

- (1) பக்கங்களின் எண்ணிக்கை 6
 (2) புதுக்கித் திருப்பிய நாள் 4.9.1
 (3) ஆதாரங்குறிப்பவர் சுருக்கொப்பம் 1057

தமிழ்நாடு ஆவணக் காப்பகம்.

தமிழ்நாடு அரசு

P. W. D. துறை

அரசாணை எண். மு. கோப்புத் தாள் எண்.	அச்சகம் பலவகை
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நாள் : 5.5.1893	198/

மடிக்கவோ கண்டபடி கையாளவோ கூடாது

(Handwritten signature)

13TH APRIL 1893, No. 127, MARINE.

1209

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
MARINE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following papers:—

From W. POWELL, Esq., Commander, R.I.M., Presidency Port Officer, to the
Chief Secretary to Government, dated Madras, 7th March 1893, No. 1482--
79 G.

With reference to G.O., Marine, No. 23, dated 24th January 1893, I have the
honour to submit the following report on the port of Muttupet. I had no time to
arrange for a joint inspection with the Superintending Engineer of the circle nor have
I been addressed yet by that officer on the subject as directed in paragraph 5 of the
order quoted.

2. I arrived at Muttupet on the 3rd instant, having proceeded thither by cart
from the Tiruválur railway station. From Muttupet I went down the river to the bar,
a distance of about 7 miles. The water is very bad to where the Pamani river runs
into the Koraiyár. From this junction to Manacottai the water is deeper. Mana-
cottai is the commencement of the swamp, which extends from Adirampatnam to
within a few miles of Point Calimere. The depth of water here is very irregular.
On a straight line to the bar there is 1 to 1½ foot at low water for one mile. The
swamp is two miles across to the bar. On the southern half of it the water is good,
as it is on the bar itself. The actual channel does not alter and has a depth of 5 to 6
feet in it. In the dry season the sand silts up on either side, but the channel remains
good.

3. I am of opinion that to clear this channel by means of dredging the bad mile
across the swamp towards the bar would be an impossibility; at all events, it cer-
tainly cannot be carried out except at an enormous outlay, and in all probability the
channel would fill up as fast as it was dredged, as the bottom is more or less liquid.

4. The rise and fall of tide being very small prevents any strong scour taking
place except when freshes occur in the rainy season. I watched both the tides in the
river and noticed that the ebb was very weak, while the flood was almost impercep-
tible except from the rising of the water—in fact, it simply rose without motion.

5. It appears to me that the present Custom House, 7 miles from the sea, is
situated in a very unfavorable position. There is a point on the main land, west of
the bar and fairly close to it, where boats can discharge their cargo at all times of
tide, and if the Custom House was placed here and connected with Muttupet by a
cart-road or tramway, the requirements of the trade would probably be met. I believe
the Railway staff have already surveyed the seven miles from Muttupet to the point
I mention.

6. Possessing the advantage of a protected bay, Muttupet carries on a busy
trade with Ceylon all the year round. From Point Calimere there is excellent shelter
in the worst of the north-east monsoon, and I am informed that in the south-west
monsoon the traffic is continuous, a brig going to, and returning from, Ceylon in a
week.

7. I am unable to say whether a road can go straight to Muttupet from the point
west of the bar, nor have I any idea what it would cost, but Provincial funds could
well meet the outlay, I think, if a road is to be made, as the value of the import and
export trade of the port amounted, in the last official year, to Rs. 5,38,161 and the
revenue accruing to Government by duty on exports (rice) in the same period was
Rs. 39,040 (vide page 9 of G.O., Marine, No. 462, of 15th December 1892).

8. I forward herewith a sketch which will give some idea of the place. The river winds considerably more than shewn therein.

From H. M. WINTERBOTHAM, Esq., Acting Collector of Tanjore, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Vallam, 30th March 1893, No. 197.

In returning herewith the report of the Presidency Port Officer, dated 7th March 1893, No. 1482-79 G., bearing the endorsement of Government, dated 13th March 1893, No. 484, I have the honour to offer the following remarks.

2. In paragraph 5 a suggestion is made that the Custom House should be moved from Muttupet to a point "on the main land west of the bar and fairly close to it," and be connected with the town of Muttupet by a cart-road or tramway.

I should mention that I have on two occasions been down the river from Muttupet to the bar, and have explored the adjacent country as far as time permitted. I beg permission to correct a misapprehension of fact as appearing in G.O., dated 24th January 1893, No. 23, Marine. For five miles below Muttupet, the banks of the Koraiyár are solid, well defined and fringed with jungle. At about 5 miles from Muttupet, the river disembogues (by several creeks running between clumps of mangrove) into what is marked in the maps as a swamp, but is, in truth, a vast lagoon. The lagoon is about two miles across from north to south, and on the south is separated from the sea by a ridge of mudbanks and sand dunes (a mile or more in width) which stretches for 18 miles right up to Point Calimere. The north margin of the lagoon is fringed with mangrove jungle, north of which is a great, bare plain of black mud quite dry when I saw it in September. Further east the black mud becomes a dazzling sheet of salt, which, of course, disappears in the rains. The river enters the lagoon at its north-west corner. Eastwards, as far as the eye can see, there is, at all seasons, an unbroken expanse of water, across all parts of which fishing boats pass from the mouth of the Koraiyár right up to the forest at Point Calimere. At the west end of the lagoon there is a minimum depth of about 1 foot of water at low tide. The outlet into the sea is at the south-west extremity of the lagoon. This outlet is about 500 or 600 yards across, and just outside it is what I understand to be "the bar." It is sufficient here to say that the largest cargo-boats have no difficulty in crossing it at all seasons.

The native brigs anchor two miles from the bar in 3 fathoms of water.

3. I cannot make out from the Port Officer's sketch where he would locate the Custom House. The sketch altogether omits the great lagoon and the sand-belt which separates the lagoon from the sea. If the sketch is drawn approximately to scale, the proposed site of the Custom House is apparently about 3 miles to the west of the sea-entrance to the lagoon. At this point (as at Adirampatnam, 5 miles further west), the mud beach shoals so gradually that there is not 4 feet of water a quarter of a mile from the shore.

4. Whatever be the spot the Port Officer would select, his proposal would be open to the following objections:—

(1) The proposed site of the Custom House is on the edge of an uninhabited swamp, devoid of fresh water and unfit for human habitation.

(2) There is no material whatever available for road-making within 50 miles, and the road and bridging would cost a great deal.

(3) One cargo-boat carries as much as 20 or 30 bandies. A cargo-boat can carry 10 or 15 tons from the town of Muttupet to the ship, or *vice versa*, in a day. If the wind be unfavorable, two men with poles suffice to shove the boat along. If the boat's cargo were shipped or landed at the bar and carried by bandy between the bar and Muttupet, this would involve an extra cost of between Rs. 20 and Rs. 30 per boat-load, or, say, Rs. 2 per ton.

Regarding the alternative of a tramway it is sufficient to say that if, and when, the railway is extended beyond Muttupet, the project is, not to make it end in an uninhabited swamp, but to carry it on eight miles to Adirampatnam (a town of 10,000 inhabitants) through two large salt factories. It is presumably the survey of the Adirampatnam extension to which the Port Officer alludes at the close of paragraph 5 of his report.

5. We thus come back to the question as to whether anything can be done to maintain the Muttupet river in a navigable condition.

The view of Government that the mud-swamp and lagoon between Muttupet and the sea will, in course of time, become dry land is certainly correct, but the time must be measured by centuries. Adirampatnam cannot be relied on to take the place of Muttupet; for even now the sea of Adirampatnam is so shallow that boats can only reach dry land by an artificial channel scooped for a quarter of a mile through semi-liquid mud. Probably in the course of centuries, Adirampatnam will (like Muttupet) cease to be a port.

6. Throughout the distance from Muttupet town to the anchorage, the river requires clearing in only two places—

(1) From the Custom House to the Pamaniyár junction, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. There is no difficulty in clearing this reach at a moderate cost. The bottom is firm sand; there is abundant labour on the spot; and even at so high a rate as 3 annas a cubic yard, the clearance of a channel 12 feet wide and 4 feet deep would cost less than Rs. 2,000 per mile. The Muttupet river is a first-class highway, which has had nothing spent on it (so far as I can learn) for the last 20 years. If it were a roadway an allotment of Rs. 500 a mile would have been made for its maintenance and the road surface would have been restored as fast as the cart-wheels cut it to pieces. No doubt the clearing of the river bed must be done again and again, but this is no more waste of money than the continual expenditure on the surface of roads. All our coast canals would be unnavigable if they had been neglected like the Muttupet river. To deepen the river from the Custom House to the Pamaniyár junction sufficiently to enable the cargo-boats to pass up and down with ease is quite practicable at a cost of less than Rs. 4,000, and the subsequent periodical clearings need not exceed Rs. 1,000 a year.

(2) There is, as the Port Officer says, a great accumulation of silt for about one mile from the place where the river enters the lagoon, and this one mile alone can be correctly described as "a depression in a waste of semi-liquid mud." It is this place that the boatmen call Mannakattai (Mannal Kattai) or sand-bank. To clear a channel through this mile is a more difficult job, but I think it should not be regarded as impracticable. Palmyrahs are plentiful at Muttupet. Two rows of piles might be driven into the mud and these might be backed with mangrove branches and brushwood available on the spot. The mud excavated from between the two rows might be heaped on the brushwood, and two artificial banks might be thus formed and planted with mangrove, and a channel between might be kept clear by cooly labour. This sort of thing is constantly done in the backwaters of the West coast. The cost of the mile would be perhaps about Rs. 5,000, and the yearly dredging would cost about Rs. 1,000 a year.

7. It is possible to do the dredging with mamooties and baskets alone, but it would be much cheaper in the end to provide proper appliances. A platform resting on two boats should receive the mud. Planks should be fixed between the platform and the bank. Scoops should be supplied to scoop up the mud and so on. I imagine there must be known to the Engineers many simple devices and appliances for canal dredging on a small scale with which I am not acquainted; but if necessary the work can be done by mere unskilled cooly labour.

8. I think there is no necessity or excuse for allowing so useful a means of communication as the Muttupet river to remain in its present almost impassable condition, and seeing that the town is shortly to become a railway terminus, the desirability of facilitating the landing and shipping of goods becomes all the more apparent.

9. I wish I could have furnished a correct sketch of the river, lagoon and bar, but I am unable to do so. The place has never been surveyed, and the details (such as there are) in the taluk map appear to be imaginary.

10. I enclose copy of a statement taken by me from one of the boatmen which has some interest. There are at present 34 cargo-boats plying on the river. The largest carries $14\frac{1}{2}$ tons, the smallest carries 3 tons, and the average tonnage is a little over 9 tons.

ENCLOSURE.

Statement of Miskin Pakkiri.

Ago 40. Am a tindal. Have been in Muttupet from my birth. I am helmsman to one of the cargo-boats. The boat is of 13 tons. When the river is in flood, my boat can carry 160 bags of rice. The boat will then draw 4 feet. If there is 4 feet of water, we can easily take 160 bags. If there is only 3 feet of water, we take 64 bags or one garce. When the boat is empty, it draws $1\frac{1}{4}$ feet. The salt-water comes 2 miles beyond Muttupet. At high tide where the river is most shallow, there will be from 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ feet of water. From the junction of the Pamaniyar and Koraiyar up to the place where the river enters the odagu (lagoon) there is plenty of water at all times. Where the Koraiyar enters the odagu we call the spot "Mannakattai." At low tide in the dry season there is only 1 foot of water on it for one mile. At high tide there will be about 2 or $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet. From the Mannakattai there is no further trouble up to the place where the ships anchor. The ships anchor two miles to the south of the spot where the river enters the sea. There are 3 fathoms of water where the ships anchor. Every year the shipowners and merchants make subscription and clear a small channel through the Mannakattai for about quarter mile so that small cargo-boats can take 30 sacks of rice. About 15 or 25 years ago the Sirkar cleared the river below the Custom House for a distance of about a quarter of a mile. I don't know at all how much was spent. The boat-hire per trip from the Custom House is Rs. 4 per garce. The general procedure now is to load the small cargo-boats at the Custom House with 32 bags. The small boats go as far as the Pamaniyar junction and there the big boats are loaded. Sometimes the small boats can only take 16, 20 or 24 sacks for want of sufficient depth of water.

Read over and acknowledged to be correct. Taken in presence of Sea Customs Superintendent and seven tindals.

MUTTUPET,
26th March 1893.

(Signed) H. M. WINTERBOTHAM,
Acting Collector.

ORDER—dated 13th April 1893, No. 127, Marine.

If the District Board are prepared to spend money in improving the state of the communication between Muttupet and the sea, proposals should be submitted. But the Government hopes that a good monsoon will, in the meanwhile, effect all that is necessary.

(True Extract.)

W. H. Pakkiri
Miskin Pakkiri
Chief Secretary.

To the Presidency Port Officer.
" Collector of Tanjore.
" Local and Municipal Department.
" Public Works Department.

Exd. A. Raitt.

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P. W. CURRENT No. 3861

Gobt. of {1893} Madras.
MARINE.

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No 1209. Wd 5 May 1893
Communicated
to the Suptg. Engr. V
Circle in continuation
of G.O. No 341. Wd 8
Feb. 1893.

Issued 10 S.C.

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G.O., 13th April 1893, No. 127.

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APRIL.

DESPATCHED
5 MAY. 93

Port of Muttupet.

Intimating that if the District Board, Tanjore,
are prepared to spend money in improving the
state of communication between Muttupet and the
sea, proposals should be submitted.

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