799

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,

1st August 1873.

No. 1. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 30th June 1873, No. 1,137 :—

Read the following letter from R. K. PUCKLE, Esq., Collector of Tinnevelly, to J. GROSE, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Tuticorin, 24th May 1873, No. 2[illegible] examined in [illegible] reed in [illegible]

I HAVE the honour to forward the Superintendent's report on the pearl banks for 1872-73.

2. There are *in fact* three main groups of banks: those off Paumben on the Madura coast, about 70 miles to the north; those off Vypar, about 40 miles to the north; and those off Pinnaikoil, about 40 miles to the south of Tuticorin. The Paumben banks were reported to be stocked with young oysters last year, but this year not one can be found, those of the banks are encrusted with mud. The Vypar banks, which were bare last year, are now covered with young oysters which extend for miles both on rock and sand; while the Pinnaikoil banks, which were reported to be partly stocked last year, have not been examined this year, as the water was too thick for the divers to see the bottom. On the whole, Captain Phipps does not think the prospects of a fishery encouraging, for, though the young oysters are so thick off Vypar as to be brought up with every heave of the lead, there is no assurance whatever that they will be found there next year. As I mentioned before, the existence of the pearl oyster is very precarious, until it is three years old, and we have no bank with oysters of over two years growth at present.

3. The absence of the fishery steamer at the Laccadives in February and March, and the subsequent illness of nearly all the crew from dengue-fever, prevented the examination of the southern banks where canoe-fishing was prohibited last year. I am anxious to see if this prohibition has been attended with any success; but I doubt the success of preventive measures, unless the guard-boat is constantly cruising in the waters that are not to be fished.

4. Captain Phipps wishes the steamer to be docked at Bombay, if the voyage to the Laccadives is to be of yearly recurrence, as she has now been afloat five years, and has not yet once been docked. The only alternative would be to build a small dock at Tuticorin, which would not only serve Government purposes but would be of great use to the native shipping frequenting the port.

—

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From Captain G. A. PHIPPS, Superintendent of Pearl Banks, to R. K. PUCKLE, Esq., Collector of Tinnevelly, dated Tuticorin, 12th May 1873, No. 5.

IN forwarding the usual detailed report of the examination of the pearl banks on the coasts of Tinnevelly and Madura during the late north-east monsoon, I regret that the prospects are still not encouraging.

2. On the banks between Vypaur and Tuticorin there are very large quantities of young pearl oysters, both attached to the rocks and also on the weed and sand in the neighbourhood, the bottom for miles being quite covered with them. As there have been several weeks of fine weather, I am in hopes that they have become strong enough to withstand the south-west monsoon now at hand; and in November next, I trust to find them in the same position; but the present examination has again shown that no dependence can be placed on patches of young oysters of this age. It will be remembered that when the bank off Paumben was examined in 1872, it was found stocked in a

similar way; nearly all the young oysters have now died, the few left being small and sickly in appearance.

3. On some of the other banks, oysters were found but in such very small quantities as to be of no value.

4. During the examination only one bank yielded oyster brought up of more than two years of age. This is, I think, sufficient to show that young of a greater age does exist on the coast.

5. My absence to the Laccadives and afterwards an outbreak of dengue-fever at Tuticorin has prevented my examining the banks off Pinnakoil, Trichendoor, and the south part of the Tinnevelly coast. The fever passed through all my establishment, which, for some time, quite prevented anything being done, and when I was again able to get to sea the south-west monsoon prevailed, and the water was so thick that the divers could not see the bottom. To continue the examination under these circumstances would have been a waste of money, and I reluctantly returned to Tuticorin.

6. It was my intention to have devoted some days during the present season to further searches in Palk's Bay; but my time being otherwise occupied prevented my doing so.

7. Under the instructions conveyed in the order of Government No. 1,100, dated 22nd July 1872, orders were issued by the Collector to prevent fishing on or near the pearl banks. If the Government would sanction it, I would propose also to have fishing prohibited in depths under twelve and over six fathoms for a few years. This would render banks of young oysters safer. In this case, the chank fishery should be stopped. The latter is kept up principally to prevent the divers becoming scarce; but as there are prospects of pearl fisheries on the Ceylon coast during the next year, or one following, which will make it necessary for numbers of young men from the villages on this coast, now engaged in other employments, to learn diving, it may be safely dispensed with for a time.

8. In a late letter, I reported the accident at Beypore to the "Margaret Northcote." I am happy to say that no further injury has since appeared; the vessel is now being scraped preparatory to being repainted. The want of a dry dock to place her in for the purpose of being properly cleaned causes me some uneasiness. The vessel has now been continually afloat for nearly five years, and the keel and bilges greatly require to be scraped and painted; the sea-cocks, which are fitted in the bottom, should be examined. For these reasons, I think it would be advisable to send the vessel to a dry dock. If this is done, and the bottom well coated with paint, it will be some years before it is needed again. The most convenient time would be January next, when I could take her to Bombay early in the month, and be back at Mangalore ready to proceed to the Laccadives, if the vessel should be again required for the annual inspection. The expense of dockery and cleaning would not be heavy, there being several appliances for doing this kind of work at Bombay belonging to Government and private companies. The engine and boiler are in perfect order, and it is only the hull that requires attention.

9. As the "Northcote" is a very useful little vessel, I beg that you will be pleased to submit this proposal, with your recommendation, for the approval of Government.

10. The boat "Edith" is at Paumben in charge of Captain Daviot, the Master Attendant, and is, I believe, very useful. The "Pearl" is at Tuticorin; both vessels are in good order.

LIST OF PEARL BANKS EXAMINED DURING THE SEASON, 1872-73.

Off Vypaur—

Davee Par.—On this bank the divers reported plenty of young oysters. The sea-weed and stones brought up were thickly covered, and as the canoes were some distance from the steamer, and all having the signal for finding oysters flying at the same time, the quantity on this bank must be immense.

Carria Par.—This bank is some distance on shore of the former one. The divers reported a few oysters of one year's age.

Off Paumben—

East Paumben Bank.—The divers reported finding only a very few oysters of about one year's age.

Off Paumben—

West Paumben Bank.—When last examined there were a large quantity of young oysters; they are now all gone, and the weed is covered with a deposit of mud.

Rocky Ledge off Maunaulli Tivoo.—No oysters brought up.

Off Keelacarry—

Keelacarry Peria Par.—The diver brought up only one oyster. This bank seems to have become nearly covered with sand, as the rocky ground was seldom found, and then only in small patches. A small bank further to the westward was also bare.

Off Ana Par Island—

Ana Par Bank, close of Vallinookum Point, and the rocky ground off Nalla Tannei Tevoo.—On these banks no oysters were found. Weed seems to cover the bottom for miles.

Off Vambar—

Coomoolun Par.—This bank, like the former, was thickly covered with weeds.

Vaimbar Peria Par or St. Patrick's Bank.—Remained on this bank for three hours; the diver found one oyster of two years age. In some parts there was Soorum.

Off Vypaur—

Carrier Par.—This bank, though examined a few days previously, was again looked at, but still found quite bare.

Pernandoo Par.—On this young oysters were found very thick all over rock, weed, and sand.

Pathamaricar Par.—This, like the previous, was covered with young oysters.

Carria Pandoo Par.—No oysters.

Off Tuticorin—

Codee Par.—Plenty of young oysters.

Cruxan Par.—Plenty of young oysters.

Cruxan Tondoo Par.—No oysters.

Vanteevoo Arupagam Par.—No oysters; plenty of Soorum.

Tholoyeram Par.—Three oysters found.

Athombadoo Par.—Blank.

Nagara Par.—One oyster found.

Oottee Par.—No oysters.

Oodooroonee Par.—Four oysters found.

Klattee Par.—A few oysters of one year's age mixed with Killikoy.

Authuvoy Arupagam Par.—No oysters. Some Soorum.

Tondoo Par.—No oysters.

Vada Ombadoo Par, Saith Ombadoo Par, Poolee Poondoo Par, and Poonar Poondotha Par.—These banks all lie close together. No oysters found.

Koothadiar Par and Passee Par.—No oysters found.

Off Pinnakoil—

Coodamathee Par, Nadookoodamathee Par, Saith Coodamatha Par, Poodoo Par, Kanuva Par, Kadian Par, Seltan Par, and Vada Ombadoo Par.—These banks were only partly examined. The water being thick, the divers were unable to do the work properly.

TUTICORIN,
12th May 1873.

(Signed) G. A. PHIPPS,
Superintendent of Pearl Banks.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) R. K. PUCKLE,
Collector.

Proceedings of the Madras Govern[illegible]ment, Revenue Department,
1st August [illegible]3.

ENCLOSURES NOS. 1 AND 2.—Statements.

THE Board submit the above for the i[illegible]nation of Government.

2. The presence of young oysters on so[illegible]many of the banks is encouraging, although the conditions of the pearl fishery on so[illegible]preclude the expectation of any renewal of the [illegible]Laccadives examining the fisheries next year.

3. [illegible]very coast. The G[illegible]ernor should take steps to confine the restriction of fisheries, which should only be e[illegible]forced on the banks preserved last year and those on which young oysters hav[illegible]been since found.

4. He will inf[illegible]the Board whether there is any dock at a Ceylon Port where the "Margaret Northcote" can be docked. The District Engineer is requested to inform the Board wha[illegible] the probable cost of a rough dock at Tuticorin would be.

No. 2. ORDER THEREON, 1st August 1873, No. 799.

Miscellaneous.

THE Government regret to learn that the prospects of the Pearl Banks continue to be of so discouraging a nature owing to the young oysters that were discovered last year having now so very generally disappeared.

2. The only course open is, as far as possible, to protect from disturbance the banks that are stocked, and all fishing on or near the Vypar banks, where the young oysters are reported to be very numerous, should be strictly prohibited. These banks being so near Tuticorin, the supervision necessary for their protection should not be a work of much difficulty.

3. The Government do not consider it altogether a matter for regret that Captain Phipps was unable to examine the Pinnacoil banks. Every such examination must cause considerable disturbance, and, considering that the careful examinations of the last few years have fully established the whole of the present stock to be of an age which, while it precludes the possibility of any practical advantage resulting from a yearly inspection, is one at which the pearl oyster is specially sensitive to external influences, they resolve to direct that, for the present, each bank be examined not oftener than once in two years.

4. The Government await the Board's recommendations as to the "Margaret Northcote" being docked, and also as to the proposal to construct a dock at Tuticorin.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R.Bantleman.

Revenue Department.

No. 799

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Under date the 1 August 1873

Read the following

Submitting to Govt letter from Collector of Tinnevelly forwarding report of Capt: Phipps on examination of Pearl Banks on coasts of Madura & Tinnevelly during late North-east monsoon &c.

H.E. 30 June 1873, No. 137.

The Govt are sorry to learn that the prospects of the Pearl Banks continue to be of so discouraging a nature owing to the young oysters that were discovered last year having so very generally disappeared.

2. The only thing that can be done is as far as possible, to protect from disturbance

disturbance the banks that are stacked; and all fishing on or near the Vyssar banks where the young oysters are reported to be very numerous should be strictly prohibited. Those banks being so near Tuticorin the supervision necessary for their protection should not be a work of much difficulty.

3. The Govt do not consider it altogether a matter for regret that Captain Phipps was unable to examine the Pinnacoil banks. Every such examination must cause considerable disturbance and considering that the careful examinations of the last few years have fully established the whole of the present stock to be of an age which while it precludes the possibility of any practical advantage resulting from a yearly inspection is one at which the Pearl oyster is specially sensitive to external influences, they resolve to direct that for the present each bank be examined not oftener than once in two years.

4. The Govt await the Board's recommendations as to the 'Margaret Horbert' being docked, and also as to the proposal to construct a dock at Tuticorin.

Lac

Note.

Mr. Puckle writes "we have no bank with oysters of more than two years growth at present."

Now as they should be five, six or even seven years old before they are fished, there seems to be no use in disturbing them.

In 1869 Captain Phipps himself wrote "it will be injudicious to disturb them oftener than necessary;" and in 1871 Mr. Puckle stated "I think it is a mistake to examine the banks as often as has been done of late as constantly heaving the lead and letting down divers stones must tend to disturb the banks."

"When once found" Mr. Puckle would leave the oysters "alone for a year" but the organization of the Pearl Mollusc is so delicate while it is young, and at all ages it is subject to disturbance, that it is submitted that it would be better to give the banks 2 years rest.

Lac

1871 RW

3/35

To B. of Revenue
Cop 6-8/73

6

5-6-09.

Tuttle Cr. 80/74

Govt. of [illegible] Madras

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE

Dated August 1st.

Recd.

Recd.

G. O., 1st August 1873, No. 799.

AUGUST.
Nos. 1-2.

Pearl Banks on Coast of Madura Tinnevelly.—Observing, with regret, that prospects of the —— continue to be discoura ordering the protection and disturbance o banks that are stocked, and directing that fo present each bank be examined not oftener once in two years.