M.R.O. 14—13,000—27-9-24.

# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

## Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 987 Press Mis.

113 - 116

Dated 6 - 5 - ~~19~~ 1862

**Not to be folded or roughly handled**

## *Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 6th May* 1862.

No. 115. Read the following letter from J. OUCHTERLONY, Esq., to J. D. SIM, Esq., Secretary to Government, dated Neddiwuttum, 26th April 1862:—

SIR,

1. My attention has been arrested by certain Proceedings of Government of the 28th February last, published in the "Madras Times" of the 22nd instant, relative to the Neilgherry nettle, from which I humbly conceive that the Government must be under some misapprehension as to the actual condition of the growth of this plant; and I therefore take the liberty of intruding the following remarks.

2. The Neilgherry nettle, with its capability of affording a fibre that might prove to have a substantial market value at home, has long and often engaged the attention of visitors to the Hills. Not a few have had specimens of the fibre prepared, and have taken or sent them to England. But it was at the time of the Crimean war, when the question of Indian fibrous productions excited so great a (passing) interest, that the most attention was given to the Neilgherry nettle. It received promising notice in the reports on Indian fibres, and the valuation set upon it was very encouraging. But practical men bore in mind that the values so set upon this and other Indian fibres were relatively with the then extravagant prices of the Russian products; and they found that, when these latter came to fall with the close of the war, the former ceased to have any estimable value, although the cultivation of some kinds and amongst them of the Neilgherry nettle, was considered deserving of encouragement.

3. The Government would appear, from its Proceedings of the 28th February last, to be under the impression that this cultivation has been in some degree proceeded with, since it calls for "particulars as to the mode of cultivation, produce per acre, and mode of treatment for "production of the fibre, &c."

4. Now the Neilgherry nettle is not cultivated at all. It alone grows naturally in the forests on and about the Neilgherry Hills, where generally speaking it is sparsely scattered amongst their undergrowth, but in some parts grows more thickly in a single spot. It is not confined to the summits or higher slopes of the mountains, for I have found it much below Neddiwuttum, and have come upon it in parts where, for a certain not inconsiderable space, it has formed almost the entire undergrowth of the forest. But even here it would be next to impossible to ascertain the amount of produce of fibre per acre, and then it would form but a poor criterion of the probable production of any system of "cultivation."

5. I have understood that the Todas have long been familiar with the use of the Neilgherry nettle for what they may have wanted in the shape of ropes. Their process of preparation is simple, but in its rude way, efficacious. The plant is cut and left to steep in a swamp; when ready it is taken out and the fibre separated by its being beaten with sticks on a block of wood, the fibre being then twisted into rope. A friend of mine treated some of the plant by this simple process, and found it made a useful ordinary rope.

6. I humbly submit my idea that no information of real value can be obtained, until a result of two experiments shall be arrived at—the one experiment being the careful cultivation of the Neilgherry nettle in the open air, to see whether and how it will thrive, and what its produce will be when deprived of the shade of the forest under which alone it is found to grow naturally; and the other, to clear a certain space under shade, cultivate this with the plant, prepare the fibre carefully, and ascertain its value. If it prove to be more profitable as a whole than other cultivation in forest land, a natural consequence will ensue. The public gardens on the Hills might afford the opportunity for conducting such experiments.

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No. 116. ORDER THEREON, 6th May 1862, No. 987.

The Government are much obliged to Mr. Ouchterlony for this communication. Mr. McIvor will be requested to state whether he can try the proposed experiments in the Government Gardens at Ootacamund and the additional funds (if any) required for the purpose.

(Signed) J. D. SIM,

*Secretary to Government.*

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from the Ceiling and is not cultivated at all. It also grows naturally in the forest about the Ceiling Walls, where annually speaking it is planted & cultivated amongst their cane & -ponths, but in some parts grows more thickly in a single species that is not confined to the mountains or higher ones of the mountains I have found it much below Ceiling Walls, and have come upon it in parts where for a certain not inconsiderable space it has formed almost the entire undergrowth of the forest. But even here it would be next to impossible to ascertain the amount of produce of fibre from an acre and there is much from but a poor criterion of the probable production from any system of cultivation.

5. Since I have understood that the Coolies have long been furnished with the use of the Ceiling Walls for what they may have wanted in the shape of ropes. Their process of preparation is simple but is attended with considerable. The plant is cut & left to steep in a swamp; when ready it is taken out & the fibre separated by its being beaten with sticks

tick or a Root Sword, the
stem being twisted into shape,
pared & prime treated, one
of the Plant by this simple process,
we found it made a useful
drawing pen.

6. I humbly submit my
idea that no information of real
value can be obtained, until a
result of two experiments shall
be carried at - the one experiment
being, the careful cultivation of the
Caltpeny cattle in the open air, to
see whether & how it will thrive, &
what its produce will be when
deprived of the shade of the forest,
under which alone it is found to
grow naturally & - and the other, to
clear a certain space under shade,
cultivate this with the plant, pre-
pare the fibre carefully, and ascer-
tain its value. If it prove to
be more profitable as a stock
than other cultivation in forest
land, a natural consequence
will ensue. The public parsons
in the Hills might afford the op-
portunity for conducting such
experiments.

I have the honor to be,
Sir, Your most Obed. Ser.
L. Cruickshanks

Calcutta Sept 1st
Forwarded
Spring Rice
Secy

1st February 62 No 3-4.
14 — o — 62 — 299 301
28th — o — o — 548-549

Copy on a Letter to England
of 24th May 1862 No. 36

No 115 & 116.

Revenue 1862 Oct.
Pro: of Govt for May.
No: 1240.

From
J. Ouchterlony Esqr.

Dated 26th May 1862
Received 30th " 1862.

No.

Offers certain
remarks on the
Cultivation of the
Neilgherry Nettle
No 987 of 6 May

With an Order

No 987 No: 987.

The pts are much
obliged to Mr Ouchter-
-lony for the commu-
-nication. Mr Mc Lean
will be requested to
state whether he can
try the proposed experiments
in the pts Gardens &
obtain a moiety of the
additional funds
if any, required for
the purpose

Copy to Mr Ouchterlony Cl.
Supt Govt Gardens Bola camund
Copy of Communication
From
6th May 1862.

Conservator of Forests