

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1845	Press Min
343-44		
Dated 23-11-1870		TS

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
23rd November 1870.*

No. 343. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 19th October 1870, No. 6,216 :—

Read the following letter from the Acting Collector of Tinnevely, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 28th September 1870, No. 481.

As promised in my letter, No. 214, dated 24th May 1870, and in reference to paragraph 2 of Board's Proceedings, No. 4,648, dated 2nd July 1870, I have now the honour to forward copy of a letter received from the Head Assistant Magistrate of Ramnad, reporting the result of his inquiry into the case of oyster-poaching in Nallatanni Thivu. From Mr. McWatters's report, there can be little doubt that poaching on a considerable scale must have taken place, and it is much to be regretted that an inquiry was not held when the matter was brought to the late Superintendent's notice some years ago. I quite agree with Mr. McWatters that the thoroughly searching nature of the examinations of the coast made by the present Acting Superintendent Captain Richardson would seem to preclude the possibility that any oysters have been left undiscovered, and likely to fall a prey to poachers, as the bank near Nallatanni Thivu appears to have done.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From G. McWATTERS, Esq., Head Assistant Collector, to the Collector of Madura, dated Permagully, 12th September 1870, No. 213.

In continuation of my letter of the 8th August 1870, No. 179, I have the honour to inform you that I met Captain Richardson, the Acting Superintendent of Pearl Fisheries, at "Nallatanni Thivu" on the morning of the 9th instant, and made a personal inquiry into the case of the alleged pearl oyster-poaching.

2. I was accompanied by the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Madura, the Sub-Magistrate of the Muduguluttur Division, and the Inspector of Police, Muduguluttur, and I had all the villagers of the coast assembled who were likely to afford us any valuable information.

3. The conclusion which we came to was, that there had been extensive pearl-poaching, but we were unable to assign a date or to attach blame to any person in particular.

4. The chank-divers of the coast villages, of course, denied that there had been any poaching, and accounted for the existence of pearl oyster-shells on the island by saying that there was a pearl fishery in the time of the Ramnad Zemindar Mutturama Linga Setupathy, when the oysters were opened on the island, and the shells abandoned there.

5. But this can hardly be accounted a satisfactory explanation of the existence on the island of such an enormous number of shells. In a legal fishery, it is only reasonable to suppose that the most convenient place would have been selected for the disposal of the oysters, and the most suitable place in this particular instance would evidently have been the mainland near some of the coast villages, where merchants from the interior could assemble without difficulty or danger; so that the presence of the pearl oyster-shells at all on the island is attended with suspicion, and this suspicion is increased by the manner in which the shells are found. They are all in separate heaps, and on the one end of the island, indicating as it were different bodies of poachers, or the same poachers at different times.

6. The statement made by the tindal of the steamer in which Captain Richardson came to the island is important on this point. He said that he landed on the island in 1864, and that he then observed several heaps of pearl-oyster shells which had been out of the water only a few months. These must, to a certainty, have been poached, and on inquiry then and there must have

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resulted in the detection of those concerned; but although the matter was brought to the notice of Captain Phipps, who subsequently inspected the shells, it never seems to have been reported either directly or indirectly to Government. This is to be regretted; for it is hopeless to make anything out of such poaching-cases, unless there is unmistakable evidence of the offence in existence.

7. From the chart shown to me by Captain Richardson, it would appear that that officer has made a most careful and continuous examination of the whole coast from Cape Comorin to Paumben. It is most improbable, therefore, that any pearl banks have escaped him, and so there is little to fear from poaching in the future, unless the guard-boatmen connive at it. Indeed, there are at present no traces of poaching subsequent to 1864.

8. As far as I can learn, all previous examinations were so conducted that it was as likely as not that important pearl banks were passed over; that is, the examinations were not made along the coast continuously, but here and there at intervals. Under such a system, the coast chank-divers might have been aware of banks of which the Superintendent of pearl fisheries was kept in ignorance, and it may be taken for granted that they do not fail to use their opportunities.

SUBMITTED to Government, with reference to their Order, No. 1,086, of 15th July 1870, paragraph 3.

2. The Board consider that Captain Phipps should be called upon for explanation of his apparent neglect as reported in paragraphs 6 and 8 of Mr. McWatters's letter. With a proper system of supervision and examination, there is probably no reason to apprehend any further depredation.

No. 344.

ORDER THEREON, 23rd November 1870, No. 1,815.

Miscellaneous.

THESE Proceedings will be forwarded to Captain Phipps on his return from leave for any remarks which he may have to offer.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
" Captain G. H. Phipps.

Revenue Department

1845

Proceedings of the Madras Government
Under date the 23rd November 1870.

Read the following
Proceedings of the Board
of Revenue.

Subj. report from P. A. P. S.
Collo. of result of enquiry made
by him into a case of Pearl oyster
poaching in Nallatanni River
in Tinnevely Dist.

(P. B. 19th Oct. / 70 No. 5210)

J. A. S.
A. A.

These Proceedings
will be forwarded to
Captain Phipps on his return
from leave for any remarks
which he may have to offer.

A. A.

14. To the P. A. P. S. Dept 24.
1. Captain Phipps

[Signature]

Govt. of 1870

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Secy. Secy.

Dated November, 1870.

Recd.

Secy.

G. O., 23rd November 1870, No. 1,815

NOVEMBER.

1103. 213-544.

1103. 213-544.

Pearl oyster poaching in Tinnevely Dist.
—Proceedings relating to this subject to be
forwarded to Captain Phipps on his return from
leave for remarks.