

impossible to see more than a few yards in advance, and there is a double object, viz., that the paths act as fire traces, and can be utilized, in case of fire, for forming a line of men, and preventing its extending to the rest of the plantation or wood. The paths are cheaply made by contract at 1½d. per running yard.

Mr. Thomson is constructing rough cart roads on the same principle, and improving those which already existed. For those now being laid out he is paying 6d. per running yard, four yards in width, and the work is very well worth the money. We could not do the like in Madras for four times the amount; and when it is remembered that a day's wages for a man is 2s. 2d., it appears marvellously cheap. The line is marked out by the forester, under Mr. Thomson's superintendence.

Fencing.—All the new fencing is wire, which is found far the best and cheapest in the long run. Thousands of acres have been thus enclosed, and I was fortunate enough to see the work in progress, and make myself practically acquainted with the method adopted. There are six wires, that at the top being thickest, and known as No. 4, the other five wires being No. 6. The wire costs 3½d. per running yard. The posts are supplied on contract, and delivered along the enclosure to be fenced at 3d. each, which Mr. Thomson finds cheaper than working them up and carting them by means of his own establishment. They are, as a rule, prepared from wood purchased from the estate, and sawn in the proprietor's saw mills, which are leased to wood merchants.

The straining posts, which are, as a rule, about 100 yards apart, the distance varying according to curves and dips, are 7½ feet long by 7 inches square. They are sunk 3 ft. 8 in., or half their length, in the ground.

The intermediate posts (5½ ft. x 5 in. x 2½ in.) are 6 feet apart, and sunk 1 ft. 8 in. in the ground. As a rule, the tops of the posts are sloped off, for appearance sake, and to allow of the rain running off.

When the posts which have been laid along the line by the contractor are firmly fixed in the holes (stays or supports being made use of when required in uneven ground), the wires are run in through staples, which are not, however, driven home till the wire is "strained," as will be explained further on.

The usual distance between the wires is as follows:—

							Ft.	in.
From top of post to 1st wire	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	2
Between 1st and 2nd wire	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	10
" 2nd " 3rd "	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	7½
" 3rd " 4th "	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	6½
" 4th " 5th "	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	6
" 5th " 6th "	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	6
" 6th wire and surface of ground	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	6
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	8

which is the height of the post out of the ground. In soft, yielding ground, the posts are made two inches longer, and one foot ten inches in the ground.

The wires are strained at each straining-post by means of instruments called strainers and collars, which have been improved and simplified by Mr. Grant Thomson, and his forester, Sampson. I think it most important that we should adopt the wire fencing for our plantations and reserves in Madras, and that our assistants and overseers should make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the *modus operandi*, which is very simple. I thought of trying it, before I came home, in enclosing the Pulney Hill plantations and some of the railway reserves near Trichinopoly, but was deterred by the expense, as furnished me by the manager of the Great Southern of India Railway. I now see that the wire made use of by that Company is galvanized and twisted, which I cannot think necessary, as the "best drawn annealed" wire is found to last well if coated with tar. This is done by Mr. Thomson the year after the fence is put up, so as to allow of tightening, straightening posts, &c. Both posts and wire are thickly coated, and in India we should probably have to creosote the portion of the posts let into the ground, or, in fact, the whole post.

The whole cost of the fence, as put up by Mr Thomson, is 7½d. per running yard, which he computes thus:—

							d.
Wire, per yard	...	...	...	...	...	...	3½
Posts (each post being 3s., and standing two yards apart)	...	...	...	...	...	...	1½
Work	...	...	...	...	...	...	1½
Tarring	...	...	...	...	...	...	1½
Extra for straining-posts and staples	...	...	...	...	...	...	½
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	7½

The rolled wire is inferior in quality and in shorter lengths, and should never be used. I propose making inquiries as to the cost of shipping the drawn annealed wire to Madras, including insurance, &c., and shall have one or two of the improved Strathspey strainers and collars made, and take them with me on my return. The method of using them can easily be shown, but it is difficult to describe in writing, and I have not therefore attempted it.

Floating.—This was formerly carried out to a large extent on the Spey and its tributaries, but is not now so much in use, and is quite discontinued on the Spey itself, owing to the construction of the railway and facilities for sawing up the timber, in or close to the forest, by means of portable steam sawing machines.

I visited one of the dams (known as the Big Dam) on the Nethy River in the Abernethy district, and made myself conversant with the methods adopted, which are simple and effective. By its