

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.C. No. 1503	Press Mis.
103-1524	
Dated	10-7-1862

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th July 1862.*

No. 153. Read the following letter from W. G. McIVOR, Esq., Superintendent Government Chinchona Plantation, to P. P. HUTCHINS, Esq., Acting Deputy Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Ootacamund 26th June 1862, No. 15:—

SIR,

With reference to the Order of Government No. 1,296, I have the honor to inform you that I forwarded to the Board of Revenue on the 12th April 1862, a brief Report on the cultivation of the Neilgherry nettle, a copy of which I beg to enclose for the information of Government.

Report on the Neilgherry Fibre producing Nettle, Urtica Heterophylla.

1. 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.

2. *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 vigor 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 15 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 4 feet in height, while the shoots cut in January will average from 5 to 6 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 6 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 8 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 farther cultivation can be applied, as it is quite impossible 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 to 8,000 feet, and this indicates the temperature best suited to the perfect developement of the fibre.

3. *Produce per acre.*—From the crop of July an average produce of from 450 to 500 lbs of clear fibre per acre may be expected. Of this quantity about 120 lbs. will be of 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, 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.

4. *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.

5. 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.

6. 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 barks being easily peeled 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, it 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

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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 matters 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.

(True Copy.)

GOVERNMENT GARDENS,
Ootacamund,
12th April 1862.

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

No. 154.

ORDER THEREON, 10th July 1862, No. 1,503.

The report submitted with the foregoing letter will be laid on the Editors' table for the information of the public.

(Signed) P. P. HUTCHINS,
Acting Deputy Secretary to Government.

*Government Gardens
Ootacamund 26th June 1862.*

N^o 15.

From

*W. G. McIvor Esq
Supt. Govt. Ootacamund Plant*

To,

*P. P. Hutchins Esq
Acting Deputy Secy. to Govt.*

Sir,

*With reference to the order
of Government N^o 1296, I have
the honor to inform you that I for-
warded to the Board of Revenue on
the 12th April 1862, a brief Report
on the cultivation of the Kettle,
a copy of which I beg to
enclose for the information of Govern-
ment.*

*I have the honor to be,
Sir,*

Your most obedient Servant

*W. G. McIvor
Supt. Govt. Ootacamund Plant*

Ms-1503

The report submitted
with the foregoing letter will
be laid on the table in the
MM for the information of the public

Printed by Perry
10-24-1862

Copy to the Supr. Genl. & Assistant.
By the undersigned - C. J. P.

Recd. June 02. Ms-177-173

Copy in as per 6 C. J.
of 25th July 1862. Ms-146

500

Ms-1503 & 154.

per July 1862

1862. P. 1503 - 1504
The Supr. Genl. & Assistant
from 25th of July 1862. Ms-1503

The Supr. Genl. & Assistant
of the National Plantation
to the Supr. Genl. & Assistant
to Government
T. J. George

Printed 26th
No. 3003 June 1862
21st 15-15

Print one enclosure
Enclosed Copy of a
Report of the Supr.
Genl. & Assistant for the
information of Government

Ms-1503. 10-24-1862

With regard to