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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. / B.P. No.	1873	Press / Mis.
Dated	1-12-1876	196 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

1873

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
1st December 1876.

No. 3. Read the following letter from J. E. O'CONOR, Esq., Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce, (Fibres and Silk) to the Hon. D. F. CARMICHAEL, Secretary to the Government of Madras, Revenue Department, dated Calcutta, 18th November 1876, No. 87 :—

I AM directed to request that if there is any record of the experimental cultivation of *Musa textilis* or Manila hemp, having at any time been undertaken in the Madras Presidency, the results of the experiments made may be reported for the information of the Government of India. If not, I am to inquire, with reference to the enclosed letter from the Superintendent of the Department of Science in Oudh, No. 211, dated the 4th September 1876, whether His Grace the Governor in Council would wish to have seed or suckers of the plant for undertaking experiments in suitable places in Madras, where, it is believed, it would grow successfully.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

Copy of a letter, No. 211, dated the 4th September 1876, from the Superintendent of the Department of Science in Oudh, to the Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh.

I HAVE the honor to forward herewith, for submission to the Government of India, extracts from the article on Fibres and Cordage "taken from Bevans' British manufacturing industries, lately published, regarding *plantain fibre* the produce of *Musa textilis*."

2. The *finer fibre* is said to be extensively adaptable to the many wants now supplied by flax and cotton, and is used at the present time for weaving into light fabrics, and also for damasks, the finer sort of furniture hangings and upholstery generally. The coarser fibre is extensively used for cordage, under the name of Manila hemp, and ropes made of it are said to be stronger than those made from Russian hemp.

3. This kind of plantain is grown in Manila and other tropical islands, and, unlike other kinds of plantains, which can only be propagated by suckers is said to be easily raised from seed.

4. There may be more than one species of plantain which furnishes this valuable fibre, but this practical botanists might easily determine.

5. Although grown in tropical islands, it might perhaps be grown to advantage in Burma, Bengal, and all Southern India.

6. If it be true that the method of extraction of this fibre is easy and simple, it might perhaps, with advantage, be grown instead of the Rhea in those climates, the difficulty of extracting the fibre of the latter being the drawback to its extensive cultivation.

Extract from Bevans' British Manufacturing Industries.

ONE of the most promising materials for certain purposes is the fibre of the plantain, which has often engaged the attention of the tropical cultivator and merchant, though until of late years there was no great demand for new textile or cordage substances. The process of disengaging the fibre is so simple, compared with the elaborate processes attending the separation of hemp and flax, and the expense and labor so trifling, that it is surprising the raw material has not before this become an extensive article of commerce.

It is extremely desirable to know the quantity of fibre that can be obtained per acre, and the following calculations, which are the result of careful experiments are worthy of record.

Cotton in America is an annual plant, subject to many deteriorating influences particularly from frost or excessive rain, and a full average crop is considered to be one bale per acre, or about 4 cwt. Flax, also an annual, is regarded as a good crop at 6 cwt. per acre, and hemp at 7 cwt. per acre. The plantain will yield of the best quality of fibre 48 cwt. per acre, besides the

coarser qualities; consequently, its produce will be as compared with that of cotton twelvefold; of flax, eightfold; and of hemp, sevenfold. Moreover, the produce of the plantain from 500 acres would require to obtain the same quantity in cotton 6,000 acres, in flax 4,000 acres, and in hemp 3,500 acres. But flax and hemp being exhausting crops cannot be grown upon the same land oftener (at the utmost) than in a five-year rotation. Therefore, to produce annually for seven years 1,200 tons of flax would require the use of an estate of 28,000 acres; and for hemp, in the same way 17,500 acres. But the plantain, not being an exhausting crop would continue to produce its 1,200 tons of fibre per annum without replanting for a term of twelve or fifteen years upon 500 acres.

No. 4. ORDER THEREON, 1st December 1876, No. 1,873.

Miscellaneous.

COMMUNICATED to the Board of Revenue and the Conservator of Forests for report.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.
„ the Conservator of Forests.

Ed. F. P. Bantleman.

Govt. of [1876] Madras.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated December, 1st.

Recd. *Encl.*

G.O., 1st December 1876, No. 1,873.

DECEMBER.
Nos. 3-4.

Manila Hemp.—Communicating to the Board of Revenue and Conservator of Forests for report letter from the Government of India requesting to know if there is any record of the experimental cultivation of — in the Madras Presidency.

ther kinds of [illegible], which may be propagated by suckers is to be easily raised from seed.

There may be more than one species of plaintain which furnishes this valuable fibre, but this practical botanists might easily determine.

5. - Although grown in tropical islands, it might perhaps be grown to advantage in Burma, Bengal and all Southern India.

6. If it be true that the method of extraction of this fibre is easy and simple it might perhaps, with advantage be grown instead of the rhea - in those climates the difficulty of extracting the fibre of the latter being the draw back to its extensive cultivation.

Extracts from Bevans' British Manufacturing Industries.

One of the most promising materials for certain purposes is the fibre of the plaintain, which has often engaged the attention of the tropical cultivator and merchant, though of late years there was no great demand for new textile or cordage substances. The process of disengaging the fibre is so simple, compared with the elaborate processes attending the separation of hemp and flax; and the expense and labour so trifling, that it is surprising the raw material has not before this become an extensive article of commerce.

It is extremely desirable to know the quantity of fibre that can be obtained per acre, and the following calculations, which are the result of careful experiments are worthy of record.

Cotton in America is an annual plant, subject to many deteriorating influences particularly from frost or excessive rain, and a full average crop is considered to be one bale per acre, or about 4 cwt. Flax, also an annual is regarded as a good crop at 6 cwt. per acre, and hemp at 7 cwt. per acre. The plaintain will yield of the best quality

ge 48 cwt per acre, besides the coarser
ities; consequently its produce will
n compared with that of cotton,
welve fold, of flax, eight fold; and
of hemp seven fold. Moreover, the
produce of the plantain from 500
acres would require to obtain the
same quantity in cotton 6000 acres,
in flax, 4000 acres, and in hemp,
3500 acres. But flax and hemp being
exhausting crops can not be grown
upon the same land of fener (at the
utmost) than in a five ozear ro-
tation. Therefore to produce annually
for seven ozears, 1200 tons of flax re-
would require the use of an estate
of 20,000 acres; and for hemp, in the
same way 17,500 acres. But the plan-
tain, not being an exhausting
crop would continue to produce its
200 tons of fibre per annum with
out replanting for a term of

twelve

twelve or fifteen ozears upon
500 acres."

1977/5

True Copy.

A. R. Wilson
Registrar,
Department of Revenue Agri-
culture and Commerce.

No. 87

not Expire,

From

The Secretary to the Government of India,
Department of Revenue, Agriculture,
and Commerce,

1877
6

To

The Government of Madras.

The Secretary Calcutta dated the 15th November 1876.

Fibres and Silk.

Sir,

I request that if there is any ... mental cultivation of Musa ... I am directed to bring, having at any time ... record of the exper... in the Madras Presidency ... Textilis, or Manil... experiments made may be re... been undertaken ... information of the Government of ... the results of the ... in due course with reference ... posted for the ... ing from the Superintendent ... Gardens in Candy, No. 211 dated ... 876, whether His Grace the Gover... wish to have seed or suckers ... undertaking experiments in ... Madras where it is believed ... successfully.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your Most Obedient Servant

J. O'Conor

From
The Government of India
Dep.t of Revenue, &c.

Dated 18th November 1876
Recd. 23d.

No. 87

Requesting that if there is any record
experimental cultivation of Musa
or Manila hemp, having at any
undertaken in the Madras
ney the results of the same may

for the information of the Govt. of
if not, to state if this Govt. has

wish to have seed or suckers
or undertaking experiments in

No. 1873 Communicated to the
Board of Revenue & the
Conservator of Forests
for report

14 Dec. Board of Revenue Nov. 29/76
21 Conservator of Forests 1/12/76