

forests, for the purposes of coffee planting, has become a serious evil. It is an evil which presses hard on the natives, who are in consequence debarred from obtaining fence-sticks and wood for building and agricultural purposes. It is an evil which will ere long make itself felt among the planters themselves, when they find themselves unable to procure timber for general use, and specially firewood for their coolies.

For these reasons I am to instruct you that, in laying out future allotments of land for sale, certain reservations should be maintained, and it is highly important that the small detached valleys among the patanas, among which timber grows, should on no account be sold, except in localities where it is clear that there is no population to be affected. You should take an opportunity of pointing out to the surveyors the reservations you consider necessary; they can then be marked out and laid down on a map.

I am, &c.,
JOHN DOUGLAS,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY to Governor the Right Hon. W. H. GREGORY.

(Ceylon, No. 256.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 31st October, 1873.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch No. 237, of the 31st of July, respecting the measures proper to be taken to arrest the destruction of forest in Ceylon.

I have read your report with much interest, and I trust that the measures which you are now taking will be attended with success.

I communicated your Despatch to Dr. Hooker, and I transmit to you a copy of a letter received from him in reply.

You are at liberty to lay this correspondence before Council, or make it public in any other manner you may see fit.

I have, &c.,
KIMBERLEY.

Enclosure.

Dr. HOOKER to Mr. HERBERT.

SIR,—

Royal Gardens, Kew, 22nd October, 1873.

I herewith return Governor the Right Hon. W. H. Gregory's Despatch, and the rules for the conservation of the Ceylon forests, which Lord Kimberley has been good enough to forward for my perusal.

This able and exhaustive document has interested me greatly, and given me much new information regarding a Colony in which I have long taken an active interest.

I am extremely glad to find from it that I had exaggerated the amount of forest destruction attributable to coffee planting, a matter in which it appears that I have been misinformed by some of the most intelligent of the planters with whom I am acquainted, and who probably included the chena cultivation in the same category with the coffee.

The duty of conserving the natural resources of the colonies for the benefit of future generations, whilst encouraging a fair use of them by the present, is becoming the most pressing and arduous duty of those entrusted with their government, and Mr. Gregory's enlightened views and energetic action leave nothing to be desired in this respect in so far as the Island of Ceylon is concerned.

I observe in a marginal note an allusion to the cultivation of tea and chocolate in the hitherto uncleared parts of the Island. The introduction of the tea plant (due, I believe, to Dr. Thwaites) will, should no unforeseen cause interfere, no doubt be carried on in the upper regions of Ceylon to an immense extent, and be exceedingly profitable.

This will inevitably lead to the destruction of the forests in those regions where it is, as Governor Gregory's Despatch points out, of paramount importance that they should be preserved.

With the view of obtaining reliable data for the guidance of the Government in future, I would suggest that comparative observations of the rainfall and humidity should, as soon as possible, be systematically made on both the leeward and windward slopes of several remote stations in the mountain region. Such observations are of the simplest description, and require neither skilled observers nor costly instruments, and those for rainfall might be made with self-registering gauges, inspected once a week, or even less frequently. The results should be reported upon annually, and every publicity given to the reports.

With regard to chocolate, for which the lower parts of the Island are probably exceedingly well suited, it will interest Lord Kimberley to know that Dr. Thwaites has sent samples of Ceylon chocolate to Kew, which I have had reported upon by two of the principal English importers, and the reports have been sent to the colony. The samples are promising, but not yet fit for the market. As the cultivation improves, the quality will also, and I look hopefully to this improvement being soon realized; meanwhile I have sent to Dr. Thwaites full instructions as to the curing of the seed, together with samples of the best kinds procured from the West Indies, as standards to be worked up to in Ceylon.

I am, &c.,
JOS. D. HOOKER,
Director.

R. G. W. Herbert, Esq., Under Secretary.