No. 131. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 24th April 1873, No. 633 :—

Read the following letter from E. A. CAMPBELL, Esq., to J. GROSE, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Dindigul, 16th March 1873 :—

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of the Board's Proceedings No. 265 of 24th ultimo.

2. Tobacco is not indigenous to India, but is the produce of a more temperate clime. It has, therefore, to be cultivated in India in the cool season; hence my inability to comply at present with the Board's request to furnish them with samples of leaf grown from the tobacco (Manilla) seed sent me last year—too late to plant that year.

3. Sufficient seed to plant five acres was sent me. I distributed this to ryots and others who are in the habit of growing tobacco on the hills and in the plains, retaining enough to enable me to plant half an acre.

4. This half acre is doing well, and will be cut about the end of current month.

5. It is fortunate I kept some of this seed, as I find now that those I gave the rest of the seed to have failed, or partially so, in the culture.

6. Last year I cut leaf enough to make 22,000 cigars from a crop raised from Manilla seed given me by the Board in 1871; these cigars were much liked.

7. This leaf was raised in Dindigul, was delicate in the web, thin-skinned, elastic, and well adapted for rolling; light in colour and in texture, and burned rather too rapidly; but the flavour, though good, was not nearly so decided or delicate as the flavour of leaf from the same seed raised on the Lower Pulneys.

8. I have grown tobacco for the last six years on the Lower Pulneys, and find that the flavour of exotic tobacco is well preserved there; indeed, in several instances, I fancied the flavour was heightened.

9. The reverse is the case with seed raised to leaf in the plains: the first crop loses in flavour; the second or third crop of leaf has almost entirely lost its original and special flavour.

10. This deterioration of flavour in tobacco raised in the plains seems to take place in other tropical climates, as I hear that in Java and in some of the West Indian Islands tobacco planters raise their seed annually on the hills, and grow the leaf in the plains.

11. I would suggest this plan being followed by Government. Seed nurseries should be opened out on some range of hills suitable to the culture of tobacco, and the seed distributed all over India. One hundred acres would raise seed sufficient to supply all India, as each plant gives on an average 300,000 seeds.

12. Should it be decided to use several varieties of seed, each variety should be planted several miles apart: otherwise, a hybrid tobacco will be the result. Bees and other insects will impregnate plants of one kind with the pollen of different varieties.

13. The mistake of planting several varieties together was made some three years ago in the public gardens, Madras. The seed was distributed and hybrids resulted, though the Board distributed the seed as the production of three different varieties, viz., Virginian, Ohio, and Maryland.

14. I would suggest further the expediency of Government starting an experimental Tobacco Farm on the plains—in a place easy of access to natives where they could inspect the operations carried on.

15. The seed should be raised, as I have suggested above, on the hills.

16. At present, isolated experiments on an inadequate scale are carried on by Government officials, all over this Presidency, with no satisfactory result.

17. To succeed in any experiment of this nature, efforts should be concentrated on one spot, and the result of these efforts should be carefully recorded from month to month and year to year; the mistakes made one year must be avoided the next. I have no fear for the result.

18. In ten years, Indian tobacco would become as renowned for its excellence as Indian coffee and tea have become in the past ten years.

19. There is this difference between the culture of tobacco and the culture of tea and coffee: tobacco benefits the million, as it is now actually grown by tens of thousands of natives all over the country; whereas tea and coffee are chiefly grown by a few Europeans on isolated hill ranges.

20. Government has nursed these industries, has spent lakhs and lakhs of rupees in aiding coffee and tea planters; why should it not spend half a lakh or even one lakh in aiding an industry so popular as tobacco planting is already with the natives of India?

Mr. C[illegible] will be submitted to Government, with the [illegible] that the Board have consulted the Superintendent of the Government Farms on the subject of hill farms for tobacco, and find that he is of opinion that the distribution of improved seed thus produced is likely to be of little use, owing to the exhaustion of soils in the plains, unless the system of agriculture in the country be improved. The Board, therefore, cannot support Mr. Campbell's suggestion.

2. The Board await the other reports.

No. 132. ORDER THEREON, 20th May 1873, No. 503.

Miscellaneous.

ORDERED to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Revd: 1873 Aspl
No 1249

1873.

Board of Revenue,
MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS, 24TH APRIL 1873, No. 633.

Despd 2 May 1873.

Encl.

Received 5 May /73

APRIL.

No. 633.

Manilla Tobacco-seed.—Letter from Mr. E. A. Campbell of Dindigul reporting on cultivation of —, and offering certain suggestions regarding tobacco-cultivation, submitted to Government, with remarks.

No 503
Recorded

20 May/73

14 To the Govt of Madras Dc: 29 May/73—

Ag: 131-132