

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

957

Press

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336-37.

Dated

28.6.1870

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
28th June 1870.*

No. 336. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 4th March 1870, No. 1,530 :—

Read the following letter from the Acting Collector of Tinnevely, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 14th February 1870, No. 66.

IN continuation of my letter and enclosures, dated the 17th April 1869, I have now the honour to forward an encouraging report from the Acting Superintendent of Pearl Banks on the result of his further examination of the Coast between Vypar and Manapad. Captain Richardson was unable to commence this examination earlier, owing to the late duration of the north-east monsoon.

2. In April last Captain Phipps found two large patches of oysters ; one off Vypar, some ten miles to the north of Tuticorin, and the other off Pinnacoi, some ten miles to the south.

3. The large patch of oysters near Vypar, alluded to by Captain Richardson in latter part of paragraph 1 as extending from the "Davee Par" to the "Cruxian Par," (*vide* Map accompanying,) is, I presume, the same patch of oysters as those mentioned in his April Report by Captain Phipps. This bank was fished in 1862, and Captain Richardson now hopes to fish it again in 1872 or 1873. Captain Richardson found three classes of oysters on the Pinnacoi bank: Captain Phipps only discovered oysters to the north of the bank of one year old. The last examination has resulted in the discovery of oysters varying from two to three years old ; and it is the middle and southern portion of this bank that the Acting Superintendent thinks will yield a fishery in March 1872.

4. On the large Manapad banks, reported blank by Captain Phipps, large numbers of oysters were found. The late Superintendent was of opinion that these banks were too exposed for oysters, and this is the first time, I believe, that any have been found on them. It will be interesting to see, after the next examination, whether Captain Phipps is right in his theory that this bank is "too much exposed to be of any value." The present Acting Superintendent reports oysters of two and three years old, which should yield a fishery in 1873 and 1874 ; and the result of Captain Richardson's examination shows that, with ordinary good luck, we should have a fishery on the Vypar, Pinnacoi, and Manapad banks, three consecutive years, commencing from 1872.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From Captain H. RICHARDSON, Acting Superintendent of Pearl Banks, to the Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 2nd February 1870, No. 7.

ACCORDING to your instructions I beg leave to forward you, for the information of Government, the result of a recent examination made by me of the southern portion of that extensive line of Coast where Pearl oysters are supposed to exist off the Coast of Tinnevely. I commenced the examination on the 15th of December, and proceeded in the steam ship *Margaret Northcote* to a spot about ten miles north-east by north of the Lighthouse on Hare Island, off a place on the Coast called Vypar. The divers commenced operations on what they called "Vypar Karia Par," but found nothing but an extensive bed of soorum—a species of small mussel which has but a short-lived existence of six months, then dies, and new layers are produced on the surface of the dead shells, and go on producing layer after layer, till in places they become two feet thick ; the dead muscle putrefying and impregnating the water, and the effect is to kill all the young oysters

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in their vicinity, say up to one year old. In coming up to this locality I carried regular soundings of from six and-a-half to seven fathoms, and in no place did the water shoal sufficiently to cause any part of the locality to deserve the appellation of a par or bank : therefore, instead of confining my examination to any particular spot marked on the Oyster Map as a par or bank, I decided on going over the whole of the ground, and carried on the examination in this way : the canoes were placed one ahead of the steamer to south-east, and one astern to the north-west, each from three-quarters of a mile from the steamer. The wind at north-east were drifted before it to the south-west, two divers in each canoe and steamer examining the ground as we went. In the locality of a place named the Thavee par or bank we struck on oysters, being then nine miles north-east by north of the Lighthouse, each canoe as they carried oysters kept a red flag flying ; the steamer in the centre likewise finding oysters at every dive. In this way the probable breadth of the bank was found. The steamer instead of being allowed to drift was kept going in diagonal lines between the two canoes from south-east to west-north-west, all the while verging to the south-west, and sometimes overlapping the canoes as oysters were found. In this way the whole of the Coast has been examined, and not individual spots as indicated on the Chart. This patch of oysters continued uninterruptedly while we passed over the following banks as marked on the Chart "Thavee Par," "Parando Par," "Puttar Marikan Par," "Puttar Marikan Toondoo Par," and "Cruxian Par ;" the water six and-a-half to seven fathoms throughout as you approach or recede from the shore. The oysters brought up were considered to be from two and-a-half to three years old, and being sufficiently thick on the ground, were supposed to be capable of yielding a fishery in March 1872 or 1873. The extent of this patch of oysters was calculated to be about four miles long by one and-a-half to one and-three-quarter miles broad.

2. From this point the examination was proceeded with in the manner described for fifteen miles to the southward and westward, passing over all these localities marked on the Chart as banks without any alteration in the depth of water to cause the name bank to be applicable.

3. With Pinnacoli bearing west-north-west we struck on another patch of oysters, but not very thick. These oysters pronounced to be three years old. When the pagodah on Trichendoor bore south-west by west about seven miles, we came on another very extensive patch that run to the south-west from four and-a-half to five miles. This patch had three classes of oysters on it ; the northern portion one year old, the middle two years old, and southern portion three years old, and sufficiently numerous, according to the accounts given by the divers, to yield a fishery in March 1872.

4. When the pagodah on Trichendoor bore west-half-south we were off the patch on sand. The same system was carried on in the examination of the ground between Trichendoor and Manapad points about nine to ten miles more without finding oysters in any quantity. I then went off the large Manapad bank situated south-east of Manapad point and church about seven miles.

5. This is the only locality on the Coast that deserves the appellation of a bank, and I look upon it as the mother-bed or best-producing bed for the Pearl oyster on the whole Coast. It is divided from the land by soundings varying from eleven, twelve, and thirteen fathoms, when you suddenly see the bottom and shoal on to the bank in eight, seven, six, to four and-three-quarter fathoms the shallowest spot I found. It is very long about eight miles, but narrow about one mile to one and-a-half in places : it has a rocky bed with large quantities of sea-weed which prevented the divers from seeing the quantity of oysters on the bank. They had great difficulty in detaching the oysters, as they were very much mixed up with and covered by large barnacles—the only place on the Coast where this peculiarity exists. Amongst the sea-weed brought up I observed very minute oysters attached to the extreme fibrous ends of the sea-weed ; and as the fresh easterly gales during the latter part of February cause this sea-weed to be detached from the rocky bottom and come to the surface, a great number of these young oysters must be lost : if by numbers and growth of size their weight bends down the weed, then they become attached to the stones and increase. This bank shows a good quantity of oysters of two and-a-half and three years old, which promise to give a lucrative fishing in 1873 ; but when the large quantity of sea-weed comes

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28th June 1870.*

covering the oysters becomes detached, the divers will be better able to see the quantity on the bank in the month of March.

6. From this bank I continued the examination to the south-west within ten miles of Cape Comorin, altogether sixty miles of Coast, but did not find any more oysters in any quantity, although at times a solitary oyster was brought up.

7. The patches referred to will most likely yield three consecutive years of fishery, commencing in 1872 or 1873.

8. The steam ship *Margaret Northcote* is very useful for these examinations, but as she has but little steam-power (some fifteen horse), great care is requisite that she is not caught out in very strong breezes as she could not steam off shore. I have been five and-a-half hours steaming seven miles head to wind in a fresh breeze and a little chopping sea. It would not be prudent to send her to any distance from the scene of her immediate duties, not having sufficient steam-power, and her sailing qualities are proportionately decreased and injured by her having three fans to her screw instead of two, which, when under canvas, only might be kept in a perpendicular position, and not retard her motion through the water.

9. I have increased the weight of her ground tackle, as that supplied by the builders was not sufficiently heavy to ride out a gale if caught on a lee-shore.

10. The aquarium is in good order and well stocked with oysters of one, two, and three years old—all living and thriving well.

11. The small coloured Chart showing the Pearl banks of Tuticorin herewith forwarded.

ENCLOSURE No. 2.—Plan.

SUBMITTED FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

2. The Board are glad to hear that the prospects have improved. The very thorough and systematic manner in which this year's examination of the oyster-waters has been made deserves much commendation. The inspection has been no doubt facilitated by the steam-power recently supplied by the Secretary of State.

3. The Government will observe what Captain Richardson remarks of the steam ship *Margaret Northcote*.

No. 337.

ORDER THEREON, 28th June 1870, No. 957.

Miscellaneous.

THE Right Honourable the Governor in Council considers the result of Captain Richardson's examination of the Tinnevely Pearl banks to be highly satisfactory. He awaits, with interest, the submission of the report of the further examination of the banks which it appears to have been intended to undertake in March last.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. S. ELLIS,
Chief Secretary.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

No. 957

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Under date the 28th June 1870.

Read the following. Proceedings of

the Board of Revenue.

Submitting letter from collector forwarding report from Acting Superintendent of Pearl Banks on result of his further examination of the Banks, along coast between Vypas Manapad in Tinnevely District.

H. E. 4th March 1870 No. 1530.

The Right Honorable the Governor in Council considers the result of Captain Richardson's examination of the Tinnevely Pearl Banks to be highly satisfactory. He awaits, with interest, the submission of the report of the further examination of the banks which it appears to have been intended to undertake in March last.

J. D. S.

N. P. M. A.

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S. M. D. S.

Gobt. of 1870	
REVENUE.	
THE BOARD OF REVENUE.	
Order June, 28th.	Recd.
G. O. 28th June 1870, No. 957.	Ent.
JUN.	
Nos. 836-837.	

Pearl Banks in Tinnevely District.—Proceedings Board of Revenue on the Superintendent's report on their examination, with orders thereon.

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