

12271
Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
14th July 1871.

No. 164. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 21st June 1871, No. 2,491 :—

Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government, dated 8th May 1871, No. 796, Revenue Department :—

ABSTRACT.—*Cotton cultivation in Madras Presidency.*—Suggestions of the Cotton Commissioner for following up the experiments made, communicated to Board of Revenue for report.

THE Board do not think that the evidence before them justifies the Cotton Commissioner's summary conclusion that the native cultivators of this Presidency, when cotton-seed is distributed to them, make the experiment fail of *set purpose*.

2. The frequent failures that have occurred can be accounted for without imputing ill-faith, as may be gathered from the following observations on the subject by a scientific farmer of great experience, Mr. Robertson, the Superintendent of the Government Farm at Sydapet :—

“ The discouraging observations of Government officers, which are frequently
“ met with in these replies regarding the results of experiments made by native
“ cultivators, are not always fair, and generally far too sweeping. If the writers
“ of these comments had had a few years' experience in the management of
“ Irish properties, or even if they were personally acquainted with our English
“ farmers, they would not write so severely. All tenant-farmers are suspicious
“ when any one interferes in their concerns ; and, in this respect, I fear that we
“ farmers form no exception to the general rule. I have known Irish landlords go
“ to great expense, and put themselves to a great deal of trouble to procure for
“ their tenants unadulterated manures, seeds, and feeding stuffs, at wholesale rates ;
“ but their good intentions were seldom appreciated by their tenants. Many had
“ the manures, etc., thrown back on their hands and suffered severe losses.
“ Tenants were suspicious ; and though one or two whose rents were in arrears,
“ or had other reasons for wishing to keep in the good graces of the landlord or
“ his agent, might take small supplies, still the great bulk of the tenantry would
“ not purchase. Some excused themselves on the plea that they could not afford
“ to purchase the article, or that they had been offered similar goods at lower
“ prices ; while others would assert that their cattle did not do well on the feeding
“ stuffs, or that the manures did not suit their land. But the truth was, they could
“ not understand the *motive* of their landlords in interfering in what many *imagined*
“ only concerned themselves. Again, I am acquainted with Irish properties on
“ which agriculturists were appointed to teach the tenants a better system of
“ cultivation ; yet their services were seldom utilized. The tenants looked on
“ them as the landlord's spies sent to ascertain the productive powers of the soil.
“ Many landlords again purchased travelling threshing-machines for the use of
“ their tenantry, but had the mortification of seeing them standing for months
“ unemployed. Some bought valuable bulls and allowed them to be used by their
“ tenants free of all cost, yet few availed themselves of this liberality. Further,
“ when our Agricultural Societies first commenced few farmers would join, and
“ fewer still exhibit at the shows. They looked upon these Exhibitions and

"Societies as so many expedients of the landlord to find grounds for increasing the rent. And at the present day, even Agricultural Statistics cannot be collected with complete accuracy in England, for the farmers of a few localities still positively refuse to fill up the statistical forms on the plea that they may thereby be giving their landlords too much information.

"If agricultural improvements make such slow progress even in Great Britain, what can we expect out here? We cannot hope to quiet the apprehensions of our ryots in a few years and secure their confidence by a few casual and spasmodic efforts of the kind. The necessary confidence must be the work of time. I believe that, in many instances, the ryot has done justly by the seed that was supplied to him, but the seed was frequently quite unsuited to the *low agricultural condition and practice* of the country. Again, in many instances, the seed and bean issued at unsuitable seasons, or the ryots were not properly instructed as to the *details* of cultivation, and not unfrequently the seed was useless before it reached the ryot.

"I have little faith in these traditions about wilful destruction of seed sent for experiment. I would attribute the frequent inaccuracies found in reports of experiments made by native cultivators, not to a desire to mislead, but to carelessness or ignorance on the part of the cultivator. A *field experiment* needs far more care and supervision than any cultivator, *who has his living to earn*, can possibly devote to the matter. The ryot seldom has any convenience for separating the produce of the experimental crop from the general produce of his land, has no means of measuring or weighing the produce accurately, nor probably has he any knowledge of the weights and measures in which his results are returned. These are only a few of the difficulties which the native experimenters must feel."

3. The Board have already stated their reasons for believing in the uselessness of these experiments, and of similar random attempts to improve a stubborn agricultural system which will yield to nothing less than organized scientific instructions, and even to that but slowly.

4. For the same reasons it seems to them that it would be a simple waste of public money to establish a cotton garden under a Kew gardener. The influence of an isolated spot of cultivation like this would be infinitesimal, and it is well that it should be, since it seems that similar gardens have been established elsewhere for farming superintended by a gardener is almost sure to fail. Gardeners know little of agricultural implements, stock-breeding and feeding, rotation of crops and the like, as farmers do of grafting, forcing, pruning, and floriculture. If the experiment is tried at all it should be as a model farm under a scientific farmer.

5. Desultory attempts at improving cotton have already been made in this Presidency on a greater scale than is possible now, and their complete failure is a lesson that should not be forgotten.

6. Doctor Wight, a Botanist and Gardener of the highest character, was for years employed in superintending cotton experiments, in distributing Sea islands and New Orleans Cotton seed imported at great cost from America, and experienced Cotton Planters were brought out from America to work Cotton Farms and experi-

ments. Reports were written; merchants and English exporters were led to expect great things from the Cotton Commission, but utter failure was the result of these enormously costly and persistent exertions.

7. It has been and always will be hopeless to attempt improvements in cotton cultivation until they form part of a general organized system for the gradual elevation of agriculture and the technic instruction of the agricultural classes. The Board have laid their views on this subject before Government in their letter of the 23rd July 1870, No. 5,013, on which orders have not yet been passed. The production of cotton has become a question of such vast importance, that it calls for far more than garden and seed experiments; it demands that the whole agriculture of the country should be fostered and improved as it can only be by a system such as the Board have proposed.

8. The First Member dissents from these Proceedings, and has recorded a separate Minute on the subject.

No. 165.

ORDER THEREON, 14th July 1871, No. 1,219.

Miscellaneous.

THE Governor in Council agrees in the conclusions arrived at by the Board of Revenue.

2. Ordered that the following letter be despatched to the Cotton Commissioner:—

(Here enter 14th July 1871, No. 1,220.)

(True Extract.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,

Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT,
FORT SAINT GEORGE,
14th July 1871.

No. 166.

No. 1,220.

To

H. RIVETT-CARNAC, Esq.,

Cotton Commissioner of the Central Provinces and Berars.

Miscellaneous.

SIR,—As you will have learnt from G. O., 8th May last, No. 796, copy of which was forwarded to you, your letter of the 24th April, No. 980-F., was furnished to the Board of Revenue, with instructions to report on the suggestions made by you in paragraphs 7, 9, and 10.

2. I am now directed to enclose for your information the Board's reply (No. 2,491 of 21st June), and to state that the Right Honourable the Governor in Council concurs in the opinions expressed by the Board, and is therefore constrained to decline your obliging offers of assistance in the matter of establishing an experimental Cotton Garden in this Presidency.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

L^d 1219
 14th July 1871
 Pro. Bd. Rev. 2491
 21st June 1871

2. Ordered that the following cables be despatched to Washington for information.

14. Looked at New York 15

1 Copy Dec 15th

Ag. 97.

101

But I think it
would be better
to say kindly
by the other
one can be done
and can be stated
with an intention
expressed with
the subject he has
declared his objection
of the procedure

Line No 1220

As you will have learnt
from P.O. S.A. Bangalore, No 796,
copy of it was forwarded to you,
for action of the 26th April No 980th
was furnished to the Bd of Revs,
with instructions to report on the
difficulties made by you in Para's
7, 9 & 10.

2. I am now directed to enclose
some information in this Reply
(No 2491 of 21st June) and to state
that the R. G. S. C. concurs
in the opinions expressed by the
R. G. S. C. is therefore constrained to
decline your offering of
assistance in the matter of
establishing an appropriate
Garden in this Pres. G.

14th July/91

14th July/91
I should be very glad to hear from you
again. Yours truly
R. A. A.

yes. K.

Ms. 116

Ms. 116

Cotton cultivation
experiments in
Hawaii



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