

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	871	Press ~~Mis.~~
	241. 243	
Dated	21. 5-	19 1864

Not to be folded or roughly handled

2

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
21st May 1864.*

. Read the following papers :—

No. 241. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 3rd May 1864.

Read the following letter from J. SILVER, Esq., Collector of Tinnevely, to W. HUDLESTON, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Fort Saint George, dated Tinnevely, 23rd April 1864, No. 157.

SIR,

Adverting to the Proceedings of the Board dated 22nd March 1864, No. 1,747, I have the honor to forward copy of a letter from the Superintendent of Pearl Banks, dated 20th April, with parcel ticket enclosed, reporting the despatch to your address of a package containing Soorum, and detailing the manner in which this Mollusc is believed to injure the Pearl Oyster.

Ordered to be submitted to Government, with reference to their Order, dated 4th April 1864, No. 564.

From G. A. PHIPPS, Esq., Superintendent of Pearl Banks, to J. SILVER, Esq., Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 20th April 1864, No. 8.

SIR

1. With reference to your letter No. 395, dated 13th instant, covering copy of the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 62, dated 22nd March 1864, with the Order of Government thereon, I have the honor to inform you that I have this day despatched to Madras per the

Ticket enclosed. Revenue, a package containing Soorum in spirits taken from the Steam Ship "Arabia," to the address of the Secretary to the Board of Klathee Par off Tuticorin.

2. From what I can learn the divers seem to think that the reason the Soorum proves so injurious to the Pearl Oyster is thus : the Oyster spawn settles on a bank, afterwards, the spawn of the Soorum also falls in the same place, in this way both begin to grow together, but when the Soorum is a few months old they say (six) it dies, and this putrifying kills the Pearl Oysters in the neighbourhood. I think also that as the Soorum is always found covering the ground very thickly, that it has the effect of smothering many of the young Oysters.

3. In the bottle I placed two pieces of Coral, called Coral Nutts, with young Pearl Oysters attached ; in my opinion banks which are covered with these are of little value. The reason for this is, that the Oyster spawn attaches itself to the Coral Nutt being uppermost, and not to the solid rock, as soon therefore as the Oyster grows to any size, the coral nutt not being a fixture rolls about with the current, and is washed off the bank, then the Oyster or all that happen to be attached to it, are lost.

4. It will be observed that the Soorum in shape, although smaller in size, is not unlike the English Mussel, and it has the tendency of collecting mud in a similar way.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. SILVER, Collector.

No. 242. From Captain J. MITCHELL, Superintendent Government Central Museum, to J. D. SIM, Esq., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 11th May 1864, No. 54.

SIR,

1. I have the honor to return herewith the correspondence as per margin* received with Official Memorandum No. 75 of the 7th

* Board's Proceedings, 22nd March 1864, No. 1,747.
Order thereon, 4th April 1864, No. 564.
Board's Proceedings, 3rd May 1864, No. —, with enclosure.

instant, and to report as follows.

2. The Soorum is a Modiola of which I do not recognize the species among those described and figured by Reeve. It bears a considerable resemblance in form and in its bristly covering to Modiola Barbatus, but this is only recorded as an inhabitant of European seas and is ten times the size of the Soorum.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
21st May 1864.*

3. It is the habit of this genus to spin together a kind of screen consisting of the debris of shells, &c., hence they are found in masses, intermingled with fragments of stones and broken shells, as in the specimens forwarded for my examination.

4. Six* months appear a short life for any Mollusc. We know that the Pearl Oyster only comes to maturity in seven years, and certainly lives longer than that; but many of the bivalves

* Letter of Mr. Phipps, paragraph 2.
are said to attain their full growth in one year, and this is believed to be the shortest duration of Molluscan life. There is, however, much to learn on this subject, and the fishermen may be correct in limiting the time to six months in the case of the Soorum. The presence of decaying animal or vegetable matter is undoubtedly injurious to shell fish, and if present for any length of time its influence would be fatal; but it must be remembered that Dr. Kelaart has shown†: That

† Report on the Pearl Oyster, paragraph 7.
the Pearl Oyster is very tenacious of life; that it has great locomotive powers, and that the power of moving from place to place is inherent, and *absolutely necessary in early life*. That it will move about in search of food if the supply becomes scanty, and, which is of the greatest importance in the present inquiry, *that it will move from its original station if the water becomes impure, either from the decomposition of animal or vegetable matter, or muddy*. Furthermore, as the animal has at all ages the power to unfix itself from its byssus and form a new one, it is scarcely probable that it would remain to be smothered by the Soorum.

5. But it naturally follows from what is stated in the last paragraph, that the Soorum without destroying the Oyster may, when present in great numbers, cause it to be absent from any particular spot by compelling it to migrate to some spot free from that incumbrance.

6. I examined the two bodies called Coral Nuts, one of these is a fragment of sponge; having a skeleton consisting of needle shaped spicules; the other consists partly of limestone; when a small portion was dissolved in Nitric Acid under the microscope it left about half its bulk of minute fragments of very transparent quartz. It would appear, therefore, not to be a fragment of Coral, but a conglomerate of carbonate of lime and silicea. Its composition however does not affect the question of it being injurious to the young Oyster; but here again we must remember that the Oyster if inconvenienced by the rolling of the stone has the power of quitting it and of attaching itself to some more convenient anchorage. It is true it might still wander from the bank. Dr. Kelaart has not mentioned the accumulation of Modiola, &c., as a cause of injury to the Pearl Oyster at Ceylon. The subject is apparently quite new to science, and therefore deserves careful watching. It is only those who are constantly on the spot who can ascertain whether this Mollusc is so injurious as reported. It would be instructive to learn whether those sent are the largest that are found; they may possibly be only young shells.

No. 243.

ORDER THEREON, 21st May 1864, No. 871.

Resolved that the report from the Superintendent of the Central Museum above recorded be communicated to the Board of Revenue. The Government concur with Captain Mitchel that no decision can be arrived at, as to the relation between the presence of the Soorum and the absence of the Pearl Oyster until a much closer observation is made of the habits of the animals. This Mr. Phipps should be instructed to make, and the result reported to Government. A supply of full-grown Soorum and also of Chanks and any other Mollusc supposed to be injurious to the Pearl Oyster should be forwarded in spirits.

(True Extract.)

To the Board of Revenue.

Secretary to Government.

„ the Superintendent Government Central Museum.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

Rev = 1864. Oct 15th
Pro: of Post 7 May 1866.

Proceedings of the
Board of Revenue

Dated 3rd May
Sept 3rd - 1864
Received 4th -

E. 2 - 1st May
2nd Dec 87 21 May

On 9th 75 87-7 May 1864
to C. 11-21-7 May 1864
Submitting letter from
the Collector of Simsbury for
= forwarding copy of a letter from
the Sup't of Pearl Bankers
= forwarding the dispatch of a
package containing serum.

for it to -

also sent up

No 241.

216 May 1864

Bank 216

Collector

Per: 1156/64.

The Murex not only
damages the Pearl oyster
but in Laccadia there
was a tradition that it also
smothered the common
edible oyster. The fact
being that by other beds
were always succeeded
by Murex. It was not
however clear that the
latter was the destroyer
of the oyster or only their
successor. The Murex in
Laccadia were the large
blue kind. These seem
to be either smaller young
but then be sent to the
Museum. Let Capt
Mudchell report on the
specimen. We should have
some larger specimens
if they can be got.

Wm

Enclosure in a letter
from the collector
of Tinnevely to the
Secretary to the Board
of Revenue Fort St.
George dated 23rd
April 1864 No 157.

Let 2342 of 1864

Copy of a letter
from the Superintend-
ent of Pearl Banks
referred to in the
above letter.

4

possibly be only young shells.
Have the honor to be

Sir,

Yours Most Obediently,
Fritzsch Captain
Superintendent Central Museum

4th April/64 N-62-63
C-1156/64
Memo of 9th May/64 N-75.

Revenue 1864. Off.
Pro: of Govt. of Madras
N-1225.

From the Sup^t
Govt. Central
Museum.

Dated 11th 3 May.
Received 12th 1864.

N-54.

S. Oct 871. 21 May

Reports on the
bottle of Cooruna forwarded
to him for examination
with Off. Memo No 75 of 7 May
1864 -

This report is clear as
far as it goes, but
I don't think we require
as much closer observa-
tion of the habits of the
animal before we
can decide on the
relation between the
presence of the mites
& the absence of the
D. can. as per M

N-242.

C. 11 May 1864 P. 11

Revenue Department
N-871-

Proceedings of the Madras Government.
Under date the 21st May 1864.

Read the following
Papers. -

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
Submitting letter from the
Collector of Trinquellamy forwarding
Copy of a letter from the Sup^t
of Pearl Banks reporting the
despatch of a package containing
Doomum.
From the Superintendent Government
Central Museum.

(Here enter 3rd May 1864 N-)

Reports on the bottle of
Doomum forwarded to him for
examination with Off. Memo N-75
of 7th May 1864 -

(Here enter 11th May 1864 N-54)

Resolved that
the report from the Su-
perintendent of the
Central Museum above
referred be commu-
nicated to the Board
of Revenue. ^{The}
Govt. concur with Capt. Mitchell
that ~~nothing~~ decision
can be ~~arrived~~ arrived at
as to
the relation between

[Handwritten signatures and initials]

The presence of the
Scorun and the absence
of the Pearl Oyster
until a much closer
observation is made
of the habits of the
animals. This Mr
Phipps should be
instructed to ^{make} and
the results reported to
Genl A Supply of
full-grown Scorun
and also of Chanks
and any other mollusc
supposed. The specimens
of the Pearl Oyster should
be forwarded in spirits

Yrs
Ld.

4 Copies to the B of A Sept 23 May
1 - Capt Genl Museum

Revenue 1864 Sept.
No. of Govt for day.

No 871.

P
No. of the Madras Govt.
Sept 21st Aug 1864.

No 8000 of Revue
of 23 June 1864 can 1864

Report of the
Dept. of Central India
revenue on the office
of to be informed
to him for examination,
communicated to Rev.
Board.

No 241 @ 243.