M.R.O. 14—13,000—27-9-24

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 1156 Press ~~Mis.~~

457 - 458

Dated 24 - 5 - 1862.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 24th May 1862.

No. 457. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 1st May 1862, No. 2,755:—

Read the following letter from E. B. THOMAS, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, to W. HUDLESTON, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Madras, dated Ootacamund, 16th April 1862, No. 87.

SIR,

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Order of Government, dated 28th February 1862, No. 436, communicated in the Board's Miscellaneous Circular of the 11th ultimo, No. 1,612, I have the honor to forward copy of letter from Mr. W. G. McIvor, dated 12th instant, No. 122, with its original enclosure containing the information called for on the Neilgherry Nettle.

From W. G. McIVOR, Esq., Superintendent Government Cinchona Plantations, to E. B. THOMAS, Esq, Collector of Coimbatore, dated Ootacamund, 12th April 1862, No. 122.

SIR,

With reference to your letter of the 1st instant, No. 129, and the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 23rd January 1862, No. 556A; I have the honor to enclose herewith a Report on the Neilgherry Nettle, supplying the particulars of cultivation, produce per acre, and mode of preparation of the fibre. This report is necessarily imperfect in some of the details, as I have only cultivated the plant to a limited extent.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) E. B. THOMAS, Collector.

Report on the Neilgherry fibre, producing Nettle Urtica Heterophylla.

In compliance with the Order of Government Revenue Department, under date the 28th February, No. 436, paragraph 3, I have the honor to submit the following brief remarks on the cultivation of the Neilgherry Nettle and preparation of the fibre.

Cultivation.—The Neilgherry Nettle has been described as an annual plant; it has however proved at least in cultivation to be a perennial, continuing to throw out fresh shoots from the roots and stems with unabated vigour for a period of three or four years, the mode of cultivation therefore best suited to the plant, is to treat it as a perennial by sowing the seeds in rows at fifteen inches apart, and cutting down the young shoots for the fibre twice a year, viz., in July and January. When planted in rich, damp soil, the shoots cut in July will generally average a height of four feet, while the shoots cut in January will average from five to six feet in height. The soil best suited to the growth of this plant is found in ravines which has received for years the deposit of alluvial soils washed down from the neighbouring slopes. In cutting off the first shoots from the seedling crop about six inches of the stem is left above the ground; this forms "*stools*" from which fresh shoots for the succeeding crops are produced; after each cutting the earth is dug over between the rows to the depth of about eight inches, and where manure can be applied it is very advantageous when dug into the soil between the rows with this operation. When the shoots have once begun to grow, no further cultivation can be applied as it is quite impossible for to go in among the plants owing to their stinging property. The plant is indigenous or growing wild all over the Neilgherries at elevations varying from 4,000 to 8,000 feet and this indicates the temperature best suited to the perfect development of the fibre.

Produce per acre.—From the crop of July an average produce of from 450 to 500 lbs. of clean fibre per acre may be expected. Of this quantity about 120 lbs. will be a very superior quality; this is obtained from the young and tender shoots which should be placed by themselves during the operation of cutting. The crop of January will yield on an average 6 or 700 lbs. per acre, but the fibre of this crop is all of a uniform and somewhat coarse quality owing to the shoots being matured by the setting in of the dry season in December. It might, therefore, be advantageous where fine quality of fibre only was required for to cut the shoots more frequently, probably three or four times in the year as only the finest quality of fibre is produced from young and tender shoots.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 24th May 1862.

Preparation of the Fibre.—Our experiments being limited, our treatment of the fibre has been necessarily very rude and imperfect as in this respect only in extensive cultivation can efficient appliances be obtained.

The inner bark of the whole of the plant abounds in fibre, that of the young shoots being the finest and strongest, while that of the old stems is comparatively short and coarse, but still producing a fibre of very great strength and of a peculiar silky and woolly-like appearance, and one which no doubt will prove very useful in manufactories.

For cutting down the crop fine weather is selected and the shoots when cut are allowed to remain as they fall for two or three days, by which time they are sufficiently dry to have lost their stinging properties; they are, however, pliable enough to allow of the bark being easily pealed off the stems and separated from the leaves; the bark thus taken from the stems is tied up in small bundles and dried in the sun, if the weather is fine, if wet, is dried in an open shed with a free circulation of air, when quite dry, the bark is slightly beaten with a wooden mallet which causes the outer bark of that in which there is no fibre to break and fall off. The fibrous part of the bark is then wrapped up in small bundles and boiled for about an hour in water to which a small quantity of wood-ashes has been added in order to facilitate the separation of the woody matter from the fibre; the fibre is then removed out of the boiling water and washed as rapidly as possible in a clear running stream, after which it is submitted to the usual bleaching process employed in the manufacture of fibre from flax or hemp.

Submitted for the information of Government, with reference to paragraph 3 of their Order quoted by the Collector.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL, *Sub-Secretary.*

No. 458. ORDER THEREON, 24th May 1862, No. 1,156.

Recorded with reference to Government Order 6th May 1862, No. 987.

(Signed) P. P. HUTCHINS,

Acting Deputy Secretary to Government.

No. 2,755.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 1st May 1862.

Read the following letter from E B. THOMAS, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, to W. HUDLESTON, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Madras, dated Ootacamund, 16th April 1862, No. 87:—

With reference to paragraph 3 of the Order of Government, dated 28th February 1862, No. 436, communicated in the Board's Miscellaneous Circular of the 11th ultimo, No. 1,612, I have the honor to forward copy of letter from Mr. W. G. McIvor, dated 12th instant, No. 122, with its original enclosure containing the information called for on the Neilgherry Nettle.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From W. G. McIVOR, Esq., Superintendent Government Cinchona Plantations, to E. B. THOMAS, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, dated Ootacamund, 12th April 1862, No. 122.

With reference to your letter of the 1st instant, No. 129, and the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 23rd January 1862, No. 556 A; I have the honor to enclose herewith a Report on the Neilgherry Nettle, supplying the particulars of cultivation, produce per acre, and mode of preparation of the fibre. This report is necessarily imperfect in some of the details, as I have only cultivated the plant to a limited extent.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) E. B. THOMAS, Collector.

ENCLOSURE No. 2.

Report on the Neilgherry fibre, producing Nettle Urtica Heterophylla.

In compliance with the Order of Government, Revenue Department, under date the 28th February, No. 436, paragraph 3, I have the honor to submit the following brief remarks on the cultivation of the Neilgherry Nettle and preparation of the fibre.

Cultivation.—The Neilgherry Nettle has been described as an annual plant; it has however proved at least in cultivation to be a perennial, continuing to throw out fresh shoots from the roots and stems with unabated vigour for a period of three or four years, the mode of cultivation therefore best suited to the plant, is to treat it as a perennial by sowing the seeds in rows at fifteen inches apart, and cutting down the young shoots for the fibre twice a year, viz., in July and January. When planted in rich, damp soil, the shoots cut in July will generally average a height of four feet, while the shoots cut in January will average from five to six feet in height. The soil best suited to the growth of this plant is found in ravines which has received for years the deposit of alluvial soils washed down from the neighbouring slopes. In cutting off the first shoots from the seedling crop about six inches of the stem is left above the ground; this forms "*stools*" from which fresh shoots for the succeeding crops are produced; after each cutting the earth is dry over between the rows to the depth of about eight inches, and where manure can be applied it is very advantageous when dug into the soil between the rows with this operation. When the shoots have once begun to grow, no further cultivation can be applied as it is quite impossible for to go in among the plants owing to their stinging property. The plant is indigenous or growing wild all over the Neilgherries at elevations varying from 4,000 to 8,000 feet and this indicates the temperature best suited to the perfect development of the fibre.

Produce per acre.—From the crop of July an average produce of from 450 to 500 lbs. of clean fibre per acre may be expected. Of this quantity about 120 lbs. will be a very superior quality; this is obtained from the young and tender shoots which should be placed by themselves during the operation of cutting. The crop of January will yield on an average 6 or 700 lbs. per acre, but the fibre of this crop is all of a uniform and somewhat coarse quality owing to the shoots being matured by the setting in of the dry season in December. It might, therefore, be advantageous where fine quality of fibre only was required for to cut the shoots more frequently, probably three or four times in the year as only the finest quality of fibre is produced from young and tender shoots.

Preparation of the fibre.—Our experiments being limited, our treatment of the fibre has been necessarily very rude and imperfect as in this respect only in extensive cultivation can efficient appliances be obtained.

The inner bark of the whole of the plant abounds in fibre, that of the young shoots being the finest and strongest, while that of the old stems is comparatively short and coarse, but still producing a fibre of very great strength and of a peculiar silky and woolly-like appearance, and one which no doubt will prove very useful in manufactories.

For cutting down the crop fine weather is selected and the shoots when cut are allowed to remain as they fall for two or three days, by which time they are sufficiently dry to have lost their stinging properties; they are, however, appliable enough to allow of the bark being easily pealed off the stems and separated from the leaves; the bark thus taken from the stems is tied up in small bundles and dried in the sun, if the weather is fine, if wet, is dried in an open shed with a free circulation of air, when quite dry, the bark is slightly beaten with a wooden mallet which causes the outer bark of that in which there is no fibre to break and fall off. The fibrous part of the bark is then wrapped up in small bundles and boiled for about an hour in water to which a small quantity of wood-ashes has been added in order to facilitate the separation of the woody matter from the fibre; the fibre is then removed out of the boiling water and washed as rapidly as possible in a clear running stream, after which it is submitted to the usual bleaching process employed in the manufacture of fibre from flax or hemp.

(Signed) W. G. McIVOR,
Superintendent Government Gardens.

OOTACAMUND, 12th April 1862.

Submitted for the information of Government, with reference to paragraph 3 of their Order quoted by the Collector.

(True Copies and Extract.)

Sub-Secretary.

To J. D. Sim, Esq., Secretary to Government, R. D.
Copy to E. B. Thomas, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore.
" Revd. J. R. Macfarlane, M.A., Honorary Secretary Agri-Horticultural Society.

Extd. J. Wright.

No. 28 Jdy/62 No. Jul 85 549

Read 1862. Department.
Letter from Collector of Coimbatore dated 24th May 1862 No. 1345.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Dated 1st May 1862.
Despatched.
Received.

No. 2,755.

Submitting for information letter from Collector of Coimbatore forwarding report from the Superintendent of Government Cinchona Plantations on the Neilgherry Nettle.