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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	993	Press
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Dated	6. 8. 1874	196

Not to be folded or roughly handled

993

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
6th August 1874.*

No. 66. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 24th July 1874, No. 1,912:—

Read the following letter from W. H. COMYN, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, to J. GROSE, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 22nd April 1874, No. 216:—

As required in paragraph 3 of Board's Proceedings, No. 57, dated 14th January 1874, I have the honor to forward, herewith, copy of a letter from the Superintendent of Pearl Banks, reporting the result of his observations on the Pearl Fishery at Aripo, in Ceylon.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From A. PHIPPS, Esq., Superintendent of Pearl Banks, to W. H. COMYN, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 18th April 1874, No. 13.

I HAVE the honor to report, for the information of the Board of Revenue that, in accordance with the instructions conveyed in their Proceedings, No. 57, dated 14th January 1874, I left this place on the 7th ultimo, and at day light the following morning reached the site of the Ceylon Pearl Fishery. It being the first day on which the boats had been permitted to fish, I remained on the banks watching the operations for some hours, and then proceeded to the Silavatory. At 3 p.m. the diving boats came in, and after landing their oysters, the Government share for the day, which in Ceylon is 1, amounted to 50,635. These were at once sold by public auction, and being the first sale and only a small quantity, prices ruled very high, and they realized from Rupees 105 to 150 per 1,000. The prices were, however, very high, and they realized from Rupees 105 to 150 per 1,000. On the 17th, there were very few bidders at this rate, but subsequently some parties came forward and took off for retail sale in Colombo small lots. The Superintendent was of opinion that a combination existed amongst the merchants to reduce the prices, and on this account refused to accept any lower offers. A considerable quantity of the oysters therefore remained unsold, and also of the following days fishing which resulted in the operations being temporarily stopped. Having been absent from Tuticorin for twelve days, and as my duties there required attention, I was unable to remain away any longer and returned to Tuticorin.

2. The method of carrying out the fishery was in every way similar to the practice on this Coast.

3. For the first time an arrangement was tried by placing counters in each diving boat to prevent the oysters being tampered with between the banks and the shore. This being only a small Fishery, with boats of not more than 2,000 per boat, the counters were able to keep some control, and on a future Fishery on this Coast, I hope to propose some similar course, but there is great fear of connivance between the counters and boatmen, and a careful search of boats and people on reaching the beach, must in no case be omitted.

4. POLICE AND SANITATION.—The arrangements made for the protection and health of the people were, as usual, remarkably good, and no sickness of any kind prevailed. Order was maintained, and ample medical attendance available, if required.

5. PROVISIONS AND WATER.—The former was imported in large quantities by bazaar dealers from the Indian Coasts, and the latter was plentifully supplied by wells and tanks in the immediate neighbourhood.

6. The number of people present was about 10,000, half of them were boatmen and divers.

7. The total number of diving boats present was over 200, and as only 50 were required, the others were rather an incumbrance, but to give employment to as many as possible, the Superintendent made three fleets of 50 each, and allowed them to work on alternate days, and towards the close of the Fishery as many as 100 boats were allowed to go out each night.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
6th August 1874.*

8. PEARLS.—Some of good size and color were obtainable, but at very high prices, which eventually became much enhanced by the arrival of some Chinamen from Hong-kong bringing large sums to invest, and on its becoming known how few oysters were daily brought in.

9. PROFITS.—Judging from the total quantity of oysters fished and the prices obtained, I am of opinion that so far as the boat-owners, divers, and boatmen are concerned, the Fishery has not been profitable. This is also the complaint of those who have now returned to this coast. Pearl Fisheries have usually been deservedly popular as rare occasions, when handsome pay and profits were sure to all who attended. Had there been a large quantity of oysters, this Fishery would have been so also.

10. Since my return to Tuticorin, I have learned that the Fishery was continued on the 21st and following days with moderate results, and ended on the 1st instant, with a total yield of 12,70,881 oysters, which realized Rupees 1,01,110; this is slightly over the estimate.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. H. COMYN,
Acting Collector.

Submitted for the information of Government.

No. 67

ORDRE TIERSON, 6th August 1874, No. 993.

Miscellaneous

Recorded

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue

No. 1,942.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 24th July 1874.

Read the following letter from W. H. COMYN, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, to J. GROSE, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 22nd April 1874, No. 216:—

As required in paragraph 3 of Board's Proceedings, No. 57, dated 14th January 1874, I have the honor to forward, herewith, copy of a letter from the Superintendent of Pearl Banks, reporting the result of his observations on the Pearl Fishery at Arripo, in Ceylon.

ENCLOSURE No. 1

From A. PHIPPS, Esq., Superintendent of Pearl Banks, to W. H. COMYN, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 18th April 1874, No. 13.

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Board of Revenue that, in accordance with the instructions conveyed in their Proceedings, No. 57, dated 14th January 1874, I left this place on the 7th ultimo, and at day light the following morning reached the site of the Ceylon Pearl Fishery. It being the first day on which the boats had been permitted to fish, I remained on the banks watching the operations for some hours, and then proceeded to the Silavatory. At 3 p.m. the diving boats came in, and after landing their oysters, the Government share for the day, which in Ceylon is 2, amounted to 50,635. These were at once sold by public auction, and being the first sale and only a small quantity, prices ruled very high, and they realized from Rupees 105 to Rupees 200 per 1,000. The following days the boats continued to go out bringing slightly better loads, but the prices receded and Rupees 75 per 1,000 was the usual figure. On the 17th, there were very few bidders at this rate, but subsequently some parties came forward and took off for retail sale in Colombo small lots. The Superintendent was of opinion that a combination existed amongst the merchants to reduce the prices, and on this account refused to accept any lower offers. A considerable quantity of the oysters therefore remained unsold, and also of the following days fishing which resulted in the operations being temporarily stopped. Having been absent from Tuticorin for twelve days, and as my duties there required attention, I was unable to remain away any longer and returned to Tuticorin.

2. The method of carrying out the fishery was in every way similar to the practice on this Coast.

3. For the first time an arrangement was tried by placing counters in each diving boat to prevent the oysters being tampered with between the banks and the shore. This being only a small Fishery, with loads of not more than 2,000 per boat, the counters were able to keep some control, and on a future Fishery on this Coast, I hope to propose some similar course, but there is great fear of connivance between the counters and boatmen, and a careful search of boats and people on reaching the beach, must in no case be omitted.

4. POLICE AND SANITATION.—The arrangements made for the protection and health of the people were, as usual, remarkably good, and no sickness of any kind prevailed. Order was maintained, and ample medical attendance available, if required.

5. PROVISIONS AND WATER.—The former was imported in large quantities by bazaar dealers from the Indian Coast, and the latter was plentifully supplied by wells and tanks in the immediate neighbourhood.

6. The number of people present was about 10,000, half of them were boatmen and divers.

7. The total number of diving boats present was over 200, and as only 50 were required, the others were rather an incumbrance, but to give employment to as many as possible, the Superintendent made three fleets of 50 each, and allowed them to work on alternate days, and towards the close of the Fishery as many as 100 boats were allowed to go out each night.

8. PEARLS.—Some of good size and color were obtainable, but at very high prices, which eventually became much enhanced by the arrival of some Chinamen from Hong-kong bringing large sums to invest, and on its becoming known how few oysters were daily brought in.

9. PEARLS.—Judging from the total quantity of oysters fished and the prices obtained, I am of opinion that so far as the boat-owners, divers, and boatmen are concerned, the Fishery has not been profitable. This is also the complaint of those who have now returned to this coast. Pearl Fisheries have usually been deservedly popular as rare occasions, when handsome pay and profits were sure to all who attended. Had there been a large quantity of oysters, this Fishery would have been so also.

10. Since my return to Tuticorin, I have learned that the Fishery was continued on the 21st and following days with moderate results, and ended on the 1st instant, with a total yield of 12,79,881 oysters, which realized Rupees 1,01,119; this is slightly over the estimate.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. H. COMYN,
Acting Collector.

SUBMITTED for the information of Government.

(True Copies and Extract.)

W. H. Comyn
Acting Sub-Secretary.

To the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
Copy to the Acting Collector of Tinnevely.

Encl. G. A. Turton.

To & through No 22-23

22-23

RECEIVED
1874.
BOARD OF REVENUE,
MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS, 22ND JULY 1874, NO. 1, 912.

Copy to the

Received

JULY.
No. 1012

From the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Madras.
Report of the Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated 1st August 1874.

Copy to the

Copy to the