

No. 73. Read the following letter from HARRY RIVETT-CARNAC, Esq., Cotton Commissioner, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Meerut, 24th April 1871, No. 980-F:—

IN continuation of former correspondence and in accordance with the permission granted in paragraph 2 of your No. 148-430, dated the 10th ultimo, I have now the honour to submit the following brief suggestions for following up the experiments that have been made in the Madras Presidency for the improvement of the cultivation of cotton.

2. As noted in paragraph 4 of my letter, dated Camp at Sheagaon, 4th of March last, the results of the experiments undertaken in various parts of the Madras Presidency correspond very closely with those reported from other parts of India; and it is generally found that where an experiment has had the benefit of intelligent supervision, there some success is reported. On the other hand, in cases in which a small quantity of seed has been made over to native cultivators, the experiment is generally reported to have proved a failure, and statements are received to the effect that "the seed did not germinate," the yield of cotton "was less than that of the native plant," etc.

3. If the only fair conclusions to be drawn from the above reports were to be that the cultivation of the improved seed could only be conducted with success, when supervised by persons of superior intelligence, and that the plant was altogether too delicate and elaborate for the native cultivator to sow with much chance of profit, then the question of the advantage of persevering with these experiments could be summarily disposed of. But I am inclined to hope that the above are not quite the conclusions to be drawn from the reports which, through the courtesy of the Government of Madras, I have had the advantage of perusing.

4. What little experience I have had in Central India has confirmed me in the belief that much value is not to be attached to the reports furnished by native cultivators of seed given to them for experiment. As a rule but very few native cultivators undertake such experiments willingly, and it is hardly to be expected that they should regard the seed with much favour. I have found the cultivators very suspicious of all endeavours to distribute seed among them for reasons given in the following extracts from one of my annual reports, which, for facility of reference, are appended. Writing in 1868, I said:—

"The disinclination at first evinced by the people to accept the cotton seed is hardly to be wondered at. They doubtless feared that some arrangements were on foot to deprive them of the profits of their lands, and they regarded the seed in the light of a 'Queen's Shilling,' which was to enlist them in cause of the true objects of which they had grave suspicions.

* * * * *

"Since writing the above I have read an article which confirms the idea expressed above, that natives regard with distrust any attempt to induce them to grow foreign plants. The *Times of India* mentions that an officer recently sent a present of some tea and some tea-plants to an independent Native Chief on the north-west frontier. The Chief accepted the tea and returned the plants, with an intimation that they were returned in consequence with the spirit of a tradition that plants of foreign countries should never be planted in that country, lest when they had thriven and leaved and flowered, the people of the country they had come from should themselves come to demand their produce, and so disturb the peace of the well-conducted and orderly community over which he presided. Doubtless some of the

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‘Kombees thought that when the cotton ripened, both cotton and land might be taken from them.’

5. Indeed, I fear that very few native cultivators give the seed fair play, and if the seed is sown, I suspect it some times enjoys the treatment referred to by ‘The old Pindari’ in the lines:—

“Then came the Settlement ‘Hakim’ to teach me to plough and weed;
“I sowed the cotton he gave me, but first I boiled the seed.”

6. The conclusion then that I think is to be drawn from the results of the experiments made in many parts of India is, that the seed, when made over to native cultivators, seldom receives fair play, and that the reports made by villagers of the experiments made by them are to be accepted with much caution. The comparative success which the seed meets with when tried at the headquarters of a district is, I believe, chiefly to be attributed to the circumstance that the experiment receives fair play, and that those who undertake it have no special object in making it a failure.

7. The comparative success noticed above, which has attended some of the experiments, is, I think, sufficient to justify us in persevering. But I would recommend that the experiments be confined to one or two places where the necessary supervision can be ensured; and I would not recommend that any seed should be distributed to native cultivators, unless it be apparent that they undertake the experiment willingly.

8. As the Government of Madras are perhaps aware the system of experimental seed-gardens in the Central Provinces and the Berars has met with some success. At these gardens the best seed of the locality is grown, and the produce is selected on the pedigree-system, and distributed to the cultivators who visit the gardens, and see with their own eyes the superiority of the crops grown from the selected seed. At these gardens also a variety of experiments with exotic and indigenous cottons are conducted under the direction of a European Superintendent.

9. I would suggest that such an experimental garden might, with advantage, be established in one of the northern districts of the Madras Presidency where good cotton is grown. Knowing but little of the Presidency, I can hardly undertake to suggest a site for such an experiment, but I might mention that in the Central Provinces and the Berars, it has been found desirable to select sites near the headquarters of a cotton-growing district, and near the line of railway.

10. If the Madras Government were inclined to adopt this suggestion and to establish such a garden, a qualified Superintendent of experiments could, I may add, be supplied by this department, as the Secretary of State for India, with a view to the extension of the system of seed-gardens, has recently sent out some gardeners from Kew, who have been attached to the gardens in the Berars, and who are now competent to superintend the management of a garden in the Madras Presidency. One of them has been placed in charge of an experiment to be started at Allahabad, and another could be made available, if required for service, under your Government.

11. Provision for his salary has been made in the Imperial budget, and a sum sufficient for an experimental garden could be made available from the same

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source. These amounts could, I believe, be transferred without difficulty to the credit of the Madras Government for the purposes indicated above.

12. These arrangements, if carried out, would not in any way necessitate the experiment being under my supervision or control. On the contrary, I am inclined to think that it would, for many reasons, be desirable that they should be conducted quite independently of my department, under the direction of the Collector of the district, or whomsoever the Madras Government might select.

13. I should only be too happy, on hearing that the plan was generally approved of by the Madras Government, to give every information in my power regarding the management of similar gardens in the Central Provinces and the Berars, and other parts of India, which might perhaps serve as a guide in setting a new experiment on foot; and I would gladly render every assistance in my power. But from my own experience I would strongly urge the importance of leaving the management in the hands of the district authorities, by which plan the interest and sympathies of the officers, who have the best means of assisting such a scheme and working it out to a success, can alone be enlisted.

14. I may mention, in conclusion, that it has been found that a European Superintendent can generally manage to overlook an experimental garden containing about 300 acres of land. For the sake of rotation of crops about 150 acres are sown with cotton and 150 acres with other crops. The experiments are not thus confined to cotton, and an experimental garden of this description, if well managed, may, I believe, in course of time, be made to prove of great value to the agricultural interests of a district.

No. 74.

ORDER THEREON, 8th May 1871, No. 796.

Miscellaneous.

ORDERED to be communicated to the Board of Revenue, with reference to paragraph 2 of the Order of Government, dated 10th March 1871, No. 430.

2. The Board will report at an early date on the suggestions made by Mr. Rivett-Carnac in paragraphs 7, 9, and 10 of his letter.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,

Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
„ H. Rivett-Carnac, Esq.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Rev. Secy
87.796.
Proceedings of the Madras Govt
Under date the 8th May 1891

Read the following
letter from the Cotton
Commissioner.

Submitting certain
suggestions for following
up the experiments that have
been made in the Madras
Presidency for the improve-
ment of the cultivation of
Cotton.

M. S. 24th April 91
Ag. Secy.

Ordered to be
communicated to the
Board of Revenue
with reference to para-
2 of the Order of Govt
dated

Dated 10th March 1871,

N^o 30.

2. The Board will
report at an early
date on the suggestions
made by Mr. Rivett-Carnac
in paras 7-9 & 10, of
his letter.

To B^d of Rev Despt^y
Mr Rivett-Carnac Esq

W. H. D.