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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	1171	Press.
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	25-7-1878	1972

Not to be folded or roughly handled

1171
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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

25th July 1878, No. 1,171.

Read the following paper :—

No. 338. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 27th June 1878, No. 1,775.

Read the following letter from G. A. PHIPPS, Esq., Superintendent of Pearl Banks, to J. B. PENNINGTON, Esq., Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 10th May 1878, No. 3 :—

I HAVE the honor to report for the information of Government that I have, since my return from Bombay, been employed in examining the Pearl Banks from Vaippar to Manapad. The result, I am sorry to say, is not so satisfactory as I expected it would be. The examination of last and the previous year appeared to give certain hopes of fisheries in 1880 and 1881 from off the banks noted in the margin, which were fished last in 1861; and I proceeded to these on the first day I was out, but

Nagara Par.	Davie Par.
Oottee Par.	Caria Par.
Kalattee Par.	

from the water not being clear could not form a fair opinion. I did so on a second occasion with the same result, and it was only on the 26th of last month that the water proved sufficiently transparent for the divers to be able to see properly what was on the bottom. I must say that I felt suspicious that all was not right when I found the oysters brought up on the two previous occasions were so few in number to what I expected, but on the last day the small number of oysters and the large quantity of dead shells was conclusive that these banks would not prove worth the trouble of fishing. To judge from the appearance of the dead shells, many of which show marks of having been bitten, the bank has been visited by numbers of Skates or Devil Fish which have had sufficiently powerful teeth to bite pieces out of the oyster shells and so destroy them. The divers had no difficulty in bringing me up some of the injured shells (which I am sending for your inspection) and also a few live oysters from one to three each dive; but, as the numbers are so rapidly thinning, I expect in a few months all the oysters will be gone, and the banks will probably be recovered by younger ones as the Kalattee Par is now in some parts. In former years we lost a large bank of oysters from its being left too long unfished, and since we have often lost very young oysters; but this is the first time that oysters which have reached their third year have disappeared, and it is to me a very great disappointment.

2. But, although the examination has shown that there can now be no fisheries so early as we expected, I am glad to say that it is only probably deferred for a couple of years when, if no misfortune again happens, we may expect very large ones. The Thalayaram Par, Kuthadiar Par, and the adjacent banks called the Vada Ombathoo

Samples of young oysters and injured shells are sent in a tin case. Par and Saith Ombathoo Par contain very many millions of one-year old oysters, all at present clean and healthy; the former

bank alone contains far more than were on all those that have lately disappointed us, while the other banks named are also of very considerable extent. In addition to these the Cruxian and Cruxian Tondoo Pars off Tuticorin, the Caria Par off Vaippar and the Velangoo and Caruvel Pars off Trichendur, with the Kuthadiar Par off Pinnocoll are all covered with oysters of similar age and size, and show that the prospects are still very hopeful. The oysters on these ten banks are far more than it will be possible to fish in one year, and it must be so arranged that two fisheries are held, a matter of some difficulty as the oysters are all of one age, but which must be decided before they reach maturity.

3. The revenue derived from the Pearl Banks always has been so very uncertain, and the late loss of oysters has again shown this that I fear it may perhaps be contemplated to abandon it. I trust, however, that this may not be the case. I believe thirty-five years elapsed between the previous fisheries, during which time oysters came and disappeared as they have done since, and yet by patience large sums were realized in 1861 and 1862, when the oysters did actually reach maturity. The Jaditallavanmore informs me that in his grandfather's time the Thalayaram Par was last fished, and alone yielded ten lakhs of rupees; but since then up to the present year, although at times on it small quantities of oysters were found, it has never been stocked; the quantity now is, I believe, beyond calculation—it is 4 miles in length by 1 and 1½ in breadth and extends down to the Kuthadiar Par, while the Vada Ombathoo Par and Saith Ombathoo Par, nearly on the same line, is also thickly covered. As time goes on it is certainly probable that we may lose a part of these, but still there is no reason to suppose that sufficient will not be left to give very large returns. The quantity of oysters on the Trichendur Banks is also now very large, but in 1862 these banks did not turn out so well as we expected, and the oysters were not very prolific in pearls, though very large ones were found. This may happen again, and I therefore at present consider the Thalayaram Par is, without doubt, the bank that is likely to recoup all the outlay of past years.

4. During the previous fine season the banks on the Madura coast were inspected, and from the absence of the *Margaret Northcote* the work this season could not be done so expeditiously as usual, and I have not been able to examine them; they will, however, be again looked at next year. For the same reason the large bank below Manapad has not been examined; this is, however, in a very exposed situation and has never yet been found to bear oysters. The sailing boat *Pearl*, which I have used for the late inspection, is much too small and uncomfortable to hold the number of boatmen and divers employed, while the difficulty in reaching the various banks in light winds caused great delay and inconvenience, besides tiring out the canoe men before the principal work of the day was commenced, as we had often to pull for many miles.

5. As a separate report on the Chank Fishery will be furnished when the shells are sold and delivered, I beg merely to mention that the number fished up to date is in excess of last year, and that I have every hope of realizing a large price; the date of sale is advertised for the 13th June.

6. I annex a list of the Pearl Banks examined during the present fine season.

LIST OF PEARL BANKS EXAMINED DURING THE FINE SEASON IN 1877-78.

Kaluttee Par. This bank was, when last examined, thickly covered with healthy oysters of two-year age; the number is now much decreased and the bank is covered with dead shells; the divers brought up from one to three live oysters at a dive. On the south part a patch of young oysters was found.

Nagara Par.—A few oysters of three-year old only left. Bank covered with dead shells.

Oottee Par.—Very few oysters left; plenty of dead shells.

Oodurici Par.—A few oysters; many dead shells.

Davie Par, Fernandoo Par, Pathamuraiman Par.—These three banks when last examined promised a good fishery; the oysters have now nearly all disappeared and dead shells only remain.

Caria Par.—This bank is stocked with oysters of one-year old free from Sooram and Killikoy.

Vaippar Peria Par.—Contains a few oysters, but much mixed with Sooram and Killikoy.

Cruzian Par.—Plenty of young oysters of one-year age.

Cruzian Tondoo Par.—Covered with young oysters, one-year age.

Thalayaram Par.—This large bank which has remained bare since 1821 is now thickly stocked with oysters of one-year age.

Kuthadiar Par.—Plenty of young oysters similar to Thalayaram Par.

Parkudanjan Par, Nengurchan Par, Mela Ombathoo Par.—These three banks are of very small extent. No oysters.

Vada Ombathoo Par, Saith Ombathoo Par.—These two banks are covered with oysters of one-year age.

Poolleg Poondotta Par, Conar Poondotta Par.—No Oysters.

Sinda Maria Poonditha Par, Rajavookoo Sippisothicha Par, Samma Ootta Moollee Par, Poondoo Par.—These banks are quite bare and at present of no value.

Kadian Par.—Plenty of young oysters.

Kanawa Par.—On the south part of this bank young oysters were found.

Nadumallai Poondoo Par.—No oysters.

Velenggo Carival Par, Caria Caravel Par.—These two banks are of considerable extent and are thickly covered with oysters of one-year age.

Oodakarai Par, Poondotta Par, Sandamacoil Poonditha Par, Tharady Poonditha Par, Seman Pullu Par, Manapad Par.—On some of these banks the divers found a few oysters, but not sufficient to be of any value.

TOTICORIN,
10th May 1878.

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

No. 387.

SUBMITTED for the information of the Board of Revenue with samples of oysters.*

* Railway receipt herewith forwarded.

2. The report is certainly disappointing, but there must necessarily be a great deal of uncertainty about such an industry as pearl fishery; and there does not seem to be anything so alarming about the prospect as to justify the abandonment of a source of income which is said to have brought in as much as 10 lakhs in a single year, and has really produced as much as Rupees 11,95,874 since we took possession.

3. It is true the establishment costs over Rupees 6,000 a year, and that there has been no fishery since 1861-62; but the proceeds of that and the previous year's fishery alone were enough to cover all the cost of establishment since the beginning of the century, and my only doubt is whether a more liberal expenditure on establishment and conservancy would not be more economical in the end. I am making inquiries as to the system of management in force in Ceylon where the fisheries appear to have been more successful than with us; but will not delay this report in order to add the result of my investigations.

TINNEVELLY,
28th May 1878.

(Signed) J. B. PENNINGTON,
Collector.

SUBMITTED to Government.

2. The Superintendent of Pearl Banks reports that the hopes entertained of remunerative fisheries in 1880 and 1881, off certain banks last fished in 1861, will not be fulfilled, as inspection last April has shown that there are few young oysters. Large quantities of dead shells were found, the oysters having suffered apparently from the attacks of predatory fish. Captain Phipps reports, however, that certain other banks contain many millions of year-old oysters, and unless some accident occurs, there should be splendid fisheries about four years hence.

3. Although the fishing is admittedly variable and uncertain, the Superintendent deprecates any idea of abandoning the enterprise. From the Collector's docket it would seem that nearly 12 lakhs of rupees have been realized since Government entered on the fisheries eighty-three years ago. The annual expenditure is some Rupees 6,000. It is surmised that a more liberal expenditure might be highly remunerative. The Collector is making inquiries as to the Ceylon fisheries, and his further report on this interesting subject will be awaited. Meantime, the Board are not aware that there is any intention of abandoning the fisheries, and would strongly deprecate such a step.

4. The shells received from the Superintendent will be sent with a copy of the report to the Superintendent of the Madras Museum.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) J. STURROCK,
Acting Sub-Secretary.

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REVENUE DEPARTMENT, 25TH JULY 1878, No. 1,171.

No. 339.

ORDER THEREON, 25th July 1878, No. 1,171.

Miscellaneous.

THE Board's further report is
awaited.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.

Ed. F. R. Bantleman.

1171
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vide vol. 5057.

Ceylon Pearl Fisheries—Awaiting the Board's further report regarding the —.

JULY.
Nos. 333-339.

G.O., 23rd July 1878, No. 1,171.

Dated July 25th.
Bd.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

REVENUE.

5057. 0118783 333-339

No. 1,775.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 27th June 1878.

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(True Copies and Extract.)

Acting Sub-Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" Superintendent of Government Museum, with Oyster shells.
Copy to the Collector of Tinnevelly.

Exd. W. H. French.

Progr

14. Book. Dec. 2. 1878. On 20th July.

20 July 1878

*24-7-78
24-7-78
N. 338*

is correct.

The Board's further views

No. 1171

*Revenue Dept
24/7/78*

**BOARD OF REVENUE,
MADRAS.**

1878.

PROCEEDINGS, 27TH JUNE 1878, No. 1,775.

*Copy 1694/15
Encl.*

Received

18 July 78

JUNE.
No. 1,775.

Pearl Banks—in Tinnevely District.—Submitting to Government report from Superintendent of Pearl Banks on the state of the—; awaiting report promised by Collector as to the oyster fisheries; and forwarding to Superintendent of Government Museum, Madras, the oyster shells received from the district.

No. 1171. 20 July 78

W. H. B. 11