

Public Administration Circular No. 339.

Ministry of Public Administration,
Independence Square,
Colombo - 07.

21st August, 1986.

To: All Government Agents.

Illicit Felling in State Lands.

Instances of illicit felling of timber from State forests and State forest plantations are daily increasing at a rapid rate. It has not been possible completely to stop such illicit activities by the steps hitherto taken by the Government for the purpose of checking such offences responsible for the destruction of national forest resources.

2. Instructions have already been issued by the Ministry of Lands and Land Development to all Government Agents by means of the following circulars, with a view to checking illicit felling and illicit transport of timber.

- (i) Circular No. 90 dated 28.4.81 issued by the S/L & L.D. on the subject "Issue of timber permits, distribution of timber and commencement of plantation for the provision of fuel to the industrial sector".
- (ii) Circular No. 192 dated 10.10.84 issued by the S/L & L.D. on the subject "Issue of permits for the transport of timber from private lands".
- (iii) Circular No. 02/207 dated 24.12.85 issued by the S/L & L.D. on the subject "Release of State forest for the extraction of timber by the State Timber Corporation and supervision of felling".

Government Agents should kindly comply with the provisions of these circulars and also satisfy themselves that the Divisional Assistant Government Agents act in accordance with the instructions given in them.

3. The Government considers that by achieving an effective co-ordination of the functions of the various institutions at District level for the protection of forests, checking of illicit felling of timber can be done more successfully than at present. It would be possible to achieve success in this by the placing of responsibility for such co-ordination on the respective Government Agents.

4. While already District Core Groups with the Government Agent at the head have been established in all Districts under the direction of the Ministry of Lands and Land Development with the object of supervising forest protection activities, District Action Committees have been established in a few Districts. Nevertheless, it has been observed that recently the effectiveness of these Committees has somewhat declined and therefore, if Government Agents take the necessary steps to revive them and convene them regularly, it would be possible considerably to improve on the checking of forest offences including illicit felling.

5. At present, apart from the officials of the Department of the Conservator of Forests and of the State Timber Corporation, officials of the following institutions too, have been given certain powers under the Forest

... appointed as Forest Officers.

