed per cartload and not per 100 bamboos.
- (d) bamboos for basket-making be given free.
- (e) permits at the usual rates be given to them from the Bassein Taluka forests included in North Thana Forest Division.

*V--Rab material*

- (a) When lopping for rab it should not be compulsory to preserve the top third of the tree, but only one leading shoot.
- (b) People should be allowed to remove tahal free by cartloads and not only by headloads from forest.

*VI--Forest Settlement*

- (a) Land should be given out for cultivation in forest wherever possible.
- (b) No more wood-land plots should be given out for cultivation, as they diminish the area available for grazing.
- (c) No Gurcharan should be converted into Minor Forest.
- (d) Tree growth on Gurcharan plots should be removed, or given free to villagers.

*VII--Malki lands*

- (a) After-growth of teak should be conceded to occupants as was done in 1864-65.
- (b) In Patilki Inam lands the Patils should be allowed to cut two or three shoots per stool, leaving the rest to Government.
- (c) Village officers should be authorised to issue transit passes for forest produce from Malki lands.

*VIII--Fires*

- (a) Early burning of closed forests should be stopped as the grass is wanted by the people.
- (b) Communal punishments on account of fires and illicit cuttings should be abolished.
- (c) The responsibility of preventing fires from rab burning from spreading into forest should be on the Forest Department and not on the villagers. The limit of 200 yards within which such burning may not be done without special precautions should be lowered to 50 feet.

*IX--Miscellaneous*

- (a) Palm leaves, Palas, Apta, Temburni, etc., leaves should not be sold by auction but should be allowed free or on nominal fees to the villagers.

(b) There should be no forced labour in connection with forest works. All labour done on plantations, fire lines, etc., should be paid for on daily wages. As the period for forming and tending forest plantations coincides with the chief period of field work people should not be taken from the fields and made to work on forest works at inconvenient times.

(c) There should be no restrictions in regard to water channels and no fees should be charged for the same.

(d) With the Ranger's permission people should be allowed to lop trees which overshadow the crops in their fields and cut trees which obstruct cart tracks. A 50 feet wide strip should be cleared of trees all round the fields, to prevent damage by wild animals.

(e) General allegations of taking bribes are made against forest subordinates, especially by Mr. Trimbak Dhonddev Datar of Kalyan. It is suggested that whilst the taking of a bribe should be a criminal offence the offering of a bribe should not.

(f) Ten panchas should be appointed in each village, and from these persons should be chosen to serve on panchnamas. This would ensure the presence of responsible people on the panchnamas.

(g) Full information should be widely published regarding the rights and privileges to which the people are entitled, as in many cases they are ignorant of the same.

(h) Forest Officers should meet local bodies and discuss forest matters; and forest committees should be appointed in each taluka, consisting of the Divisional Forest Officer, Range Forest Officer, and five non-officials.

(i) The sawing of timber and burning of charcoal should be allowed anywhere in malki lands without special permission.

(j) Shooting licenses should be given free or at reduced rates to enable villagers to pursue wild animals in the forests.

#### Kolaba District

##### *I—Grass and Grazing*

(a) It is requested that grazing and grass be given free.

(b) It is complained that the grazing area is insufficient in some places.

(c) It is requested that the period of closure be reduced from ten to one, three, or five years.

(d) It is requested that no forest be closed to grazing within two or more miles of villages or near water, that closed forests be fenced by the Forest Department, and that free access be given to closed forest in order that cattle may be able to reach the open forest beyond.

(e) Complaints are received regarding the doubling of pound fees and the recovery of compensation in addition to pound fees when cattle stray into closed forest.

(f) It is requested that herdsmen be allowed to build huts in forests so that they may keep their cattle in forest during the rains.

##### *II—Fires*

(a) Some complaints were received regarding the imposition of communal punishments in fire cases.

### III—Fuel and fencing

(a) Complaints are received regarding the difficulty of getting branchwood under 6" girth from coupes; it is said that the contractors do not allow the people to remove this.

(b) It is requested that fuel and fencing material be allowed free, even from closed forest.

(c) It is requested that the sale of trees for timber, firewood and for charcoal burning in forest and malki land be stopped, as otherwise the supply of fuel will disappear and rainfall will decrease.

### IV—Timber

It is requested that—

(a) teak and injaili wood be allowed free for agricultural implements without any special permission. It is pointed out that green wood is required for ploughs in May and June; the wood kept for sale in depôts or by contractors is unsuitable, as it is cut some months before and is therefore dry.

(b) There should be no delay in making free grants to people whose houses have been burnt and that there should be no condition attached to the grant that the new houses built should have tiled or metal roofs.

### V—Malki Lands

It is requested that—

(a) all trees on malki lands, both teak and injaili, original growth and re-growth, should be the property of the occupants.

(b) Village officers should be authorised to issue transit passes for malki wood. If the Patel is illiterate he should be allowed to issue blank pass forms.

### VI—Miscellaneous

It is requested that—

(a) Temburni and Phalas leaves should not be auctioned.

(b) Fruit trees in coupes should not be felled.

(c) More temporary gun licenses should be issued for crop protection.

(d) There should be no restriction on the digging of water channels and no fees should be charged for them.

(e) It should not be compulsory to get permission for sawing wood within one mile of the forest boundary.

(f) Forest work (plantation, line-clearing, etc.,) should be paid for on daily wages, or suitable privileges given in return.

(g) Local Forest Committees should be appointed in every taluka.

### Kanara District

#### Grazing

(a) The grazing fee is excessive. Resident gavlis have to pay a higher fee than cultivators.

The grazing fee should be abolished. Resident gavlis should be treated in the same way as cultivators, as the presence of their cattle is a help to the cultivators.

(b) In places the grazing area is insufficient, unsuitable for grazing, and inconveniently situated. Sometimes the Bettas are the only grazing grounds available. Cattle are apt to stray into closed forest, when pound fees and compensation are recovered.

All forests within a mile of the villages and fields should be open to grazing, and no plantations should be made in this area. The people should be allowed to improve the quality of the grazing by cutting trees and undergrowth and burning the areas annually. No fees should be charged for grazing in Bettas.

(c) Hardship is caused to the people by the collection of grazing fees by Foresters as the people are often absent when the Forester comes for the fees, and double fees are imposed for late payment.

Grazing fees should be collected by Village Officers, who live in their villages.

### *Bettas*

(a) For betel nut gardens in above ghat talukas 9 acres and below ghats 4 acres of betta per acre of garden are supposed to be assigned; the full area is not always assigned; it is often unsuitable for lopping and at a long distance from the gardens. The betta rules are irksome and unsatisfactory.

The full allowance of 9 acres of betta per acre of garden should be given both above and below ghats, and 5 acres should be allowed per acre of cocoanut garden. The bettas should have plenty of tree growth for lopping and should adjoin the gardens to which they are assigned. Bettas should be assigned to individuals and not communally. The bettas should be handed over to the gardeners as their own property, just as the gardens are, and they should be allowed to lop, cut, burn and otherwise destroy the tree growth without any restriction. The Forest Department should remove the royalty trees (Teak, Blackwood and Sandal) as early as possible.

(b) Difficulty is experienced in getting earth for the use of the gardens when the betta adjoining the garden is assigned to the owner of another garden.

There should be no restriction in the removal of earth by a gardener from the betta adjoining his garden although that betta may have been assigned to another.

### *Strips round cultivation*

There is delay in the demarcation of strips. The grant of the strips is cancelled if they are not cleared within a short time. The clearing of strips involves much labour and is sometimes the work of a number of years.

Strips are not allowed in Kans (High evergreens), and it is the encroachment of these Kans which does most damage to the crops, owing to their dense shade and thick undergrowth.

Strips should be demarcated by the Village Officers without application to higher authorities. There should be no time limit for the clearing of

strips. It is desirable that all trees should be cleared from the strips, and, to facilitate this, kumri should be allowed in them, including the removal of all trees. All trees in strips should be allowed free except teak, black-wood, and sandal, which should be removed by the Forest Department. Strips should be allowed in Kans.

### *Minor Forests*

(a) The area of Minor Forest is often insufficient, and it is sometimes at a distance from the village. In some cases the Minor Forest contains no tree growth, in others the tree growth is so thick as not to admit of grazing and other privileges.

All forest within at least a mile of the village or cultivation should be converted into Minor Forest. There should be a certain proportion of Minor Forest to each acre of rice land, variously estimated at from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 acres. Lopping of trees and shrubs should be allowed, as also should burning without any restriction.

(b) Fifteen kinds of trees are reserved in Minor Forest; this is a hardship, as these trees occupy much room.

The number of species of reserved trees should be reduced to 7; all other species should be allowed free.

(c) In the Coast talukas the arrangement of villages into groups for the exercise of privileges causes much dissatisfaction and it is found that the coast villagers derive much greater benefits than the inland villagers, as the former have a greater command of labour and thus can remove much more material than the inland villagers.

The grouping of villages in the Coast talukas should be revised, and a Committee consisting of the Divisional Forest Officer, Coast Division, and two local non-officials should be appointed to do this.

### *Pressure of forest on cultivation*

Owing to the presence of Kans and other reserved forest proper in close proximity to villages and cultivation great hardship is felt owing to the dense shade over the crops, to wild animals lying up near the fields and villages, and to unhealthiness promoted by the presence of such dense jungle. In some cases the villages and fields are surrounded by a dense belt of lantana. At Bargadde and Yelwalli near Kumta and at many other places there is thick forest close to the fields and gardens, and no strips or bettas have been assigned. These fields and gardens have lain fallow for 6 or 8 years, but the villagers still pay high assessment, in the hope that something will be done for them.

At Gadhalli near Sirsi there is a Kan of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  acres close to the village and at Unchalli near Sirsi the village site is very much cramped by the surrounding Kan. The assessment on inland rice lands is higher than near the coast, which shows that formerly the inland rice lands were considered more productive. Now the contrary is the case; much of the land is waste and fallow, and there has been an enormous decrease in population in the last 40 years.

All forest within a mile of villages and cultivation should be converted into minor forest and the people should be allowed to clear it by cutting and burning.

Kans were formerly in the possession of the people, who kept the undergrowth clear and trained pepper vines on the trees.

By the clearing away of all thick forest near the fields and villages, cultivation and health will be improved.

Village site should be extended to an unlimited area.

### *Timber privileges*

(a) The present royalty rates are too high. Teak and blackwood cannot be obtained on permit, and other good timbers are valued at Rs. 6 and Rs. 3 per khandy.

Teak and blackwood should be given at Rs. 6 per khandy and other kinds at half the present rates.

(b) There is much delay in the issue of free permits for timber when houses have been burnt.

Free grants should be promptly given.

### *Fuel privileges*

(a) The preparation of jagri (gul) is looked on by Government as a manufacturing process and not an agricultural purpose, and fees are charged for the fuel used for this purpose. This is a hardship.

Fuel for jagri should be given free.

(b) Poor people are allowed to take fuel for their own use free by headloads, but the prohibition against taking carts into the forest for this purpose is a hardship.

Carts should be allowed into the forests for the removal of free fuel, as this is a more economical method of removal than by headloads.

(c) Fuel depôts are a hardship and cause the price of fuel to rise.

There should be no fuel depôts except in taluka towns, where the price should be fixed at annas 3½ per 80 lbs. maund. Elsewhere fuel should be given free or on paid permit.

### *Sawing Permits*

The rule requiring permission to be obtained from the Ranger for sawing timber within a mile of forest limits is a hardship and causes delay in carrying out the work.

The rule should be cancelled ; or steps should be taken to prevent any delay in giving the required permission.

### *Shooting*

The restrictions on the shooting of animals which damage crops and kill cattle are a great hardship. Even where such shooting is allowed free the skins, horns, etc., become the property of the Forest Department.

There should be no restriction on the shooting, netting, or snaring of such animals. The skins, horns, etc., of the animals shot should be the property of the people who shoot them.

#### *Tali Palms*

(a) Tali flour is an article of food amongst poor people. The present fee of Rs. 4 per tree is excessive.

Tali palms should be given free or at most, at Re. 1 per tree.

(b) Tali leaves are required for thatching, and the leaf sheaths for protecting young betel nuts; the imposition of a fee for these articles is a hardship.

Tali leaves and leaf sheaths should be given free for these purposes.

#### *Roads and Railways*

There is a great lack of roads in the forests and of railway communication in the District.

The road system should be extended. A railway should be constructed from Alnavar to Haliyal.

#### *Miscellaneous*

(a) The village panchayat rules are unsatisfactory. The rules should be revised.

(b) Transit passes are required for material from Minor Forest. This is a hardship. Transit passes should not be required for material from Minor Forest.

(c) Casuarina plantations take up valuable space where cocoanuts could be grown. They should be cut down and disforested.

(d) Lopping of soppu is not allowed in Mundgod Petha. Lopping should be allowed in Minor Forests in Mundgod Petha.

(e) The privilege rules are not known to the public. Wide publicity should be given to the Privilege Rules.

(f) Tanks and water channels in forest have silted up and become useless. Permission should be given to enlarge and deepen tanks and channels and dig new tanks and channels in forest free of charge.

(g) Kumri has been stopped in the Ghat areas of Sirsi and Siddapur and the people are being driven from their homes. The forests are of no value to Government and merely serve to increase the rainfall on the Ghats and diminish it inland. Kumri should be allowed in the Ghat areas.

(h) It is a hardship that a fee is charged for teak posts used for wire fencing the fields. Teak posts should be given free.

(i) Sufficient time is not given to cut and collect bamboos for fencing. The period should be extended to the end of June..

#### **Belgaum District**

##### *Grazing*

(a) Owing to closure of coupes there is great difficulty in finding grazing for cattle, and if cattle stray from open into closed forest the owners

have to pay pound fees and heavy compensation. The number of cattle is decreasing very much in consequence and agriculture suffers.

The closure of forest should be abolished. If however it is still insisted on the closed forest should be fenced.

(b) The grazing fees are excessive. Grazing should be free; or at least the fee should be reduced from annas 4 to annas 2.

(c) Sheep and goats are not allowed to graze in forest. The grazing of sheep and goats should be allowed in forest.

(d) Lopping of trees for fodder is not allowed. The lopping of trees for fodder should be allowed free.

(e) At Chinchni village cattle are impounded in the temple, as there is no pound. This should be stopped.

### *Timber*

Timber for agricultural implements has to be paid for if brought from forest, and even if it is brought from malki lands the permission of the Forest Department has to be obtained, and great delay is experienced.

Timber for agricultural purposes should be given free. Village officers should be authorised to issue passes for timber from malki lands.

### *Fuel*

Fuel is not allowed free from the forest, and even coupe contractors do not allow the free removal of branch-wood. The removal of fuel should be allowed free by head-load or cartload without any restriction.

### *Fencing material*

Cultivators are not allowed to remove thorny shrubs free for fencing or for repairs to their houses. Even for lantana, which is a noxious weed a fee is charged. The removal of thorns for fencing purposes should be allowed free.

### *Minor produce*

Minor produce such as bark, leaves, honey, wax, gum, etc., is auctioned by the Forest Department, instead of being allowed free to the people. Even for stones a fee is charged. All minor produce, including stones, should be allowed free.

### *Pressure of forest on cultivation*

In some places on the Ghats and in other dense forest there is thick forest on the edge of the fields. In such places the forest should be cleared to a distance of about a furlong from the edge of the fields, and the land given out for cultivation.

### *Kumri*

Kumri land is not sufficient in the Ghat villages. More kumri should be given where required.



### Water Channels

Fees are charged for taking water channels through forest. Channels for taking water through forest should be allowed free.

### Sawing of timber

(a) Permission of the Ranger is required before sawing of timber can be undertaken within a mile of forest limits. This causes delay and hardship. Sawing should be allowed anywhere without the necessity of taking permission.

(b) The rules regarding forest privileges are not known to the villagers. They should be widely published in Kanarese and Marathi.

### Nasik District

1. Grazing fees, sale of kurans to villagers at average price, compensation plus pound fees, inconvenience of closed forest, stones, earth, dead-fuel, thorns, right of way to water for cattle.

2. *Anjan leaves*.—Anjan leaves should be given free in May and June, and no anjan trees should be cut.

3. *Land for cultivation*.—There is an extensive demand for land for cultivation.

4. *Grazing of sheep and goats*.—Some people want permission to graze sheep and goats, whilst others ask that the animals should not be allowed to graze where their cattle graze.

5. *Wood for building and agricultural purposes*.—Free junglewood is wanted for building and agricultural purposes.

### Poona and Ahmednagar Districts

1. Complaints about insufficiency of grazing ground, enhancement of grazing fees, inconvenience of closed forest, necessity for all cattle of forest villages being paid for, recovery of compensation in addition to pound fees far in excess of actual damage done, *panchnamas* on grazing offences being held in the village instead of the forest.

2. Owing to scarcity of fodder in April and May cattle should not be impounded in these months, and the period of contract for areas sold for cutting and grazing should be extended from 31st March to 31st May.

3. Closed areas should be sold for grass cutting to the villagers at the average price of the last ten years if they wish to buy them.

4. A fee of Re. 1 has to be paid for cattle grazing in the forests of another village.

5. Cattle from Inam villages straying across the boundary into forest should not be penalized. There should be a strip of 50 yards within which no penalty should be enforced.

6. Great areas of grass land have been handed over to the Military authorities, much of which is required for the use of the people. The Military authorities recover compensation for trivial offences.

7. Stones, thorns, dead-fuel, rab, teak leaves for thatching, shooting of destructive animals, free water channels, abolishment of communal punishment for fires, delay in giving free grants of wood in case of houses burnt, pressure of forest on cultivation, oppression of the people by forest subordinates, abolishment of passes for malki wood or issue by village officers, land for cultivation.

8. Royalty trees in malki lands inside the demarcation line should be given free to the occupants.

9. Rules under the Indian Forest Act should be published in Marathi.

10. Notifications regarding proposals for afforestation should be more widely published than at present.

11. Rules under the Indian Forest Act should be put before the Legislative Council before being passed.

#### Satara District

1. The grazing fee should be reduced from annas 4 to annas 2.

2. In forest villages fees have to be paid for all cattle including calves, whether they graze in forest or not. Only such animals as actually graze in forest should be paid for, and calves should be exempted.

3. In many places the grazing ground is insufficient and unsuitable. Closed forest intervenes between the village and the open forest.

4. Compensation should not be levied in addition to pound fees in cases of illicit grazing.

5. Communal punishment (enhancing of grazing fees) on account of forest fires should be stopped.

6. There is a considerable demand for land for cultivation especially for "Kumri" in the hill area.

7. Closed areas should be sold on cutting and grazing terms and not on condition of cutting grass only. In times of famine removal of grass free for sale should be allowed from closed forest.

8. Thorns for fencing, stones for building and dead-fuel should be allowed free.

9. Sheep and goats should not be allowed to graze in the same areas as cattle.

10. No fee should be levied for taking water along a channel through forest.

11. Permission should be given to clear the growth obstructing the flow of water in channels.

12. Formerly seven kinds of shrubs were allowed to be lopped for rab, but now the cutting of one of these—karvi—is prohibited.

13. Wild animals cause much damage to crops; permission should be given to shoot them in forest.

14. Land acquired into forest and subsequently given up should be restored to the former occupants if wanted by them.

15. Permission to cut royalty trees in Malki lands within the demarcation line is refused even if the occupants are willing to pay the fees.

16. There is a sliding scale of prices for sandalwood trees in Malki numbers according to size. The rates are too high and the old rate of Rs. 1-8-0 per tree should be reverted to.

17. There is much trouble about getting passes for the removal of Malki wood in the maidan area of the District where there is no forest establishment.

18. Passes should be given to traders to remove Malki wood on their satisfying the Forest Department that they have purchased the trees from the Malki owners.

19. Persons removing forest produce under a transit pass should be allowed to keep the pass as a voucher instead of being compelled to give it up to the Forest Department.

#### *Panch Mahals District*

Many of the grievances brought forward in this District are identical with those already dealt with elsewhere. Only those dealing with new matters are mentioned below.

(i) Mhowra trees should not be cut, as they supply food and liquor to the people.

(ii) Villagers are forced to work on plantation and fire protection, and other works, often at times when they want to carry out agricultural work; and proper wages are not paid for such work.

(iii) There are many exactions by forest subordinates of money, grain, ghee, etc., etc.

(iv) Agricultural land in forest is given out to influential people in large areas; it should be given out in small lots to agriculturists.

(v) The sale of grass to contractors is a hardship as it deprives the villagers of grass required by them. Grass should be sold to contractors only after full provision has been made for local supply.

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**PART II-B**

*Notes by the Chairman on the grievances enumerated  
in Part II-A, concurred in by the other official members of  
the Committee*

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## (1) East Khandesh District

## REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

*Grazing and Grass*

*I (a).*—The system of periodical closure has been explained to the Committee. It was undertaken on a suggestion from the Agricultural Department that periodical closure for short periods is more beneficial to the grass and therefore to the cattle than continued closure for a long term of years, and there is no doubt that under this system grazing is available the whole year round instead of for a short time during the rains only. As the grazing available is therefore more plentiful and the quality will, it is expected, improve from year to year, it is a question for consideration whether the Government fee of annas 4 per head is not much too low in consideration of the value received. Under the new system the fees leviable are annas 4 to Government for Sub-Blocks I and IV and a *maximum* of Re. 1 to the contractor who buys the grazing right of Sub-Blocks II and III. The grazing in the scrub jungle area is of excellent quality and there is little doubt that Re. 1-4-0 per year is well below its market. Allowing one pair of plough cattle to 20 acres of arable land this means a tax of annas 2 per acre only. In the case of Hartale, where the villagers themselves bought up the grazing area, they charged Re. 1 per head to the cattle of other villages. The new system has not yet been formally sanctioned by Government, and is now on trial. The Working Plan of the Scrub Jungle area is now being revised, and proposals regarding the regulation of grazing will form an important part of the new Plan. The opinion of the Committee will of course receive due consideration from Government when the new Plan is submitted to them.

*I (b).*—In view of the value of the grazing, the general rise in the price of all commodities, and the greatly increased expenditure on supervision, a reduction of the standard rate of grazing fee from annas 4 to annas 2 seems quite uncalled for. It would entail a loss to Government, on the figures of 1923-24 of about Rs. 16,000 in East Khandesh District alone, and of about Rs. 1,50,000 in the whole Presidency.

*I (c).*—Exemption of cows and calves would entail some loss to Government, and as I am responsible for the collection of as large a revenue as we fairly can I am personally against such exemption. If any member can bring forward valid reasons for such exemption their views will receive full consideration. The other two categories deserve exemption provided safeguards are taken against its abuse by their remaining too long in our forests.

*I (d).*—The taluka seems a large enough unit for a single grazing fee. As a rule agricultural cattle would not graze in more than two talukas at the most during a season; the great majority are confined to one.

*I (e).*—This is a reasonable request.

*I (f).*—Fees for village cattle and agricultural cattle are fixed at as low a rate as possible; this is considered to be a concession rate. Non-agricultural cattle are charged at a higher rate in view of the profits which their owners make by the sale of the cattle and their products.

*I (g).*—The fencing of all paths in closed forest would be impossible for this Department to undertake; but if the villagers care to undertake the work to safeguard their cattle from straying, such fencing material as is available in the adjoining forests should be allowed to them free of charge for the purpose.

*I (h).*—If all the forest within a mile of the village had to be kept open to grazing there would be little chance of closing any forest at all in the scrub area, which contains numerous villages. A quarter of a mile would be a more feasible limit, and in fact this limit is observed now.

It is not fair to impound a whole herd when only part of it trespasses in closed forest.

As regards the levy of compensation in addition to pound fees, it should be borne in mind that the actual money damage done at the time may be small whilst the prospective damage may be very large, *i.e.*, small seedlings, trees of no money value at present may be worth many rupees some years hence. This is the reason why we have to be strict regarding cattle trespass. Our forests would soon be ruined if we did not enforce the closure.

*I (i).*—In practice all the cattle of forest villages resort to the forests for grazing and the levy of fees on all of them is not unfair.

*I (j).*—This is a reasonable request.

*I (k).*—This should receive very careful consideration; lack of water is a very serious drawback in many of our grazing grounds.

*I (l).*—The fixing of a maximum sale price for grass is desirable.

*I (m).*—These are good suggestions and should receive full consideration.

*I (n).*—The period of permits should be extended whenever necessary. As regards the area for which they are available the Forest Department must keep a control over this to ensure the protection of the forests.

### *Anjan leaves*

*II.*—Very large quantities of anjan leaves are removed at the present rates of fees, to the value of over Rs. 20,000 per year in Khandesh. From this it would seem that the present rates are not excessive as the people are making full use of the concession.

### *Fuel and Thorns*

*III.*—It would be fatal to the protection and well-being of the forests to revert to the permit system, under which people were allowed to cut what they liked and where they liked. Under the coupe system the cutting is regulated and a supply of timber and fuel is ensured for all time. Taking into consideration the labour of cutting the prices asked by the contractors seem very moderate. In a matter like this the laws of supply and demand are bound to regulate the price, and in most parts of Khandesh the supply is greater than the demand.

### *Fires*

*IV (a).*—It is very desirable to try to secure the protection of the forests by rewards rather than punishments. Suitable rewards in the

way of concessions should be given for good protection, and punishment only in bad cases.

*IV (b).*—I cannot support this suggestion. It is only right that forest villagers should realise their responsibilities and it is well within their power by ensuring good protection to enjoy very valuable privileges.

*IV (c).*—The Divisional Forest Officer explains that in these cases the people turned up too late to be of any help simply to get their names put on the list. It should be emphasized by the Committee that great care must be taken before imposing communal punishment on any village and that each case should as far as possible be enquired into by a responsible officer.

*IV (d).*—This is quite reasonable and should be done when the Police Patil is present.

*IV (e).*—Clearing and burning of fire-lines are generally paid for at so much per mile. It should be emphasized by the Committee that it is the duty of the Forest Department to see that the rate fixed is sufficient to give a decent wage.

*IV (f).*—This is a reasonable suggestion.

#### *Permits and Passes*

*V (a).*—This system was introduced for the convenience of the public, as the Forest staff is not large enough to cope with the work. It is essential, however, that maximum rates should be fixed, above which the contractors should not be allowed to charge.

*V (b).*—This should be adopted to the greatest possible extent.

#### *Miscellaneous*

*VI (a).*—Certain materials are given free to forest villagers under the North and South Tapti Codes, *vide* pages 568 to 570 of the Bombay Forest Manual, Vol. II. The concessions seem to be quite liberal enough to meet all reasonable demands.

*VI (b).*—I hardly think this comes within the scope of our enquiry.

#### *Complaints regarding Individual Villages*

*VII (a) and (b).*—These cases are being enquired into.

#### *Grazing and Grass*

*I (o).*—It would be quite impossible to allow this without sacrificing a great amount of revenue. There are hundreds of cart-tracks leading into the forests and it is not possible to establish Nakas on them all. The only safeguard is to make the people pay in advance, and to ensure that they have paid by examining their permits whilst they are cutting the grass and removing it from the forest.

*I (p).*—This matter is being enquired into.

*I (q).*—This matter is being enquired into.

*I (r).*—In non-forest villages in Nawapur, cattle are still allowed to graze in Gurcharan land on payment by the village of a fixed sum per acre. Such villages are very few. In forest villages grazing fees are recovered at the ordinary rates. Except for a small area previously settled



the whole of Nawapur Petha was included in forest, and the cultivated land has been taken from forest, instead of forest being taken from waste land, as is the case in most parts of Khandesh.

*I (s).*—This is being done.

*I (t).*—This is impossible without ruining the forests. In the scrub forests of West Khandesh a system of modified closure will probably be introduced, as in East Khandesh.

*I (u).*—This cannot be done in valuable forests, as the young plants begin to grow before the grass becomes green, and they would be destroyed if the forest was thrown open to grazing from April to June. In scrub forests, where the demand for grazing is keenest, every effort will be made to extend the grazing facilities.

*I (v).*—Owing to the small staff at our disposal we have to extend the collection of grazing fees over a considerable part of the monsoon. If it was delayed till near the end of the monsoon, many people would inevitably evade payment. There is never such a total failure of grass over the district as to justify a remission of grazing fees, and it would be dangerous to make any rule regarding remission. Any cases of special hardship should, however, be considered on their merits. The checking of the number of animals after payment of the fees is essential to prevent evasion, and any cases of undue hardship should be reported to the Collector or Divisional Forest Officer.

*I (w).*—Sheep spoil the grazing for cattle, and as cattle are the more essential for the welfare of the cultivators they should receive first consideration. Sheep should only be allowed where there is room for them after providing for the cattle.

*I (s).*—No such general system is in force, and rewards are only given in exceptional circumstances.

### *II—Anjan Leaves*

*II (b).*—Large quantities of Anjan leaves are being taken at the present rates, which seems to show that the rates are not excessive. Weekly and daily permits should be issued when required.

*II (c).*—If Anjan trees were not cut they would eventually die completely. By cutting them when alive we get fresh shoots, which quickly grow up and ensure a constant supply of leaves. The quantity of Anjan is actually increasing in the forests, due to fresh shoots from the stumps of cut trees and to seedlings springing up from seed shed by the standard trees which are always left in the coupes. If Government allowed no Anjan trees to be cut in the coupes there would be a loss of revenue of at least Rs. 13,000 annually.

### *III—Fuel and Thorns*

*III (b).*—This will be done wherever possible.

### *IV—Fires*

*IV (g).*—Owing to the widely different conditions prevailing in different parts of the District no hard and fast rule is practicable. The people nearest the forest are expected to help to put out the fire.

### V—Permits and Passes

V (c).—The Forest Department must keep control over the material growing in the forests, and it would be most unsafe to allow this control to pass into the hands of the village officers.

V (d).—Except in the few villages previously settled, Government has for the present reserved the right over Mahua trees growing in lands given out for cultivation in the rest of the Petha. The occupants therefore are not entitled to any right in the fruits of such trees. Where they are entitled to such right arrangements must be made to give them passes if they desire to have them.

### VI—Miscellaneous

VI (c).—Much land is being given out for cultivation. It should be emphasized by the Committee that no land should be given out without ensuring that grazing facilities will not be unduly curtailed.

VI (d).—In tracts where it is shown that damage is done to the crops by wild animals arrangements for the destruction of the animals should be made under due safeguards against damage to the forest by fire or otherwise. It is doubtful whether clearance of the forest near the fields will help to protect them from wild animals, as these animals wander to great distances from the forest at night in search of food.

VI (e).—The simplest way to avoid this inconvenience would be to refrain from committing offences. A recommendation might, however, be made that carts should not be detained as a general rule, provided the accused persons do the unloading on the understanding that Government accept no responsibility for damage to the property unloaded.

VI (f).—In Nawapur it is the custom for Government to give out land for cultivation for a period of eleven months, year by year until it is finally given out on permanent tenure. During the preliminary period of eleven months Government retains the right to all trees on the land; at the time of giving the land out permanently the trees are finally sold off by auction.

### Thana District

#### REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

##### 1—Grass and Grazing

(a) Over the greater part of the District the grazing area in forest, gurcharan, and malki lands is much more than sufficient. The remedy for villagers near the Coast, where grazing is not so plentiful, is to stall-feed their cattle, or to send them to suitable grazing grounds. The ten year closure is essential for the well-being of the teak plantations, which will be of immense value to future generations, and should be insisted on.

(b) Agricultural cattle of forest villages enjoy free grazing, a privilege which is allowed in very few parts of the Presidency. There seems no necessity to extend this extraordinary privilege to other cattle, in view of the low rates of fees charged. The issue of free passes for cattle entitled to free grazing is necessary to ensure that other cattle are not allowed in without payment.

(c) It is a mistake to suppose, as has been stated by some of the witnesses, that closure is any more inconvenient now on the average than it was in the past. The area under closure varies from year to year and is sometimes nearer the village or water than at others. Under the present Working Plan the area under closure will soon not exceed one-eighth of the whole forest area, and grazing is available in Gurcharan and malki lands besides. It is sufficient if a free way is left to open forest or water near any village and the people are allowed to take fencing material free to fence ways through closed forest. Hard cases should be submitted every year in May by Divisional Forest Officers to the Conservator who should immediately throw open any closed coupes which are pressing unfairly on any village.

(d) Thana is an unsuitable country for sheep too wet and too heavily wooded. There is no need to throw the forest open to sheep.

(e) The scale of pound fees is fixed by Government and it is learnt on enquiry that it is the same for cattle whether trespassing in forest or in private lands. The number of cattle impounded from forest is a small fraction of the total number which trespass, and the amount of compensation collected is small compared with the value of the damage done. Any relaxation would result in an enormous increase of damage done, and is not at all advisable.

(f) This should be done where general protection is good.

## *II—Timber*

(a) The free removal of dead standing timber cannot be allowed, as such a concession would inevitably lead to the manufacture of dead wood. The removal of fallen dead timber, excluding reserved species and Ain, by forest villagers, might be considered.

(b) This should be allowed if no extension of the working period is given.

(c) In Salsette taluka, where there is less teak than elsewhere, fruit trees in coupes are kept. Elsewhere the reservation of fruit trees would interfere too much with the growth of teak; but in parts of the coupes where it is not essential to make plantations clumps of mango and other fruit trees might be kept.

(d) The area of coupes annually cut has already been reduced by nearly half under the new Working Plan, and no further reduction can be contemplated at present.

(e) A large amount of timber suitable for agricultural implements is cut annually in thinnings and not disposed of, and this can be made available for the use of forest villagers. Villagers could make their wants known through taluka committees to the Divisional Forest Officer, who can arrange to supply them from unsold thinnings at fixed low rates. There is no need for depots or permits. There is no reason why Government should supply free wood for houses except in cases of fire or other calamity.

(f) Any serious cases of delay should be reported to the Divisional Forest Officer. Timber of suitable species should be given; there is no need to give the most valuable kinds.

### III—Fuel

(a) There is a modicum of truth in this grievance. The privilege of removing 6" material from coupes expires at the end of March. The Forest Department should not be allowed to burn the rab for plantation work before end of March as they sometimes do and very strict orders must be kept that no people wishing to remove 6" material before then are interfered with. Apart from this the burning of rab for plantations by the Forest Department is entirely unobjectionable. In the great majority of localities the rab is not wanted from coupes as the villagers can get it nearer at hand from malki and gurcharan. Near larger towns there is much more demand for it and the poor results of sowing and planting round about towns show how freely the people do exercise the privilege.

There is bound to be a certain amount of friction incidental to this privilege as between coupe contractors and villagers, because it is impossible to keep rigidly to the dimension of 6" girth at the thickest part. A great deal is removed over that size by villagers in spite of contractors, and probably about as much by contractors under size. There must be give and take and on the whole no great hardship occurs to either class of user. The Forest Department gets only what is left after March, so there is no reason whatever to stop their using so valuable an aid to teak reproduction. These cultural works will in the next felling period yield a net profit per coupe of anything from a few thousand up to Rs. 30,000. They are entirely dependent on rab for soil preparation, and cannot be foregone.

(b) Forest villagers are allowed to collect fuel free for their own use, and wild tribes are allowed to collect it free for sale by headloads. There is no justification for any further extension of this privilege. Nor is it possible to revert to the permit system for fuel, which was abandoned many years ago. All the forests near the populous centres are cleared of deadwood by privilege holders and any system of permits would lead to the wholesale manufacture of deadwood. The price of fuel from the coupes is governed by the law of supply and demand, and there is no reason why the coast villagers should not pay the market rate. Several fuel depôts have however actually been opened for sale at cheap rates.

(c) Such fuel is available in large quantities in many of the thinnings.

(d) New depôts will be opened as required; but the rates now fixed are the lowest possible.

### IV—Bamboos

*Note.*—All forest villagers are allowed to remove bamboos free from open forest for their own use—

(a) No valid reason has been given for this request, which amounts to asking Government to sacrifice a considerable amount of revenue annually. There are plenty of bamboos in Thana District to meet all requirements.

(b) These plantain and betel-leaf gardens are flourishing concerns and the owners can well afford to pay the moderate fees demanded. Wagon

loads of produce leave by rail every day for distant places, showing that the industry is a paying business.

(c) This should be done.

(d) No reason for this at all.

(e) This should be done.

#### V—*Rab Material*

(a) This would be a retrograde step. For many years a regular campaign has been carried on in Thana to teach the people the proper methods of cutting tahal; this has had excellent results and has led to a great increase in the supply of tahal. It would be most inadvisable to revert to the old methods.

(b) It is a necessary rule that no cart should be allowed into reserved forest for the exercise of any free privilege. Much wanton damage is done already to forest by privilege holders while removing headloads of various produce. The use of carts would result in wholesale damage and should on no account be permitted.

#### VI—*Forest Settlement*

(a) A good deal of land has already been given out in backward areas, and a little more might be given; but very little suitable land is available in forest.

(b) This matter is in the hands of the Revenue Department. It is the general opinion of the Forest Officials that no more plots should be given out as enough have been given already for the proper existence of gurcharan as such.

(c) Only a small proportion of gurcharan has been proposed for minor forest, and that where the reserved forest and the remaining gurcharan exceed requirements. No hardship is therefore anticipated.

(d) Teak is removed by the Forest Department before the plots are given out. The Revenue Department might sell the Injaili to the occupant; to give it free would encourage people to ask for plots for the sake of trading in the timber and this would lead to a great diminution of the tahal supply.

#### VII—*Malki lands*

(a) Not a single word in defence of this proposal was forthcoming. That Government failed in 1865 to appreciate the prospective value of their property in malki teak is no reason why they should perpetuate their mistake from 1902 onwards. Proposals for the better working of these teak stocks are now before Government. It is proposed, in brief, to cut the regrowth, not in a haphazard manner as now but according to regular cycle of fellings, and to carry out thinnings among the crowded poles at least once in the rotation. All these operations will benefit both the taxpayer and the malki owner, because the property will be worked to the best advantage and every time revenue is realised by Government the owner will get a 20 per cent. share of net profits. Hence the more revenue Government secure (which is a public advantage) the more will the owner, and the advantage to both will be permanent.

(b) This is out of the question, and it would be impossible to keep a check on any such privilege.

(c) Any relaxation of the present transit rules in Thana is fraught with great danger.

#### VIII—Fires

(a) It is out of the question to allow grazing in closed coupes, but the cutting of grass should be allowed free if general protection has been good. The necessity for early burning would then be diminished.

(b) As the actual offenders are seldom caught the only punitive method possible is communal punishment, and it is hoped that public opinion will become strong enough to deter people from wantonly damaging the forests. It should be remembered that a system of communal rewards for good protection is in existence as well.

(c) There is no risk of fire spreading into forest if reasonable precautions are taken. It is for the rabburners to take these precautions, as the Forest Department staff cannot possibly cope with the work.

#### IX—Miscellaneous

(a) These may all be given on permits at fixed rates if desired, and only sold by auction if the local demand is very small.

(b) All labour should be sufficiently paid for, either in cash or in privileges. Lump sums or piece work payment is however preferable to daily wages as a general rule. As regards plantation work, permanent coolies should be employed wherever possible.

(c) It is essential that these should be under the control of the Divisional Forest Officer and it is advisable to levy the small fee of annas 8 to prevent the establishment of a right. The privilege is sufficiently valuable to justify the levy of a fee.

(d) The first part of the request may be allowed. There is no need however to cut a 50 feet strip. The forest villagers are allowed to clear the brushwood, which is enough.

(e) Bribes should never be offered, and any cases of attempts to exact them should be reported to the Divisional Forest Officer or Collector. The offering of a bribe is as serious an offence as the taking of one.

(f) This may be done as far as possible, but if such panchas are not available when required any suitable person available must be requisitioned.

(g) Yes.

(h) Yes; but the Committee should be non-official, as the Forest officials have not the time to spare to serve on them.

(i) Permission is required as a safeguard against fraud, and is given by the Ranger as a matter of course after inspection of the material and site.

(j) There is no need to reduce the fees. The wild tribes are allowed to shikar in Dahanu and Umbargaon. Nilgai may be shot all over Thana without a shooting license. It has been proved over and over again that hunting in the forests is of no use at all to protect the fields from damage by wild animals; the only proper remedies are efficient fencing and watching of the crops by night.

## Kolaba District

## REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

*I—Grass and Grazing*

(a) The grazing in Kolaba District is good and plentiful, and annas 4 per head of cattle is a very low rate to charge for a year's grazing. No good reason has been advanced why Government should sacrifice an annual revenue of some Rs. 20,000 which is now realized from grazing fees. Removal of grass is allowed free, except from a few unimportant kurans.

(b) Over the whole District the grazing area is plentiful and much grass goes to waste. There is bound to be a shortage of grazing area near the large towns far from the forest; the remedy for this is for the people to stall feed their cattle or to take them to the more distant forests for grazing.

(c) Good progress is now being made with teak plantations in Kolaba District, and it would be dangerous to make a general rule reducing the period of closure, as the young plants need protection from cattle for at least 10 years. It should, however, be emphasized by the Committee that in special cases where the closure causes hardship the period of closure should be reduced.

(d) There is no need to keep all forest open within two miles of a village; a quarter of a mile is enough. The Committee should emphasize that wherever closed forest intervenes between the village and open forest ample ways should be left for the cattle to pass through the closed forest on their way to graze or to water. The villagers should, if they so wish, be allowed to take fencing material free for the fencing of such ways.

(e) The rate of pound fees is not regulated by the Forest Department. As the number of cattle impounded is a very small proportion of the number of cattle which actually trespass it is necessary to take compensation as a deterrent measure, as cattle trespassing in a young teak plantation do very serious damage.

(f) This should be allowed wherever necessary.

*II—Fires*

(a) The actual culprits in fire cases are seldom caught. As fires are ruinous to the forests it is essential that they be stopped, and this can only be done by the force of public opinion. It must be remembered that whilst communal punishment is imposed where fire protection is bad the reward of free grazing is given where protection is good.

*III—Fuel and fencing*

(a) According to the terms of the coupe agreement the villagers are allowed to remove branchwood under 6" girth from the coupes and there is no doubt that difficulties are being put in their way of doing so. A certain amount of small branchwood is required by the Forest Department for burning over the areas where teak plantations are to be made

and owing to this requirement the villagers have not been getting their full allowance of branchwood. It is hoped to remedy this by allowing the villagers to lop the branchwood in the coupe the year before it is felled and allowing them to take branchwood from the thinnings which are to be made in every block. This will fully compensate them for the loss of the branchwood in the contractors' coupes.

(b) These are allowed free to forest villagers from open forest. It is most inadvisable to allow access to closed forest on account of the danger of damage to young plantations.

(c) This request is absurd. In fact the tree-growth is increasing owing to protection and plantations. In malki lands the trees (except the original tree-growth) belong to the occupants, who can do as they wish with them.

#### IV—Timber

(a) No arguments were brought forward as to why wood for agricultural implements should be given free. It would be fatal to allow people to go into the forests to cut trees wherever they wished. No proof was brought forward that green wood is essential for ploughs and I do not believe it.

(b) Free grants are promptly given. It was explained by the Divisional Forest Officer that in the interests of the people themselves the Collector tried to induce the people to extend their gaothans to avoid congestion, and to tile their houses to avoid the danger of fire. They have not fallen in with his suggestions. Free grants are not however conditional on houses being roofed with material other than thatch.

#### V—Malki lands

(a) The original teak growth on malki lands vests in Government in Kolaba District as elsewhere throughout the Presidency, and no arguments were brought forward as to why the rule should be different in Kolaba to what it is elsewhere. Other trees and the regrowth of teak vest in the occupants. As nine-tenths of the original teak growth has been cut over the rights of Government to trees in malki lands are now very limited.

(b) Village officers should be authorised to issue transit passes for malki wood wherever this is necessary for the convenience of the people. The idea of illiterate Patils issuing blank forms cannot, however, be considered.

#### VI—Miscellaneous

(a) If forest villagers are allowed to take these free for their own use there is no reason why the rest should not be auctioned.

(b) The retention of these would prevent the formation of proper teak plantations; but they should be reserved in parts of the coupe where it is not intended to make plantations. Palm and Hirda trees are reserved now.

(c) The issue of gun licenses is in the hands of the Collector.



(d) Permission for this is freely given, and a nominal fee charged, to prevent the formation of a right.

(e) This rule is enforced in order to safeguard the forests from theft. Rangers are empowered to give the necessary permission, which is given as a matter of course after inspection of the timber. No reasons were brought forward for the relaxation of the rule.

(f) This is desirable.

(g) I agree, provided the Committees are non-official and Forest Officials have no connection with them. The time of our staff is fully taken up by their Forest work and they have no time to spare for serving on Committees.

#### Kanara District

#### REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

##### *Grazing*

(a) The grazing fee is annas 2 per head of village cattle, which is half the rate charged in most parts of the Presidency, and is a very low fee for a year's grazing. In Kanara these fees bring in over Rs. 30,000 a year to Government, and are an important item of revenue. Gavlis keep cattle for profit, and the fee of Re.1 for their cattle was fixed many years ago when the value of cattle was far lower than it is now, and has never before been objected to. It is a very low rate for a year's grazing, especially taking into consideration the fact that Gavlis keep their cattle in the best grazing areas of the District.

(b) No closure is allowed within a quarter of a mile of village sites, and strips are left open round cultivation. The only forests closed to grazing are in the Working Plan areas, and in all new Working Plans efforts are being made to leave areas open to grazing all round cultivation. It is impossible to keep all the forest within a mile radius of cultivation open, as in many places this would put an end to all closure and consequently to all regeneration of the forests. But every effort is now being made to reduce the hardship from closure to a minimum.

(c) In many cases in Kanara, e.g., in Sirsi, Siddapur, and in large parts of the Coast Talukas, collection of grazing fees is now done by the Village Officers. If this results in no loss of revenue to Government there is no objection on the part of the Forest Department to the system being extended elsewhere in Kanara, and enquiries on this point are now being carried out.

##### *Bettas*

(a) Bettas are not in charge of the Forest Department, but of the Collector and his Revenue establishment. The existing scale has been recognised as sufficient for many years past. If in individual cases the assignment falls short of the standard the persons concerned should apply to the Collector for redress. Such cases are few. Bettas are always assigned as near to the gardens as possible, but when 9 acres of betta are allotted to each acre of garden it is naturally impossible that in every case the whole of the betta will be close to the garden. Individual

assignments are certainly preferable to communal assignments if such can be arranged, and it seems desirable to hand over the bettas to the gardeners as their own property, under some guarantee against the destruction of the tree growth. The Forest Department should remove the royalty trees as soon as possible.

(b) This is a matter to be arranged between the gardeners themselves, without interference from Government.

### *Strips round cultivation*

Strips once demarcated are under the control of the Revenue Department. Cases of delay in demarcation should be reported to the Collector or Mamlatdar. If the demarcation is properly done there should be no objection to the clearance being done gradually.

It was not the intention of Government that the strips should be cleared of all trees but that undergrowth should be cleared and the trees used for lopping for leaf manure for the fields. If, however, the occupants desire to remove the trees they may do so for agricultural purposes, except the reserved trees, and most of the latter may be removed with the Collector's consent. Burning is only allowed with the consent of the Forest Department, in order to safeguard against fire spreading into the forest. If the people showed any signs of attempting to protect the forests against fire such permission would be given; but up to now no such signs have been seen. It should, however, be pointed out that the clearance of all trees from strips will certainly be followed by an invasion of lantana, an ineradicable pest.

It is desirable to preserve Kans for the sake of water supply, and for this reason strips are not given in Kans.

### *Minor Forests*

(a) Minor forest has been allotted by the Settlement Officers in the various talukas after careful enquiries on the spot into the requirements of individual villages. Minor forest is always given as near to the villages and fields as possible, the only exception being the case of Kans, which are kept as Forest Proper on account of the climatic benefits ensured by them—chiefly the retention of water and prevention of erosion. Minor Forest is intended for the satisfaction of the privileges of the villagers, e.g., for the supply of timber, fuel, grazing, etc., and Government wishes to interfere as little as possible with its management beyond ensuring that it is not destroyed now and that supplies shall be available for future generations. Past experience in the coastal tract has shown that where the population is large and control is not exercised the forests soon become utterly destroyed, and the people of that area now have to go long distances for their supplies which they formerly got near at hand.

(b) All species which are necessary for the use of the poorer classes are allowed free. The reserved kinds are available for people who are able to pay the fees, which are very moderate.

(c) The grouping of the villages was done by Mr. Collins, Forest Settlement Officer, after a very minute enquiry into their requirements, and it is extremely doubtful whether this can be improved on now.

Cases of hardships of individual villages should be brought to the notice of the Collector, under whose orders the Divisional Forest Officer, Coast Division, is responsible for the administration of the forests of the coastal tract.

It is true that the coast villagers have a greater command of labour than those further inland, but at the same time their area of cultivation and requirements of forest produce are much greater, and there is no reason why the inland villagers should not be able to obtain their full requirements

#### *Pressure of Forest on Cultivation*

Please see remarks above under "Minor Forests." The only reason why Government exercise any control over Minor Forest is to ensure that supplies of forest produce will be available for future generations as well as for the present; Government have no desire or intention of exploiting the Minor Forests for the sake of revenue. Cutting and burning would lead to the destruction of the forests, and worst of all, to the spread of lantana which is everywhere invading the open spaces round villages and cultivation and is a far greater pest than the ordinary forest growth which it replaces, as it is impossible to eradicate once it has established itself. The Committee has seen this in the neighbourhood of Sirsi, and it is worse in many places.

Kans improve the water supply by holding up the water in the soil during the monsoon and allowing it to flow gradually in the springs during the dry weather when it is most required; if the Kans were cut down the water would run off immediately after each shower of rain. The clearing of Kans is quickly followed by the ruin of the gardens in the neighbourhood. Such has been the experience with forests and cultivation in every part of the world, and large sums of money are now being spent in Europe and elsewhere in planting up areas where the forests were recklessly destroyed and cultivation suffered in consequence.

Wherever village sites are cramped by the surrounding forests the situation should certainly be eased by an extension of the village sites, but Kans should be interfered with as little as possible.

Enquiry at Yelwalli showed that the villagers of that place boycotted Mr. Collins when he was conducting his enquiries and refused to place their requirements before him; it was therefore quite impossible for him to make provision for their wants. If villages who are suffering in this way will now apply to the Collector efforts will be made to meet their wants, but this will take time, as there is no special settlement establishment in existence now. They should have applied to Mr. Collins when he was engaged on the settlement work, when arrangements would have been made to suit their convenience.

#### *Timber Privileges*

(a) Teak and blackwood, which as a rule are used by well-to-do people only, can be bought at auction or from coupe contractors. The rates fixed for timber of other species are much lower than the prevailing market rates and should not be further reduced. The timber used by the poorer classes of cultivators is available for them free of charge.

(b) In cases of fire timber required for temporary huts should be made available without delay by the Range Forest Officer on production of a certificate from the Mamlatdar. This will enable the people to shelter themselves until they have time to build permanent houses, timber for which should be applied for to the Collector or Divisional Forest Officer in the usual way.

#### *Fuel Privileges*

(a) Enquiries are being made as to the total area under sugarcane cultivation in the district and to the amount realised by the sale of fuel for jagri, and it is hoped that the figures will be available when the Committee meets in Poona. It should, however, be remembered that Mr. S. R. Nadig, a B.Ag. and an experienced cultivator, stated that the gross receipts from one acre of sugarcane are about Rs. 400, expenditure Rs. 250 *including Rs. 5 only for fuel*, and profits Rs. 150.

(b) Fuel is allowed free by headloads to poor people such as do not usually own carts. To people well enough off to own carts a fee of annas 4 per cartload is very little.

(c) The smaller fuel depôts have been abolished and there are now only a few at large towns for the convenience of the townspeople. The usual price is annas 4½ per 80 lbs. maund, which barely covers the cost of extraction.

#### *Sawing Permits*

The rule is required to safeguard the neighbouring forests from looting. In future if a man requiring permission to saw his timber does not get a definite reply to his application within one month he may be allowed to begin sawing work. This will not absolve him from the responsibility of proceedings being taken against him if it is found that any of the timber is Government property.

#### *Shooting*

Shooting of destructive animals by cultivators who hold gun licenses is allowed over the greater part of the district. Persons who wish to shoot elsewhere and to keep the skins, horns, etc., should take out the usual shooting license.

#### *Tali Palms*

(a) A tali palm yields 12 headloads or more of pith, and the fee of Rs. 4 for this quantity is very low. People come from forty miles or more on foot and carry this pith away to their homes; this shows that the fee is not considered excessive. The Mahrattas in the area are allowed one palm per year per household free of charge.

(b) Excessive removal of the leaves and sheaths would result in the destruction of the palms and the loss of a valuable article of food.

#### *Roads and Railways*

The Forest Department is the only department which is now making new roads in Kanara and its work is much restricted owing to shortage

of funds. The construction of railways should be encouraged, but only if they are to be paying concerns, and the Railway Company is the best judge of this.

### Miscellaneous

(a) The panchayats have been very recently introduced. In the absence of any hints as to where the rules are defective it is difficult to make any recommendations.

(b) Transit passes are a necessary safeguard against the looting of the forests. They are required when material is to be removed from one village to another. They are dispensed with in areas where they are not considered necessary in the interests of the forests.

(c) Casuarina plantations were made only on bare sandy places which had not been cultivated for many years. They are of great use as wind-breaks, to prevent the shifting of the sand and the washing away of the beach by storms. They yield excellent fuel and the villagers make use of the grazing and of the fallen leaves.

(d) The people of Mundgod Petha have never been in the habit of lopping soppu. They sow the rice direct in the fields, and not on prepared seed-beds.

(e) They have been published in every village.

(f) On receipt of application permission should be given free of charge unless the destruction of forest is involved.

(g) Kumri is a destructive form of cultivation on steep hill slopes which results in the complete erosion of the soil and failure of the water supply during the hot season.

(h) The cost of the posts is very little when compared with the cost of the wire. People who can afford to buy wire can afford to pay for the posts.

(i) This may be conceded.

### Belgaum District

#### REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

#### Grazing

(a) Part of the forest is closed for regeneration in accordance with the provisions of the sanctioned Working Plan. Every care is taken to see that every village has sufficient open grazing ground available within easy reach. It is impossible for Government to undertake the fencing of closed forest; but if the people wish to do so every facility will be given to them to obtain fencing materials free. In the four villages which submitted this petition it is found that in the last twenty-five years the number of cattle has increased from 461 to 477, and has not decreased.

(b) The grazing in Belgaum District is good and the fees charged are far lower than the market value of the grazing.

(c) Sheep are allowed to graze, and goats in the proportion of one goat to 50 sheep. Owing to their destructive habits it is out of the question to allow goats to graze indiscriminately in forest.

(d) This may be allowed in time of famine but not at other times, as it

would soon lead to the destruction of the trees.

(e) A pound should be built. Cattle should not be impounded in the temple.

### *Timber*

In the thickly wooded areas of Belgaum and Khanapur talukas timber for agricultural purposes is allowed free to cultivators who pay up to Rs. 50 assessment and at half the usual rates to those whose assessment does not exceed Rs. 150. In Gokak and the thinly wooded areas of Belgaum taluka this privilege is not allowed, owing to the great scarcity of timber in the forests of that area. The permission of the Forest Department is not required to cut trees for agricultural purposes; but only when trees are cut for purposes of trade, and there is never a delay of over 14 days in disposing of such applications.

### *Fuel*

The removal of deadwood for fuel is allowed free by headloads. Coupe contractors are bound to stack all fuel under 3" girth separately and the villagers are allowed to remove this free.

### *Fencing Material*

Cultivators whose fields adjoin forest are allowed to remove wood and bamboos for fencing purposes from the strip adjoining their fields. Thorns have always been charged, for the present rate is annas 6 per cartload. Lantana ought to be allowed free on condition that the people do not plant live shoots of it round their fields; this would merely lead to the spread of this noxious weed.

### *Minor Produce*

These are forest products of considerable value, and the right of farming them has been sold for many years. For stones a fee of one anna per cartload is all that is charged.

## PRESSURE OF FOREST ON CULTIVATION

The clearance of such strips would be followed by an invasion of lantana, a much worse pest than the present forest growth. This was tried amongst other places at Nagargali, where the people were allowed to cultivate the strips, but the fields are now surrounded by impenetrable thickets of lantana.

### *Kumri*

Kumri lands have been allotted by Government to the fullest extent possible.

### *Water Channels*

These should be allowed free if they do not involve the destruction of forest growth or the enclosing of areas of forest over which other people have privileges.

### Sawing of Timber

(a) The abolition of the restriction would result in great risk of looting in the forests. It should be allowable, if a man does not get a reply to his application within a month, for him to begin sawing; but this will not absolve him from responsibility if it is found that any of the timber is Government property.

(b) It is understood that this has already been done.

#### Nasik District

##### REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. *Grazing fees, sale of kurans to villagers, etc.*—*Vide* remarks against similar grievances in other Districts.

2. *Anjan leaves.*—The fee for anjan leaves is annas 12 per cartload and annas 1½ per headload (compared with annas 3 per cartload for grass) and is really low in comparison with the value of the leaves. In famine years leaves should be allowed free, and only old anjan trees which are not likely to survive for long should be cut; these will send up fresh shoots.

3. *Land for cultivation.*—Large areas have been given out in the eastern part of the District and enquiries are in progress in Dindori taluka. The Forest Department does not wish to retain any land which is more suitable for cultivation than for forest.

4. *Grazing of sheep and goats.*—Separate areas are allotted as far as possible, but the claims of agricultural cattle should always come first.

5. *Wood for building and agricultural purposes.*—Most of the Nasik District forests are very open and contain little or no timber, owing to excessive cutting in the past. It is essential to protect them for the benefit of future generations; but if people were allowed to cut indiscriminately in them now there would soon be nothing left.

#### Poona and Ahmednagar Districts

##### REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. These points have been touched on in the case of several other districts.

2. Whilst recognizing that the needs of the rayats must have first consideration, in these areas, I must point out that there is little or no grazing in the forests during these two months, whilst it is just at this time that young tree growth is most liable to damage. From the forest point of view therefore such a concession is not desirable.

3. This should be done wherever possible; but three years would probably be a fairer period.

4. This is excessive. The Taluka or Range is the unit for grazing fees and on payment of annas 4 the village cattle are entitled to graze in the open forests of that unit wherever there is room for them.

5. Inam villagers have no privileges in forest and pay no fees. They should see that their cattle do not stray into forest.

6. The question of kurans in charge of the Military authorities is under consideration, and it is probable that considerable areas will be taken back. The Conservator states that in future compensation will be recovered through the agency of the Forest Department only.

7. These points have been considered elsewhere, under Satara and other Districts.

8. The right of Government to royalty trees in malki lands has existed from time immemorial.

9. This is always done.

10. This is the first time I have heard any complaint about this, and as far as I know the notifications are always widely published.

11. I have nothing to say on this point until I have heard it discussed.

#### Satara District

#### REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. Annas 4 is the rate charged throughout most of the Presidency and is considered to be a low rate in comparison with the value received.

2. As a matter of fact all the cattle in nearly every forest village graze in forest. Instances in which cattle of forest villages do not resort to forest must be exceedingly rare. If for special reasons some of the cattle are never sent to forest to graze such cattle should be exempted from payment of fees.

3. The closure is kept down to the lowest limits considered necessary for the well-being of the forest growth. Cases in which hardship is complained of should be investigated by the Revenue and Forest officials and matters put right as far as possible. It should be borne in mind that, except in the case of specially valuable forests, the well-being of the rayats must always be the first consideration.

4. In cases of deliberate trespass compensation may be charged; in cases of accidental trespass greater leniency should be exercised.

5. Only such people as refuse help in cases of fire should be punished.

6. It is understood that there is very little area suitable for cultivation left. The hill slopes are nearly all denuded by Kumri and are quite unfit for growing crops. Individual cases should however be carefully enquired into.

7. Some areas are sold for cutting and grazing; but in areas containing young tree growth grazing would do great injury. The removal of grass in famine times should receive every encouragement but as those who cut it get a high price at such times there seems no need to allow its removal free.

8. The fees charged for thorns and stones are low (annas 8 and annas 2 per cartload). Dead fuel is allowed free by headloads to forest villagers for their own use.

9. This should be arranged as far as possible.

10. The usual fee for such a channel is annas 8. This is a nominal fee to safeguard Government ownership. As long as no higher fee than this is charged there seems to be little or no ground for complaint.



11. This should be granted.

12. If the demand for Karvi for hutting purposes is not great it should be allowed for rab.

13. The shooting rules should be relaxed in areas where the crops are subject to much damage from wild animals.

14. This request is reasonable.

15. The demarcation line, which was fixed in 1885, should be revised in accordance with modern requirements. In view of funds not being available now-a-days for the purchase of lands for inclusion in forest the lists of survey numbers noted for inclusion in forest should also be revised.

16. The rate of Re. 1/8 represents the merest fraction of the value of the trees. The owner is not bound to accept the valuation according to the sliding scale. If the owner wishes the sandal trees on his land to be removed Government should dispose of them without delay, either at a valuation or by auction or by departmental extraction.

17. Transit passes should be dispensed with in the Maidan area to the greatest possible extent and village officers should be authorised to issue them where no forest establishment is conveniently available.

18. Yes.

19. Yes.

#### Panch Mahals District

#### REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

(i) In future a certain number of these trees will be reserved in coupes. Mhowra seed is now being sown in closed areas. The number of Mhowra trees in forest is a small proportion of the whole number in the District, as it is a very common tree in the open lands outside forest.

(ii) There should be no compulsion, and a sufficient wage should be paid to the people who actually do the work, and not to headmen and mukadams.

(iii) Educated people and societies should try to teach the poorer classes that any such exactions are illegal and will be severely punished if proved against the persons carrying them out.

(iv) A few such cases have occurred; steps have been taken to prevent a repetition of this. The grant of land on a joint system or to Societies should be encouraged.

(v) In ordinary years the supply of grass is more than enough for the use of the District. In seasons of scarcity like that just past, the grass stored by Government is of the greatest value to the inhabitants, who have lately bought large quantities of it for their cattle which would otherwise have starved.

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PART II-C

*Notes by the non-official members on the grievances enumerated  
in Part II-A, drawn up after consideration of the chairman's  
notes contained in Part II-B*

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## PART II-C

## GRIEVANCES OF THE RAYATS DISTRICT BY DISTRICT

We have read very carefully all the applications received and heard people in support of them. We find there are many grievances which are individual. They affect only particular places or persons. These we have not considered nor was it possible for us to do so. It could not be the object of this Committee to investigate into individual cases. However we may sympathise with the people, we must leave these cases to the local authorities to investigate. We recommend that every one of these applications which records individual cases of complaints should be sympathetically inquired into by the Department and redress should be given to the places or persons.

We have before us the grievances of the people noted down district by district, with the remarks of the Chairman thereon. We have considered all these and we record our recommendations about them. Where some grievances have escaped the attention of the Chairman, we have noted them also. Kanara is mainly a forest district and its grievances are peculiar. Betta, Kumri, Kan and such other things are unheard of in Khandesh, Nagar or Sholapur. According to puranic tradition, Kanara is significantly known as "Gorashtra," the land of the cows and historically known as "Haig-Nadu," the land of Havik Brahmins, indicating wealth of grazing in the former case and preponderance economically and numerically in the latter. We therefore propose to deal at greater length with the conditions of Kanara. Of course there are some questions which are common to all other districts also. They may be considered as urged on behalf of all districts. We take up the districts in the order in which we visited them and lastly refer also to other districts which we have not visited but from which a few applications have been received.

## East Khandesh

*I—Grazing and Grass*

(a) Under the new system the fees leviable should be 2 annas per animal for sub-blocks I and IV and in sub-blocks II and III grazing should be free after the grass is cut and removed by the people on permit system. The practice of auctioning grass in sub-blocks II and III should be discontinued. The people of East Khandesh were not in favour of the new plan.

(b) We have considered already the question of grazing fees in detail. People demand that grazing should be free or the fees should be even less than what they were before the recent increase. But considering all circumstances and possibilities we have come to the unanimous conclusion that they should be reduced to their original level.

(c) As to cows and calves we have considered the point elsewhere. As to the exemption of the other two categories we agree with the view of the Chairman.

(d) This point is considered elsewhere.

(e) We agree.

(f) We agree.

(g) We agree.

(h) Wherever possible, forest should not be closed within half a mile of any village but in no case should it be closed within a quarter of a mile. It is unjust to impound the whole herd of cattle when only a few stray into closed forest.

There should be no compensation recovered in addition to pound fees. The contention of the people of Borad in Taloda Taluka in West Khandesh is a striking instance in point. They say "formerly there were about 10,000 cattle in the village, but owing to these hardships in Forest matters many a cattle have been sold. For the present there are a thousand or a thousand and a half cattle. Even to keep this number has become unbearable owing to the hardships of Forest."

(i) It is fair to say that fees should not be charged on such cattle as don't graze in the forests, but we are afraid all cattle in forest villages have to graze in forest at one time or other of the year. If however any cattle don't graze, they should not be charged.

(j) We agree.

(k) We agree, for instance in the Satpuda hills even in the days of scarcity there is abundance of grass but no water. We urge that prompt steps should be taken to give water facilities where they are urgently needed.

(l) and (m) Contract system works harsh. It should be stopped. Kurans should be sold, in the first instance, to the villagers; they refusing they may, in the second instance, be sold to agricultural associations where any exist; they refusing, then they may be sold to Taluka Local Boards. But if Taluka Local Boards also refuse, their maximum sale price for grass should be fixed. In fixing the price to villagers and public bodies, the average of the last 10 years of contract prices should be the price of grass for the next 10 years.

(n) We agree.

### II—Anjan Leaves

In times of scarcity and famine, Anjan leaves should be promptly allowed free. In ordinary times, the fees should be only nominal.

### III—Fuel and Thorns

Villagers should be allowed to take deadwood by headloads free of any charge. They should be allowed to take fuel by cartloads on permit, at the rate of 4 annas per cart in the case of fuel of inferior quality and 8 annas in the case of that of superior quality.

Villagers should be allowed to take thorns free.

### IV—Fires

(a) We have already shown how the practice of communal punishment is unjust and should be stopped. Protection of forests should be by rewards and not by punishments.

(b) This complaint shows how people consider the vicinity of forests as a curse. If communal punishments are abolished, there will be no occasion for this complaint.

(c) The instances referred to by the people struck us most. We could not understand how even those that rendered help rendered themselves liable for punishment. Communal punishment must go and such complaints will not hereafter arise.

(d) This grievance would not survive if communal punishments are abolished, which we strongly recommend should be. If communal punishments, however, remain to worry the rayats, we agree with the opinion of the Chairman on this point.

(e) We are of opinion that the work of clearing and burning fire-lines should be paid for on daily wages at market rates.

(f) We agree with the Chairman.

#### V—Permits and Passes

(a) We are of opinion that the old system of selling fuel, grass, bamboos and minor produce on permits should be revived. But if that cannot be done, we agree with the Chairman that the maximum rates should be fixed.

(b) We agree.

#### VI—Miscellaneous

(a) The materials mentioned should be given free to agriculturists.

(b) Apart from the fact whether the question comes within the scope of our enquiry, we think the suggestion is worth consideration.

#### VII—Complaints regarding individual Villages

(a) The complaint, if true, is serious. Although information on this subject was sought from the Collector, East Khandesh sometime in January 1926 it was not received even till today.

(b) The Divisional Forest Officer has given details of the cases. They are after all individual cases. We hope such cases will not occur again.

#### West Khandesh

##### I—Grazing and Grass

(a) to (n) are grievances similar to those from East Khandesh and they are dealt with already.

(o) This complaint is not peculiar to Chimthana only. To suit the convenience of the Forest Department, villagers, at great inconvenience to themselves, have to visit forest Nakas twice. Either before paying, they must be allowed to go straight off to the forests or after paying, straight off to their villages. It is a petty matter and Government will do well to give relief in such small matters. Knowing our poor villagers as we do, we don't think they dare evade payment and there would be no loss of revenue.

(p) This is an instance of harassment of the rayats by the petty subordinates. We need not be surprised at it. The people at Chimthana said distinctly that those that pay the tip money are given the permits at once and relieved immediately and those that refuse to pay are detained. This is how occasions for exactions are created. To avoid the detention and consequent loss people pay.

(q) The complaint is that the people of Chimthana have to pay a grazing fee of eight annas to the Forest Department and two annas to the Revenue Department.

This was sent to the Divisional Forest Officer for inquiry and report. He reports:—

“Chimthana is not a forest village and the people do not therefore have to pay grazing fees. Some of the cattle from Chimthana were found grazing in Reserved Forest, so in accordance with the rules, fees were collected from them.”

The grievance of the people and the explanation by the officer read together exemplify how punishments have come to be looked upon as a normal condition of things. The explanation is hardly satisfactory. We wanted to know whether grazing fee had been collected from the people of Chimthana at 8 annas per head of cattle. The grievance of the people is general and the explanation refers to a particular occasion. Grazing fee ought to be the same throughout.

(r) In no case should revenue waste lands be included in the forests, when people require them for grazing or are prepared to take them for cultivation.

(s) And yet the Bhils don't know that they are so allowed. All village officers be instructed to inform the people.

(t) That the period of closure be brought down to five years has been suggested by people from many places. Forest Officers may give the suggestion a second thought and consider if it is not possible to reduce the period.

(u) It may not be possible to open closed forests during the first year or during the first few years of the closure. But during the latter half, at least, of the period of closure, closed forests may safely be kept open for grazing in the months of April, May and part of June.

(v) It would be possible to grant this simple request of the people if the collection of fees is entrusted to village officers. It is but fair that before grazing fees are collected grass ought to be assured. Grazing fee should not be collected earlier than August. The checking of the number of cattle after payment of fees gives an opportunity to the lower subordinates to harass and to exact. Mr. A. P. Kulkarni, B.A., of Dighave writes that he has noticed instances in which people were harassed by checking their cattle three times in a year. This harassment must cease.

(w) We agree.

(x) It is said rewards are given in exceptional cases. We think that rewards should not be given in any cases as the temptation is sure to lead the subordinates to improper and illegal impounding.

## II—Anjan Leaves

(b) That large quantities of anjan leaves are being taken at the present increased rates is no proof of the rate not being excessive. Even if the rates are still increased people will take these leaves in the same quantities, because they still hope to keep their cattle alive. West Khandesh people

bitterly complain against these increased rates. They should be brought down. Weekly permits may also be introduced. We have said of these leaves elsewhere also.

(c) We have considered this point elsewhere.

### III—Fuel and Thorns

See East Khandesh. We agree.

### IV—Fires

For (e) and (f) See East Khandesh.

(g) But in no case should the people from villages distant by five miles and over be expected to render any help and be punished for not having rendered it.

### V—Permits and Passes

(c) We don't see any danger in allowing village officers to issue permits and passes for fuel and thorns only. It will be convenient to villagers. The guard being in charge of more than a dozen villages is not available to every villager in time.

(d) This is a grievance of the Bhils. Government should not reserve any right over Mahua trees growing in malki lands or in lands given out for cultivation. Nawapur is a taluka almost wholly populated by Bhils. They pay the full assessment for these lands. The Mahua trees growing on their lands render cultivation difficult and inferior. The Bhils ought to get the benefit of the trees growing on their lands. They use the fruit of these trees for extracting oil and it is a supplementary source of income to these people. Government should not interfere with it.

The Chairman says "Where they are entitled to such right arrangements must be made to give them passes if they desire to have them." Why will they not desire to have them? This phrase cannot explain away the fact that during the last three years not a single pass was issued by the Rangers. When village officers had the power to issue these passes hundreds of them were issued and why should none have been issued when the duty of issuing passes was delegated to the Rangers? Can it be said that the desire to have the passes subsided as soon as the duty of issuing them was transferred to the Rangers? The truth is that a forest subordinate is a terror to the Bhils. The forest subordinates refuse to issue passes. The grievance of the Bhils is just. In the absence of such passes they have to sell their fruit to the contractors at a great loss to themselves. We hope, the grievance will be redressed.

### VI—Miscellaneous

(a) See East Khandesh.

(c) We agree.

(d) We agree, but at the same time we recommend that forests near the fields should be cleared. It will give some protection from the wild animals.

(e) We agree. Carts need not be detained.

(f) At the time of giving out the lands permanently, as far as possible the trees should be sold to the persons who held the lands on eleven months' tenure. At least preference should be given to them.



### VII—Some more Complaints

(1) Complaints are heard that the way of cattle to their grazing lands lies often through forests and is blocked. Forest officers should be instructed not to have their coupe in such a way as to cause inconvenience to the rayats and their cattle.

(2) Very bitter complaints were heard in Khandesh and in other districts that the department exacts the duty of burning *rab* for the department, of planting trees, of taking firelines, etc., from the villagers at a time when they must necessarily be engaged in their own fields. Very often they suffer. They have often to sacrifice the cultivation of their own lands to suit the departmental needs. For instance, on account of timely rain, a particular day or days may be best suited for sowing and the villagers are taken away during those very days from their own fields to the work of departmental plantation. This is harsh. We suggest that no villagers should be thus taken away against their will. As far as possible, the department should call in the services of people who may have no lands to cultivate. There should be no compulsion. The labourers should be paid daily. Forced labour and petty return by way of payment are common things in Nawapur Petha. People resent these things. We strongly recommend to stop these practices which cause great inconvenience and loss to the rayats.

(3) Only one day is allowed to take a cartload of grass or fuel from forest. That is hardly sufficient. People complain of it. We recommend that sufficient time should certainly be allowed.

(4) The grievances of the Thilaries appear to be real and should be redressed. They pay more fees and get insufficient and less forest land to graze. If they cannot have sufficient grazing, their fees may be reduced. 'Padavpatti' and 'Chulpatti' ought to be abolished. The Thilaries should be allowed to remove manure from their own cattle camps.

#### Thana District

##### I—Grass and Grazing

(a) We have considered all these points elsewhere already.

(b) Wherever grazing is free it shall remain free. Wherever the fees have been increased, we have recommended that they should be reduced. We agree with the remarks of the Chairman.

(c) We generally agree with the remarks of the Chairman. Harsh cases should be immediately attended to. As far as possible, closures should not be very near villages.

(d) We agree. If necessary separate forests should be assigned for goats and sheep.

(e) The doubling of pound fees is a grievance to be considered. But it is not a forest grievance and we are not concerned with it. Of the three, pound fee, grazing fee and compensation, compensation ought to go.

(f) We agree.

*II—Timber*

(a) We agree with the Chairman as regards dead standing timber. We recommend that fallen dead timber, excluding the reserved species and Ain, should be allowed free to forest villagers.

(b) We agree. As far as possible no extension of the working period should be given.

(c) We agree generally. Unless absolutely necessary no fruit trees in coupes should be cut.

(d) We agree. We only add that there should be no interference with the cultivation work of the villagers.

(e) Timber should be allowed free for cattle sheds, and agricultural implements.

(f) We agree.

*III—Fuel*

(a) Complaints by the people about the difficulty of getting branch-wood under 6" girth are genuine. Contractors ought to, but as a matter of fact they don't allow the removal till the end of March and thereafter the department carries away what remains. The rights of villagers ought to be guarded.

(b) If we cannot revert to the permit system for fuel, maximum rate to be charged by the contractors ought to be fixed and entered in the agreement.

(c) We agree. Fuel from thinnings should be made available as asked for by the people.

(d) We agree that new depots should be opened as required and we recommend that the present rates may also be considered with a view to reduce them.

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*IV—Bamboos*

(a) and (b) People everywhere are opposed to auctioning to contractors. We recommend concession rates on permits.

(c) We agree.

(d) Poverty of the basket makers is the only reason. If possible bamboos for basket making for agricultural purposes should be given free by way of encouragement.

(e) We agree.

*V—Rab Material*

(a) We agree.

(b) We see no objection to carts being allowed. We recommend that people should be allowed to remove Tahal free by cartloads and not only by headloads, as at present. We must give facilities to the people to take the fullest benefit of the right they enjoy. The department should take the necessary precautions that no damage is caused by the use of carts.

*VI—Forest Settlement*

(a) We agree. Where possible land should be given out for cultivation.

(b) No action should be taken that will diminish the area available for grazing.

(c) Gurcharan should never be converted into Minor Forest against the wishes of the people.

(d) Tree-growth on Gurcharan plots should be removed.

#### VII—*Malki Lands*

(a) Much can be said in defence of this demand by the people. The prospective value opened the eyes of Government and they want to get what is not their own but already vested in the rayats. Government have absolutely no right to the aftergrowth and if they were to resist this claim of the people it would be a sheer act of injustice. We have said elsewhere in more details about this question.

(b) This question does not survive.

(c) We believe the request of the people is fair. We don't look upon our village officers with any distrust, nor do we think that they are less competent to do the work of issuing transit passes contemplated.

#### VIII—*Fires*

(a) People don't ask for grazing in closed coupes. They demand that early burning should be discontinued as the grass is required by the people. Instead of burning the closed coupes early, we recommend that the cutting of grass should be allowed free to the people.

(b) We have already shown elsewhere that the system of communal punishment cannot be justified and must go.

(c) We fail to understand how any responsibility of preventing fires from departmental rab-burning from spreading into forest can attach to the people employed by the department for rab-burning.

The question of lowering the limit of 200 yards to 50 feet has not been referred to by the Chairman. It is a matter of experience and we would leave it to him to decide.

#### IX—*Miscellaneous*

(a) Yes, we agree.

(b) The complaint of the people is just. We have considered it elsewhere also. The department will do well to employ permanent coolies.

(c) The fee should be only nominal. It should be less than eight annas.

(d) We agree.

(e) We agree. We have also elsewhere treated this question.

(f) We agree.

(g) Yes.

(h) We have referred to this point elsewhere.

(i) We agree.

(j) The rates for shooting licenses should be reduced by way of encouragement. Similarly villagers may be allowed to pursue wild animals in the forests.

#### Kolaba District

##### I—*Grazing and Grass*

(a) We have considered the question of grazing in our general remarks. Removal of grass should be allowed free.

(b) We have referred to this point also in our general remarks.

(c) We have said elsewhere that the period of closure may be brought down to five years if it can be safely done so. We hope the Chairman may reconsider this question. Surely we have great pleasure in emphasizing that in all cases where closure causes hardship, the period of closure should be reduced.

(d) All the points involved in this question have been considered by us elsewhere.

(e) This has been considered elsewhere.

(f) This should be allowed.

### *II—Fires*

(a) We have considered the question already elsewhere.

### *III—Fuel and Fencing*

(a) The grievance is real. We ascertained it to be so at Khopoli, when a contractor was confronted with the villagers. Villagers should be allowed the free use of their right. They may be allowed, if possible, to do so till the end of May. We agree with the suggestion of the Chairman as an additional remedy to have the grievance compensated.

(b) We generally agree.

(c) We cannot give our opinion as to what the occupants of Malki lands should or should not do. The request about forest is too general to be considered.

### *IV—Timber*

(a) We recommend that wood for agricultural implements should be allowed free. At Khalapur all people said so, and the revenue officer who was present endorsed that green wood is required for a particular portion of the ploughs in May and June. We recommend that in the interest of cultivation steps be taken to provide people with the green wood required. We asked the people how they managed so far to get green wood if it was necessary and their reply was frank enough. We recommend therefore that steps be taken to grant this small request.

(b) If it is so we agree.

### *V—Malki Lands*

(a) The original teak growth on malki lands vests in Government and we cannot go back upon it. As to aftergrowth we are satisfied about the injustice done to the people and we have treated the question elsewhere.

(b) We agree.

### *VI—Miscellaneous*

(a) We agree.

(b) Considered already.

(c) We have nothing to add.

(d) The fee should be only nominal, say, annas two.

(e) We agree. We reiterate however that Rangers ought to give the permission as a matter of course.

(f) Considered elsewhere.

(g) Considered elsewhere.

VII—Some other grievances

(a) People ask for Temburni and Palas leaves free and we think this petty concession may be made.

(b) People ask that the Forest Department should be amalgamated with the Revenue Department. This is beyond the scope of our enquiry. We have noticed, however, people appear to have more confidence in the Revenue officers than in the Forest Officers.

(c) They ask that grass in closed forests should not be burnt but should be given to villagers free of charge.

Similar request was made in some other districts also and we think it is a fair demand.

(d) They ask that fencing material should be given free to forest villagers and we recommend it.

**Kanara**

GRAZING

(a) *Levy of Grazing fees*

The agriculturists of Kanara complain against the levy of grazing fee on their cattle and urge for its abolition. They stand upon two grounds, one of right and the other of principle. They maintain that from time immemorial they enjoyed the right of free grazing in certain parts of the forest and rely upon the Kanara Gazetteer, Part I, as authority on the point. The Gazetteer says at page 25 that "people have always enjoyed free grazing in certain parts of the forest." Though this has been included under the heading "Forest Privileges" the wording of the sentence quoted above is significant. For it says that people have always enjoyed free grazing. The words "enjoy" and "always" import the sense of right of free grazing.

In the original Survey Settlement in Kanara which was introduced in 1863 and completed subsequently every village had its own grazing ground set apart. This is also borne out by the Kanara Gazetteer, Part I, which says at page 25 that "under the Survey Settlement in each village certain numbers have been set apart for free grazing." Forest Settlements of a sort were introduced in Kanara even before the passing of the Indian Forest Act, No. VII of 1878. The earliest of these was the Forest Demarcation in the eastern part of the Supa taluka now known as the Haliyal taluka. This was done before 1876 by Mr. Ebdon, C. S., who recognised the people's right of free grazing in that part of the district and proposed that "district reserves" should be thrown open for the free grazing of its cattle. This was sanctioned by Government in their Revenue Department Resolution No. 7394, dated 15th December 1876. The same officer made the Forest Settlement of the Karwar taluka also in 1877 but his report hung fire for a number of years before it was sent up for sanction. *Vide* also Government Resolution No. 5569 dated 20th October 1880, sanctioning the proposals of Mr. Horsley, C. S., and his reports on Forest Demarcations of Ankola, Mundgod and Sirsi talukas. Even in later Forest Settlements the right of free grazing was admitted by the Forest Settlement Officers. *Vide* also the Forest Settlement

Reports of Mr. Wingate for the 46 villages of Sirsi taluka and 45 villages belonging to the 2nd Group of Kumta taluka which were reviewed by Government in their Revenue Department Resolution No. 278, dated 13th January 1890, and No. 6244, dated 29th August 1893.

It is true that the right of free grazing which was found to exist and therefore admitted by Mr. Wingate as a right in the Settlement was not consented to by the Forest Officers who appealed against his decision and got an order in their favour. Mr. Wingate defended his action in finding the free pasturage of cattle in forests as a right and not a privilege in the second paragraph of his Settlement Report in regard to the 45 villages of the Kumta taluka. He says "all I put forward in self-defence is that I was guided as to the use of the terms "rights" and "privileges" by the Acting Legal Remembrancer's memorandum quoted in Government Resolution No. 3112, dated 31st May 1881, and considered that pasturage in the forests where the cattle have been grazed from time immemorial might well be considered a prescriptive right." *Vide* also extracts from the Forest Administration Report for the year 1889-90 appended hereto.

Mr. H. Woodward, the then Collector of Kanara, in his letter to the Commissioner, Southern Division, in forwarding the Forest Settlement Report of the 45 villages of Kumta taluka remarked that for the future guidance of the Forest Settlement Officers in Kanara, Government should be pleased to instruct them that with the exception of rights of water and rights of way no other rights had till then been found to exist in the forests of Kanara as against the State.

All these go to show that the Forest Settlement Officers were for treating the pasturage of cattle in the forests of Kanara as a right and the Forest Officers and the Collector as Head of the district were against that right being admitted and recorded.

From what has been said above it would be abundantly clear that Kanara enjoyed the right of "free grazing" from time immemorial down to the introduction of the levy of grazing fees which came off in the year 1883 and possessed for free grazing separate survey numbers in every village which went by the name of "Gairan" even after the Survey Settlement.

In the later Settlements (Forest) the right was ignored and the grazing areas known as "Gairan" which came to be included in the District reserves were included in the "pasture and forest reserves" next, transferred to the "protected forest" areas afterwards and finally merged into the reserved forests, organised or unorganised.

There is no hesitation in saying that Kanara "Gairans" have gone for the formation of its "forest areas" and it is a settled rule of principle that the villages which have contributed their "Gairans" to the formation of forests should have the right of *free grazing*. Such a rule is even now observed in the case of certain tracts of Thana and Panch Mahals districts where consequently *free grazing* prevails (*vide* Government Resolution No. 8952, dated 15th September 1909).

The agriculturists of Kanara are keen on having their right restored to them. The levy of grazing fees has been their long standing grievance. The fact that they have submitted to the levy does not debar them from

claiming that right which was lost to them. The Committee is appointed by Government to enquire into the grievances of the ryots with regard to Forest matters and it is but right that the Committee should look to the redress of such a long standing grievance.

It would appear that the system of levy of grazing fee was first introduced in Kanara in 1883 (*vide* Government Notification No. 2419, dated 22nd March 1883). Even then agricultural cattle were allowed "free grazing." Only other cattle belonging to the agriculturists and the cattle of professional graziers and outsiders who sent their cattle to Kanara for grazing were taxed at a varying scale of from Re. 0-4-0 to Re. 1 per head.

It seems that there was manifestation of dissatisfaction and bitter feeling on the part of the general public about the said rule and its working by the department. Consequently the Government of Bombay appointed an official committee in 1890 consisting of the Collector of Kanara, the Conservator of Forests, S. C., and the Forest Settlement Officer to consider the question of levy of grazing fees and to frame rules to regulate it. The Collector was to be its President and the other two as members—*vide* Government Resolution No. 278 dated 13th January 1890.

The Committee framed rules and proposed a levy of 0-2-0 per head on all cattle whether agricultural or not belonging to villagers resident in the district which grazed in the forest. In the case of professional graziers and outsiders however it proposed a levy of Re. 1 per head on all cattle.

The Government accepted the Committee's recommendations with the remark that the former rate was modest and the latter rate was rather high.

At the time of the introduction of the levy of grazing fees in Kanara the Protected Forest where grazing was allowed was about 3,048 square miles out of the total area of 3,674 square miles of forest. The people of Kanara must not have felt so much for their cattle then as they naturally had sufficient and good grazing throughout the vast area of the then Protected Forest where fodder grew luxuriantly and plentifully. But later on Forest Settlement after Settlement took place throughout the district with the result that the Protected Forest area which was 3,048 square miles in 1880-81 came down to 133 square miles in 1910-11 when the Forest Settlement work in Kanara was fully complete.

It is true that some care was taken by Government in all the Forest Settlements to allow nearly two acres of land per head of cattle in every village for grazing. For this purpose and for the exercise of other privileges a portion from the vast area of Protected Forest known as Minor Forest was set apart and the rest was notified as Forest Proper. Where Minor Forest area was found insufficient at that rate some provision for grazing in the Forest Proper was made.

The Forest Policy pursued in Kanara from 1890 was very rigorous and detrimental to the interests of agriculture. The gowlis who inhabited Kanara and supplied cattle and dairy articles to the people were driven away by force from Kanara bag and baggage, *vide* Forest Settlement Report of the Mundgod Petha referred to in Government Resolution

No. 11381 dated 1st December 1906. Kanara was known to be a home of cattle as the country was called "Gow-rashtra." Yet they had no place even in their home. All the gowlis migrated to Mysore with their cattle after undergoing all sorts of bad treatment at the hands of the Forest Officers and officials.

In virtue of the curtailment of the Protected Forest area the impoundings of cattle rapidly increased as grazing on the arbitrarily Reserved or closed Forest area to which the cattle were accustomed from time immemorial and in which good grazing was available came to be treated as "Cattle trespass." This action of the Forest Department became so harassing to the ryots who had to pay fines, etc., to the Forest Department in addition to the payment of poundage that it was pointedly and seriously noticed by the Commissioner, S. D., who criticised the policy of the Forest Department in regard to grazing and drew their attention to Government Resolutions Nos. 8952, dated 15th September 1909; 9360, dated 1st October 1910 and 5183, dated 3rd June 1914 which had been ignored or contravened by them—*vide* extracts appended.

The area set apart for grazing though technically sufficient as shown in colours in the Forest maps and in the Statistical tables in the various Settlement Reports consisted more of stony portions incapable of growing even a blade of grass. Some of the remaining portions were woody and the remaining portions which were proportionately very small but which afforded some grazing became over-grown with scrub, lantana, mimosa, etc., on account of the restrictions placed on the firing of the grazing areas and the gradual abolition of the Kumri or wood-ash cultivation which was in vogue in Kanara. The Forest Department in recent years has begun to raise Teak plantations in portions of the Minor Forest open to grazing under a pretext that the remaining portions would be quite sufficient for grazing or an equal area from the Forest Proper would be thrown open for grazing. As a matter of fact however there would be nothing available for grazing in those areas.

The proposed area to be left open for grazing in Forest Proper or Reserved as distinguished from Minor gradually came under the Working Plan system under which coupes were made for exploitation of fuel and timber. The system of closing and opening of the areas in the Forest Proper was introduced with the result that shifting of grazing areas became frequent and coupes exploited by felling were closed for ten years or grazing and opened for that purpose thereafter when due to dense tree growth they were completely unfit for growing fodder.

The evergreen area both in the Minor and Proper Forests left open to grazing is always dangerous for cattle to graze as it is generally haunted by carnivora which pounce upon the cattle going there and destroy them. Such area is therefore quite unfit for grazing for two reasons, firstly because many heads of cattle are every year lost on account of the destruction by the carnivora and secondly because the best area for grazing is that which is denuded of tree growth but not stony.

This is borne out by the Press Note issued by the Government of Bombay on 21st September 1920. In that Press Note which in the eyes of Government is an important document, Kanara is divided into six



tracts for the purpose of dealing with the grievances conveniently and accurately. The study of that Note will show that grazing areas in all the tracts are either poor or have become unfit for grazing on account of overgrowth and that the people have loud complaints about lack of good grazing.

The Collector of Kanara has very recently exempted some villages in the below-ghat talukas from the payment of grazing fees since their cattle have not sufficient land to graze conveniently.

Government promised in the Press Note that the grazing areas overgrown would be cleared and made fit for grazing but very little has been done yet in that direction.

It is true that Government appointed Mr. Collins as Forest Settlement Officer to extend the Minor Forest area for the benefit of the coastal ryots in the matter of supply of forest produce needed for agricultural purposes. He added 33,311 acres of forest land to the already existing area of 92,943 acres out of which only 39,853 acres are partly wooded. This addition has not at all solved the problem. This is borne out by the following remarks of Mr. Collins himself. "In fact it is the areas which are the most denuded of tree growth which are usually the best for grazing. The new area which in almost all cases is covered with dense tree growth and has been taken from the Working Plan areas is for that reason of little use for grazing though nominally it must be permitted—*vide* paragraph 9 of the Report dated 15th March 1921, on the subject of Extension of Minor Forests.

Under the prevailing conditions the cattle population in Kanara would have been almost extinct for want of sufficient pasturage and supply of grass from forest were it not for the straw got from the rice fields and hay from private "bena" lands in the below-ghat talukas, and from "bettas" and "bena" lands in the above-ghat talukas. The gardeners above-ghats and strip-holders below and above-ghats are allowed free grazing in their Bettas and strips and some of the gardeners resort to their Bettas only for grazing their cattle as they have no other place to graze them.

Grazing in the areas set apart in the Forest Settlement has simply become nominal and cattle are sent out for grazing simply to respect the old custom of sending out cattle every day. They roam in vain on the stony and overgrown areas and return home hungry simply to be fed by their keepers. In many places the milch as well as dry cows and buffaloes, have to be stall-fed during the greater part of the year.

The people of Kanara *inter alia* brought these grievances to the notice of their representative in the Local Legislative Council who tabled two Resolutions on the points in successive sessions, one for the abolition of the grazing fees in Kanara and the other for the appointment of a Committee of officials and non-officials from Kanara with majority of non-officials including the Member for Kanara to investigate into the problem of grazing in that district and to suggest ways and means for its solutions, such Committee being given power to elect its own Chairman.

To recapitulate the grazing area in Kanara is most inadequate and even this area is useless for grazing purposes, partly because it is

over-grown with scrub, lantana or mimosa and partly because it is poor and rocky in many places. That Kanara cattle get 13 acres of grazing land per capita in Supa Petha and three acres in the rest of the Talukas and pethas is an unreliable statement. Taking for granted that lands at the rate of two acres to one head of cattle were allotted for grazing at the time of Settlement, that area cannot be availed of by the Kanara cattle for the foregoing reasons. The area of really useful grazing ground cannot average even one-eighth of an acre per head of cattle. If Government want to levy grazing fees because of the provision made by them for grazing they should do so only after providing not less than two acres of good grazing ground per capita. So long as they would not do it grazing fees cannot be justly levied even on give-and-take policy.

Thus on the ground both of right and principle the ryots urge that the grazing fee should not be levied but abolished once for all and the name of "Gow-rashtra" restored to Kanara.

A question is raised as to what should be done in the case of the gowlis residing in Kanara. They are to be found especially in Mungod Petha and Haliyal and Yellapur Talukas. They are resident gowlis. The gowlis who were driven away were invited to return to Kanara by the Forest Department which seemed to have realised the mistake of the policy adopted by it in regard to them. The Government Resolution which says that professional graziers should be taxed one rupee per head of cattle applies to Dhangar gowlis only and not to resident gowlis. So Kanara gowlis who are resident gowlis cannot be brought under the operation of one rupee rate. If Kanara is to enjoy free grazing it should be made universal there. To encourage gowlis is to encourage cattle breeding for which Government is expending a large sum of money on the Cattle Breeding Farms opened by them. In reply to a question put by Mr. M. D. Karki, M.L.C., in the 2nd council the Government have replied that the fee levied on the cattle of gowlis who have returned and settled in Kanara is two annas per head. (*Vide Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Vol. XII, Page 229.*)

It is said that the two anna rate in the case of all cattle belonging to the residents of Kanara and grazing in the forests is very moderate and consequently nominal and the one rupee rate in the case of gowlis is quite reasonable since they make a huge profit by the sale of cattle and the dairy articles the prices of which have gone considerably high in recent years. The Forest Department should not look at these things from a commercial point of view. The commercial point of view should be limited to the exploitation of timber only. The advancement of agriculture mainly depends on forests in Kanara and all the facilities that are needed from the forests for the keeping and maintenance of good stock of cattle should be given by Government to the agriculturist free of any charge. This is in accordance with the good intentions of the Government of Bombay and of the Government of India expressed in their Resolutions repeatedly and with the time-honoured forest rights and privileges of the Kanara agriculturist.



## APPENDIX

Commissioner (Mr. H. E. M. James)—“.....The large figures representing the number of cattle impounded suggest doubts whether the present system is not too violent a departure from the old established custom. The entrustment of grazing interests to a department in its very nature hostile to them can only be regarded as an experiment which should be carefully watched. The tendency of the department is, it cannot be doubted, to subordinate all interests to the growth of timber. The so-called forests are artificial creations of yesterday whilst as grazing grounds they have existed for generations.”

“As far as the Commissioner is aware, the object of Government in passing the recent Grazing Rules was to consolidate orders, bring grazing privileges under better control and revise the fees. It is not clear how the real interests of the rural cattle can be furthered by charging more highly for the grazing. Limitations of grazing will, if the Commissioner is not mistaken, yield to a tendency to raise revenue from as many cattle as possible. Allusion is made to illicit grazing but customary grazing that has been enjoyed for generations should not be stigmatised as illicit grazing merely because it has now been decided to make a charge for it.”—Forest Administration Report for 1889-90.

Commissioner—“.....The Conservator alludes to the confusion caused by orders or instructions issued by the Commissioner, Southern Division, to the effect that subject to no limit all people paying fees were entitled to grazing. The Commissioner issued no fresh orders or instructions but directed compliance with the Government orders on the subject contained in Government Resolution Nos. 8952 of 15th September 1909, 9360 of 1st October 1910 and 5183 of 3rd June 1914 which had been ignored or contravened by the Forest Officers.”—Forest Administration Report for 1914-15.

(b) *Inadequacy of grazing.*—That grazing area in Kanara is insufficient and consequently cattle are suffering has been more fully dealt with in discussing the question of levy of grazing fees. Mr. Mountford, Commissioner, Southern Division, remarked in the Council on 29th February 1924 in reply to representations from various districts including Kanara that “Anyone coming from Kanara knows that a large area (I believe the Honourable Member from Kanara said ‘a small area’) has been given out for grazing—an average of three acres per head of cattle and 17 acres in Supa”. A perusal however of Forest Settlement Reports will make it clear that the grazing area made available comes, on an average, to three acres in Supa and two elsewhere. With regard to the area made available for grazing (whatever may be its ratio to every head of cattle) Mr. Mountford admitted “but we are not at all satisfied with the condition of the grazing lands. They have been overgrown with a lot of lantana and are often useless for grazing”. Agriculturists then barely get an eighth of an acre for grazing their cattle. A comparison with such area set apart for grazing in other countries will show that Indian cattle get the least area.

Manure and grazing are the chief and indispensable requirements of cultivation. Better and ampler grazing improves the number and quality of the cattle. Increase in stronger cattle will enable the people to bring under the plough more land.

So far as possible, sufficient grazing land should be set apart for grazing in each village consonant with the principles laid down by the original revenue settlements in Kanara. Such a reservation will only give effect to the express intentions of the Government of India in their Resolution No. G. I. R.-22F.—1894 and the recommendations of the Yellapur Conference.

We therefore propose that three acres of good land should be set apart for grazing throughout this District. The allotment should follow the rules suggested by the Yellapur Conference in paragraph 15 of its proceedings: Ryots should be permitted to remove all undergrowth in such areas and timely firing resorted to.

(a) *Bettas.*—Improper, insufficient and inconvenient assignment of bettas.

The Kanara spice gardens, the pride of the Presidency, mainly depend for their cultivation on the large quantum of forest produce. This the gardener used to get unrestrictedly from time immemorial, by way of right, from the surrounding forest which went by the name of “Betta” meaning tree-clad areas as opposed to bare area. This usage of the gardener came to be called as his “betta right”. From the year 1878 when the Indian Forest Act was first introduced down to 1902 this “right” was attempted to be minimised, diminished, ignored and denied by the Forest Department. In this process, arose a series of struggles between the Forest Department and the gardeners, the detailed history of which will be found a sad reading.

The Government of Bombay instituted an enquiry into the matter and after finding that nine acres of *betta* was necessary for the cultivation of each acre of the garden land,

sanctioned the assignment of bettas on that scale in their Government Resolution, Revenue Department, No. 3203 of 9th May 1902. The Government remarked that such a useful and ancient industry in Kanara which adds to the potential wealth of the Presidency was dearer to them than the overzealous forest conservancy pursued.

However the pious and generous Resolution of the Government was not executed in that liberal spirit. The area from which the bettas were to be assigned came to be marked out in the forest maps concerned, either at Belgaum, Dharwar or Karwar, the Forest Department being always vigilant to keep for itself the best tree-clad area and areas suited for tree growing.

The Betta Assignment Officer who was called the Betta Mahalkary had to assign bettas according to the instructions contained in the map and consequently it is no wonder if the gardeners did not get sufficient, proper and convenient bettas. In some places bare areas came to be assigned instead of useful tree-clad areas for betta purposes; in other places they were given good or bad bettas, matter of convenience to the betta-holder being not carefully considered by the officer while making the assignments. It is no small complaint in many quarters that the scale of nine acres was not cared for even when there was no difficulty in allowing the full benefit.

In cases of disputes between the gardeners regarding location of each one's assignment the Mahalkary was not required to go into details and to attempt distribution in reconciliatory spirit but was ordered to make the assignment communally to hasten the work.

This hap-hazard way of assignment of bettas as made by the Mahalkary is rightly complained of by many a gardener in the above-ghat talukas and the matter of indiscriminate distribution of bettas has led to much trouble. Insufficient assignment of bettas even in the below-ghat talukas has led to deterioration of valuable gardens as has been witnessed by the Committee in Yelvally.

With a view to avert imminent danger to the garden industry in Kanara the M.L.C. for the district has repeatedly tabled a Resolution in the Legislative Council with a view to urge on the attention of Government the great need to mend matters.

We propose that the assignment of bettas as made already should be revised and made once again in strict conformity with the generous intentions of Government as expressed in the Resolution cited above, once for all. Communal assignments wherever made have to be revoked and individual assignments made in their stead, wherever possible.

(b) *Non-assignments of Bettas on Malki rights.*—The gardeners are unanimous in demanding that proprietary rights should be conceded to them over "bettas". The garden lands existing from the time prior to the original survey and settlement have been assessed at very high rates extending to over Rs. 14 per acre on the assumption that enough forest produce was available without restrictions for their cultivation, vide Government Resolution, Revenue Department, No. 3203 of 4th May 1902. Though bettas have been sanctioned at the rate of nine acres to one acre of garden and assigned to some extent, the proprietary rights over them have not been conceded to the gardeners. The assignment was first treated as a lease, the terms of which being very repugnant to the interests of gardeners and their right were very severely resented by them. They then were classed as Protected Forest and transferred to the Revenue Department for being managed. The use of the bettas is now regulated by the rules framed by Government under the title "Kanara Protected Forest Rules." The rules though modified in 1924 contain various restrictions on the use of these bettas, which unnecessary as they are, interfere with the free exercise of betta right and afford ample room for various complaints from both sides—viz., Government and people—which may eventually result in the suspension or resumption of the said right by Government. Consequently it is no wonder if the gardeners do not deem the bettas as their own land which idea is essential for their conservation and regulation. The Government is already realising a revenue at a fair rate of Rs. 8 per nine acres of bettas by the increased rate of assessment fixed on the pre-survey garden land which (revenue) comes to Rs. 1,60,000 in Sirsi and Siddapur talukas only.

It was decided by responsible officers in the Yellapur Conference that it would be better in the interests of both the gardeners and the Government if bettas are handed over, lock, stock and barrel, to the gardeners subject only to the condition that they should go with the gardens attached to them, the rights over some trees therein being reserved to Government.

Generally agreeing with the official report on this point we propose that "malki rights" over bettas assigned or hereafter to be assigned to gardeners, according to the scales sanctioned or hereafter to be sanctioned by Government should be conceded to them on express conditions that (1) they should go with the gardens to which they are attached, (2) that in case of their being spoiled or in any way deteriorated no fresh assignments

would be made in future, (3) that the existing royalty trees such as Teak, Sandalwood and Blackwood therein should either be removed by Government or be sold to the betta-holders if so desired by them, at half the rates now prevailing, the right over their after-growths being expressly left to the betta-holders in either case.

In the case of gardens fully assessed at garden rates no extra assessment should be levied and in the case of new gardens not assessed at garden rates, assessment according to scale should be levied on the bettas assigned.

There is a general complaint that difficulty is experienced in getting earth for the use of the gardens when the betta adjoining the garden is assigned to the owner of another garden. Earth is required for the cultivation of gardens and that was being got by the gardener from the adjoining betta.

(c) *Omission of Assignment of Bettas in the Below-ghat Talukas.*—Betta assignments were first sanctioned by Government in 1902 (*vide* Government Resolution, Revenue Department, No. 3203, dated 3rd May 1902) at the rate of nine acres of Betta for each acre of garden, no distinction having been made between the gardens of the above-ghat and those of the below-ghat. In the year 1908, however, the Government resolved, to the great disappointment of the below-ghat gardeners, that only four acres of betta should be assigned to them. At the outset the operation of this Resolution was restricted to Ankola taluka only but later on in the same year it was extended to Honavar and Kumta talukas and Bhatkal petha also. Assignments even at this reduced rate have not yet been made in all cases though pressed for in and out of the Council. The gardeners complain that the assignment ought to have been in the ratio of 9 to 1 as in the above-ghat as at first sanctioned. But Government seems to have been led to believe that the betta portion to be assigned below-ghat is better wooded and gives as much material as nine acres above-ghat. Four acres of betta should therefore suffice below-ghat. This view however is untenable. Though it is a fact that at some places at the very foot of the Sahyadri in Ankola and Kumta talukas there is tree-clad area round about betel-nut gardens just as would be found above-ghat it cannot justifiably be contended that the density of tree-growth in the former case is greater than in the latter. As a matter of fact the surrounding area of the betel-nut gardens in the coastal tract away from the foot of the Sahyadri, has no tree-growth worth mentioning. Therefore the complaint of the gardeners that the assignment should be at the nine acre rate seems reasonable. This was also the view expressed by responsible officers at the Yellapur conference and from which the gardeners urge there should be no departure and that adequate assignments on reasonable and liberal terms should be made without further delay.

Again there is much discontent prevailing amongst the gardeners of the below-ghat talukas as Government have recently proposed to give the owners of pre-survey gardens "malki" rights over bettas if they consent to pay assessment on them at the classification rates in addition to the Rs. 8 rate they have been paying on the gardens for betta considerations all along. The owners of new gardens also bitterly complain that the occupancy price proposed to them, namely Rs. 20 per acre of the betta land for malki considerations is too high; they do not however object to paying the land assessment at the prevailing "khushi" rates on the betta assignments. The measure to subject the gardeners to the Hadi terms of tenure where the land to be given away as betta is with established tree-growth and to the Hadi rate of Rs. 1 per acre is resented by all.

The official attempt to subject woodlands to Hadi terms would only expose the hollowness of the statement made in Government Resolution of 1908 that the land to be given away for betta purpose in the below-ghat talukas is more woody than in the case of the above-ghat talukas and as such four acres of the former supply more soppu than the nine acres in the latter instance, while in fact in the majority of cases the land already assigned and to be further assigned is barren and treeless. To class woody land separately would be unfair. Many gardeners, in the hope of eventually having betta benefit have since years spared no labour and money to reboise the elbow land surrounding their gardens and it would be unfair to force the harsh Hadi terms on them in return for their labour spent for the improvement of what was once bleakland as can be seen from the condition of the surroundings. It is high time that the Government be advised to reach peace to the gardeners once for all.

The Committee visited Yelvalli a model garden village in the forest tract below-ghat and has seen the destruction of several gardens and noticed the deteriorating condition of the rest for want of leaf manure. Though there is forest at hand, the gardeners have not the least access to it for that purpose. If cultivation and habitation in the forest villages are to be preserved the portions from the adjoining forest should be forthwith set apart as bettas which would remove the pressure of forest to a certain extent under which they are grubbing and help the successful cultivation of the gardens.

We therefore propose that "betta" assignments should be made for the betel-nut gardens throughout the below-ghat talukas at the rate of nine acres to 1 of garden. The assignment in the case of pre-survey gardens should be free of any assessment. In case nine acres of bettas to one of garden could not be assigned the assessment on the said gardens should be proportionately reduced. In the case of new gardens, the occupancy price at the rate of Rs. 10 per acre should be levied once for all on the area assigned or assessment should be levied at "khuski" rate on the area assigned without making any distinction between the area with established tree-growth and the bare area.

*Strip round cultivation.*—To have stripland round about cultivation is a forest privilege of the Kanara ryots. The origin of this privilege appears in the forest rules appended to the Kanara Forest Gazetteer, Part I. From time immemorial they enjoyed the privilege of clearing the forest area round about cultivation of its tree-growth to keep a clear belt there to avoid the inroads of the wild animals over their cultivation.

This privilege is now embodied in rule No. 3 of the Kanara Forest Privilege Rules. The history of how this rule came to be sanctioned by Government will be found a pleasant reading (*vide* appendix F to the Crop Protection Committee Report).

The present rule is undoubtedly an advancement on the old rule modified from time to time.

Striplands may serve three purposes: namely (I) it may serve as a clear belt for growing grass or for grazing the cattle, (II) it may serve as a store house of forest produce if the tree-growth if existing is not completely denuded or if trees are grown subsequently, and (III) it may serve as cultivable land for raising dry or other crops.

The owners of rice or garden land in inforest or innermost inland villages may like to keep the strip completely clear of tree-growth as the inroads of wild animals in these tracts are rampant, while the said owners in the coastal villages or their neighbouring villages on the inland side like to utilise the strip land for preserving the established tree-growth if any or for growing trees if it is bare as well as grass for their domestic or agricultural purposes.

Thus the strip land is undoubtedly in both the cases a real kumki land to the occupants of rice and garden lands fringing the forest areas.

The people complain that (a) there is delay in the demarcation of strips, (b) the grant of the strip is cancelled if they are not cleared within a stated period which is always short, (c) the clearing of strips cannot be finished in a short period where the growth is very thick as it involves much labour and expense in the ordinary way, and (d) that strips are not allowed in Kans (high evergreens) which when they fringe the cultivation do damage to the crops owing to their dense shade and thick undergrowth. They further complain that the granting of strips by instalments involves duplication of work in clearing them and so in proper cases strips of 100 yards in width should be granted at once and that they should be allowed to remove all trees without restrictions if they intend complete clearance and that kumri should be allowed as it is an easy way of clearing in a short time.

There is a good deal in their complaint.

In the inforest villages above-ghat and in the inland villages below-ghat, the forests which fringe the cultivation have so thickly grown that it is impossible for an ordinary ryot to clear the strip area in a short time by resorting to ordinary ways of felling and removing the tree-growth. The Crop Protection Committee therefore recommend that the first clearance of these strips should be made by the Government at their own expense as the location of the so thick forests near the cultivation was probably due to the act of commission on the part of their Forest Department. The people therefore pray for kumri cultivation which attracts people of the lower classes to the felling of tree-growth without much expense. The ordinary expenses would be met by the use of timber got in the clearance. If kumri is not allowed clearance in the ordinary way is not possible in a short time; it will take years in some cases. The process of demarcating and clearing under the rule is a dilatory one. Their request is that village officers should be instructed without application to have the strips demarcated in the ordinary case of 44 yards.

We propose that (a) village officers should be made to get the strip area of 44 yards demarcated without application from the occupants, (b) that the grant of strip area should not be cancelled if not cleared within the stipulated period but should be kept up irrespective of the fact of its clearance or not, (c) that in the case of complete clearance kumri should be allowed, the right over all the trees being given over to the occupant without restrictions, (d) that strips of 100 yards in width should be granted in proper cases, i.e., in the inland and inforest villages to avoid duplication of work of clearance, (e) that strips be granted in Kans subject to the condition that there should be no complete clearance there but only removal of useless undergrowth and the branches of trees overhanging the cultivation, (f) that the burning of rab for kumri cultivation should be granted by the officers concerned without any restrictions.

There is a general complaint from the coastal villages that strips are not granted to them on the ground that there is no tree-clad forest area to be cleared. The object of the strip-grant is to provide kumki land for cultivation. The rule should therefore be strictly observed no distinction being made between the coastal villages and inland villages.

*Minor Forest.*—This serves as a subsidiary land for the needs of agriculture. Agriculture in Kanara mainly depends on manure and organic matter—the one supplied by cattle, the other by these minor forests. It is true, gardens growing betel-nut are provided with Bettas but that allotment is found to be quite inadequate. For the proper cultivation of these gardens the "bettas" do not serve during the rains when green leaf (soppu) is to be collected for manure for palms. Bettas cannot be utilised in the rains for that purpose as part of it has already been lopped in the fair season for the current year and part of it has to be reserved for being lopped for the next season. Lopping therefore even in the rains would put a strain which the trees cannot bear. This need of the betel-nut gardens needs to be met from the minor forests set apart for use of the villages in which the gardens are situate. Besides garden-cultivation, there are Tari or rice lands and Bagayats of cocoanut which require forest produce for their cultivation. The demand of the people in behalf of these two latter cultivations varies from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 acres. In the Yellapur conference, 2 acres of such subsidiary land was thought necessary for every acre of cultivation—the scale observed in South Kanara. Below-ghat Tari lands require more "soppu" and "darku" as they are poorer. On an average it may be taken that 2 acres of best "kumki" land would suffice for 1 acre of Tari land both above and below-ghat. In the year 1908 when betta assignments were sanctioned by Government in their R.D., G.R., No. 2324, it was proposed that cocoanut garden lands also should be given "betta" at the same rate as betel-nut gardens and the people of Ankola got bettas at that rate for their cocoanut gardens; but an exception was made in the case of cocoanut gardens which fringed the sea-beach. In the same year, Government sanctioned the assignment of bettas for Kumta and Honawar talukas but the assignment was restricted to the betel-nut gardens only, the cocoanut gardens being safely ignored. It cannot be disputed that cocoanut gardens do require kumki for their cultivation. The average area has been estimated to be 4 acres according to Government view. What is now required is to give effect to that view and no more. We clearly see that agriculture in Kanara is deteriorating in spite of the plenty of material the tract contains. It is pointed out here that the interests both of Forests and cultivation may with a little readjustment and redistribution be fully guarded.

We therefore propose that minor forests be opened to meet the requirements of (1) Tari, (2) Cocoanut gardens and (3) Betel-nut gardens, as detailed above. We also suggest that individual assignments for cocoanut gardens should be made at the rate of 4 acres to one of garden wherever it is feasible to do so.

#### GROUPING OF VILLAGES IN THE COASTAL TALUKAS OF ANKOLA, KUMTA AND HONAWAR INCLUDING BHATKAL PETHA

The people of inland villages complain that the arrangement of villages into groups for the exercise of privileges causes much inconvenience to them as the coast villagers derive much greater benefit as they have a greater command over labour which helps them to remove much more material in no time. They request that the grouping of villages should be revised and a Committee consisting of the Divisional Forest Officer, Coast Division, and two local non-officials should be appointed to do that.

It is true that coast villagers have a greater command of labour than those further inland and that they go in numbers to collect forest materials in the inland forest tract and remove them in large quantity in a short time. In inland villages labour is scarce and the villagers who used to get the required quantity of forest materials near at hand before the said system, do not now get them there and consequently suffer. As the labour is scarce to fetch materials from a distance tells upon them heavily and so their cultivation has begun to suffer.

No doubt Mr. Collins, Forest Settlement Officer, has, after minute inquiry grouped the villages for the exercise of privileges. The experience of the inland villagers during these years however seems to show that the system adopted is disadvantageous to them.

We therefore propose that this question be enquired into by Government.

#### PRESSURE OF FOREST ON CULTIVATION AND HABITATION

*General.*—Kanara is the only forest district in the Presidency where population and cultivation are both declining, *vide* the Bombay Forests by Mr. W. E. Copleston, C.S.I., page 15. The apparent cause of this is the Forest Policy pursued there which is borne out by the remarks of a responsible officer Mr. Tupper, I.C.S., and also by the proceedings of the Yellapur Conference.



The Committee visited some places in Kumta and Sirsi talukas where forest has been extended to the very doors of the cultivations and habitations. It is no wonder they are sinking under such conditions. At Yelvali where cultivation and population were flourishing both are now deteriorating on account of the expansion of the forests all round. Some gardens are laid waste and the rest have become improverished.

At Bargadde some wet lands up to the Survey boundaries of which the closed forests are extending on some sides are lying waste. Some of them which were gardens some years ago were subsequently made into rice-land due to the difficulties of cultivation brought about by the unrestricted and ever increasing growth of the forest close to it but for some years past all this land is lying fallow as the cultivation has become impossible thereby. The ryots also pointed out that the neighbouring forest has choked up a water course which was letting a large volume of water in a current down to the fields for their cultivation. The owners of these fields have not relinquished them hoping for better days to come in the future, but have continued to pay assessment as rules do not entitle them to claim remission in such cases. Mr. V. T. Hegde with all the earnestness and emphasis at his command stated before the Committee that 62 hamlets similarly placed as Bargadde and Yelvali at the foot of the Sahyadris are exactly on a par with the above two villages. The Committee visited two villages in the Sirsi Taluka and there too the same state of things prevailed. Mr. G. R. Hegde Ainkai told a more appalling story of the conditions of inforest villages on the top of the Sahyadris regarding difficulties of cultivation and population created by the close proximity of closed Proper Forests. Both of these gentlemen spoke about the helplessness of ryots under existing conditions and their hopelessness if conditions would not improve. All the ryots coming from the various talukas and pethas strongly complain about the growing and increasing pressure of forests everywhere and consequently about the safety of their lives and their cattle as well as the security of their cultivation.

Proximity of closed proper forest round about cultivation and habitation serves as a haunt for the wild animals and reptiles dangerous to life and cultivation and a hot-bed for malaria brought about by the thick overgrowth of useless vegetation choking the process of ventilation and by the decaying of organic matter. It interferes with the right of grazing and the exercise of privileges. It also gives rise to impounding of cattle, ravages of wild beasts, scarcity of water, harassment by Forest Officials, insanitary conditions of the locality affecting the lives of the residents, thereby making the very existence of agriculture and habitation difficult and impossible.

On account of such forest pressure both population and cultivation in some villages and hamlets have been extinct and in the case of some villages they are on the verge of extinction. A reference to the proceedings of the Yellapur Conference is also invited.

The Yellapur Conference had specially met to check the decline in cultivation and population in the existing villages and to repopulate and revive agriculture in villages which had become extinct. The pious conclusions of that Conference were not however put into operation. Had they been, Kanara would have been entirely different from what it is to-day. Kanara is a beautiful district all round. The beauty and loveliness can permanently remain as an ornament and pride of this Presidency if population and cultivation are only saved and helped to increase as it ought to.

In view of the innumerable difficulties to which the Kanarites are put on account of pressure of Forests Proper on the occupied villages, hamlets and cultivations Mr. M. D. Karki had tabled in successive sessions of the Legislative Council a Resolution recommending to Government that Proper Forest within a distance varying from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 mile from habitation and the occupied lands should be put back forthwith in ways beneficial to the resident population in proximity as the case may be.

We propose that the villages and hamlets should be given free scope by the withdrawal of the Proper Forests round about them and their cultivation to the maximum distance from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 mile as circumstances permit and converting the intermediate area of forest into grazing grounds and strips with a view to clearing the village lungs as the case may be. While so fixing the distance at which the Proper Forest should be limited the needs of the surrounding residents should be carefully consulted due regard being given to the number of cattle in the locality, areas of cultivation, etc. If the Proper Forest consists of "Kans" or evergreens, the under-growth and the branches overhanging cultivation and habitation should be likewise cleared and cut and pepper cultivation be encouraged there.

#### SPECIAL

*Teak plantation near cultivation and habitation.*—Pressure of forests round about cultivation and habitation in Kanara has been admittedly the cause of the decline in population and cultivation. People are loudly crying for the removal of such pressure. The Forest

Department has in spite of it begun a campaign of raising teak plantations round about cultivation and habitation and notifying the area under them as closed. The ryots of Supa, Ankola and Honawar urge that such plantations should be removed as they cause immense trouble to them in the matter of exercise of their forest privileges as well as to their cattle in the matter of grazing. The process of raising plantations goes to diminish the area of good grazing ground and brings in the pressure of new forests to the very doors of cultivation and habitation, to the detriment of agriculture and population. This also gives scope for the Forest Officials to harass the people on any day and at any time.

We recommend that fresh teak plantations within a radius varying from two to eight furlongs from cultivation and habitation should not be raised in future and all the plantations which fringe the cultivation and habitation should be cleared according to that scale. In determining the distance at which the plantations should be, the opinion of the villagers should be consulted and the Collector's decision on the matter should be final. In no case teak plantations should be raised in the minor forests.

*Timber privileges.*—Formerly the people of Kanara got good building timber at from one-eighth to one-fourth of the market price (*vide* Kanara Gazetteer, page 25, Part I). After the enactment of the Forest Act, they were brought under the rules known as Kanara Permit Rules in the matter of supply of timber. These were modified from time to time and the rules now in force are of 1924 (*vide* Notification No. 779, published at page 1711, Part I of the *Bombay Government Gazette* of 31st July 1924). According to these rules a Kanarite has to pay a certain amount per khandi of each kind of timber specified therein. It is made a condition precedent in rule No. 6 that before a grant may be made to an applicant he should first satisfy that the timber applied for is not available in his own lands or cannot be had conveniently in the Forest Timber Depots or at an auction or from a forest contractor, etc. This rule practically denies him the timber he wants at the scheduled rates even. The depots, auctions and forest contracts are all commercially run. Rich people only can afford to purchase timber there but agriculturists cannot afford to pay high prices or stand competition in the auction sales. In the latter case big lots are offered for sale which are in excess of their limited requirements and in the former if they should go in for their limited requirements only they have to pay prohibitive rates fixed by the department. The climatic conditions of Kanara require a good house to live in and in villages of this district abounding in forest it is absolutely necessary to have strong houses for protection against inclemencies of weather and danger from wild beasts. The ryots urge that the rate in their case should be at least half of the present rates and rule No. 6 should be so changed as not to drive them to others for the purchase of timber. Teak and blackwood whenever required by them for their private use should be given on permits at half their present rates only.

Kanara is a forest country where timber can be had abundantly. It is therefore just that people should enjoy concessions in their own country. The Committee in the circumstance proposes that in the case of agriculturists the rule should be changed to meet their wishes and timber may be allowed them to meet their legitimate requirements at half the present scheduled rates. It is but just to concede that the legitimate requirements of the people of the place are a primary charge on the surrounding forest resources.

There is also a complaint that much delay is made in the issue of free permits for timber when houses have been burnt. We agree that Range Forest Officers should on production of a certificate from the Mamlatdar in that behalf arrange to have timber supplied as required by the applicant for erecting temporary sheds without delay. This will enable the people to shelter themselves until they have time to build permanent houses timber for which should be applied for to the Collector or Divisional Forest Officer in the usual way.

*Fuel privileges.*—(Gul-boiling). From time immemorial, the people of Kanara were accustomed to the usage of cutting and removing of dead wood for fuel from the Government forests not specially reserved for tree growth or other conservancy purposes. No distinction was made between fuel required for gul-boiling and that used for other purposes. It was only in the year 1911 that the people were denied that customary usage, by exempting the manufacture of "jagri" from the operation of the Kanara Forest Privilege Rules. Since then there has been a tough fight between the people and the Government on that point, the former demanding the restoration of their time honoured usage and the latter trying to levy guntha rate at a varying scale of one anna to two annas and a half and to restrict the people residing within a radius of 5 miles from the fuel depots or the exploited forest coupes to purchase the required quantity of fuel from the depots or coupe contractors only. (For detailed history of the struggle, *vide* Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Volume No. XII, pages 62-65). Gul-boiling is purely an agricultural industry and in Kanara sugarcane crop is the only valuable field crop. The Government seem to view this industry as a remunerative one from a commercial point of view. Such a view in the case of agriculture is not in consonance with the declared policy of Government. It is not so remunerative as is supposed to be if labour,

ravages by wild animals and expense are rightly taken into consideration. Figures showing the area under sugarcane in the District are given below. They will show that less than one-eightieth part of the cultivated area is given to sugarcane and so necessary a cultivation has remained practically stationary during two decades. It should also be remembered that Gul manufactured in the District is almost all locally consumed.

No.	Taluka	Total area	Cropped area	Area under sugarcane in 1923-24	Area under sugarcane in 1903-04
1	Karwar ..	180,095	25,234	211	350
2	Ankola ..	227,001	20,107	247	269
3	Kumta ..	144,025	29,422	288	246
4	Honavar ..	186,426	23,136	627	796
5	Bhatkal ..	86,084	16,076	278	
6	Haliyal ..	273,704	24,450	144	205
7	Supa ..	402,754	8,285	62	
8	Yellapur ..	321,209	11,880	302	512
9	Mundgod ..	165,074	9,596	212	
10	Sirsi ..	327,076	36,973	537	473
11	Siddapur ..	212,467	28,388	501	370
Total ..		2,525,915	243,037	3,409	3,221

The people of Kanara are unanimous in having the old customary usage restored to them. The feeling for that is so keen that a resolution recommending that the portion of the clause 1 (a) of the Kanara Forest Privilege Rules of 1924, published under Government Notification No. 779, dated 6th April 1924, excluding the manufacture of jagri from the concession of free fuel should be deleted was tabled in the various sessions of the Local Legislative Council.

We therefore propose that the old customary usage in this behalf should be restored to them and the said clause be deleted.

The District is not self-sufficient in the matter of Gul production. It imports Gul from the neighbouring districts of Dharwar and Belgaum and also foreign sugar in larger quantities. To tax Gul manufacture is to discourage sugarcane cultivation which is already on a very meagre scale, and encourage importation of foreign Gul and sugar to the detriment of the local economical interests.

#### ADDITIONAL PRIVILEGES UNDER THE KANARA FOREST PRIVILEGE RULES

*Fuel privilege.*—Under the Kanara Forest Privilege Rules, as framed in 1924, the collection and removal by *headloads only* of fallen dead wood of unreserved trees for domestic purposes have been allowed. This rule was subsequently extended as to permit the removal of such dead wood by carts and country crafts from a point in the forest where there was a road or a river route. Rayats now urge that they should be allowed the next concession of taking carts into the forest whether there is a road or not for the purpose of collecting and removing such wood with a view to facilitate its removal which otherwise will cost a good deal in these days of scarcity of labour and high prices. This is only a further improvement on the existing rules.

We recommend that carts should be allowed to be taken into forests for removing the dead wood from minor forest and that the necessary rule be amended accordingly.

*The removal of Tali leaves free of any charge for covering the betel-nut bunches in the rain.*—Gardeners generally cover the bunches by the betel sheaths ( *हाठे* ) for protecting them from rain. If the rain is very excessive these sheaths become rotten and drop down exposing the bunches. Dry sheaths of betel are necessary for covering them. They are not available in the rains and the bunches if not protected in time get diseased and fail to grow. Tali leaves are the only leaves suitable then for the purpose as they withstand rain admirably. The rayats do not require these leaves every year. Besides Tali Palms are only available in Honavar taluka and the gardeners who may avail themselves of these leaves are not many.

We therefore recommend that the privilege small as it is may be included in the Kanara Privilege Rules and the existing rules amended forthwith.]

There will be no excessive removal of leaves which will lead to the destruction of the palms if this privilege is allowed. Now the gardeners do avail themselves of these leaves even if there is no recorded concession. Their request is only to legalize what they already do apparently stealthily.

*Reserved trees in the minor forest.*—A distinction is made in the Kanara Forest Privilege Rules in the species of trees to be cut and lopped for the exercise of privileges. Subject to certain restrictions, 15 species of trees are now prohibited from being cut and removed for that purpose and seven species are reserved from being lopped. Out of the said 15 species, six species are prohibited from being cut at all and the rest, i.e., nine species are allowed to be cut on payment of usual fees. It is to be noted however that these nine species are allowed to be cut by the fuel depot contractors for supplying fuel. The rayats urge that the species prohibited from being cut should be brought on a par with the species of trees prohibited from being lopped, and that the said seven species reserved from being cut as well as lopped should be made available to them on payment of half the usual rates for the purpose of exercising their privileges. Purposes for which timber is allowed to be cut and removed under certain restrictions now are mentioned in clause (f). Substantial houses of agriculturists are not contemplated by these rules and there is no fear that well-to-do people will escape the liability of paying anything to Government for the timber they require.

We therefore recommend that 15 species should be brought to the level of seven species and those seven species too should be allowed to be cut on payment of half the usual rate for the exercise of privileges under the rules. This arrangement will suit both the Government and the people.

*Lopping of soppu.*—The above-ghat people are unanimous in demanding the privilege of lopping soppu in the rainy season in the minor forests. They also ask for assignment of minor forests for Tari cultivation at a rate varying from two to four acres. This has been separately dealt with. The gardeners further say that their bettas cannot give the sufficient quantity of soppu for green leaf manure in the rains as they are invariably lopped in the dry season for covering the manure put to the betelnut trees. It is to be admitted that both Tari lands and garden lands do require manure for better cultivation. Lopping of trees for soppu in the below-ghat talukas is allowed under certain restrictions in the privilege rules. The inforest villagers admitted before the Committee that they helped themselves in that matter in spite of the rules by resorting to the stealthy removal of soppu in forests other than "bettas" during the rains.

The Yellapur rayats further said that lopping from trees for "rab" burning was also necessary for sugarcane cultivation there: bettas could not be utilized for that purpose for fear of affecting the requirements for betelnut gardens. It is true in Mundgod, paddy is sown direct in the fields but it cannot be said that they do not require manure for their fields and soppu for their cattle beds in the rains.

We therefore recommend that lopping privileges should be extended throughout Kanara for the use of gardens, rice lands and manure pits subject to the existing restrictions in the Kanara privilege rules and also for rab-burning in dry season in the case of sugarcane cultivation in Yellapur taluka.

*Clearing of tanks, water channels and other sources of water.*—At many places in Kanara fields and gardens are cultivated with the aid of water running down to them in channels from tanks, reservoirs, springs, etc., situate in the forests. The water channels become choked with the growth of roots and shrubs and with other organic matter. The tanks, reservoirs, springs, etc., become unfit for the purpose on account of similar reasons.

The rayats urge that they should be allowed to clear the growth, etc., obstructing the flow of water in the channel and the storage or running of water as the case may be in the tanks, etc. They further state that they should be allowed the privilege of repairing the tanks by deepening and broadening them to increase the supply of water.

We recommend that the prayer of the rayats should be granted in the interest of cultivation and provision should be made for these things in the Kanara Privilege Rules.

*Withdrawal of privilege under the privilege rules.*—Under rule 5, the Collector is authorised to suspend or restrict the exercise of privileges regulated by the rules under certain circumstances. The rayats urge that this power of suspension should in their interests be altogether deleted. There already exist in the rules various restrictions to guard against abuses and the Committee proposes that the prayer of the rayats be granted. The rules be amended accordingly.

*Extension of period for removal of bamboos to the end of June.*—Fencing operation in the fields commences with the agricultural operations. The rayats sow the fields first and then begin to fence them. The sowing is done in the month of June. The rayats ask for the extension of the period allowed for collecting and removing bamboos for fencing to the end of June. We propose it should be done.

**Fuel depots.**—These depots which were once in vogue throughout the district are gradually being abolished. Small fuel depots below-ghat and urban fuel depots above-ghat have now been done away with. There are only some depots below-ghat at large towns for the convenience of the towns' people.

The general complaint of the people in these depot areas is that (1) good and sufficient quantity of fuel is not made available in the depots throughout the year as the fuel depot contractors are allowed to export what remains over after supplying the depot, which concession encourages them to make a surplus by keeping the depot short, (2) that they, who are invariably contractors of other coupes as well, manage to export good billets available in both the coupes, thereby leaving the inferior billets of all the coupes for sale in the depots, and (3) that the price of fuel per maund has been raised from 3 to 3½ annas to 4½ to 5 annas. There is a good deal in this complaint. It is to be noted that these depots are generally supplied fuel from the minor forest which is set apart solely for the exercise of privileges by the rayats. The Forest Department should not therefore try to make any profit from the sales of coupes for these depots but try its level best to meet the wants of the people in such a way as not to give room for complaints of any kind. The depot contractors should not be allowed to export fuel obtained from the minor forest as it tends to take away the benefit of so much fuel to the privilege holders and to encourage the contractors to starve the depots and care should be taken that the contractors do not mix the fuel obtained from the fuel depot coupes with the fuel of other coupes. If there is any loss in the sale of fuel in the depots there is timber obtained from the fuel depot coupes to compensate it. If eventually any timber remains it should be sold to the privilege holders at a low rate of price. If there is any scope for reducing the present price of fuel it should be done without loss of time. We would in this connection suggest that Fuel Depot Coupes should be advertised for sale with express condition that the fuel obtained therein should be sold in the Depots at a rate from 3 to 3½ annas which once prevailed.

**Saving Permits.**—We agree with the views of the Chairman on this point.

**Ravages of Wild Animals and Shooting Privileges.**—On this point the less said the better, as it was once the subject matter of a Special Enquiry held by a Committee known as "Crop Protection Committee" appointed by Government in the year 1922 whose report was submitted to Government in 1923 and considered by them, *vide* Government Resolution, Revenue Department, No. 4058 of 31st January 1924. Out of the various proposals made by the Committee very few were given effect to, others such as imposing liability on Government for damage done by pig or to contribute to the cost of fencing, etc., were not accepted by them and the rest were kept pending further consideration. The public still remain in the dark about what came of these proposals.

The damage caused by wild animals is an important one among the various factors which have contributed to the decline in cultivation. This can be more imagined than described.

Mr. Copleston, once the Chief Conservator of Forests, Bombay, in his "Bombay Forests" has graphically described at page 25 the plight of a Kanara agriculturist regarding the ravages of wild beasts. He says "it may not be generally known that up to the year 1903 no wild elephants had been seen in North Kanara by the oldest inhabitants excepting one stray animal which soon felt lonely and returned to Mysore. In 1903 a small herd came into Siddapur and Sirsi forests from Mysore. This incursion proved a misfortune to the country. The Kanara rayat's lot has always been an unending struggle against malaria and wild pig. Night after night when his crops are ripening in October he would be perched up in his little 'machan' down in the damp cold paddy fields scaring away the pig, this too at a season when the malarial mosquito abounds. With elephants about he felt unsafe on his flimsy platform supported by four sticks and in most cases he took refuge in a big tree somewhere along the boundary of his field where he was unable to guard his crop efficiently from the pig. Consequently several of his small isolated fields had to be abandoned."

The loss of crops due to wild pig alone which was estimated by the Crop Protection Committee and subsequently admitted by Government comes to an amount of Rs. 7,05,000 annually, the loss caused by birds and other animals such as wild elephants, monkeys, etc., being apart. The latter loss too is not insignificant but severe as is admitted by Government in the course of debates in the second Council of our Legislature. The inroads of elephants on cropped area result in its total destruction.

Of late, wild elephants have become a localized nuisance and complaints are frequently heard of the inroads of these animals from various quarters. They have even harmed the people. The local newspapers invariably contain fresh news of these inroads every week almost.

Kanara already contributes for an average area of 120 thousand acres of land under cultivation, a larger sum of land revenue to Government (amounting to a sum in the neighbourhood of Rs. 11,00,000) when compared with other districts similarly or better placed, but her quota of contribution does not end there. It pays a sum considerably larger than the land revenue to the forest birds and animals in the shape of crops. This will show how hard hit is the lot of the Kanara rayat.

The Committee finds that wire-fencing and erection of wall round the cultivations which are prevalent in Europe and other countries are not possible throughout the district where cultivation is scattered and the rayat is ordinarily unable to bear the cost and that the granting of gun-licenses is not on sound basis; licenses are often refused for the skilled and the needy but granted sometimes to persons who keep arms as an ornament and mark of honour rather than for use. We therefore propose that all proposals of the Crop Protection Committee other than those which have already been given effect to should be sanctioned without delay. Those that were accepted should be kept up. The gun licenses for protection of crops and person should be freely granted. The killing of wild pig should be encouraged by shooting, netting and trapping throughout the minor forests without restriction and in the proper forests without restrictions within a radius of half a mile from habitation and cultivation and with restrictions elsewhere. The damage caused to crops at different stages of growth by Cheetal, Sambhar and Bison is also considerable and there should be put no restriction on hunting these in the Minor Forest by means at the disposal of the cultivator. To protect the cattle from the ravages of the carnivora the cultivator should by all means be permitted to shoot them even in forests. The loss of cattle carried away by the carnivora in Kanara each year is enormous. The game rules should be amended on the lines indicated by the Proceedings of the Yellapur Conference and given effect to without loss of time. The skin, horns and other parts of the animal killed should belong to the person who killed it. The help rendered now for the destruction of elephants being ineffective, timely and effective help should be given wherever they are found doing mischief. If elephants are not exterminated from the Kanara forests danger to cultivation and population would be imminent. Measures for the removal of the monkey pest should also be undertaken.

Every possible facility should be given to the rayats to obtain fencing materials free. The people of Mundgod ask for free grant of teak posts for wire-fencing as they are more durable. The Crop Protection Committee recommended that Government should even contribute to the cost of fencing by the rayats. This was not however accepted. So people request free grant of teak posts. This seems reasonable and should be allowed. In places where teak is not available posts of durable species should be made available to them free of any charge.

#### TALIPOTS

*Enhancement of the rate for the talipot palms.*—These palms grow in certain tracts of Honavar and Kumta talukas only. The said tracts of Honavar taluka have been brought under a working plan system, *vide* Government Resolution, Revenue Department, No. 2031, dated 26th February 1909. The pith of these trees is used for food by the low class poor people. This is done out of sheer necessity. The pith as food is not even liked by dogs. Now-a-days there is a great demand by these people for these trees which is an indication of growing poverty. The Kumri Marathas are allowed the trees free of charge on a scale laid down by Government, *vide* Government Resolution, Revenue Department, No. 2894 of 5th May 1903 and No. 5163 of 6th July 1904. Others who wish to have them get them at rupees four per tree. There is discontent among the people concerned as the present rate is complained of as too high for their limited means. A resolution was therefore tabled in the Local Legislative Council by Mr. M. D. Karki, M.L.C., Kanara, that the fees per tree should be reduced to rupee one but not moved as he had no chance in the ballot. The fee should however be reduced to rupees 2 per tree.

The working plan system as applied to the Tali palm is very faulty inasmuch as it deprives Government of much revenue and places irksome restrictions on those for whom the palms have a food value owing to extreme poverty. As these palms flower but once, in their life time and then die away and as it has not been possible to find out correctly the exact or even approximate time of maturity of the trees many trees in the closed compartments lose their food value before they are made available. Hence it results in loss of revenue to Government, and restricted area leads to insufficient supply. Therefore the people concerned rightly think that the working plan system is undesirable in their interest as well as that of Government. We therefore favour the view point taken by the people and propose abolition of the Working Plan in the Talipot areas.

## ROADS AND RAILWAYS

The Forest Department in Kanara realises the largest revenue. For the exploitation of its high forests and to convey its valuable timber to markets roads are admittedly essential. A net work of roads therefore will immensely benefit the Department and will at the same time assist the people of these far outlying villages in dense forest. It is true a welcome move in this direction has already been taken by the Department but much still remains to be done. The Legislature could be generous by placing ampler funds at the disposal of the Department for this very useful and necessary purpose.

We propose that there should be a net work of roads all over Kanara forests both for the benefit of the Department as well as the use of the people inhabiting them.

Roads, after all, will not finally meet the needs of the District. Opening of a railway is a necessity. This point has incessantly been pressed in every Forest Administration Report for the two decades: the Commissioners have supported it strongly. The project though thus authoritatively placed before Government for adoption appears to have been kept back on the score of its economic infeasibility. In the interest of the valuable forests, however, the idea may well be taken up. In due course the benefit accruing will more than compensate the immediate outlay which now seems to deter Government from undertaking it.

We therefore propose that a railway be early opened in Kanara.

## THE FOREST VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

The formation of village panchayat should be encouraged. The rules as they stand are considered as unsatisfactory. No suggestion has however been made as to on what lines they should be made or what defects there are in the existing rules. The draft of the present rules was not, it is understood, published and public criticism invited. We therefore recommend that the present rules should be widely published as draft rules and public criticism invited. This will put an end to the whole complaint.

*Casuarina plantations.*—*Casuarina* plantation on the Kanara coast is 1,088 acres 30 gunthas which are scattered in eight villages of the three talukas shown below.\* These lie along the sea beach and are situated on the borders of villages touching either cultivation or habitation and a small area of 55·6 acres at Kodibag though situated on the sea beach lies within the limits of Karwar Municipality. They are notified as reserved forests and are brought under the working plan system.

		Area	
		A.	G.
<i>Karwar Taluka *</i>			
Chiakule, Bad, Kodibag, Binge and Arge .. .. .		392	0
<i>Ankola Taluka</i>			
Harwade .. .. .		112	0
<i>Honawar Taluka</i>			
	A. g.		
Kasargod	433-10	584	30
Haldipur	151-20		
Total ..		1,088	30

The land covered by these plantations is at some places most suitable for growing cocoanut trees (owing to the insufficiency of which to meet the requirements Kanara is now importing cocoanuts and cocoanut oil from Malabar side) and is at all places suitable for growing kaju-nut trees and Undi trees the products of which have a good market now-a-days. There is a keen demand for land for cultivation in the coastal talukas especially on the coast on account of the pressure of its population. These plantations are said to be injurious to the cultivation surrounding them and the people residing close to them. These, though fenced when the trees are tender are left without fencing when they pass that stage and so the village cattle do trespass in them incurring thereby a loss of money to the owner. These plantations are generally within a quarter of a mile from a village and cause a good deal of inconvenience to the villagers. From a business point of view also, it seems that they are not so remunerative on the whole. The forest point of view that they serve as wind-break, supply fuel from the droppings of their leaves and

also give shelter for growing fodder plants underneath the trees even if true is not so strong as to countervail the inconvenience and loss both in money and land to the people in Kanara.

Besides the said plantations, there is one more plantation in the village of Nadu Masgeri in Kumta Taluka. The area under that was classed as minor but closed to privileges. Much of it has lately been clear cut and disforested and it has been provided that the remaining area shall also be disforested when it has been cut over, vide G. R., R. D., No. 6271 of 3rd July 1911. Land set apart for grazing of the cattle was also included in this plantation.

We recommend that the same principle as that observed in the case of Kumta Taluka plantation should be observed in the case of other Taluka plantations. The areas disforested should be given over to private cultivation. It is to be noted that owing to the existence of casuarina plantation in the close proximity of the Karwar town, the extension of the town has become very difficult and the people are using Tari, i.e., rice land for building purposes after expending a huge sum of money for making it a house site.

*Kumri or wood-ash cultivation.*—This was in vogue throughout the district as a forest right or privilege before the introduction of the Forest Administration there but subsequently stopped gradually.

It is however still kept up in some parts of the district only to help the hill tribe people to earn their livelihood.

It serves two purposes :—

(1) it supplied food for the poor hill tribe people and

(2) it serves to remove rank growth of useless vegetation. The people of Siddapur and Sirsi complained that owing to the stopping of kumri cultivation on the top of 'Sahyadris' the hill tribe people have migrated to Mysore and scrub jungles which have neither commercial nor agricultural value since they contain no timber, or 'soppu' producing trees but on the contrary contain useless vegetation rankly grown to serve merely as a cover to the wild animals, have appeared on the scene of good grass growing areas, that their existence near hamlets and cultivation has become a serious nuisance and that they should be removed by the process of 'Kumri' which is the only way of removing them.

The departmental point of view is that 'Kumri' results in the complete erosion of the soil and failure of the water supply during the hot season.

Kumri is not a new thing to Kanara. As noted above it existed in good old days when the district had its health and wealth. The cultivation had then its plentiful water supply from the neighbouring hills and mountains and the population had its plentiful food supply from the cultivation.

The pious object of keeping and maintaining good supply of water by growing forests all round the district has failed to bring about the desired effects. Cultivation has deteriorated as the forests were grown near by and the population has sunk as the cultivation declined. The sweet and lovely homes of thousands have been rendered unfit for habitation on account of the insanitary conditions created by the conservancy and development of forests all round and water scarcity has been felt everywhere in the hot season.

People do not desire that valuable forest areas should be 'kumried.' They are necessary in the interests of the people and the State. They want to get rid of useless scrub jungles which neither serve the people nor the State but unnecessarily hamper progress both in cultivation and population.

We propose that scrub jungles on the top of Sahyadris near habitation and cultivation should be removed by the revival of kumri cultivation.

*Raising up and rearing of pepper creepers in Kans (ever green forests).*—Ryots from Supa complained about this grievance. They said that the 'Kans' in Gund Range even now bear the names of certain families who originally reared pepper in them. This privilege which existed in the past in the "Kans" of Kanara was lately withdrawn at settlements and so useful a custom was stifled. There are remnants of pepper vines clinging to several trees in these 'Kans' which abut on cultivation or are close to habitation. With such careful rearing of the creepers these Kans presented the fine appearance of gardens; all unsightly and injurious rank vegetation being removed by the privilege-holders. Trees grew straight and high. Kans are without question the result of the labour and care lavished upon them in the past by these privilege-holders who are now ousted.

Kans are now strictly reserved except in some places in the eastern part of the Sirsi Taluka where on account of their close proximity to habitations and cultivation, exercise of some rights is as a matter of grace permitted in them.



The ryots are anxious to have that privilege restored to them. The Supa men expressed that the cultivation would, if permitted, be renewed with redoubled energy. There is absolutely no danger that Kans will suffer the least damage by the revival of pepper cultivation in them. They will on the contrary improve appreciably like gardens. Ryots bear a peculiar reverence and affection to these Kans and with that superstitious vein in the people, Kans will be rather guarded than hacked. If any proof were needed, treatment of them when the privilege was freely conceded will bear out.

By the neglect brought on them by the present system we see these excellent evergreens are reduced to be hot-beds of malaria and turned to be a nuisance to the surrounding tract. By reviving the industry, the Kans will be kept cleaner all organic matter liable to rot being removed by the people. The growth of valuable trees will be encouraged. The cultivation if thus revived and regulated by encouraging rules will serve as a supplementary means of maintenance to the people. It seems that Government have realised the importance of pepper industry and have lately undertaken to introduce it in bettas, *vide* page 578 of Local Council Debates, Volume XI. For obvious reasons, the industry will prosper more in Kans than Bettas.

We therefore propose that the industry of pepper vine cultivation in the "Kans" or evergreen forests be revived and regulated.

### Belgaum

*Grazing.*—(a) We have already considered all these points. We have noticed it as an undoubted fact that in most places, grazing area is insufficient. We heard the complaint everywhere. That on the whole grazing area is insufficient cannot be denied and this fact must greatly affect the condition of our agriculturists.

Compensation in addition to pound fees should not be recovered.

In the particular four villages the number of cattle may not have decreased, but old men said before the Committee that within their memory the number of cattle had much gone down. Prior to 1915 there was no regular census of cattle, but we have census figures available for 1915-16 and 1919-20. We find these figures under agricultural stock in the statistical Atlas, 1925. A comparison of these figures shows that during those four years, in the nineteen districts of the Presidency proper, the number of plough oxen decreased by 7 per cent., the number of she-buffaloes by 6 per cent. and that of cows by 17 per cent. This fall in the Central Division is more serious. There oxen have gone down by 10 per cent. she-buffaloes also by 10 per cent. and cows by 25 per cent. These are alarming disclosures. If in four recent years, the fall in the number of cattle is so great, there can be no difficulty in believing what old men say from personal knowledge that the number has been greatly reduced during the last 30 or 40 years.

(b) We have considered this question already.

(c) Separate grazing area should be assigned to sheep and goats.

(d) We think that this may be allowed also in times of scarcity.

(e) We agree.

*Timber.*—We recommend that it may be allowed free everywhere to cultivators who pay assessment up to Rs. 50 and at half the usual rates to those who pay more than Rs. 50 but less than Rs. 150.

As to the question of permission, it shows how people do not know their rights and privileges and rules and orders of the Department. It is, therefore, urged that wide publicity from time to time should be given to these.

It is a matter for congratulation if there is never a delay of over 14 days in disposing of such applications. We do not know why people then complain of great delay in such matters. Probably the departmental rule may be that such applications should be disposed of within 14 days, but the practice may be otherwise. We can only say that there should be no delay.

*Fuel.*—The demand for removal of dead wood for fuel by cart load is often made in other places also. We have elsewhere recommended that it should be allowed. It may be allowed in this district also.

It is perfectly true that coupe contractors are bound to stack separately all fuel under 3" girth in this district and under 6" girth in other districts and the villagers are entitled to remove it free, but in no place contractors allow the villagers to remove it. Contractors ought to be strictly warned not to obstruct villagers from removing such fuel. This is an instance of how unnecessary irritation is caused among the villagers by their not being allowed to enjoy what is conceded to them by rules.

*Fencing material.*—The fees for thorns should be reduced. We agree with the Chairman that lantana ought to be allowed free on the condition suggested by him.

*Minor Produce.*—The income from the minor produce enumerated is not great and the fee of one anna is trifling. We recommend that they be allowed free to avoid discontent for a trifle.

*Pressure of forest on cultivation.*—We have considered this point in more detail under Kanara.

*Kumri.*—Wherever and whenever possible more kumri should be allotted.

*Water channels.*—These should be allowed free. We agree.

*Sawing of timber.*—We agree.

*Publicity of rules.*—It may have been already done, but it should be often done. It is necessary that frequent and wide publicity is given to rules regarding forest privileges. as we have discovered practically everywhere that people do not know their rights and privileges.

*Some more grievances and our recommendations.*—(a) As far as possible there should be no closed coupes near cultivation, as cattle are very often impounded.

(b) There should be a right of way allowed from one malki land to another.

(c) There should be no forest in the midst of cultivation, as it is at Harsuli and Khelwadi.

(d) Licenses to shoot should be given on a liberal scale and villagers should be allowed to pursue the animals into the forests.

(e) Material for erecting huts in fields should be allowed free, if it is not already allowed.

(f) Reward and not punishment should be the inducement to render help to extinguish fire.

(g) Three acres of grazing land per head of cattle should be allowed.

(h) Grazing land should be, as far as possible, near villages. It should be within four miles at best. At Madanalli and other villages it is ten miles off though it is possible to assign grazing land nearer.

(i) Tanning material should be allowed free.

(j) People resent the recovery of damages over and above the pound fees. They say "many people had to leave their villages after selling their cattle for payment of the punishments of two kinds". There should be no damages recovered in addition to pound fees.

#### Nasik

(1) Grievances regarding grazing fees, sale of kurans to villagers at average price, compensation *Nus* pound fees, inconvenience of closed forest, stones, earth, dead fuel, thorns, right of way to water for cattle are grievances which are common to other districts and have been already considered.

(2) The question of Anjen leaves has also been considered. Only two years back these leaves were allowed free in Nasik District. We are not told why these fees have been levied now. The economic condition of agriculturists has not improved, probably it is getting worse day by day and we see no justification for imposing new fees where they did not exist before. In this case, the policy of pushing on slowly was followed by Government. Three different rates gradually rising higher were introduced in a single year. First the rates generally were one anna per head load and six annas per cart load, then they were raised to one anna and a half and nine annas and again they were raised to two annas and twelve annas respectively and all these rising fees by gradation in one year. To push on slowly but surely till there is resistance appears to be the policy responsible for these three different grades in one year.

(3) We agree, only care ought to be taken that more than sufficient grazing area is left out.

(4) As a rule separate area should be allowed to sheep and goats.

(5) Nevertheless we recommend that it should be allowed free at least for agricultural purposes.

#### Poona and Ahmednagar

(1) All these points have been considered already.

(2) We have also considered this point. We have advised that coupes may be left open during the latter half of the period of closure, when there is no chance of young tree growth being damaged.

(3) We consulted people from many places. They believe that the average price for the last ten years would also be too heavy for local bodies to accept, for since the Great War, bids have gone up high. Some people have therefore asked for the average of the last fifteen years. They say that if three years are to be taken up for finding out the average, let the years 1911, 1912 and 1913 be taken. The people and public bodies would be willing to take up the work provided the average of these three years is taken up. We recommend that if possible the average price for the said three years be ascertained and public bodies and villagers be asked if they be willing to take up the work at that average.

(4) We agree, only the grazing fee will, hereafter, be annas two and a district will be the unit.

(5) Instances were quoted of Inam villages having a river flowing by and on the other side of the river would be our forest. Cattle crossing the river would enter the forest. A strip of 50 yards is therefore asked for and we think the demand is reasonable.

(6) We agree.

(7) These points have already been touched elsewhere.

(8) We agree.

(9) The point probably is that wide publicity should be given to these rules. We have recommended it elsewhere.

(10) We recommend that such notifications be widely published in the vernaculars and at places affected.

(11) If the Forest Act is provincialised, everything else will follow.

*A few more complaints.*—(12) One more complaint was made out on behalf of Inamdars that instead of their having to take the permission every year of the Department to export timber from their forests, they should have that permission permanently or at least for a long period. As we are not concerned with the grievances of the Inamdars we leave this question to be decided by the department as best as they can.

(13) People maintain that grazing offences should be disposed of by the Panchas of the village instead of being taken to the Magistrate's Court. It is a good ideal but we are afraid time has not come yet for the ideal being brought into practice.

(14) People ask that Temburi leaves should be granted free to people of poor class, such as Thukkars, Bhils, Kolis, etc. It is alleged they used to get them free before and used to maintain themselves by their sale or barter. It is said since the concession was withdrawn they had taken to the habit of robbery and dacoity. We recommend that it is a trifling concession and should be restored.

(15) The people in Ahmednagar district, as in some other districts, ask that when famine occurs, grazing fee should be remitted as is done by the Revenue Department. Since 1919 the people in Sangamner taluka had very bad years and the Revenue Department did not recover any grazing fees, whereas the Forest Department recovered them, though no grass had grown in the forest. We recommend that in famine years no grazing fees should be recovered and if recovered should be remitted.

#### Satara

(1) We have considered this point in our Part I.

(2) Considered elsewhere.

(3) Considered elsewhere.

(4) There should be no compensation in addition. We have said it elsewhere.

(5) We have considered the point in general remarks.

(6) Wherever possible the demand of the people should be met.

(7) We agree on the first part and recommend that in famine times the prices should be controlled.

(8) We have considered it elsewhere. The fees should be reduced. They should be only nominal.

(9) Certainly sheep and goats should not be allowed to graze in the same area. Separate area should be assigned to them.

(10) The fee should at best be four annas.

(11) We agree.

(12) We agree.

- (13) We agree. In any case villagers should be allowed to pursue the animals into the forest.
- (14) Certainly.
- (15) We agree.
- (16) The sliding scale is too high and has been recently introduced. Old rates should be restored.
- (17) We agree.
- (18) We agree.
- (19) We agree.

### Panch Mahals

This is mainly a Bhil district. The attention of the Committee was drawn to this district by an application received on the last day from the Bhil-Seva-Mandal of Dohad. In this district the Committee met at two places: Godhra and Dohad. At Godhra had assembled people from the three western talukas of Godhra, Kalol and Halol and at Dohad from the two eastern talukas of Dohad and Jhalod. The Bhils are a backward people and therefore in this district more than in any other, the forest subordinates have greater opportunities of harassing the people and it was but natural that here we should have heard some very bitter complaints against the Forest subordinates. We hope the District Forest Committees that will be formed will go a great way in putting a stop to the alleged mal-practices. In connection with this district we have to recommend that the Bhil-Seva-Mandal, which is doing a great and laudable service to the backward community of the Bhils, should have a representative on the District Forest Committee.

We proceed to the grievances of this district:

- (1) *Mhowra tree*.—Mhowra flowers and fruits are a staple food of poor cultivators in this district. They were not sold by auction in the past, but they are now being sold. We recommend they should not be sold nor should there be wholesale cutting of them.
- (2) *Forced work*.—We agree. There should be no compulsion. It is most unfair to take people to the work of the department at a time when they must be in their own fields. The present practice is to call away villagers to cultivate forest land, to sow seeds, to weed seedlings, to cut grass, to tend and water seedlings, to clear demarcation lines, to repair boundary marks, to burn fire-lines, at a time when they have urgent work in their own fields. They necessarily suffer a great loss. This practice must cease. We agree.
- (3) *Exactions by subordinates*.—We heard of these exactions more prominently in this district. We recommend a special inquiry, as far as this district is concerned, into these practices. Steps should be at once taken to check them.
- (4) *Agricultural land*.—The grievance of the rayats that agricultural land in forest is given out to influential people in large areas is just. The Chairman says a few cases have occurred and steps have been taken to prevent a repetition. But we recommend that if it be possible to take back lands given to rich and influential persons in large areas from them, by all means they should be resumed and given to poor agriculturists in small holdings.
- (5) *Sale of grass*.—We recommend that grass should not be sold to contractors. We were told that before 1918 only four grass Birs were put up for public auction and the rest were allowed to be used by the cultivators. But since 1918 all closed coupes are put up to auction to the great inconvenience of the rayats. This should not be.
- (6) *Some more recommendations*.—Grazing area, in this district also, is not in proportion to the number of cattle. Steps should be taken to have sufficient grazing area.
- (7) The Rayats should have the privilege, which they once enjoyed, of removing fire-wood below 6" in girth on head loads from open portions of the Reserved Forest. Branch-wood in a coupe under cutting should be allowed to be removed free by the rayats.
- (8) After the expiry of the contractor's period, material remaining in a coupe should be allowed to be removed, as of old, by the people.
- (9) Every kind of forced labour must cease.
- (10) As in the past, the people should be allowed to take thorns free.
- (11) Cultivators should be allowed to have bamboos and sali wood on permits.
- (12) As in the past, people should be allowed to take wood free for mandavs on wells, for burning bricks and for agricultural implements.
- (13) Standing dead trees should be given at half the concession rates, as was done before.

(14) The Bharwards, Charans, Rabaries are not professional graziers and like other cultivators they should be allowed free grazing.

(15) At all times there should be a way to the places of water.

(16) Dead fallen wood should be supplied for bonfire on the Holi day.

(17) At one time, the Bhangies were given bamboos on headloads for their maintenance. They are not now so allowed. They should be allowed.

(18) From Government Depot no contractors should be supplied grass for the purposes of trade. It should be supplied to cultivators at favourable rates.

(19) Closed forests should be distant from villages.

(20) Period of closure should be reduced, if possible, for the purpose of grazing.

(21) The duty of issuing transit passes may be entrusted to revenue Talathis.

(22) Grazing passes may be issued as before by the Revenue Department.

(23) People should be allowed to collect flowers, fruits, gum, lac, etc., free from forests.

*N.B.*—We found that these minor concessions and privileges were enjoyed by the people of this district before. They have been recently stopped. It should be noticed that the people of this district are mostly backward and the withdrawal of all these petty concessions has caused great uneasiness among them. We recommend that to secure the contentment of the people of this district these minor concessions may be made.

#### Sholapur

(1) In the district of Sholapur, we recommend that the time limit for grazing should be extended to the end of May as there are no early monsoons in that district.

(2) The grievance of the people of Tirhe, taluka Sholapur, appears to be just. That village had once 204 acres of forest land. Out of that land 145 acres are given out for cultivation on an assessment of only Rs. 28, leaving only very bad land, upon which even grass cannot grow, for grazing. People contend that they are willing to pay the assessment of Rs. 28 and the area given for cultivation should be resumed for the purpose of grazing.

#### Bijapur

(1) Lands which are fit for cultivation may be given for cultivation to the villagers, provided grazing area is not reduced.

(2) Area wherein temples are situated should be disforested and given over to Panchas of the villages.

(3) Free shooting in the forests should be allowed.

#### CONCLUSION

We are glad we have been unanimous in our recommendations. We sat for five days, deliberated together, considered every point with the sole object of restoring peace and contentment among the rural population. We noticed a considerable amount of heart-burning in the masses on account of forest grievances. We know our people better as we move among them and the vehemence and the sincerity with which they talk about forest grievances is an eloquent testimony to their deep discontent on account of these grievances. We are anxious that these grievances should be redressed. With that object in view, we considered every point, not forgetting at the same time the three main objects of forest management that have been laid down by the Chairman at the outset of his report.

We can realise that it is not an easy affair to restore that contentment which once existed. We also can see that the forest subordinates, who have contributed greatly to bring about the present discontent, cannot be reformed all at once. But we look forward with great hopes to the District Forest Committees, that we have strongly recommended should be formed to safeguard the interests of the rayats in all districts.

D. R. PATIL.

M. D. KARKI.

K. E. DADACHANJI.

ABDUL LATIF HAJI HAJRATKHAN.

SHANKAR S. DEV.

Council Hall, Poona,

6th August 1926.