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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

1893

Press
Mis.

Dated

1-12-1876

196

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

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.

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

1873/4

I have the honour to forward herewith
for submission to the Government of India
extracts from the article on fibres and
cordage "taken from Reuans' British manu-
facturing industries, lately published, regard-
ing plantain fibre the produce of "Musa
"textilis."

2. The finer fibre is said to be extensively
adaptable to the many wants now sup-
plied 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

Govt. of 1876 Madras.

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

&c., &c., &c.

Dated December, 1st.

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 1st Decr. 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.

Other kinds of *Plantain*, which
only be propagated by suckers is
to be easily raised from seed.

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
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6. If it be true that the method of
extraction of this fibre is easy and
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Extracts from Bevan's British Mann-
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One of the most promising mate-
rials for certain purposes is the fibre
of the plantain, which has often en-
gaged the attention of the tropical cul-
turator.

Cultivator and merchant, though
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for new textile or cordage substances. The
process of disengaging the fibre is so
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hemp and flax; and the expense and
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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

at 48 cwt per acre, besides the coarse
stems; consequently its produce will
be as compared with that of Cotton,
twelve fold, of flax, eight fold; and
of hemp seven fold. Moreover, the
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in flax, 4000 acres, and in hemp,
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upon the same land of tenor (at the
utmost) than in a five year
rotation. Therefore to produce annually
for seven years, 1200 tons of flax
would require the use of an estate
of 20,000 acres; and for hemp, in the
same way, 17,500 acres. But the plantain,
not being an exhausting
crop would continue to produce its
1200 tons of fibre per annum with
out replanting for a term of

twelve

twelve or fifteen years upon
500 acres."

1873
5

True Copy.

A. R. Wilson

Registrar,

Department of Revenue Agri-
culture and Commerce.

87

no. 87
Esquire,

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

FROM

J. C. G.
1876

1873/6

the Government of Madras

TO

The Secretary, Penalty dated the 18 November 1876.

Fibres and Silk.

SIR,

I request that if there is any experimental cultivation of Musa

I am directed to enquire, having at any time record of the exper in the Madras Presidency Textiles, or Maria experiments made may be been undertaken on behalf of the Government of the results of the in to enquire with reference for the in from the Superintendent of India. If Science in Andh, No 211 dated 27/6, whether His Grace the Governor wish to have seed or such undertaking experiments in Madras where it is held of the plan for successfully suitable places it would grow

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your Most Obedient Servant

W. O. C.

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

Dated 18th November 1876
Recd. 23

No. 87

Requesting that if there is any record
of experimental cultivation of *Musa*
or Manila hemp, having at any
time been undertaken in the Madras
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India, or if not, to state if His Grace the Governor

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Communicated to the
Board of Revenue & the
Conservator of Forests
for report

14 To Board of Revenue 2-12-76
21 Conservator of Forests 1/10/77