

D.O. No.LRB. 3-13762/57 dated 6-1-61 from the First Member, Board of Revenue to the Chief Conservator of Forests

Sub:- Eviction of squatters from dam sites and preservation of this area free from encroachments.

I am enclosing a copy of the minutes of the meeting held in my room on 19-12-1960.

Minutes of the meeting held on 19-12-60 to discuss the problems arising from the existence of squatters in Hydro Electric Project areas of the State

Present:- Sri. K.P. Menon, First Member, Board of Revenue  
,, A.O. Oommen, Chairman, Kerala State Electricity Board  
,, M.P.George, Chief Conservator of Forests  
,, K.Ranganathan, Chief Engineer (Civil)  
,, Kerala State Electricity Board  
,, G.K.Unnitha, Asst. Director of Agriculture (Soil Conservation)  
,, P.G. Krishna Pillai, Special Dy. Collector for land acquisition Kerala State Electricity Board.

The subject was discussed by the conference in all its aspects as it was found necessary for arriving at specific proposals to be placed before the Government. An examination of the problem in the Hydro Electric Project areas was found to be incapable of separation from the general one of encroachers in the catchment areas of all projects in which lands originally under forests were involved. The Chief Conservator of Forests explained that he was at present engaged in indicating the physical extent of areas which should compulsorily remain afforested after separating from it those areas which are not essential for the requirements of his department, considering the fact that such lands are at present under encroachment and have been so far a long time. The conference decided that the Chief Conservator of Forests should make such proposals in close co-ordination with the Electricity and Irrigation departments bearing in mind the first principle that the catchment areas of all the projects through out the State should remain completely afforested, without allowing any occupation within that area. It was also decided that those areas covered by the western Ghats in this state which are not afforested and which may be given for settlement should be protected by soil conservation measures so that further loss of soil from the areas of heavy of rain fall and steep slopes can be prevented at least in future. The conference decided that these two principles should not be departed from in any case whatsoever throughout the State and proceeded to examine individual cases for making recommendations to Government.

1. Existing encroachments:- According to information which has been gathered by local officers and which is available with the special Deputy Collector for land acquisition, Kerala State Electricity Board the following is the number of

encroachments(families) which should be deal within the water spread areas of the different projects.

Ponmudi Dam	88
Pallivasal Generation area	13
Anayirankal Dam	16
Sengulam Reservoir	37
Neriamangalam Project	91
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Total	245
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The Director of Survey and Land Records pointed out that there are enough number of two acre blocks at Chinnartheeram of Udumbanchola taluk to accommodate these 245 families (Ref. Government Memo. No. 16642/58-1 Agri.(Forest A) dated 31-3-58). The conference decided that no encroachment other than those listed above can be considered for the purpose of rehabilitation as they keep on increasing day by day and have to be evicted by force if necessary after resettling these 245 families who have been in those areas for a very long time. It was decided to recommend to Government that these 245 families be offered one block each of two acres in the Chinnartheeram area and given 15 days to leave the spot after which any persons found in occupation will be evicted using force if necessary under the provisions of the Forest Act, which is still in force in all these project areas and in other cases the provisions of the L.C.Act.

The Conference noted that the areas covered by occupation in the catchment area of Mattupetty and Kundala dams are lands belonging to the K.D,H.P. Company and that the Company has been requesting the Forest Department and the Electricity Board in the past to assist them in preventing cultivation in those catchment areas. The conference decided the recommend to Government to issue instructions to the Revenue and the police departments to render all assistance to the Company whenever such requests are received, in the interests of conservancy of these reservoirs.

II. Prevention of encroachments:- The project areas of Pamba Kakki and Sholayar come under this class. The conference was of the opinion that there was no occupation worth the name in these areas as yet but that stern measures are required to protect them in future so that the lessons learnt in the earlier mentioned cases can be utilized here without having to take coercive measures later on. It was decided to recommend to the Government that these project areas should be go to declared as protected areas by the Government of India under Section (S) 2 of the Indian official Secrets Act (Act.XIX of 1923) similar to projects in other parts of the country. Admission within the areas should be restricted to these holding passes issued by the Electricity Board. The Forest Department should take steps to terminate all existing less with in those project areas and will also stop any future leases. If any encroachments are seen in these project areas they will be put down sternly utilizing the provisions of the Forest Act.

III. Treatment of Forest lands required for project purposes:- The conference decided to recommend to the Government that such of those areas where project structures are put up, namely the dam sites residential colonies, pipe lines(generation) and power houses, will be demarcated and transferred to the Electricity Board who will exercise control over these areas. Catchment and water –spread areas should continue to be under the control of the Forest Department and to be protected by the provisions of the Forest Act. The staff of the Electricity Board should be given free access to those areas for carrying out their duties.

IV. Treatment of project roads. It was decided that the Electricity Board will construct and maintain all the roads which are necessary for their projects and to request the Government to declare these as private roads. The application of the Motor Vehicles Act to these roads should be done only with the concurrence of the Electricity Board.

V. Conservation of soil in the catchment areas:- The soil Conservation department will prepare a scheme for types of cultivation v and details of soil conservation to be compulsory adopted by the authorized occupants in the catchment areas. The conference felt that the cultivation of tapioca in the steep slopes should be prohibited altogether and it completely destroys the top soil leading to soil erosion and loss of water retention powers.

VI. Idukki Project:- The conference felt that Idukki Project has to be considered in a different light since its catchment and water spread areas in the cardamom hill reserve are already under heavy occupation. The Chief Conservator of Forests is drawing up a scheme in the matter of cardamom hills reserve which forms the major portion of the project catchment area. The State Electricity Board has not taken up the work yet and investigation by the Central Water and Power Commission is in progress. The Electricity Board will supply a map of the project and catchment areas to the Director of Survey and Land Records who require sufficient copies for use by the Forest and Revenue Departments when dealing with the problem of occupancy in that areas separately. Meanwhile, the conference decided to request the Government to stop all assignment of further areas in this region under the land assignment scheme until a final decision is taken in the matter.

VIII. Conservancy of lands belonging to the Kerala State Electricity Board:- At present there is a doubt whether the Land Conservancy Act will be apply to those lands vested in the Electricity Board. It was decided to recommend to the Government that nothing may be done which may affect the description of lands owned by authorities like the Electricity Board from falling outside the scope of the definition of “Property of Government” in section 3 of the Kerala L.C.Act 1957 (VIII of 1958).

Sd/- First member

Endt. On B5-32462/60 dated 20-1/6-2-1961.

Copies forwarded to all Conservators for information and attention.

Sd/- for Chief Conservator of Forests

Endt: on Kt.3525/61 dated 9-2-1961.

Copy forwarded to all Divl. Forest Officers and Wild Life Preservation Officer,  
for information and attention.

Copy to Sections G1, CH, ML. and T.R. and D.

Copy to Stock file (Kt.)

Conservator's Office,  
Chalakydy.

V.Govinda Menon,  
Conservator of Forests.

Forwarded /By order

Manager