CHAPTER-IV

CONTROL OVER CIRCAR TERRITORY IN TIRUNELVELI

The British wanted to bring the Tirunelveli Region under their control. Hence they employed Khan Sahib, a native warrior, endowed with a lot of confidence. Realising the weak position of the Nawab in the Carnatic, Khan Sahib aspired to establish his independent authority in Tirunelveli. When the British recalled him, he refused to respond.

Fall of Khan Sahib

The rebellion of Khan Sahib was the turning point in the history of Madurai and Tirunelveli Provinces under the Nawab of Arcot. Towards the end of Khan Sahib’s rebellion, his headquarters at Madurai was besieged by the forces of the Nawab and the British, led by Major Donald Campbell. Hence the position of Khan Sahib and his followers and supporters became critical. Entering into a secret plot with the sardars of the Madurai Fort, the French Commander, Marchand, agreed to surrender the fort on the condition of general pardon.\(^1\) On October 14, 1764, the

\(^1\)Robert Palk in Council, 27 October 1764, letter, M.C., Vol.21, 1764, p.735.
rebel forces surrendered and the flag of the Nawab was hoisted on the Fort of Madurai.² Following this, Khan Sahib was executed on October 15, 1764. In this regard, the Nawab wrote to Madras Government thus: “Today, being Monday, the rebel Khan Sahib was hanged at five O’clock in the evening which struck terror into the hearts of our enemies.”³ Khan Sahib’s Revolt closed for many years all opportunities of a higher career to the natives of Madras who entered into the Military service of the British Company.⁴

Major Donald Campbell was appointed by the British Government as the Commander of the Army in Madurai and Tirunelveli. After dispersing other rebel followers of Khan Sahib, the forces of Donald Campbell appeared before Tirunelveli on October 23, 1764. After the loss of Khan Sahib, the dispirited rebels surrendered the Fort of


Palayamkottai, their stronghold in the Tirunelveli Region. With the capture of Palayamkottai, the subjugation of the rebels was completed.

**Importance of Palayamkottai**

After the capture of Palayamkottai, the British realised the strategic importance of the Fort. No wonder it became the military headquarters of the British in the Tirunelveli Region. It became the focal point of the military operations of the British in the region.

The Palayamkottai Fort was garrisoned under a captain who was called the Commandant at Palayamkottai. Captain Daniel Frishman took charge as the first Commandant at Palayamkottai in 1765. It was the result of the farsighted work of Major Donald Campbell.

**The Role of Palayamkottai**

Palayamkottai played a vital role in the movement of the British troops in the Tirunelveli Region. It served as a military outpost of the British to check the possible incursions of the forces of Travancore into the Tirunelveli Region, especially into the Kalakkad Area. The British

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also noticed that the good effects produced by Khan Sahib's vigorous administration came to an end with his execution. The Poligars of Tirunelveli again became restless and they failed to pay their tributes regularly to the sircar agents. The forces of Nawab were insufficient to control them and hence the need for reinforcements from the British.  

The Commandant at Palayamkottai periodically sent reports to the Madras Government, explaining the political condition of the Tirunelveli Region, which sometimes led to strong British military expeditions into this region to chastise the rebellious Poligars. 

It was in this context of Poligar resistance to the British Power that Palayamkottai gained importance.

Palayamkottai, moreover, played a useful role in the postal communication between Madras and Bombay in the later half of the Eighteenth Century. Packets of letters were sent by the Madras Government to the Commandant at Palayamkottai who, in turn, sent it to Bombay through Anjengo. Similarly packets of letters were despatched from Bombay to Madras through Palayamkottai. This circuitous postal communication was necessitated by the hostile powers of Hyder Ali, Tipu

Sultan and the Marathas who blocked the direct route. The British troops moved between Anjengo and Palayamkottai to maintain order in the path of communication.\textsuperscript{13} Palayamkottai also served as a commercial centre. The British had a Commercial Agent at Palayamkottai. They had a warehouse for their goods. The Commercial Department was established in a place called Kokkirakulam, a mile away from the Fort of Palayamkottai.\textsuperscript{14}

**Communication with Anjengo**

As soon as Palayamkottai came under the full control of the British, the military communication between Palayamkottai and Anjengo was opened. When Major Donald Campbell was sent as the Commanding Officer of the British forces in the south, he was accompanied by an artillery force from Bombay. The chiefs of the Anjengo Factory, namely, Whitefield, Arthur King, W. Taylor and T.A. Glass requested Major Donald Campbell, who was then camping at Palayamkottai, to send back the Bombay artillery. But Major Donald Campbell wanted to retain the Bombay artillery at Palayamkottai Fort till the disputed areas of Kalakkad and Shencottai were settled between the Nawab and the King of

*Anjengo* was a small town in the Malabar Coastal area between Travancore and Quilion. It was a town under the British East India Company.


\textsuperscript{14}Pate, H.R., *op.cit.*, p.2.
Travancore. Hence Donald Campbell sought the permission of Robert Palk, the Governor of Madras, to retain the Bombay Artillery Force.\textsuperscript{15}

**Accommodation for Troops**

Major Donald Campbell, who was appointed the Commander of the British Army of Madurai, stayed at the Palayamkottai Fort until a better arrangement was worked out. While he stayed at Palayamkottai, he found that the King of Travancore had no intention of making any incursions into any part of the Nawab's Territory. But he felt that the King of Travancore might turn aggressive, if the Palayamkottai Fort had not been properly garrisoned.\textsuperscript{16}

When Donald Campbell found the roads were very bad for further march towards the south, he wanted to lay good roads. In order to improve the position, he was obliged to detain the lascars, coolies and bullocks in the Fort of Palayamkottai and informed the matter to the Governor of Madras for further orders.\textsuperscript{17}

Though the Fort of Palayamkottai was spacious, the troops under the detachment of Major Donald Campbell was greatly distressed for want


\textsuperscript{16}Donald Campbell, 24 December 1764, letter to Robert Palk in Council, M.C., Vol.22-A, 1764, p.3.

\textsuperscript{17}Donald Campbell, 23 December 1764, letter to Robert Palk in Council, M.C., Vol.22-A, 1764, p.7.
of proper tents and quarters. Hence he requested the Madras Government to sanction the construction of tents and buildings. Many officers and men were distressed for want of accommodation.\textsuperscript{18} Major Donald Campbell expected favourable orders from the Governor-in-Council for two vital matters, viz., permission to retain the Bombay Artillery and the construction of buildings for the British troops stationed at Palayamkottai.

On receiving the letter of Major Donald Campbell, the Madras Governor-in-Council permitted him to station a large force at Palayamkottai for the security of Kalakkad till some agreement could be worked out with the King of Travancore over Kalakkad. But an immediate agreement seemed quite impossible as the King of Travancore did not come forward.\textsuperscript{19}

As there was no possible Travancorean invasion into the Tirunelveli Region, Major Donald Campbell was permitted to provide accommodation to the Europeans and the British troops in Palayamkottai. If the quarters were not sufficient, the soldiers and sepoys were to be accommodated in private houses. Some sheds were also permitted to be erected by the lascars.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p.2.
\textsuperscript{19}Robert Palk in Council, 7 January 1765, letter M.C., Vol.22-A, 1765, p.5.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
Campbell's Visit to Kalakkad

Whenever the situation warranted, Major Donald Campbell was requested to visit Kalakkad and other military posts at Tirukurangudi and Panagudi, and monitor the position of the British sepoys to prevent a possible invasion by the King of Travancore. In accordance with the Governor's request, Major Donald Campbell, who was commanding the British Army in the South, visited the Kalakkad Region and sent two Sergeants to command the Nawab's sepoys. He requested the Governor to permit him to send a company of British sepoys under an officer to those places suspected of rebel activities to superintend the whole security arrangement.

Campbell gave an account of the Nawab's troops stationed at several outposts in the Kalakkad and Shencottai Regions.

Kalakkad - Captain Stockwell with 5th Company Sepoys and 20 Arabs. Captain Alexander with 50 artillery, 3 Pounder gun and 300 Black horses.

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21.Ibid.
23.Ibid., p.48.
Tirukurangudi - 4 Companies of Sepoys, 2 of them with various arms.

Panagudi - 4 Companies of Sepoys, 2 of them with various arms.

Wadagarai - 4 Companies of Sepoys, and Ensign Dawson with 4 troops, 8 Iron guns.

**The First Commandant at Palayamkottai**

The Madras Government felt that the service of Major Donald Campbell was very valuable and asked him to return to Madurai. He was asked to leave the troops, such as the cavalry and as many sepoys as possible, at Palayamkottai and to place them under the command of Captain Daniel Frishman. As per the order, Captain Daniel Frishman was appointed as the Commandant at Palayamkottai. On the request of Donald Campbell, the Bombay artillery was allowed to stay on at Palayamkottai until the arrival of further communication from the Bombay Government.

When the political situation changed, the presence of more force at Madras was realised. Therefore Donald Campbell was ordered by the

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25. Ibid.
Governor of Madras to return the Bombay artillery at Palayamkottai and to march to Madras by the most convenient route.  

**Peace Mission to Travancore**

Meanwhile, the Chiefs at the Anjengo Factory had a conference with the King of Travancore who was very positively inclined to settle the disputed areas of Kalakkad and Shencottai. In case of restoring those regions to Travancore, the King promised many advantages to the British. Thus the King of Travancore was prepared to negotiate his claims over Kalakkad and Shencottai.

**Trouble from Hyderabad and Mysore**

In the meantime, the Nizam of Hyderabad had moved very close to Hyder Ali of Mysore. Having come to know about the secret alliance between them, Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot and Robert Palk, the Governor of Madras, became alert. Robert Palk ordered Major Donald Campbell, the Commandant at Madurai, to reduce the strength of the British sepoys in Madurai and Tirunelveli Regions and to send two companies of troops to Madras owing to the impending danger from the Nizam of Hyderabad. He recommended the reduction of British troops in the Tirunelveli Region to the following strength.

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Kalakkad
Tirukurangudi 3 companies
Panagudi
Wadagarai 2 companies
Palayamkottai 3 companies

The outposts at Kalakkad, Tirukurangudi and Panagudi were maintained to safeguard the Kalakkad Region whereas the services of Wadagarai was enlisted to protect the Shencottai Region from falling an easy prey to the King of Travancore. 28

Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot, also ordered his forces to reach Arcot. Hence Captain Daniel Frishman, the Commandant at Palayamkottai, reported that many of the Nawab’s sepoys had deserted the Tirunelveli Region. The security of Tirunelveli, along with Kalakkad and Shencottai Regions, was precarious owing to the reduction of strength and the evacuation of both the British and the Nawab’s troops. There was a real danger of invasion by the Travancorean forces. 29

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Trouble at Panagudi

The withdrawal of the Nawab's troops in Tirunelveli created a situation in favour of the potential invaders. Bakshi, the Commander of the Nawab's troops in Tirunelveli, was ordered by Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot, to proceed to Arcot with the troops already posted in the disputed area of Kalakkad. As soon as the Travancoreans had intelligence of Bakshi proceeding to Arcot, the Travancorean forces marched out of the walls of Aramboly. The Travancorean forces, consisting of 1000 sepoys and four guns, encamped at an orchard about six miles away from Panagudi. The march of the Travancorean forces alarmed the British troops which were commanded by Captain Daniel Frishman. The Travancorean forces inflicted heavy damages. The Travancoreans cut down the trees in Panagudi Region and sent them into their Country. In the same night, they retreated to the walls of Aramboly fort for safety. But they reappeared before Panagudi again in the next morning. Meanwhile Captain Daniel requested Bakshi not to proceed to Arcot on account of the risk of losing the grain that was being harvested in the

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31. Ibid., p.377.
Kalakkad Area. But Major Donald Campbell had already sent orders to Bakshi to transfer all troops to Arcot.

Reaction of the British

The Madras Government did not expect invasion from the King of Travancore. On the other hand, it was felt that the King of Travancore would have been relieved by the evacuation of the Nawab’s troops from Kalakkad and its neighbourhood.

Hence the British were very cautious and sent orders that the Nawab’s troops might remain at Palayamkottai. They might be ordered back if they had already marched from Palayamkottai.

Role of Pay Master

On May 14, 1765, Archadale Palmer was appointed as the Paymaster and Storekeeper for Madurai and Palayamkottai Regions. He was instructed to muster the military, artillery, cavalry, sepoys, lascars and all those who received monthly pay from the Company, in the garrisons of Madurai and Palayamkottai. The monthly pay of the military, artillery and cavalry was to be issued to the Commanding Officer of the

33. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
sepoys while lascars could be paid directly by the Paymaster, Archadale Palmer.\textsuperscript{37}

**Fresh Travancorean incursions**

Before the orders of the Governor reached him, Bakshi had arrived at Madurai with 600 horses and he then proceeded to Arcot to meet the Nawab. But he had brought no sepoys along with him. Raja Hakmat Ram, the Renter or amuldar of Tirunelveli and agent of the Nawab, had taken the sepoys and detained them.\textsuperscript{38}

Meanwhile, a large body of the Travancoreans had surrounded Kalakkad which was protected by fifteen companies of the Nawab’s sepoys, with fifty in each company and some black horses. Captain Alexander was commanding the European artillery and cavalry. Panagudi and Tirukurangudi had already been lost to the Travancore forces. The main intention of Travancorean invasion was to capture the Kalakkad Region.

Captain Frishman was the critical of Nawab’s troops which could not be depended upon during critical periods.\textsuperscript{39} The Nawab’s battalion contained only limited number of soldiers and nothing much could be

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p.383.
\textsuperscript{38}Donald Campbell, 1 May 1765, M.C., letter to Robert Palk in Council, Vol.22-B, 1765, p.407.
\textsuperscript{39}Ibid
expected of them. As the situation was critical, Raja Hakmat Ram, the Renter or *amuldar* of Tirunelveli, sent companies of sepoys, parcels of cartridges, flints and other stores to Kalakkad. He also collected some *colleries* from Uttumalai Pollam and company sepoys and sent them to Kalakkad.\(^{40}\)

Mohammed Rajah, the *Killedar*\(^*\) of Wadagarai, Japhir Ali Khan, the Killedar of Kalakkad and the Nawab’s Renter of Tenkasi found that the supply was insufficient and they requested further supplies. Consequently, more supplies and stores were sent from Tirunelveli and Palayamkottai.\(^{41}\)

**Reason for the Aggression**

Captain Daniel Frishman rendered all possible help. He sent a lieutenant and some troops to assist Captain Alexander. When the lieutenant reached Kalakkad and enquired about the reason for aggression, the Travancorean forces replied that they had received orders from the Madras Government to take over the fort of Kalakkad.\(^{42}\) They asked for the surrender of Kalakkad. When it was refused, they fired briskly. In that encounter, Captain Alexander and his sergeant and the subedar of the

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\(^*\) *Killedar* was the Commander of a Fort


Arab company were wounded. Ten thousand Travancoreans attacked the region. The Nawab’s agents requested for the supply of arms and ammunition to fight against the Travancoreans.

**Fight in Kalakkad**

Captain Alexander was in command of the forces of the British and forces of the Nawab. He had made a sally with great bravery upon the Travancoreans near the Fort of Kalakkad and drove them out of it. The Tranvancoreans incurred a heavy loss. Meanwhile, Noor Mohammed, one of the commanders of Nawab, went to assist the garrison under Captain Alexander with four companies of sepoys, two small guns and 2000 Poligar men. However, Captain Alexander informed that 2000 armed men were not enough to protect the Kalakkad Region because he considered Nawab’s army to be irregular and ineffective.

**Plunder of Forts**

When the British and the Nawab forces were preoccupied with the inroads made by Travancore forces, four hundred colleries entered the town of Tirunelveli and plundered it. The Renter of Tirunelveli was

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43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

unable to drive them away. Following this raid, a large body of Travancore forces attacked and captured the Fort of Shencottai. The two companies of the Nawab's sepoys that were stationed at Shencottai, however, were permitted to retreat to Tirunelveli with arms and baggage. The position of Wadagarai was not disturbed. The fort was under the command of British General Dawson. There was a well in the Fort of Wadagarai, which was polluted and therefore the troops had to get water from outside the Fort of Wadagarai. British General Dawson was instructed to hold the Fort of Wadagarai at any cost.

Arrival of Bakshi

On May 17, 1765, Bakshi, the Commander of the Nawab Army in Tirunelveli, returned from Arcot to Madurai with only 200 black horses. Major Donald Campbell prevailed on him to march to Tirunelveli immediately. He informed Campbell that the remaining 400 black horses were marching from Tiruchirappalli.

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., p.506.
Attempt Again on Tirunelveli

The colleries of the Poligars made another attempt upon the Town of Tirunelveli as they did successfully in the previous attempt. But some of the British troops of Captain Daniel Frishman drove away the colleries before they could do any harm.\(^{51}\)

Captain Harper in Kalakkad

Captain Alexander launched another attack against the forces of Travancore. In that encounter, ten sepoys were killed and twenty were wounded.\(^{52}\) Captain Humphrey Harper was sent to Kalakkad to continue the war operation. At the same time, Major Donald Campbell received a detachment of infantry from Major Wood, the Commanding Officer at Tiruchirappalli.\(^{53}\) Major Donald Campbell ordered twelve private tents to be erected at Tirunelveli because there were none at Tirunelveli or at Palayamkottai.\(^{54}\) Captain Harper reached the Kalakkad Fort without any trouble. Captain Daniel Frishman gave orders to Captain Harper, directing him to demolish the village very near the Fort of Kalakkad.\(^{55}\)

\(^{51}\) Ibid.
\(^{53}\) Ibid.
\(^{54}\) Ibid.
Campbell at Palayamkottai

Major Donald Campbell himself was interested in proceeding to the Kalakkad Region. As a preliminary measure, he sent a detachment from Madurai to Palayamkottai consisting of about 100 Europeans, 6 pounder guns and 5 companies of British sepoys. After sending a detachment from Madurai, he proceeded to Palayamkottai. On reaching Palayamkottai on May 30, 1765, he asked Bakshi, the faujdar of the Nawab troops in Tirunelveli, to accompany him to Wadagarai to help Ensign Dawson.

On hearing the arrival of Major Donald Campbell at Palayamkottai, the Travancore forces made a hasty retreat with their whole force from Kalakkad. However, Campbell did not give up his intention of proceeding to Kalakkad. He, along with Bakshi, the faujdar, made a swift move to Kalakkad. The places of Kalakkad, Thirukurangudi and Panagudi were brought back under the control of the Nawab.

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Harper and Bakshi were placed there to lead the company and Nawab forces respectively.  

Major Donald Campbell went further and drove away the enemies beyond the lines of Aramboly. After driving away the Travancorean forces upto Aramboly, Campbell proceeded to Palayamkottai. He sent a detachment under Lt. Will Cook to Wadagarai to assist Ensign Dawson. He left Captain Harper in command of Kalakkad with six companies of British forces, a subaltern and the Nawab’s sepoys under the command of Bakshi. The impact of the campaign of Donald Campbell was so significant that the Travancore army never again invaded the Kalakkad Region.

On the night of June 9,1765, Major Donald Campbell returned to Palayamkottai. He sent six artillerymen to Captain Harper who was in control of Kalakkad. Campbell was suddenly ordered by the Madras Government to come back to Madurai.

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62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
While Major Donald Campbell stayed at Palayamkottai, the detachment under Lt. Will Cook, instead of proceeding to Wadagarai, returned to Palayamkottai as the enemies fled away from the region. He heard a complaint made by Nawab’s officers at Palayamkottai against Captain Frishman. Aphzul-din-Mohammed Khan, the Kiledar of Palayamkottai, had lodged a complaint that Captain Daniel Frishman, the Commandant at Palayamkottai, was quarrelsome. Lt. Will Cook sent for the Kotwal of Palayamkottai and slapped him without any reason. Captain Frishman was unaware of such a complaint.

Major Donald Campbell, Captain Frishman, Raja Hakumat Ram, Abdul Mehaboo Khan and Abhzual-din-Mohammed Khan discussed the reported interference of the Commandant at Palayamkottai in the business of the Nawab. However, it was found that it was done without the commandant’s knowledge.

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After having driven away successfully the Travancoreans, Major Donald Campbell returned to Madurai on June 12, having left a proper force to secure the Kalakkad Region. However, he suggested a peace settlement with the King of Travancore, which was essential for the effective administration of the Tirunelveli Region.

**Clash between the Commandant and the Amuldar**

Captain Frishman depended upon the Nawab’s agent for supplies. He made a complaint against the Nawab’s *amuldar* for not supplying the garrison with provisions. For the Palayamkottai Fort, wheat was sent by sea from Anjengo to the Dutch Settlement at Manapad. But the *amuldar* did not provide for the coolies and bullocks to carry away the wheat from Manapad. As the wheat was spoiled, the sepoys refused to eat it. Heavy duty was levied by Aphzul-din-Mohammed Khan, the *killedar* of Palayamkottai. Naturally nothing was brought to the bazaar for sale. There was scandalous management by the Nawab’s officers. The British sepoys at Palayamkottai was left half starved and they refused to obey the Commandant. The barracks of the British sepoys and the Nawab’s sepoys were to be rebuilt. Raja Hakumat Ram was informed of the repair works

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to be done in the barracks. Though he had promised to do something, no remedial action was initiated.\footnote{Ibid.}

**Military Rearrangement**

The Madras Government wanted to strengthen its southern military stations at Madurai and Palayamkottai. Both stations were provided with one battalion of sepoys. It was also agreed that for the head of each battalion of sepoys, there was to be one captain, one lieutenant and one ensign. Captain Harper was recommended for the Palayamkottai battalion of sepoys.\footnote{Robert Palk in Council, 20 October 1765, letter, M.C., Vol.23-B, 1765, pp.966-967.}

**Warning of Campbell**

Major Donald Campbell received an intelligence report that Hyder Ali, along with Maphuz Khan and King of Travancore, planned to attack the Tirunelveli Region and the King of Travancore had already encamped for this purpose.\footnote{Donald Campbell 15 December 1765, letter to Robert Palk in Council, M.C., Vol. 23-B, 1765, pp.1053-1055.}
New Military Arrangement

Major Donald Campbell was recalled to Madras from Madurai. By the resignation of Colonel Charles Campbell of Vellore, some military personnel received promotion. Major Donald Campbell was promoted as Colonel and he was posted to the command of the second regiment stationed at Vellore. Palayamkottai and Madurai came under the control of the third regiment stationed at Tiruchirappalli. Colonel John Wood was the Commandant of third regiment at Tiruchirappalli. Lt. Colonel De Beck was posted to the command of Madurai.

Peace with Travancore

The representatives of the Nawab of Arcot and the King of Travancore came to a settlement on December 14, 1766. On the part of the Nawab, he recognised the Western Ghats as the boundary between his Kingdom and the Kingdom of Travancore. On the part of King of Travancore, he renounced his claims over Kalakkad, paid 700 white Madurai chakrams for the pagodas of Kanyakumari and 3000 white Madurai chakrams for Shencottai and promised to pay two lakhs of Travancore chakrams for the arrears of tribute and loss caused in the

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Kalakkad Region. Besides, the King of Travancore promised to pay an annual tribute of 4000 Travancore chakrams as a vassal. In addition, the King promised to maintain friendship with the friends of the Nawab and enmity with the enemies of the Nawab.

The Treaty between the Nawab of Arcot and the King of Travancore was highly significant. It clearly demarcated the southern and western boundaries of the Tirunelveli Region, which was the southern province of the Nawab of Arcot. Besides, as the British were free from the war with Travancore, they were able to concentrate on the suppression of the rebellious Poligars. The trade and commercial link between the King of Travancore and the British was strengthened, leading to the appointment of a Commercial Resident at Palayamkottai.

Revolts of Poligars

Major Donald Campbell returned from Palayamkottai on June 12, 1765 after his successful campaign in the Tirunelveli region. Poligar troubles broke out a little more than a year after the return of Donald Campbell. On October 1766, the Western Poligars of Tirunelveli, gathering 20,000 armed colleries, captured Vasudevanallur and cut off

79. Ibid., pp.11-12.
80. Ibid., p.13.
communication with the agents of the Nawab in Tirunelveli.\(^{81}\) Thereafter they appeared very close to the Fort of Palayamkottai, roamed about and sacked every village they came across.\(^{82}\) Meanwhile Jegavira Pandiya Kattabomman, the Poligar of Panjalamkurichi, became rebellious and took the sircar posts in the eastern region.\(^{83}\)

Ensign Foulsum, the Commanding Officer in the Fort of Wadagarai, rushed to the support of the Nawab forces stationed at Vasudevanallur but in vain. For want of water, the Nawab forces had already left Vasudevanallur and surrendered the forces to the Poligars, before the arrival of Ensign Foulsum. Foulsum had to face a body of 12,000 Poligar men. Therefore he returned to his Fort at Wadagarai.

However, Captain Frishman acted promptly. He fitted out a strong force with artillery and 1000 cavalry and 4,000 Nawab’s sepoys under Bakshi, the Nawab’s faujdar in Tirunelveli, to reduce the Fort of Panjalamkurichi. The expedition was a thorough waste as the force did nothing but merely waiting outside the fort. The Nawab forces were ill-equipped and ill-disciplined.\(^{84}\) Hence Captain Frishman highlighted the necessity of undertaking a powerful expedition against the Poligars of

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\(^{84}\) Ibid.
Tirunelveli. Whenever the British troops were withdrawn, every petty Poligar exploited the opportunity for plundering. He complained that the Nawab forces were not co-operative and the payment of the troops was not proper.85

Expedition of Flint

Based on the report sent by Captain Frishman, the Madras Government decided to send a powerful expedition to the south under Major William Flint to reduce some of the more turbulent Poligars to submission. Accordingly, Flint marched to Srivilliputhur and then, proceeded to Kollamkondan in the Sivagiri area on December 23, 1766. On December 25, 1766, the attack of Kollamkondan Fort commenced but the fort was gallantly defended by the Poligar of Sivagiri and other Marava Poligars.86 The siege continued. Meanwhile, Major Flint sent an escort to Srivilliputhur for the procurement of supply of grains. But it was attacked by the Poligars and hence a stronger force had to be sent out to the support of the escort. But the combined British forces also came under attack and the attack continued at Kollamkondan.87

85 Ibid.
87 Ibid
On December 29, 1766, a breach was effected in the Fort of Kollamkondan. But the resistance was strong and resolute. The Poligar of Sivagiri had very little force but he was supported by reinforcements sent by other rebellious Poligars. The British forces attacked the fort for half an hour. They were unable to continue the encounter and therefore they returned with a considerable loss. Captain Painter and five Europeans were killed and many Europeans were wounded. Major William Flint made a hasty retreat to Rajapalayam. Captain Humphrey Harper, who accompanied Major Flint, was incharge of the rear guard of the retreating force. Major Flint retreated from Rajapalayam to Parambur. There he was joined by Bakshi, commanding the Nawab forces. Major Flint was supplied with two twelve pounders, two mortars and ammunition from Palayamkottai. The failure of Major William Flint encouraged the rebellious Poligars to be more independent.

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Arrival of Forces from England

To prevent the rebel activities of the Poligars, the British needed a strong force. The Chief of the Anjengo Factory informed Captain Daniel Frishman, who in turn informed the Madras Government through Colonel John Wood, the commandant of third regiment at Tiruchirappalli that the Devonshire Indiaman had landed with recruits from England at Anjengo who were bound for the Coromandel Coast and they would pass through Manapad, the Dutch settlement.\(^91\) Captain Frishman also received a packet which was a large box, sent by the Devonshire Indiaman to the Governor of Madras through the Anjengo Factory.\(^92\) While there was a proper communication between Anjengo and Palayamkottai, the communication between Palayamkottai and Madurai was entirely stopped.\(^93\) The condition was so critical that Frishman could not send even a small despatch to Madurai by taking risk. Frishman promised to send the packet with a long letter at the first safe despatch.\(^94\)

Robert Palk, the Governor of Madras, ordered the box to be sent to Madurai and from Madurai to Madras, escorted by Major William Flint up to Madurai, in order to safeguard the consignment from falling into the

\(^92\) Ibid.
hands of rebel Poligars. The recruits from Anjengo were to be kept in a state of readiness in the Fort of Palayamkottai until further orders. Colonel John Wood was directed to provide clothing for the new recruits. As per the orders, Col. John Wood sent ninety coats and other clothing from Tiruchirappalli to Palayamkottai. Meanwhile Captain Daniel Frishman informed the Chief of Anjengo Factory to send the recruits to the harbour at Vijayapathi. He also sent Lt. Mackenize to Vijayapathi, the place appointed for the landing of the recruits, with a company of sepoys, who stayed there for fifteen days, to receive the recruits from Anjengo.

**Attack on Ettaiyapuram**

Having failed to capture Kollamkondan, Major William Flint intended to attack the Eattaiyapuram Pollam. He was well supplied with heavy guns and ammunition. The Madras Government hoped that he would be successful against the forts in the Ettaiyapuram area. At that
time, there were three important forts in the Ettaiyapuram region, namely, Ettaiyapuram, Vaipar and Panjalamkurichi. Major Flint intended to besiege and attack the Fort of Panjalamkurichi because it was a fort of high strategic value. On February 11, 1767, Major Flint endeavoured to capture Panjalamkurichi by assault. Thereupon he opened the battery. A breach was made at six in the morning. The attack continued till five past in the evening. As he could not capture the Fort, he turned the siege into a blockade. But during the night, the rebels made their escape. In the encounter, eight Europeans were killed and eighteen were wounded. The number of killed and wounded were ninety-two on the side of the Poligar.

On the evening of February 12, 1767, the rebels attacked the marching British troops. But they failed and hence they fled to Tuticorin and Vaipar. The fort of Panjalamkurichi came under the control of the British. Major Flint did not want to destroy the fort of Panjalamkurichi as it was situated on a fine open country which abounded in grain. Major William intended to capture Vaipar also after he had reduced Ettaiyapuram. He sent back the two twelve pounders to Palayamkottai and Vaipar fell easily as the rebels left it. Ettaiyapuram had to be attacked next but he had abandoned the idea of

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102. Ibid.
capturing it. On hearing the early unsuccessful attempts of Major Flint, Colonel Wood requested the services of Colonel Donald Campbell, the Commandant of the second regiment at Vellore, to chastise the Tirunelveli Poligars as he was an experienced campaigner.

Before the arrival of Campbell, certain measures were undertaken to strengthen the British military system. Archdale Palmer, the Paymaster at Madurai and Palayamkottai, sent an indent for medicines for the garrisons which were promised to be delivered by the Madras Government. The third regiment was improved with six battalions of sepoys and one grenadier company, which should be kept in the Forts of Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Palayamkottai. Major William Flint was asked to move to Koilpatti, leaving a small garrison in the Forts of Panjalamkurichi and Vaipar. Major Flint made the following arrangements in the forts of Panjalamkurichi and Vaipar.

4 companies of sepoys

200 colleries

4 little pieces of cannon

under a subaltern at Panjalamkurichi

2 companies of sepoys

few colleries

under a subaltern at Vaipar

He then moved to Koilpatti and waited there for further orders with the following forces.\textsuperscript{109}

3 companies of sepoys

A sergeant with a few colleries

4 small pieces of cannons

**Reinforcements from Vellore**

To quell the disturbances caused by the Poligars in the Madurai and Tirunelveli Provinces, Charles Bourchier, the Governor of Madras, had ordered a detachment of 100 Europeans from Vellore to Tiruchirappalli.\textsuperscript{110} It was further recommended that Major William Flint should be placed in command of 400 Europeans, including 100 Europeans from Vellore, 2500 sepoys and 6 field pieces.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
By the swift movement of Major Flint, the Poligars of Panjalamkurichi and Vaipar and the region to the eastward of the road from Madurai to Palayamkottai abandoned their places. But no severe step was taken to quell the rebellions in future.¹¹¹

**Cantonment at Sattur**

The entire distance between Madurai and Palayamkottai was not protected by forces and the Poligars were tempted to exploit this unprotected territory. They created disturbances in the areas between Madurai and Tirunelveli. In order to arrest the rebel activities in future, the Madras Government thought it necessary to establish a cantonment at Sattur on the banks of Vaipar river. It was a very convenient place as it occupied a central location between Madurai and Tirunelveli and it is an area where the Poligars were most likely to be troublesome. The Madras Government recommended a strong force in the Sattur cantonment which included 200 Europeans, 4 battalions of sepoys, 4 field pieces and some of the Nawab’s black horses.¹¹²

The enhanced strength of forces at Sattur enabled the British to take over Panjalamkurichi and Vaipar Pollams. To retrieve their Pollams, the Poligars sent their vakils to Colonel John Wood. They were desirous of making peace with the Nawab in the Tirunelveli Region. But Colonel

¹¹² Ibid.
Wood did not give any place to these Poligar’s *vakils*.\(^{113}\) Hence a complaint was lodged by the Nawab’s agents against the Colonel with the Madras Government. The Madras Government responded by informing Colonel Wood about its intention to support the authority of the Nawab.\(^{114}\)

**Expedition of Campbell**

Colonel Wood recommended Colonel Donald Campbell, the Commandant of the second regiment at Vellore, to lead a punitive mission against the rebel Poligars. The Madras Government appointed Donald Campbell to command the troops in the Tirunelveli Region.\(^{115}\)

On April 23, 1767, Colonel Donald Campbell sent Captain Desmond to Srivilliputhur for securing supply. Captain Humphrey Harper joined Campbell on April 21, with two companies from Madurai. On April 24, he reached Rajapalayam.\(^{116}\) On April 25, he left Rajapalayam and reached Kollamkondan the next day. The main object of the Colonel was to arrest the ring leaders and thereby he wanted to prevent the defenders of the fort from escaping. This was necessary because the escaped rebels would rebuild the destroyed fort at less expense. He waited for a day


before the Kollamkondan Fort and tried to find out a device for cutting off
the retreat of the rebels. But he was greatly disappointed to find the fort
abandoned even before he opened fire on the morning of May 1, 1767.117

Colonel Donald Campbell was instructed to visit all the forts in the
Madurai and Tirunelveli Provinces and to give directions for levelling all
such forts which were not essential for the protection of the region.118 The
Madras Government wished that the Poligars submitted peacefully to the
Nawab and promised obedience in future on condition that they
demolished their strongholds.119

After levelling the Fort of Kollamkondan, Colonel Donald
Campbell marched to Seithur on May 3, 1767. Campbell faced a
considerable force stationed outside the Fort of Seithur. A fighting took
place in which the colleries were defeated. Two officers were wounded.
Three sepoys were killed. The loss was heavy on the side of the Poligar.
Eight Poligar men were killed and more than hundred of them wounded.
On losing the fight, the Poligar men retreated into the Fort of Seithur.120
Colonel Donald Campbell wanted to take the ring leaders as captives. He
posted guards all around the fort and opened cannon fire. On fearing that

117. Donald Campbell, 1 May 1767, letter to Charles Bouchier in Council,
118. Charles Bouchier in Council, 21 May 1767, letter, M.C., Vol.26-B, 1767,
p.476.
119. Ibid.
120. Donald Campbell, 7 May 1767, letter to Charles Bouchier in Council,
they were about to be hemmed in, the *colleries* escaped on the night of May 3, 1767. Soon after their escape, Campbell sent Captain Harper's battalion and the Nawab's horse under Bakshi.\(^{121}\) The Fort of Seithur was as large as the Fort of Palayamkottai. The task of destroying the fort was a hard one. People were employed on demolition work, day and night, relieved every twelve hours. The forces commanded by Colonel Donald Campbell stayed in the hills near Seithur.\(^{122}\) The work of destroying the Fort of Seithur was completed on May 9, 1767. Starting from Seithur early in the morning of May 10, Colonel Donald Campbell arrived at Sivagiri where he found the fort abandoned by the Poligar.\(^{123}\)

After the abandonment of the fort, the *colleries* of the Poligar moved to the adjacent hills where the harvest season made it totally inaccessible to any but to them. Sivagiri was inhabited by 20,000 people. When Donald Campbell arrived, there were neither men, women or children.\(^{124}\) The Sivagiri Fort was larger than Seithur. The bastions were capacious and regular with a parapet five feet thick and loopholes to fire through. The works were entirely new and some parts of it were unfinished. There was a wet ditch with bamboo hedge which surrounded the fort. Had a little more time been allowed, the fort would have been

\(^{121}\) Ibid.
\(^{122}\) Ibid.
\(^{124}\) Ibid.
rendered impregnable. The countryside of Sivagiri was the most beautiful and delightful.

Colonel Donald Campbell began to level the Fort of Sivagiri on the morning of May 11, 1767. On May 12, Campbell received a message that the Fort of Vasudevanallur was abandoned. On May 13, Major William Flint was left behind at Sivagiri to follow the work of demolition. Major Flint completed the work and joined Colonel Donald Campbell at Vasudevanallur on the morning of May 17, 1767.

On his arrival at Vasudevanallur, Colonel Donald Campbell discovered that instead of running away, the rebels had taken great pains to strengthen the fortification. A French four pounder was upon one of their bastions and a Malabar gun upon another. With these, they fired upon the camp of Campbell. As the rear was all wooded, Campbell opened fire upon the fort in the night from the bushes.

The fort was immediately surrounded. On the night of May 17, the collieries made an attempt to get away but were soon beaten back. On May 18, Captain Harper commenced a cannonade on the fort with the hope of effecting a breach but in vain. In the meantime, heavy rain also started.

125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
128. Ibid
129. Ibid.
Taking advantage of the situation, the **colleries** forced their way out through three different directions about four in the morning. They retired to the adjacent hills. On May 19, the fort was captured. The loss of rebels in the fort was considerable.\(^\text{130}\)

The work of demolition was ordered for the fort at Vasudevanallur. Peaceful conditions were established from the areas of Wadagarai and Kalakkad, all the way to Palayamkottai. Colonel Donald Campbell wanted to go back in the same route through which he made his second campaign.\(^\text{131}\)

The Tirunelveli Region in the east became very quiet and the keeping a garrison at Panjalamkurichi was unjustified. Therefore Campbell opined that the Nawab should demolish the Fort of Panjalamkurichi. He also recommended the demolition of the Fort at Thirukurangudi as it was very close to Kalakkad. Garrisoning the Fort would require a number of men, who might be better employed at other places.\(^\text{132}\)

Colonel Donald Campbell recommended Sankarankoil to be the most commodious cantonment. He considered Sankarankoil because it had

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\(^{132}\) Ibid.
a large **pagoda** and a town situated in a free open country, fifty miles west from Tirunelveli, thirty two miles east from Wadagarai, twelve miles north from Vasudevanallur and twenty two miles south from Sivagiri. It was well inhabited and the choultries close to the **pagoda** could accommodate more than 2000 men. From there, the communication was easier to Palayamkottai and Tirunelveli. The Madras Government also approved the cantonment to be created at Sankarankoil and Colonel Donald Campbell was directed to send the complement of men and horses necessary for the purpose. Donald Campbell left Vasudevanallur and halted at Sivagiri on June 2, 1767. On June 3, he reached Kollankondan. On reaching Sankarankoil, he kept Captain Humphrey Harper at Sankarankoil to be the Commandant. He also ordered the construction of quarters and hospital for the cantonment in Sankarankoil. He kept at Sankarankoil a British force containing 200 Europeans, 4 field pieces, lascars, coolies, ammunitions and bullocks. After giving proper instructions to Captain Harper, Donald Campbell left for Palayamkottai.

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136. Ibid.
on June 14, 1767. On the way, he visited Panjalamkurichi and Vaipar and on June 30, he reached Palayamkottai.

Settlement with Poligars

The campaign of Donald Campbell was followed by a peaceful settlement. Campbell found out that the Poligars revolted primarily because of the Nawab’s oppressive policy. The Nawab’s agent demanded too much from the Poligars and therefore they revolted. Colonel Donald Campbell felt that the situation in the Tirunelveli Region would become critical as Hyder Ali made incursions into the Central Carnatic. He felt that the conclusion of terms of peace with the defeated Poligars was essential. Therefore he restored the Pollams of Sivagiri, Seithur and Wadagarai to their former chieftains and settled the revenue accounts with them. But he did not conclude any such agreement with the Pollam of Panjalamkurichi. On account of the settlement of Donald Campbell, peace spread to the Tirunelveli Region.

137. Ibid.
Trouble Again

With the withdrawal of the forces of Colonel Donald Campbell, the Poligars again revolted and thus rendered the pacification of Campbell short-lived. The Poligars refused to pay the tribute they had agreed to.\textsuperscript{142} The most turbulent was the Poligar of Sivagiri. With the help of Raja Hakumat Ram, the \textit{amuldar} of the Nawab at Tirunelveli, Captain Daniel Frishman compelled the Poligars to come to terms again. They were helped by the Poligar of Wadagarai who was restored by Colonel Donald Campbell. Raja Hakumat Ram also banished the Poligars of Sivagiri and Panjalamkurichi and appointed new Poligars in their places.\textsuperscript{143}

Outbreak of the First Mysore War

The First Anglo Mysore War broke out in August 1767. Hyder Ali, the Ruler of the Mysore Kingdom, took the offensive and invaded the Carnatic.\textsuperscript{144} He wanted to enlist support for himself throughout the length and breadth of the Nawab’s domain. Therefore he sent messages to the

\textsuperscript{142} Daniel Frishman, 2 August 1767, letter to Charles Bourchier, M.C., Vol.27, 1767, p.756.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Venkata Ramanappa, M.N., \textit{Outlines of South Indian History}, Delhi, 1971, p.208.
Poligars of the Tirunelveli Region to join him against the Nawab and the British. They were promised rich reward of additional villages.  

Alarmed at the rise of Hyder Ali, the British undertook appropriate steps. In January, Colonel John Wood encamped at Pallipettai to meet the forces of Hyder Ali. Major Flint was commanding the forces at Tiruchirappalli and Lt. Col. De Beck, the Commandant at Madurai, was to assist him. The Madras Government sent Capt. George Brown to relieve Capt. Daniel Frishman from the command of the fort and garrison of Palayamkottai. Capt. Frishman was ordered to furnish Capt. Brown necessary information regarding the Poligars of Tirunelveli which might enable him to assist Raja Hakumat Ram, Nawab’s Manager in Tirunelveli, in keeping the Poligars in continued subjugation. He was also to pass on the instruction as he had received from the Madras Government. After transferring the Command to Capt. Brown, Capt. Daniel Frishman was ordered to proceed to join the army under Col. Joseph Smith, the Commander of the First Regiment, who was leading the British Army of Madras against Hyder Ali. Thus the first commandant at Palayamkottai was appointed by the Madras Government through Major Daniel Frishman, 2 September 1767, letter to Charles Bourchier in Council, M.C., Vol.27, 1767, p.865.

Donald Campbell and the second commandant at Palayamkottai was appointed directly.

The Government of Bombay informed the Madras Government about their moves against Hyder Ali during the First Mysore War. The Chief of Anjengo despatched a letter to Col. Joseph Smith through Palayamkottai. It advised the capture of Mangalore and Hyder Ali's fleet with the help of troops from Bombay.\(^\text{147}\) During the First Anglo-Mysore War, Palayamkottai served as a link of communication between the Governments of Madras and Bombay. Utilising the diversion of British forces towards Hyder Ali, Kamlya Naick, a Chieftain in Tirunelveli Region, tried to rebuild a fort destroyed by them. Captain George Brown sent three companies of sepoys, with a sergeant, to foil the attempt.\(^\text{148}\) Thus the British demonstrated to the Poligars that they were alert to any situation emerging out of the rise of Hyder Ali.

Col. Joseph Smith, along with the assistance of Col. John Wood, prepared himself to meet Hyder Ali in the First Anglo-Mysore War by placing troops at Pallipettai, Dharmapuri and Salem.\(^\text{149}\) Lt. Col. De Beck


of Madurai and Maj. William Flint of Tiruchirappalli were ordered to take possession of Coimbatore and Dindigul Areas. In August 1768, Madras Government ordered Capt. Brown to send troops and artillery to reinforce Colonel John Wood who was in trouble. But Capt. George Brown could not comply with the orders of the Government. A large body of collieries, some eight or nine thousand in number, assembled under the pretence of settling some disputes among themselves in Tirunelveli Region. Their real purpose was to plunder the sircar territories. This was the reason Captain Brown could not support Col. John Wood with reinforcements.

The Poligars of Sivagiri and Panjalamkurichi, deposed by Raja Hakumat Ram, the Nawab’s amuldar, were in exile in Ramnad. As they received encouragement from the Poligar of Ramnad, they created disturbances in the areas of Sivagiri and Panjalamkurichi. The Madras Government warned the Poligar of Ramnad for giving his help to the deposed Poligars.

151 George Brown, 8 August 1768, letter to the Governor in Council, M.C., Vol.29-B, 1768, p.1012.