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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public

DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

500

Press
Mis.

Dated

18-4

19 1871

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
18th April 1871.*

Read the following papers:—

No. 62. From the Committee appointed in G. O., No. 1311, dated 18th October 1870, on the Cooum Fisheries, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 6th January 1871, No. 6.

With reference to G. O., No. 1311, of the 18th October 1870, in the Public Department, we have the honour to submit, herewith, our views on the question referred for our consideration on the subject of the Cooum Fisheries.

2. The first point we have had to consider has been the "necessity, on sanitary grounds and for the protection of the public health, of prohibiting fishing in the Cooum river, and the collection and drying of shell-fish on the river banks."

3. From the evidence laid before us, it appears that there are about 400 fishermen (with their wives and children, numbering about 1,200 persons) who get their living by fishing in the Cooum. Each man has a casting-net, and some of the families own drag-nets also. These people, and their ancestors before them, have always enjoyed the right of fishing in the Cooum waters. The headman of the fishing tribe appeared before us, and stated that he was employed by the Madras Club and Government House as a purveyor of fish. A large number of the fishermen assembled to meet the Members of the Commission, and, as far as we could judge, there was nothing in their appearance indicative of an unhealthy occupation. As a class, they were well-featured, and appeared more intelligent than the average of the lower classes within the town.

4. The river Cooum has certain peculiarities which must be noticed in reference to the products of its fisheries. The stream of fresh water, except for two or three months in the year, is nearly or quite dry, so that the varieties of fresh-water species of fish are exceedingly limited. The river, however, in its lower reaches, is in communication, by the salt-water canal, with the lagoons or "backwaters" of Ennore and Pulicat, and it depends very much upon the level of the water in the Cooum river whether a current flows from these backwaters into it or not. In ordinary seasons, the sand-bar at the mouth of the Cooum is washed away by the October or north-east monsoon floods, and, for a period varying from two to four months, the water of the river from the "Commander-in-Chief's Bridge" to its mouth is changed twice a day by the ebb and flow of the tides. During these months, the products of the river are the same in kind and variety as those of the shallow water along the coast and of the Ennore and Pulicat backwaters, which furnish the major portion of the fish supply of the Madras Markets.

5. Again, the great width and extent of the shallow water in the Cooum bed, when the sand-bar is closed by the action of the sea, brings it precisely into the condition (though on a smaller scale) of the inland seas or backwaters of Pulicat and Ennore. The Cooum river differs from these backwaters in one respect, viz., that it receives the sewage of a portion of Triplicane, Chintadrepett, Egmore, and John Pereira's, whereas the latter have no town sewage. The area of river bed receiving town sewage has been computed at between 500 and 600 square acres; and, whatever the effect of sewage may be on the smells from the river, it is quite certain that the presence of sewage does not interfere with the entrance of fish from the sea, or with

18th April 1871.

their frequenting its shallow waters to deposit their ova. The Cooum bed, in fact, when the bar is closed, becomes a huge breeding ground for the several varieties of fish that frequent the Coromandel Coast and its backwaters.

6. As regards the fish ordinarily caught in the tidal portion of the Cooum, we have identified thirteen species, a list of which may be found in Appendix A. We have it on the authority of the head fisherman, that the sea mullets, whittings, prawns, and crabs caught in the river are sold to European as well as to Native purchasers, and that the fish are considered to be quite as good as those caught at Ennore or Pulicat.

7. It has been questioned whether the prawns and shell-fish of the Cooum feeding on the foul matters discharged by the town sewers are not thereby brought into such an unwholesome condition as to be unsuited for food. Practically, there is no evidence before us to warrant the assumption that the flesh of these animals is more noxious to health than fish of the same class taken from the waters destitute of sewage.

8. We are of opinion that, on sanitary grounds and for the protection of the public health, there is no necessity to prohibit fishing in the Cooum river.

9. The collection of shell-fish, and their exposure on the river banks, is a subject to be specially noted. From our inquiries, it is found that only one species of mollusk (a bivalve) is fished for in the river bed. The animals live on the mud banks under water, and to obtain them women and boys wade into the stream and pick them up. If our information is exact on this point, the shell-fish are not collected by the ordinary fishermen who own nets, but by a class of poor persons who fish occasionally only on their own account to procure food, and who, after extracting the mollusk from its shell, collect and sell the shells to the chunam burners.

10. Another class of persons, unconnected with the Cooum fishermen, we learn, frequent the bed of the river, disturbing the muddy deposits therein to grope for "sand-eels," which they sell to the sea fishermen for bait. This practice is very common when the water is shallow, and as the people dig the mud up with their hands, and leave it in heaps exposed to the sun and wind, there can be no doubt that the river bed is often made to be offensive from this cause.

11. With regard to both of these practices, we are of opinion that they are not injurious to health so long as the river bed is open to tidal influence; we are not satisfied that the practices are generally a nuisance; but at a period of the year when the river is cut off from the sea and no rains are falling, i.e., from the end of February to July, we think that the disturbance of the mud in the river bed, whether by netting or wading for shell-fish or digging for sand-eels, should be prohibited. The mud, when disturbed at this period of the year, gives out considerable volumes of offensive gases which taint the air, and the disturbance of the river bed in the hot months from 1st March to 1st July may, we think, be considered a public nuisance. After July, the early rains usually cause a considerable increase in the volume of the water retained in the river bed, and we should not, therefore,

18th April 1871.

be disposed to impose the restriction on shell fishing, or any other practice tending to disturb the mud after that date.

Exposure of shells on the river banks, we imagine, can always be dealt with by the Police when the practice is pursued so as to be offensive to the neighbourhood. We have not met with any instance of this particular form of nuisance.

12. We are of opinion that shell fishing and groping for sand-eels should ordinarily be forbidden from the date of closure of the bar until the rise in the river in July, and that these practices should be especially forbidden in the portions of the river above the Government House and Wallajah Bridges, where the river bed is the foulest and most noxious in its emanations.

13. The river bed is disturbed not only by these practices but by the drag and cast nets so constantly in use by the fishermen. We think that, on other grounds than the mere sanitary aspect of the question, it is desirable to establish a close time for these inland lagoons along the coast which constitute the great breeding grounds of the sea fisheries. The destruction of young fry in the Cooum every year is enormous. A Member of the Commission has seen huge basketsful of several species taken out of a close-meshed drag-net in the months of May and June. Thousands of these were too young to be of any value as food. The wonder is, considering how the fish in the Cooum are worried and preyed upon the whole year round, that any survive. If nets are permitted to be used at all during the period we have indicated, they should be of a size and width of mesh to prevent the wholesale destruction of young fry that now takes place; but probably the safest plan, both for the protection of the young fish and the diminution of nuisance, would be to prohibit netting in the reaches of the river above the Government House and Wallajah Bridges for the period specified (1st March to 1st July), allowing the fishermen to pursue their occupation in the wide part of the river, around the lower half of the island, unmolested. In this part of the river the larger fish are to be found, and the river bed is less offensive than elsewhere.

14. In conclusion, we may be permitted to remark that the great width of the river bed and the exposure of so large an area of shallow mud banks are the chief sources of evil odours from the Cooum. We think that this might be remedied by deepening the channel, and using the mud so excavated to embank the sides, which should be sloped and turfed down to the water's edge. The shape of the "Cooum ditch" has much altered since the period when Orme wrote his history, and gave plans of the Fort of Madras. In his day, one channel of the river entered the sea to the north of the Fort, and much of the land now forming the island was an irregularly shaped lagoon, the indentations of which have, in course of time, been removed or filled up as we now see.

(Signed) JOHN C. LOCH,
Acting President of the Municipal Commission.

(") W. R. CORNISH, F.R.C.S.,
Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

(") G. BIDIE, M.B.,
Secy. to Insp.-Genl., Indian Medl. Dept.

APPENDIX A.

List of Fish usually caught in the Cooum.

Native, &c., Names.	Scientific Names.
Kolla	Species of Kenuramphus.
Kooltee	Do. Bagrus.
Ullatee (Whiting)	Do. Elops.
Muddavay (Mullet)	Do. Mugil.
Verachee	Do. Megalops.
Vullachee	Do. Leuciscus cultellus.
Muddagundee	Do. Chætoessus nasus.
Oodam	Do. Gerres oyena.
Kiechan	Do. Therapon Servus.
Seellacassie	Do. Etroplus maculatus.
Selandan	Do. (Not identified.)
Currangan	Do. Sillago inhum.
Pareo	Do. Caranx.
Kalla Kundee	Do. Polynemus.
Palla Kundee	Do. (Not identified.)

No. 63. From the Sanitary Commissioner, Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 31st January 1871, No. 144.

I regret to find that the latter part of the 11th paragraph of the Order of Government, in the Public Department, No. 998, of 10th August 1870, was inadvertently omitted to be noticed by me in reporting on the proposed subsoil irrigation on the esplanades.

2. I have the honour to state that I am not aware of any particular objection to the proposal of the President of the Municipal Commission, that the conservancy of the Cooum, and the grant allowed for that purpose, should be transferred from the Department of Public Works to the Municipal Commissioners, but, at the same time, I am inclined to think that the municipal funds are hardly in a condition to bear the somewhat serious burden of deepening the bed and embanking the sides of the river, so as to provide a sufficiency of water-way in the dry season of the year to prevent the river becoming a nuisance.

3. If the conservancy of the river be given over to the Municipal Commission, I am of opinion that it should be done on the stipulation that no more municipal drains be constructed to discharge sewage into it, and that, at a prospective date, the sewage from existing drains should be intercepted by the Commissioners and conveyed elsewhere.

No. 64. From the Superintending Engineer, 4th Division, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 4th March 1871, No. 4883.

With reference to paragraph 11 of G. O., dated 10th August 1870 No. 998, calling on the Superintending Engineer to report as to the expediency or not of the transfer of the conservancy of the Cooum to the Municipal Commissioners, I have the honour to state, for the information of the Government, that I should

think the handing of the conservancy of the Cooum to the Municipal Commissioners would be attended with every advantage. They are, I should think, in a much better position to look after and tend to the proper keeping of the banks in order, which now costs such large sums of money to keep in repair, being chiefly damaged by the drains from the roads of the Municipality over which my department has no control.

2. The question also of keeping out sewage from the river and its general welfare is also much more under the Municipal Commissioners than it even can be under the limited department under the Superintending Engineer. They can also better regulate the removal of turf and sand from the bed, and the prevention of any use of the bed detrimental to conservancy.

3. I would, however, still keep the care of the large bridges, inspection of the foundations, &c., as well as the regulating of the opening and closing of the bar, under the Engineer's Department, as this requires a certain amount of professional skill which I should not suppose that the Municipal Commissioners possess.

4. The water in the Cooum is, to a certain degree, regulated by the flow of the water over the Calingulah at the Shandra Coopum Lock; this, of course, is now, and will continue, under our department. If the Cooum is handed over to the Municipal Commissioners, it would be as well to make arrangements for the Government to be able to take sand, turf, &c., out of the bed under certain restrictions, or else we shall be having to pay the Municipality for the privilege.

Transferred to the Public Department, with reference to paragraph 11 of the Orders of Government in that Department, dated 10th August 1870, No. 998, and with an intimation that, in the opinion of the undersigned, the transfer of the conservancy of the Cooum to the Municipal Commissioners, if sanctioned, should be authorized on the conditions indicated by the Superintending Engineer in paragraphs 3 and 4.

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R.E.,
Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.

8th March 1871.

No. 65. ORDER THEREON, 18th April 1871, No. 500.

The Government observe that a legislative enactment would be required to enable them to carry out the recommendations made by the Committee, as regards the complete regulation of fishing in the Cooum and the establishment of a close season. They believe that general legislation on the subject of Indian Fisheries will take place on the termination of an inquiry now in progress under the orders of the Government of India, and they are unable, at present, to take any steps to procure a special enactment giving them the necessary powers to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee on this point.

2. The disturbance of the river and of the mud forming its bed is reported by the Committee to be caused by persons fishing, collecting shell-fish, and groping for sand-eels. These practices, if they are to be suppressed, must be dealt with as public nuisances under the ordinary law. Fishing need not, in the opinion of the Committee, be prohibited on sanitary grounds or for the protection of the public health. The other two practices, though not generally productive of nuisance,

18th April 1871.

should not be allowed when the river is cut off from the sea by the bar being closed and when no rains are falling, and the Committee would prohibit them between the 1st March and 1st July. Such prohibitions should, they think, be especially enforced above the Government House and Wallajah Bridges, where the river bed is foulest and most noxious in its exhalations. The Committee have not met with any instance of exposure of shells on the river bank; but this, should it occur so as to be offensive, can be prevented.

3. The Government concur in the opinions and recommendations of the Committee, and authorize the Commissioner of Police to issue a notification that persons disturbing the mud of the Cooum by groping for shell-fish or eels, or by using drag-nets, between the 1st March and 1st July, will be prosecuted for nuisance before the Magistrates.

4. These prosecutions should be instituted by Officers of the Department to which the conservancy of the river shall be entrusted. In the letters from the Superintending Engineer and the Sanitary Commissioner above recorded, these officers approve the proposed transfer of the charge, on certain conditions, to the Municipal Commissioners, who, it is believed, are willing to accept it. The conditions suggested are that no fresh drains be constructed to discharge sewage into the Cooum; that the care of the large bridges and the inspection of their foundations, as well as the regulation of the opening and closing of the bar, should rest with the Public Works Department, which should also be allowed to take sand and turf from the river bed when required, for Government use.

5. The Governor in Council will be prepared to make over the conservancy of, the Cooum, on these conditions, to the Municipal Commissioners, together with an annual grant equivalent to the average expenditure of the Public Works Department in the conservancy of the river during the last five years, namely, Rupees 2,300.

(True Extract.)

W. HUDLESTON,

Secretary to Government.

To the President of the Municipal Commission, Madras.

- .. Public Works Department.
- .. Inspector-General, Indian Medical Department.
- .. Sanitary Commissioner, Madras.
- .. Commissioner of Police, do.

Obbt. of 1871 31 adras.

PUBLIC.

To
THE PRESIDENT OF THE
MUNICIPAL COMMISSION,
Madras,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated April, 18th.

Recd.

Recd.

G. O., 18th April 1871, No. 500.

APRIL.

70, 69 11.

No 6.

Office of Sanitary Commission
Madras. 6th January 1871

From,

The Committee appointed
in G. O. No 1311 dated 18th Oct 1870
on the Coorn fisheries

To,

The Chief Secretary to Government
Public Department
Fort Saint George

Sir,

With reference to G. O. No 1311 of the 18th October 1870 in the Public Department, we have the honor to submit herewith our views on the question referred for our consideration, on the subject of the Coorn Fisheries.

2. The first point we have had to consider has been the "necessity on sanitary grounds, and for the protection of the public health, of prohibiting fishing in the Coorn river and the collection and drying of shell-fish on the river banks."

3. From the evidence laid before us, it appears that there are about four hundred fishermen (with their wives and children) numbering about 1200 persons who get their living by fishing in the Coorn. Each man has a casting net, and some of the families own drag nets also. These people

and their ancestors before them, have always enjoyed the right of fishing in the Coorn waters. The headman of the fishing tribe appeared before us, and stated that he was employed by the Madras Club and Government House as a purveyor of fish. A large number of the fishermen assembled to meet the members of the Commission, and as far as we could judge, there was nothing in their appearance indicative of an unhealthy occupation. As a class they were well featured and appeared more intelligent than the average of the lower classes within the town.

4. The river Coorn has certain peculiarities which must be noticed in reference to the products of its fisheries. The stream of fresh water, except for two or three months in the year, is nearly or quite dry, so that the varieties of fresh water species of fish are exceedingly limited. The river however in its lower reaches, is in communication by the salt water canal, with the lagoons or "backwaters" of Egnore and Pulicat, and it depends very much upon the level of the water in the Coorn river, whether a current flows from these backwaters into it or not. In ordinary seasons, the sand bar at the mouth of the Coorn is washed away by the October or N.E.

monsoon floods, and for a period varying from two to four months, the water of the river from the "Commander-in-Chief's bridge" to its mouth is changed twice a day by the ebb and flow of the tides. During these months, the products of the river are the same in kind and variety as those of the shallow water along the coast and of the Egnore and Pulicat backwaters, which furnish the major portion of the fish supply of the Madras markets.

5. Again the great width and extent of the shallow water in the Coorn bed when the sand bar is closed by the action of the sea, brings it precisely into the condition (though on a smaller scale) of the inland seas or backwaters of Pulicat and Egnore. The Coorn river differs from these backwaters in one respect, viz: that it receives the sewage of a portion of Triplicane, Chintadripett, Egnore and John Perieras; whereas the latter have no town sewage. The area of river bed receiving town sewage has been computed at between 500 and 600 square acres; and whatever the effect of sewage may be, on the smells from the river, it is quite certain that the presence of sewage does not interfere with the entrance of fish from

the sea, or with their frequenting its shallow waters to deposit their ova. The Coom bed in fact, when the bar is closed, becomes a huge breeding ground for the several varieties of fish that frequent the Coom and its coast and its back waters.

8. As regards the fish ordinarily caught in the tidal portion of the Coom, we have identified 18 species, a list of which may be found in appendix A. We have it on the authority of the head fishermen, that of the sea mullets, whiting, prawns and of crabs, caught in the river are sold to the European, as well as to natives purchasers, and that the fish are considered to be quite as good as those caught at Bunnor or Pulich.

9. It has been questioned whether the prawns and shell fish of the Coom, feeding on the foul matters discharged by the town, its sewers are not thereby brought into such an unwholesome condition as to be unsuited for food. Practically there is no evidence before us to warrant the assumption that the flesh of these animals is more noxious to health than fish of the same class taken from the waters destitute of sewage.

10. We are of opinion, that on sanitary

sanitary grounds and for the protection of the public health there is no necessity to prohibit fishing in the Coom river.

9. The collection of shell fish and their exposure on the river banks is a subject especially noted. From our enquiries it is found that only one species of mollusk, *bivalve*, is fished for in the river bed. The animals live on the mud banks under water, and to obtain them women and boys wade into the stream and pick them up. If our information is exact on this point, the shell fish are not collected by the ordinary fishermen with their own nets, but by a class of poor persons who fish occasionally only on their own account to procure food, and who, after extracting the mollusk from its shell, collect and sell the shells to the chunam burners.

10. Another class of persons, unconnected with the Coom fishermen, we learn frequent the bed of the river disturbing the muddy deposits therein, to grope for "pang sels" which they sell to the sea fishermen for bait. This practice is very common when the water is shallow, and as the people dig the mud up with their hands, and leave it in heaps exposed to

the sun and wind, there can be no doubt that the river bed is often made to be offensive from this cause.

11. With regards to both of these practices, we are of opinion that they are not injurious to health so long as the river bed is open to tidal influence; we are not satisfied that the practices are generally so nuisance, but at periods of the year when the river is cut off from the sea and no rains are falling i.e. from the end of February to July, we think that the disturbance of the mud in the river bed, whether by netting or wading for shell fish or digging for sand eels should be prohibited. The mud when disturbed at this period of the year, gives out considerable volumes of offensive gases, which taint the air, and the disturbance of the river bed in the hot months, from 1st March to 1st July, may we think be considered a public nuisance. After July the early rains usually cause a considerable increase in the volume of the water retained in the river bed, and we should not therefore be disposed to impose the restriction on shell fishing, or any other practice tending to disturb the mud after that date.

Exposure of shells on the river banks we imagine can always be dealt with by

the police when the practice is pursued so as to be offensive to the neighbourhood. We have not met with any instances of this particular form of nuisance.

12. We are of opinion that shell fishing and groping for sand eels should ordinarily be forbidden from the date of closure of the bar, until the rise in the river in July, and that these practices should be especially forbidden in the portions of the river above the Government house and Malacca bridges where the river bed is the foulest and most noxious in its emanations.

13. The river bed is disturbed not only by these practices but by the drag and cast nets so constantly in use by the fishermen. We think that, on other grounds than the mere sanitary aspect of the question, it is desirable to establish a close time for these inland lagoons along the coast, which constitute the great breeding grounds of the sea fisheries. The destruction of young fry in the Courn every year is enormous. A member of the Commission has seen huge baskets-full of several species taken out of a close meshed drag net in the months of May and June. Thousands of these were too young to be of any value.

as food. The wonder is, considering how the fish in the Coom are worried and preyed upon the whole year round, that any survive. If nets are permitted to be used, at all during the period we have indicated, they should be of a size and width of mesh to prevent the wholesale destruction of young fry that now takes place; but probably the safest plan, both for the protection of the young fish and the diminution of nuisance would be to prohibit netting in the reaches of the river above the Government House and Walledah bridges for the period specified / 1st March to 1st July / allowing the fishermen to pursue their occupation in the wide part of the river, around the lower half of the island, unmolested. In this part of the river, the larger fish are to be found, and the river bed is less offensive than elsewhere.

In conclusion we may be permitted to remark that the great width of the river bed, and the exposure of so large an area of shallow mud banks are the chief sources of evil odours from the Coom. We think that this might be remedied by deepening the channel, and using the mud so excavated to embank the sides, which should be sloped and

trooped down to the waters edge. The shape of the "Coom ditch" has much altered since the period when Orme wrote his history, and gave plans of the Fort of Madras. In his day one channel of the river entered the sea to the north of the Fort and much of the land now forming the island, was an irregularly shaped lagoon, the indentations of which have in course of time been removed or filled up as we now see.

We have the honor to be.

Sir

Your most obed^t Servants.

Wm. C. C. C.

Ag. President of the Municipal Commission

H. M. Formis F.R.C.S.
Sanitary Commissioner,
for Madras.

W. M. P.

Secretary to Inspector General
Indian Medical
Department.

P. 4883. Superintending Engineer's Office to the
 Madras 4th March 1871.

From
 Colonel C. J. Wilkinson R.E.
 Superintending Engineer to Division
 To, Colonel C. J. O'Bye R.E.
 Secretary to Government, P.W.D.

Sir,
 With reference to Para 11 of G.O.
 dated 10th August 1870 No 998 calling on the
 Superintending Engineer to report as to the
 expediency or not of the transfer of the
 conservancy of the Coom to the
 Municipal Commissioners I have the
 honor to state for the information of the
 Government that I should think the
 handing of the conservancy of the Coom
 to the Municipal Commissioners would be
 attended with every advantage. They
 are I should think in a much better
 position to look after and tend to the
 proper keeping of the banks in order
 which now costs large sums of
 money to keep in repair, being chiefly
 damaged by the drains from the roads
 of the Municipality over which my
 Department has no control.

Received by Mr. J. J. O'Bye
 11th March 1871
 11th March 1871
 11th March 1871

Received by Mr. J. J. O'Bye
 11th March 1871

Mr. J. J. O'Bye
 11th March 1871
 on the Coom - P.W.D.

With chief duty: to Lord
 Public Works
 Fort St. George

Robert 6th 1871
 11th March 1871

Mr. J. J. O'Bye
 11th March 1871
 Suburb report on the
 operations carried to P.W.D.
 King in the Coom River
 Madras, with other
 documents

2 The question also of keeping out sewage from the river and its general welfare is also much more under the Municipal Commission than it even can be under the Limited Department under Sirperintendent Engineer. They can also better regulate the removal of turf, sand, from the bed and the prevention of any use of the bed detrimental to Conservancy.

3 I should however still keep
the care of the large bridges, inspection
of the foundations &c as well as the
regulating of the opening and closing
of the bar, under the Engineer's
Department as this requires a
certain amount of Professional skill
which I should not suppose that the
Municipal Commissioner's possess.

4 The water in the Coom
is to a certain degree regulated by
the flow of the water over the
"Slingulas" at the Shandra Coom.
Lock.

Look, this of course is now and will continue under our Department. If the Court is handed over to the Municipal Commissioners it would be as well to make arrangements for the Government to be able to take sand, turf &c out of the bed under certain restrictions or else we shall be having to pay the Municipality for the privilege.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most Obedient Servant

Wilmington, Colonel R.E.
Sup. Regiment 4 Pa.

Memorandum for Orders

Coolidge River

In accordance with the instructions contained in the G. O dated 18th October last, a Committee consisting of the officers marginally named has submitted a report on the points indicated in the Government Order.

These were, -

I can see in these
hospital. He can
only present for
his sake - J. H.

• common in the papers
has been to be discrediting
a humane on the
whole the I fear the

1st As to the necessity, on
sanitary grounds, and for
the protection of the public
health, of prohibiting fish-
ing in the Coosue River,
and the collection and drying
of shell-fish on the river
banks.

2nd If no prohibition is necessary the limits which should be fixed as those within which no such fishing or shell-gathering and exposure shall be allowed.

3rd Whether the prohibition shall be for the whole year or only during certain months of the year.

The Committee report that about 200 fishermen with wives and children - 1200 persons, are engaged in fishing in the Cooum. They proceed to describe the character of the river which, when the bar is open, resembles, as regards the fish in it, the shallow water along the coast, and the Sumere and Pulicat backwaters.

Sea fishermen may in the 4 close months be rather put to it for want of bait. Much must depend on the season & the height of the water. This year there has been no nuisance in backwater fishing as the river is full.

A.
A.P.

backwaters. The sewage which finds its way into the Cooum does not appear to injure the fish or prevent them coming from the sea into the shallow water and depositing their ova. The Cooum is in fact, when the bar is closed, becomes a huge breeding ground for the several varieties of fish which frequent the Coromandel coast and its backwaters. The taint of sewage does not, it is stated, affect the quality of the fish or render them unwholesome. The Committee therefore declare "that on sanitary grounds and for the protection of the public health, there is no necessity to prohibit fishing in the Cooum River."

3 The above is regarding the

the ordinary fishing. The collection of shell-fish in the river bed is not carried on by the net-cumming fish-ermen but by a class of poor persons who fish occasionally on their own account to procure food, and who after extracting the mollusk from its shell, collect and sell the shells to the Chinaman burners.

Another class of persons who stir up the mud in the bed of the River are the collectors of sand-els which they sell to the fish-ermen for bait. This practice is common when the water is shallow, and as ^{these persons} they lay the mud they collect with their hands on the banks, ^{they} are a cause of nuisance.

etc

As regards both of these practices the Committee consider that they are not injurious to public health so long as the river is open to tidal influence. They would prohibit as a public nuisance the disturbance of the river mud by collecting shell-fish or sand-els from the 1st March, to 1st July.

Exposure of shells on the river bank does not seem from the Committee's enquiry to be a common practice.

While recommending the above prohibition generally, the Committee consider that it should more especially be enforced in the portion of the river above the Govt. Police and Pallayak bridges where

where "the river bed is the
foulest and most noxious
in its emanations."

8 Having thus answered
the Govt. reference, the
Committee enter into a dis-
cussion as to the advantage
of having a close time for
the inland lagoons and the
Coorn, with a view to the
protection of the young fish.
We require the Coorn then
advise with for the protection
of the fishery and prevention
of the disturbance of the mud,
that nothing be prohibited
in the reaches of the river
above the Government House
and Pallajah Bridge from
the 1st March to 1st July
allowing the fishermen to
pursue their occupation in
the wide part of the river
around

around the island, where are
the large fish and where the
river bed is less offensive.

9 It is suggested that
a legal enactment will be re-
quired to give the Government
power to declare a close season,
and this may be done when
legislation takes place when
Dr. Day's enquiry is over. I
conclude that there will be
an Act for all India as re-
gards a close season for game
and fish.

10 The Government, as regards
the Coorn can, as would seem
from the Advocate General's
opinion, (see Proceedings 18th Oc-
tober 1870.) deal with the matter
of the Coorn fishing, only in
so far as it is a nuisance.
From the Committee's report
the fishing is not injurious

to public health and after
this report it is certain no
Magistrate would carry
on a prosecution to abate a
nuisance.

11. As regards the shell
fish and sand etc the case
is stronger and it is suggested
that the Commissioners of Police
might issue a notice warning
persons collecting these re-
sins 1st March and 1st
July that they will be pro-
secuted before a Magistrate
for committing a public nuisance.

12. The prosecution should
be carried on by the officer
charged with the conservation
of the river. Whether this
has or rather some previous
talked with the Department
of Public Works. The Muni-
cipal Commissioners wish
that

that it should, with the
grant hitherto allowed in the
D. H. Department for that
purpose, be made over to them.

13. The Superintending
Engineer and the Sanitary
Commissioner both think
this desirable - with the re-
strictions that no fresh sewers
should be allowed to debouch
into the Coosum and that the
Municipality engages prospec-
tively to reduce the number
of such sewers according to
their means - that the large
bridges, inspection of the
foundations thereof - the re-
gulating the opening and
closing the bar, remain un-
der the control of the P. W.
Department. That the P. W.
Department be allowed by
the Municipal Commissioners

The Sanitary Com. says.

"That at a prospective
date the sewage from
existing drains should be
interdicted."

- to take sand and turf out
of the bed of the river when
required for Govt use.

14 I have ascertained
that the ^{average} allowance hitherto
made in the P.W. Department
for conservancy of river is
Rs. 2300. per annum.

MH

For 1866-67.

593 - 6 - 4

593 - 6 - 4.

For 1867-68.

420 - 3 - 5.
600 - 10 - 8
 3 488

4 508 - 14 - 1.

~~1023 - 1 - 5~~

For 1868-69.

2769 - 6 - 4.
146 - 7 - 4

2915 - 13 - 8

For 1869-70.

751 - 12 -
281 - 4 - 5

1032 - 1 - 5

For 1870-71.

2080 -
107 - 3 -
56 - 3 - 6

2243 - 6 - 6

11294 - 9 - 0 to 5 years.

At 2259 Average for 1 year

Submitted to the Public

Public Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letters

- From the Committee appointed under G. O.
No 1311 dated 18th October 1870 on the
coconut fisheries.
- " " Secretary Commissioner for Madras
dated 31st January 1871
- " " Superintending Engineer & Division
dated 6th March 1871

Order thereon 4.500. 1871
The Government
observe that a legislative
enactment would be
required to ~~make them~~ ^{enable them}
to carry out the recom-
mendations made by the
Committee, as reg.

the complete regulation
of fishing in the bazaar
and the establishment
of a close season. They
believe that general
legislation on the
subject of Indian fisheries
will take place on the termination
of an enquiry now in
progress under the
orders of the Government
of India; and they
are unable, at present,
to take any steps to
procure a ^{special} enactment
giving them the necessary
powers to give effect to
the recommendations of
~~the committee~~ on this
point.

2. The ^{disturbance} agitation
of the river and of
the

the mud forming
its bed is reported by
the Committee to be
caused by ^{persons} fishing,
collecting shell fish &
groping for sandels.
These practices, if they
are to be suppressed,
must be dealt with
as public nuisances
under the ordinary
law. Fishing need
not in the opinion of
the Committee, be pro-
hibited on sanitary
grounds or for the
protection of the public
health. The other two
practices, though not
naturally productive
of nuisance, should

not be allowed when
the river is cut off from
the sea by the bar
being closed, and when
no rains are falling,
and the Committee
would prohibit them
between the 1st March
and 1st July. Such
prohibitions should, they
think, be especially
enforced above the Gork
House & Wallaya bridge,
where the river bed is
foulst and most
noxious in its exhalations.
The Committee
have not met with any
instance of exposure
of shells on the river
bank, but this should
it occur so as to be
offensive, can be prevented

3 The Government
concur in the ~~opinion~~^{opinion}
and recommendation
of the Committee; &
authorize the Commissioner
of Police, to issue
a notification that
persons disturbing the
mud of the boom
by groping for shell
fish or eels, or by using
drag nets, between the
1st March & 1st July
will be prosecuted for
nuisance before the
Magistrates.

4 These prosecutions
should be instituted
by officers of the de-
partment to which
the conservancy of the
river shall be intrusted.
In the letters from the
Committee.

Govt. of 1871 Madras

File

To

The Local Board Commrs.

Madras

cc

Dated April 18

Recd.

1871, No. 570.

Nos. 62. 65.

Placing orders on paper re.
Laying to ground in the
Coromandel River.

Superintending Engineer
and the Sanitary
Commissioner above re-
corded, these officers
~~approve the proposed~~
transfer of the charge,
on certain conditions,
to the Municipal Com-
missioners, who it is
believed are willing to
~~accept~~
~~accept~~ it. The conditions
suggested are that no
fresh drains be constructed
to discharge sewage into
the Cooum; that the
care of the large bridges
and the inspection of
their foundations as well
as the regulation of the
opening & closing of the
bar should rest with
the Public Works Depart
which should also be
allowed

allowed to take sand
and turf from the
river bed when required
for Government use.

5 The Governor in
Council will be prepared
to make over the con-
servancy of the boom,
on these conditions, to
the Municipal Commis-
sioners, together with
an annual grant
equivalent to the average
Expenditure of the P.
W. D. in the Conservancy
of the River during the
last 5 years, namely
Rs 2300.

40/11 Resident of the Municipal Commission,
Madras
Public Works Department.
Inspector General, Indian Medical Depart.
Sanitary Commissioner, Madras
Commissioner of Police, Madras.