

EAST AFR. PROT.
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Recd 19 FEB 10

Journal 38
1910
27 Jan

at previous paper

Cotton Cultivation by natives

Send report by Mr J.B. Jones on cotton cultivation by natives in the coast belt. Suggest establishment of system of small plots in the hinterland under food administration Dept. to supply food to B.C.G.A.

W. ~~Robert~~ Fielder

We have now sent Sir P. Croom a copy of the correspondence relating to the grant to the B.C.G.A. from Imperial funds. He will find that it does not cover work in the E.A.P.

I send a copy of this despatch with its enclosures to the B.C.G.A. and the Trip Inst for their attention.

Yours,

W. Robert Fielder, Feb 22. H.J.F.
as Col. Selby may like to see 22/11
done Feb. 23

1910 (that) memo 28 Feb
To Gen 139. 21 Mch. 1910

subsequent Paper.
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Hi Belle

Recirculator for Col. Kelly to see

In his hands to write

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W. V. ...

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

Red 19 10

Nairobi,

January 20 1910.

WEST AFRICA PRODUCTIONS.

No. 38.

(Incl. 1.)

My Lord,

I have the honour to transmit herewith for Your Lordship's information a copy of an interesting report on the cultivation of cotton by natives at the coast submitted by Mr. J. E. Jones, a settler in the Malindi district, and a member of the Sabaki Cotton and Rubber Company.

It is true that as far as the attempt to introduce the cultivation of cotton among the natives have been somewhat discouraging, but I consider that this was only what might have been expected in view of the constant possibility of a change of the price, and the difficulty of persuading the natives to give a try to

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

THE EARL OF CURZON, K.C.S.I.

Principal Secretary of State

for the Colonies,

ROBINSON ROAD, SINGAPORE.

which he is not accustomed.

3. As Mr. Jones says, our efforts so far have practically been confined to the coast belt, and I agree with him in thinking that an attempt to reach the Giryama and Wyika tribes in the hinterland would be worth while. There can of course be no question of compelling the natives to cultivate cotton, but I consider that a system of small plots, as advocated by Mr. Jones, under the supervision of Government officials appointed for the purpose might have beneficial results.

4. I see that it is stated in a cablegram emanating from Reuters' Agency that the Imperial Government contemplates a further subsidy to the British Cotton Growing Association. I shall doubtless shortly receive further information from Your Lordship, if the statement is correct.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's humble,
obedient servant,

R. Howard
GOVERNOR.

NATIVE COTTON AND NATIVE CULTIVATION.Malindi,
January 1910. 10

The results of the season are poor and disappointing, and this too in spite of favourable weather. The total output must fall far short of the previous season, a fair estimate being 2/5ths of last year's crop.

This applies to the littoral from Takaungu to Mambrui, hitherto the chief cotton-producing district.

In the season 1908-1909 it seemed as if cotton had taken firm hold of the native and that he would grow it in large quantities in the future. Everything that individual effort could do was done to induce him to plant and thus help on towards supplying Lancashire with British grown cotton. Seed, directly imported from Egypt, was given him free, money was generously advanced him to enable him to clear his land and find means of subsistence until his crop matured, advice and even supervision of his crops were always ready. In consequence of this, there was a large area under cultivation and those natives who spent their money honestly on their crops reaped a benefit. The season was by no means good for the rains failed after the middle of June and the second crop, which ought to have matured in January of this year, was practically a failure.

Practically all this was done and all money advanced by the British East Africa Corporation and the Sabaki Cotton and Rubber Company. Unfortunately both Companies

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found themselves losers, for a large part of the advances were not repaid, and, the home market being low, very little profit was made out of the cotton. Hence an agreement was made in June 1908 stopping further advances, at any rate until the outstanding monies were recovered. In spite of this, large number of natives took seed again in March 1909 with a view to planting, but it has been found that in many cases this was merely a blind, the seed being thrown away or at any rate not planted. There was wilful dishonesty on the part of many of them, for if they had planted this last season, they could have repaid their advances and put money in their own pockets as well. But there remains the fact that many honest ones have not planted again and the result is seen in the small output. The reasons are, I think, three, viz:-

The stopping of advances

The liberation of Slaves

The want of systematic help and encouragement.

In regard to the first, it was inevitable from our point of view. Private Companies cannot be expected to lay out sums of money unless there are good prospects of a return. The coast native is not to be depended on for steady work. His first aim, naturally, is his food. Other products come second to this, and if he finds that the production of his food supply entails some real work (which it generally does not) he will not trouble with any other crop. He has not yet grasped the fact that it is better for him to plant a valuable crop - the proceeds of which will enable him to buy the articles of food which are relatively cheaper - than confine himself to maize and
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sisim which are less valuable than cotton.

The system of advancing money before a seed is put in the ground is entirely wrong. It was done with the simple view of encouraging and helping the native to grow cotton, but it has proved disastrous. It was done far too lavishly, and I have no hesitation in saying that nearly half the money advanced was spent by the native in finery and feasting. The native is habituated of old to this system, for the Indian traders invariably advance them money for all kinds of purposes. It is unlikely that the system will be continued, as far as we are concerned, for it is out of the question for private Companies to advance money, supply seed, &c. with no prospect of a return. It is true that the Corporation has received a grant of £1000 a year from the Government for this purpose, but my Company had no such advantage. I have, however, spent much time and money and for the last two seasons have supplied natives with expensive seed free of charge.

3. The Liberation of slaves.

This undoubtedly has stopped progress, for although slavery in its strict sense was abolished many years ago, it is only lately that its total abolition has been carried into effect. The whitom slave is now a free man and his own master in every way. He will do no work and he has no ambition. The soil yields him a sufficiency without any exertion on his part and he is content to live a life of complete idleness. It is only a natural result. The old slaves are dying off rapidly and the younger ones newly liberated flock into villages and spend their time there in enjoyment, picking up their living by casual jobs. The present disinclination to work marks a transition stage

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stage during which the country is bound to suffer heavily from an economic point of view. It means less money circulating, diminished exports and a general falling-off in the commerce of the country. A considerable amount of Coastland is going to out of cultivation and the present Coconut Shambas are suffering severely (among other cases) from want of labour.

3. The want of systematic help and encouragement.

Briefly the history of the efforts made of late by way of helping the native is as follows.

In 1904 a Government cotton Expert was appointed whose duties were to put down small areas here and there, to teach the natives as far as possible and to induce them to grow cotton. This gentleman had a wide field of operations, for his range of work embraced practically the whole of the Coast belt. Evidently one man was unequal to a task of such magnitude, particularly as the funds placed at his disposal were limited. In spite of the disadvantages however, the work was fairly successful. In the following season several natives planted cotton and over 18,000 lbs. of seed cotton was produced in the District. The British Cotton Growing Association gave every encouragement, particularly in setting up a small Ginnery at Mombasa. In 1906 all matters pertaining to cotton were handed over to the British East Africa Corporation and a Grant from Imperial Funds made them for a period of three years to aid them in their work. Another Company - the Sabaki Cotton and Rubber Company - also took up the matter and did their share in inducing the natives to plant cotton.

But we find that, although the seasons 1905-1906 was

a success, this present one (1899-1900) is a failure. I have enumerated above the causes which in my opinion have contributed to this failure and it remains now to try and find a remedy.

There is not the slightest doubt that the coast belt is very suitable for native cotton growing. It will never pay White Planters, for, owing to the uncertainty of the rains and the price of labour, the risks are too great. I speak from five years' experience of cotton growing near Malindi. Were it possible to use bullocks for ploughing, it would be a different matter altogether, but manual labour is too expensive. I am convinced that it will pay on the river flats where water is available for irrigation and where the soil is of that kind nature which cotton loves. I am greatly convinced that it is a very profitable crop for the native. He plants his small plot which is attended to by himself or his family. The cost of production to him is very little, in many cases nil, for a very favourite method is to plant cotton and maize or cotton and beans on the same ground.

So far all efforts on the part of Government and others have in reality been confined to the coast belt, whose population consists almost entirely of Swahilis. No real attempt has yet been made to reach the Uryua and Wanika in the hinterland, and I venture to think that, if a systematic effort were made by Government, the results would be well worth the trouble.

Viewing the serious out look at home in the Cotton mills and the difficulty of obtaining sufficient raw material - a difficulty which tends to increase every year I venture to think that we should be guilty of neglect of

duty

duty if we did not strain every nerve to increase our output. The two great political parties at home are unanimous in their desire to support this immense industry, and Mr. Balfour in a letter which he wrote to the "Times" a short time ago, gave full expression to his views on the subject, stating that he for his part was prepared to generously support from Imperial Funds any project for increasing the production of cotton in the British Empire.

From the point of view of the economical development of British East Africa itself, the idea is one that merits every consideration. The Government must always benefit from the progress of a country, for not only is the task of administration rendered easier, but the taxable area is increased. The inhabitants of every grade and colour must benefit too - the grower, the trader and the merchant.

From every point of view, therefore, it is highly advisable that Government should undertake this duty. I am aware that the various Missions have done and are doing, a good deal, but the task is beyond their resources. Granted the premises that cotton is necessary at home and that its cultivation will be a source of profit to the native, it remains to be seen what can be done to encourage production. I would venture to ask that special Government Officials be appointed for the work. They need not be actual experts, but they must have a fair knowledge of cotton. Above all they must know the language and be keen workers, for it is a sheer waste of money to send among the natives an official who does not understand their language. Each man should be given a district in which he should plant small areas of cotton at different centres and with

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the help of the village headmen teach the natives and show them the financial results likely to accrue from given areas. He should be prepared to supply them with seed and offer small bonuses for good cultivation as an inducement to would be growers. At present, there is one experimental farm at Mazeras, but how far that is likely to influence the native, I do not know. I am convinced that by itself, it is insufficient, and that the only way to teach the natives is to keep men continually amongst them, for a period (say two seasons) sufficient to give the experiment a thorough trial. I have no doubt that difficulty will be experienced in inducing the Giryama to grow cotton, but as there is a tendency among them even now to indulge in wild luxuries, it is probable that a profit-bearing crop like cotton will appeal to them, once they are brought to understand the value of it.

I would further suggest that the efforts of these officials be not confined to cotton only, but attention be also given by them to the planting of Ceara Rubber and Coconuts. These grow excellently in the District and there is no reason why the native should not grow both extensively.

Sd/- J.E. Jones

The Sabaki Cotton and Rubber

Company's Office,

MALINDI.

For
5/41/10.
EAP
26.

DRAFT

The Chairman
B.C.G.A.

The Director
Imperial Institute

MINUTE. 23/2

- Mr. Noall 24/2
- Mr. Butler 25/2
- Mr. Just.
- Mr. Antrobus.
- Mr. Cox.
- Sir C. Lucas.
- Sir F. Hopwood.
- Col. Seely.
- The Earl of Crewe.

Handwritten notes: 25/1, 26/2, 27/3

28 Feb 10

Sir,

I am directed by the
 Secretary to you,
 E of Crewe for any observation
 which you may be good enough to
 offer, the accompanying
 copy of a despatch from the
 Gov of the E.A.P., with its
 enclosure, respecting the
 possibilities of the cultivation
 of Cotton by natives in the
 British India.