

Government of Madras.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

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} 1915.

Enclosures

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G.O. No. 942, 27th August 1915.

Report.

Recording the — of the Dyeing Expert for the quarter ending 30th June 1915.

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EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper:—

Letter—from K. T. B. TRESSLER, Esq., Director of Industries.
To—the Secretary to Government, Educational Department.
Dated—Madras, the 21st/26th July 1915.
No.—B-2.

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of Dr. F. Marsden, the Dyeing Expert, for the period April to June 1915.

ENCLOSURE.

Letter—from Dr. F. MARSDEN, Dyeing Expert to the Government of Madras.
To—the Director of Industries.

I have the honour to submit my report for the period April—June 1915.

The scarcity of dyes was becoming so pronounced in the early part of the year that it appeared imperatively necessary to find some means of obtaining colouring matters and especially to push the use of indigenous materials. I obtained through one of the Madras firms samples (with prices) of some of the materials available but it was only in the case of safflower that there seemed any possibility of extended use. The Government Economic Botanist at Pusa has been conducting an investigation upon the different varieties of safflower and their value and I was pleased to receive large samples of a number of varieties from him for a report upon their dyeing value. Examination showed that there was a wide variation in the dyestuff content of the flowers from various species and that the valuation of the flowers would be a matter of some difficulty. The price quoted for the mercantile sample was taken as standard and comparative dyetrials made, and from these it was plain that from the point of view of price alone the natural safflower could not compete with the synthetic dyes which had displaced it. Before the war the best of these dyes was selling at Re. 1 to Rs. 1-2-0 per lb. and to get the same effect at least 100 lb. of safflower would have to be used costing according to the market quotation Rs. 50 as a minimum. The delicacy of the shade and the readiness with which it is altered by various influences is also against it and the aniline dye being much cheaper, faster and available in standard qualities will always be given a preference by the dyer.

The lack of fastness of safflower dyeings and the impossibility of obtaining any depth of shade will under any circumstances militate against the extended use of this material in the South of India.

There seems to be little or no possibility of getting sufficient quantities of the alizarine containing red dyeing roots to make up for the shortage of imported synthetic alizarine and the reports from Madura dyers who made attempts to use the roots were not promising, even if they could be collected in sufficient quantity. The purity of the shade obtained was not equal to the demands of the market and the quantity of root which had to be used to get the required depth of shade was so great as to make the process cumbersome. In the end the stock of roots was used up for the preliminary operations and the dyeing was finished off with alizarine.

A sample of Munjeet was received from Northern India and tested but the shade would find no market in the south and the quantity offered was so small as to be negligible.

In fact dyers have become so used to the imported dyes that except in a few special industries we are entirely dependant upon the factory made product and it is unfortunate that the dyestuff factories find it impossible at the present moment to meet the demands made upon them. The latest reports I have seen indicate that even in Germany, dyeing concerns are having to shut down owing to inability to obtain dyestuff supplies and in other countries the position appears to be almost as acute as it is in India.

The conditions at Home appear to have been such that the hopes based upon the early representations to the Board of Trade were impossible of realisation, for the demand for war material has necessitated the works which might have supplied our industrial needs restricting if anything instead of increasing their output. In the case of dyes this is decidedly unfortunate for the German products held the world's markets and would have continued to do so against normal competition, largely because the agents and distributors had reported upon the demands of the market and the products, in quality and make up, met these demands.

These are important points, as evidenced by an incident during the period under review when at my suggestion attempts were made to obtain supplies of certain dyes which ought to have found a ready sale. Small quantities of the dyes were reported as available at high prices, but nothing was done as the merchants here would not risk purchasing until they had information as to the nature of the packing and the degree of strength of the dye. The saleability largely depended upon these two points and the German firms had devoted no little attention to the style and decoration of their packages and their tickets and trade marks were well known in the bazaar.

Any new firm coming in will have to devote both time and money to getting its products taken up and the opportunity which offers for English-made dyes to become known here is one which should not be lost. The formation of the new British Dyes Company seemed to be the time to bring this question of the importance of the Indian market before the Directors, but the scheme whereby subscribers would have first call upon the products of the company is not one which would be of any use to Indian consumers. The Mills and Joint Stock Companies might be able and willing to subscribe for the sake of getting their supplies, but the ordinary Indian dyer is not a capitalist and has no idea of any other method of purchase than going to the bazaar and purchasing what is available there.

I met some representative dyers, to place the circular and prospectus before them and was not surprised at their attitude, which was that any man who had money to spare would not put it out to bring in some 6 per cent. only, when by lending it in the bazaar he got a minimum of 15 per cent. I could not impress them by stating what I could not guarantee—that subscribers would obtain the dyes they required—and I could hold out no hope that the assistance guaranteed by the Home Government would give us in India any claim to any portion of the outturn of the company.

This company however is the only one I think from which we can hope to obtain any supplies of aniline dyestuffs. So I wrote to the Chairman drawing the attention of the Directors to the market which was waiting for them in India, giving information as to the general manner in which the trade had been conducted and mentioning the dyestuffs which would find a ready sale, the plant for the manufacture of which I knew was available in Messrs. Read Holliday & Sons' works. I also wrote a personal letter to the Chairman placing before him the parlous condition of Indian dyers owing to the lack of material, and the impossibility of them finding employment in other directions, and requested him to use his influence to have regular shipments of certain dyes forwarded through a well-known firm and on this side we would develop an organization for distribution direct to dyers, eliminating the possibility of resale and thus prevent, with respect to these consignments, the speculation which is at present rampant.

A correspondent in Bombay in touch with the trade informed me that there were stocks there at the end of April sufficient for three or four months, but that speculation had driven up the prices to a phenomenal figure. The prices quoted were such that it was unthinkable that any remunerative dyeing could be done and the dyestuff business there appears to be nothing but a gamble. About this time certain enemy ships which had been captured, had been dealt with by a Prize Court and had come forward to India to discharge cargo consigned here. This included dyestuffs, and the Governments of Bombay and Madras were moved to take over these portions of the cargo for distribution; the idea did not find favour and the consignees may be expected to make huge profits, as is evident from the statements made in the law-suit which arose over part of one of these consignments between an importer and his customer.

It is alizarine which is in greatest demand here, and all attempts to get supplies from the British Alizarine Company have been unsuccessful. The Licence Scheme of the Board of Trade has not had any material effect and owing to the demand for war material the company has been unable to increase its normal output or carry out the extensions which it contemplated. The impossibility of obtaining regular supplies has reacted upon prices and casks which before the war sold at Rs. 320 are now quoted at Rs. 6,000 and more.

During the period under review the enquiries made to me have mainly referred to materials and sources of supply. One case however again illustrated how universally the faulty method of dyeing indigo upon wool (and which I have so often referred to) is employed. It can only be because the dyers largely depend upon what has been handed down to them, and what they hear, and have no acquaintance with books and the literature of their subject. The complaint was that the indigo dyeing was not fast to a special "wash" and I was called upon to explain why. Enquiry showed that the preliminary treatment of the indigo with vitriol was the only method of dyeing practised there for wool, and that the fermentation or vat method, by which alone fast indigo dyeings can be produced, had been quite forgotten. I supplied a full description of the process suited to local conditions and have since received appreciative letters informing me that the results were now good.

Order—No. 942, Educational, dated 27th August 1915.

Recorded.

(True Extract.)

C. G. TODHUNTER,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Industries.
Editors' Table.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. No. 942, EDUCATIONAL, DATED
27TH AUGUST 1915.

[SUBJECT.—Quarterly report of Dr. Marsden, the Dyeing Expert.]

From the Director of Industries, No. B-2, dated 21st July 1915.

Submitted that the report may be circulated to His Excellency the Governor for perusal.

2. A draft order recording the report is submitted. It is for orders whether as usual the report may be placed on Editors' Table.

S.K.—5-8-15.

C.R.—6-8-15.

C. G. TODHUNTER—6-8-15.

P[ENTLAND]—7-8-15.

* This case was linked with the note written on certain points discussed with the Hon'ble Sir William Clark, Member of the Viceroy's Council.

For orders whether the draft may now * issue.

S.K.—25-8-15.

C.R.—25-8-15.

Issue.

C.G.T.—26-8-15.

[G.O. No. 942, Educational, dated 27th August 1915.]

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C. No. 2604, From the S.S., No. B2, dated 21. 7. 1915

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ORDER.

No. 74200, dated 27. 8 1915

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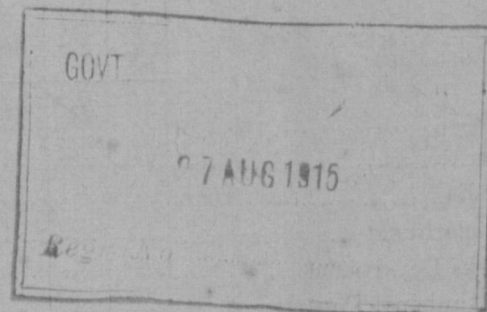
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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS.

Report

Recording the report of the Dyceing Expert for the quarter ending 30th June 1915.



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