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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
21st August 1873.

No. 175. From C. J. LYALL, Esq., Officiating Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce, (Fisheries,) to the Hon. W. HUDLESTON, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Simla, 23rd July 1873, No. 27.

I AM directed to forward copy of correspondence, noted in the margin, on the subject of the sea-fisheries of British Burmah, and, with reference to the 2nd paragraph of the Chief Commissioner's letter, No. 528-15, dated the 25th June last, I am to request that you will be good enough, with the permission of His Excellency the Governor in Council, to ascertain and report whether, and on what terms, Madras fishermen could be induced to start sea-fisheries in the Mergui Archipelago.

From British Burmah, No. 38-15, dated 21st February 1873.
To British Burmah, No. 19, dated 28th May 1873, with enclosure.
From British Burmah, No. 528-15, dated 25th June 1873.

(True Copy.)

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

Ed. F. R. Bantleman.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT,
OOTACAMUND,
21st August 1873.

No. 388.

No. 176.

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,

REVENUE, AND COMMERCE.

Miscellaneous.

SIR,—In reply to the Officiating Under-Secretary's letter, No. 27, (Fisheries), dated the 23rd July 1873, I am directed to state that, while His Excellency the Governor in Council would be glad to render the Chief Commissioner of Burmah assistance in the way therein suggested, he feels assured that, without further detailed information than that hitherto received, the institution of the inquiries desired would have no practical results. Persons willing to emigrate would unquestionably desire precise information as to the price of food, the cost of houses, and of living generally; and to satisfy them on all such points this Government has not at present the requisite knowledge.

2. I am further desired to say that, in the opinion of His Excellency, the course more likely to be attended with success would be for the Chief Commissioner to start the fishery on behalf of Government, and gradually abandon it to that private enterprise which demonstration of its profitable character would assuredly excite.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

Acting Secretary to Government.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

British Burma.

No. 38/15

Revenue Department.

From

Major A. T. Duncan.

Asst. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner

To.

A. O. Hume Esquire C.B.

Secretary to the Government of India

Department of Agriculture, Revenue & Commerce &c.

Dated Rangoon, 21st February 1873.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 62 of the 20th ultimo, forwarding a digest of the investigations made by the Inspector General of Fisheries, in respect of the sea fisheries of India and Burma, and requesting that the questions put by Dr. Day might, with the digest, be forwarded to the Officers of Districts on the sea coast and their opinions invited on the subject. These papers having been circulated to the Officers in charge of Sea-board Districts, their replies are now submitted for the information of Government.

2 — It would appear that as a result

of

of the previous investigations made by Dr. Day he was led to believe that Sea-fisheries in those localities far removed from large towns required some stimulus in order that the harvests of fish might be rendered more conducive to the general good. He thought this object would best be gained by the fish being Cured and exported to other places where it would find a ready sale.

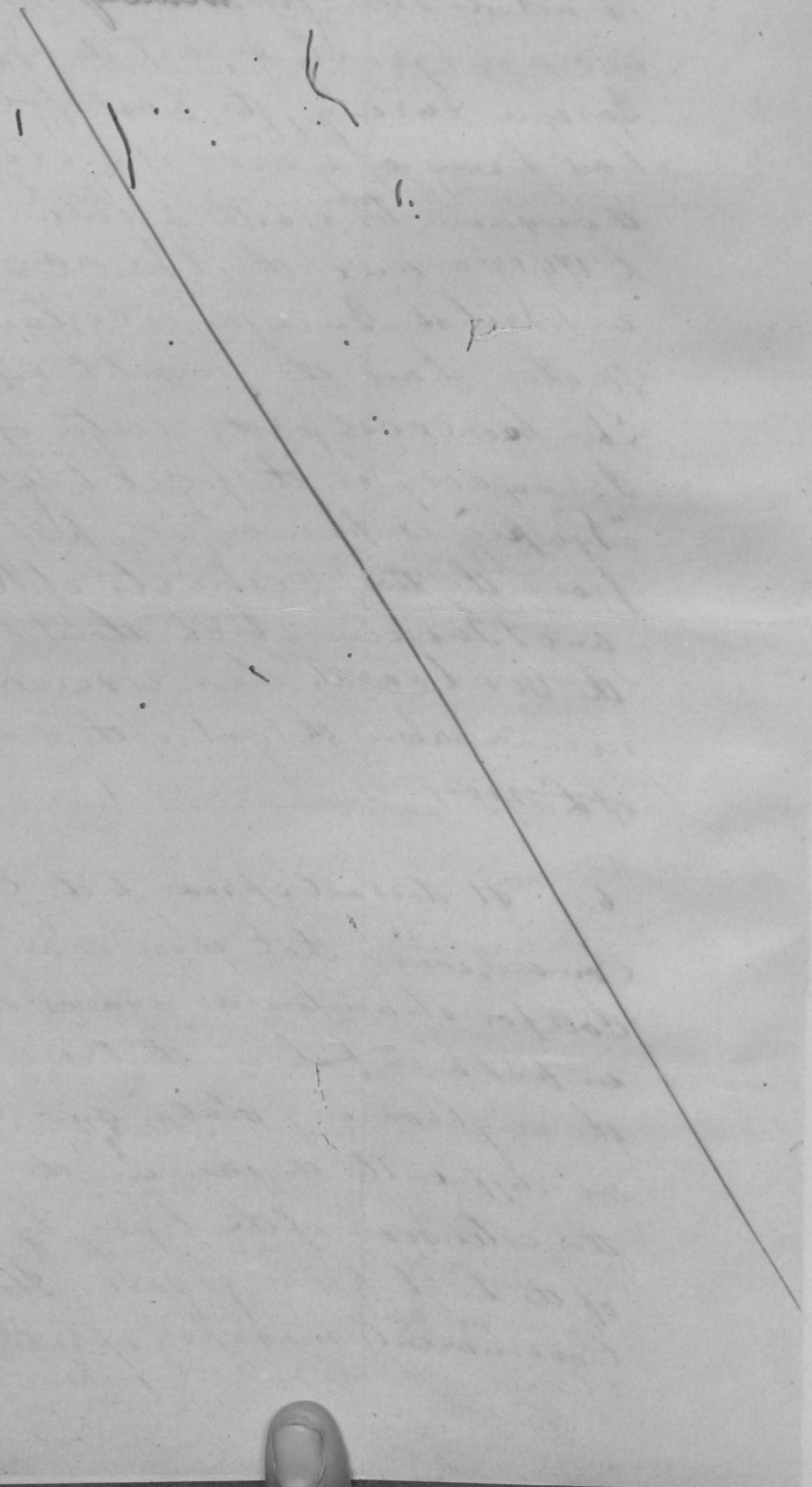
3. — He found it asserted by several Officials that the monopoly price of Salt is such as to interfere with the extensive manufacture of Salt fish and he asks whether that is the Case in British Burma, or whether there be other causes preventing the development of this particular trade

4. The Chief Commissioner desires me to observe that there is already an exceedingly large production of prepared fish for Consumption in British Burma and the neighbouring inland native States.

5. The particular article in use among the Burmese is called "Ngapee" and its preparation is described by Dr. Day in the "Digest" of his previous investigations. This "Ngapee" is extensively employed as a Condiment by the Indo Chinese races, the quantity Consumed in our own territory is not known accurately, but the average yearly export to Upper Burma during the past four years has been upwards of sixteen thousand tons, with a value of £170,000, and the home Consumption in British Burma is certainly far greater than the quantity exported. The Sea Coast of the delta of the Irrawaddy is the locality where this "Ngapee" is principally prepared, and from the two Districts of Rangoon and Bassein which there furnish the Seaboard, there is derived an annual revenue from the rent of the sea fisheries of £22,000.

6. It does not appear to the Chief Commissioner that there is any special Call for stimulus as regards the traffic in prepared fish in the Province and the neighbouring states; and there is no difficulty thrown in the way of the extension of the trade by reason of the high price of Salt. There is no Government monopoly of Salt in Burma

Burma, and an ample quantity can always be obtained by the fish curers, at a very moderate cost.



7. It is very certain as remarked by Dr Day that new markets would produce increased manufacture of cured fish in places where at present they only prepare for home consumption; and this result will in the opinion of the Chief Commissioner gradually be arrived at from improved means of carriage. The district of Mergui at the Southern extremity of the Province has long been famous for its cured fish which it has exported in considerable quantities - but the district is much isolated and has a difficult and dangerous coast.

8 Quite lately however a merchant Steamer has commenced to run between Rangoon and Mergui and undoubtedly that will have the effect - if the line be kept up - of increasing the export of fish from that district.

9. Mr Eden has lately returned from a tour in the Mergui Archipelago and was very much struck by the enormous supply of fish among these inhabited islands; these fisheries are now untouched

untouched and unvisited by any fishermen. The sea is literally alive with fish, and it at once occurred to the Chief Commissioners to suggest to the Government of India the possibility of establishing a colony of fishermen and fish curers among these islands. Dr. Day will probably be able to say what prospect there would be of inducing a colony of 100 or 200 fishermen to come over from Madras and establish themselves. It might be necessary to make them advances for the purchase of nets and boats and to guarantee them a certain minimum of earning. If a system of this sort could be established and carefully maintained Mr. Eden believes that a supply of salt fish would be obtained which would lead to a very large export to India, and it seems to him that a small portion of the proceeds of the fishery tax could not be employed in a more legitimate manner; with this exception it seems to the Chief Commissioner that the expansion of trade in the article of salted or cured fish may be left to national develop-
ment.

development, and requires no exceptional measure on the part of Government.

10.- It will be observed that the Deputy Commissioner of the Rangoon district remarks that the tax on sea fisheries in his district is considered too high or at least that the manufacture would be increased if the tax were reduced and altered in its mode of collection. The Chief Commissioner, will cause further enquiry to be made into this question, and the effect it would have on the revenue derived at present from the fisheries, and will take into consideration the advisability or otherwise of lowering the present rates.-

I have &c.

Sd/ A. T. Duncan Major

Officiating Secretary

No 230 of 1873

No

From

F. Day Esquire,
Inspector General of Fisheries

To

A. O. Hume Esquire C. B.
Secretary to the Government of India
Department of Agriculture, Revenue & Comm

Simla the 21st May 187

Sir

With reference to Mr. Geoghegan's Demi-official dated 4th March last, I have the honor to observe that Dr. Helfer in his fourth report on the Tenasserim District (Journal Asiatic Society of Bengal 1840, page 183) observes respecting the sea-fisheries of Mergui "It seems that a fishery carried on by Europeans on a similar scale with that of Newfoundland would be much more remunerative, as a ready market, here, and in India will always be found, cured fish forming an universally relished

Continued

condiment and ingredient of the Native dishes "Crouford in his Indian Archipelago" asserts that fish are almost, if not always dried without salt, but this (Report on the sea fisheries of Burmah page 9) is not quite correct, for although the greater portion of the fish taken are sun dried or smoked, some salt is employed. The fishermen proceed to some of the islands to the south of Mergui, and there capture and pre = pare their spoils, but their plans are rude and primitive, probably having remained unchanged for ages, consequently the article is very inferior."

2. Mr. Eden having visited the same locality appears to have been equally struck by the enormous supply of fish amongst these uninhabited islands but which are now unworked by man and he suggests the possi = bility of establishing a colony of 100 or 200 Madras fishermen giving them advances to purchase nets and boats and to guarantee them a minimum of earnings. This he con =

Letter from Offg. Secy: No. 38-15 dy 21st July 1873.

siders would lead to a large export to India.

3. There are two countries from which fishermen could probably be introduced, Madras or China, some from the East coast of the former part of India have already migrated in considerable numbers to Burmah and it might be advi = sible to enquire whether they would not be available for this purpose provided they had certain inducements offered them; such as being permitted to manufacture salt on those islands free of duty &c.

4. If Government guarantee a minimum of earnings in a sea fishery it does not appear improbable that the measure would be a failure: but if the captures or excess of those required by the fishermen were purchased to a certain rate and fish salted as proposed in the last para: more satisfactory results might be obtain = ed. Or the salted or cured articles

might

might be bought at a fixed price, for the worker must have an interest in his own success. Another important consideration is that the siluroid or cat fishes which are of a very inferior description as food but are easily captured, may be passed off in selling the excess to Government. Rules would be necessary for the sorts of fish as some of the very finest species exist in this Archipelago. If the fresh fish were bought, arrangements would have to be made for salting them on the spot, this occupation being usually carried on by the women and children of the families of the fishermen, but in Burmah it is improbable that the Madras fisher-men would be provided with these encumbrances: whilst were men solely thus employed it would raise the price of the article.

5. It must not be forgotten that these islands at present are uninvited for living in during the months of the S. W. Monsoon, but could fishermen be induced to go there with their families doubtless they might become popilated in time.-

6. Fish obtained in the waters of these islands might be sold by auction or contract in the Moulmein or Mergui bazaars leaving it to the enterprize of the local merchants to develop the expan-sion of the trade.-

I have &c

(Signed) Francis Day
Inspector General of Fisheries.

No. 19 (Fisheries)

Department of Agriculture, Revenue & Commerce

Simla 28th May 1873.

Copy forwarded to the Chief Commis-sioner of British Burmah for infor-mation, with reference to para: 9 of his letter No. 38/15 dated the 21st February last.-

By order,

(Sd) C. J. Lyall
Offg. under Secy: to the Govt. of India

12/2
1873

British Burmah

No. 528/15

Revenue Department

Miscellaneous

From

Crawford B. Cooke Esquire
Asstt. Secy. to the Chief Comm.r

To

The Secretary to the Govt. of India
Department of Agriculture
Revenue and Commerce

Dated Rangoon 25th June 187

Sir,

With reference to your endorsement No. 19, dated the 20th May 1873, forwarding a copy of a letter from the Inspector General of Fisheries regarding the sea fisheries of Mergui, I am directed to say that the Chief Commissioner does not think the scheme proposed by Dr. Day could be worked.—

2. If the Government of Madras would be good enough to ask the district officers of fishing districts in that Presidency to endeavour to ascertain on what terms fishermen could be induced to start Sea fisheries about these islands, the Chief Commissioner would be in a better position to judge what action to take.

3. With reference to the remarks contained in para: 5 of Dr. Day's letter regarding the unhealthiness of these islands during the S.W. Monsoon, I am directed to say that Victoria Point, close to the Tin mines and in the immediate vicinity of the fisheries is perfectly healthy and is protected by the Police, and is inhabited.—

I have &c

Sd/ C. B. Cooke

Asst: Secretary to the Chief Comr.

True

011

(True Copies)

J. Coleman

Registrar

Department of Agriculture

Revenue and Commerce

Rev. Dept

No 27

From

C. J. Lyall Esquire,
Offg: Under Secy: to the Govt of In
Department of Agriculture
Revenue and Commerce

To

The Chief Secretary to the Govt
Madras.

Simla, the 23rd July 1873

Fisheries:— Sir

I am directed to forward copy of the correspondence noted in the margin on the subject of the Sea fisheries of British Burma, and with reference to the 2nd para of the Chief Commissioner's letter No 528/15 dated the 25th June last, I am to request that you will be good enough, with the permission of His Excel-

*From British Burmah No 38/15 dated 21st February 1873.
To — Do — No 19. dated 26th May 1873 with enclosure
From — Do — No 528/15 d/25th June 1873

Rev. Dept

23/7/73

Rev. Dept

Excellency the Governor in Council,
to ascertain and report whether
and on what terms Madras
fishermen could be induced
to start sea fisheries in the
Mergui Archipelago:—

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your Most Obedt. Servant

Chas. Ino. Lyall
Offg. Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.—

22/7

Revd 1873 Sept
No 2306

From
Govt. of India Dept Agri
Revenue Com. 27.

Dated 23rd July
Read 4th August 1873 Encls 3.

Forwarding correspondence on the subject of the Sea Fisheries of British Burmah and requesting to ascertain and report whether and on what terms Madras Fishermen could be induced to start sea fisheries in the Mergui Archipelago

To Govt. of India
Revenue

No. 175-176

R.C. 15 Augt R.C.O. Augt
C. 6 August 1873 R 7 August

114
D

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

No. 2306.

From
Govt of India A.R.C. Dated 23 July 1873 No. 27 ~~187~~.

FOR ORDERS.

I would print at the
Madras pt. the it will not
be necessary information that
is here given, it would be
sufficient simply to indicate
the district in question - Perhaps

killing & Emigrants who
naturally seek & receive
information as to the
price of food - cost of
land &c. which the
Govt cannot ~~afford~~ give -
It would be better, I think
for the ~~Col~~ Chief Com.r of

K.I.
C.O.

Kaffirs - as a Pt. Concern-
ant of it proceeds pro-
perly pic it up &
first sell on the farm - that
Govt will actually
receive

I.O.S

15

FOR ORDERS.

888.

R.C. 15 Augt & R. 20 Augt
C 5 August / 73 R 7 Augt

R.C.
C. 6 August / 73 R 7 August

Revenue Dept.

No 888. 21 Augt. 73

Sept-28-9/73

To

The Secretary to the Govt of India,
Dept of Agrc: Rev: & Commerce

Sir,

I

In reply to the Offg: Under Secretary's letter No 27 (Fisheries) dated the 23rd July 1873, I am directed to state that while His Excellency the Governor in Council would be glad to render the Chief Commissioner of Burmah assistance in the way therein suggested he feels assured that without further detailed information than that hitherto received the institution of the enquiries desired would have small practical results. Persons willing to emigrate would unquestionably

unquestionably desire precise information as to the prices of food, the cost of houses and of living generally and to satisfy them on all such points this Govt has not at present the requisite knowledge

2. I am further desired to say that in the opinion of His Excellency the course more likely to be attended with success would be for the Chief Commissioner to start the fishery on behalf of Govt and gradually abandon it to that private enterprise which ~~well founded hopes of profit~~ would assuredly excite.

demonstrate them to be public character

3/3

No 7

To

The Govt of India

Madras fishermen for
the sea fisheries in Burmah

Do

Nos. 175-176

Encl. 15 Aug 1933 & 20 Aug