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## *THE COTTON INDUSTRY AND ITS POSSIBILITIES IN HAWAII.*

The object of this article is not particularly to encourage agriculturists to make any large venture in cotton raising, as we are well aware that our present labor conditions might be a great drawback, and such as to render an enterprise of this nature purely speculative. We do believe, however, that the time has arrived when other industries, possible to Hawaii, and apart from sugar, should receive the attention, not only of our agriculturists, but also of our capitalists. It is surely not possible to judge whether a new industry can be successful or not until an effort is made to experiment with it, and in this instance, if need be, a few acres only in some suitable locality might be experimented on, not particularly with a view to ascertain whether cotton will grow here, as we know that it will, but for the purpose of arriving at some conclusion as to whether or not it is one of the possibilities of the future for Hawaii. The labor conditions in Hawaii we know to be such that any experiment made will hardly compare, so far as cost of production is concerned, with similar ventures in other cotton-growing countries, but the cost of labor might, in a measure, be decreased by the employment of women and children in picking the crop the same as is done elsewhere. The profit-sharing system might also be tried with Hawaiians and others, but in such event a man of capital would have to back the enterprise, by erecting a central ginning house in some suitable location, and making advances to the planters for purposes of cultivation, etc. It would, however, be useless to undertake any experiment with any expectation of success unless it were conducted throughout in a systematic manner, preferably in the hands of some agriculturist having expert knowledge of the seed suitable for our tropical climate, the nature of soil required, the most suitable locality for such an experiment, and, in fact, all other matters, however

trivial, pertaining to the production of the grade of cotton best suited for the foreign market, and which would be most likely to yield the most remunerative returns.

One of the chief things to discover in connection with successful cotton growing on these islands is the proper time to plant it so that the crop may be gathered at the proper season, and preclude the chance of the pods being damaged by heavy rainfalls just as they are ripening. The amount and distribution of rainfall has much to do with successful cotton cultivation, and this fact must be considered when soils are selected.

According to Hillebrand the only two varieties of cotton truly indigenous to Hawaii are *Gossypium Tomentosum* (Nat. names "Mao" and "Huluhulu") and *G. Drynarioides* (Nat. name "Kokio"), but besides these there are, or have been in cultivation on these islands, *G. Barbadence*, with its smooth seeded variety, the "Sea Island" cotton, and *G. Peruvianum*. All these, with the exception of perhaps the "Sea Island" variety, are of little commercial value, owing probably to their short staple. In former days, quantities of Hawaiian grown cotton were exported to the States, but we have no statistics on hand giving details in regard to these exports.

The climate of Hawaii is well suited to the growth of cotton, and the U. S. Experimental Station, in charge of Jared G. Smith, has partly determined that there may be a possible profit in that industry.

Following is a copy of a letter received by the Botanist in charge of Fiber Plants, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., from Chas. M. Shove, Treasurer of the Granite Mills, Fall River, Mass., which Mr. Smith received in connection with samples of cotton grown by himself at the U. S. Experimental Station:

Fall River, Mass., Nov. 5, 1903.

"Lyster H. Dewey, Esq.,

"Botanist in Charge of Fiber Plants,

Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.:

Dear Sir:—Referring to your favor of Oct. 7th, addressed to our President, Mr. John S. Brayton, and to the samples of cotton grown in Honolulu, Hawaii, forwarded to him at that time, Mr. Brayton, not being familiar with the different grades

of cotton, has given me the samples, and requested that I pass judgment on them and report to you. I respectfully submit the following:

"The samples submitted are rather small for thorough examination. The sample marked 'upland' is evidently raised from different seed from that used in growing the cotton known and quoted commercially as Upland cotton, that is, cotton grown in the uplands from ordinary seed which has a fiber varying from  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch to  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches in length, and is harsher and rougher in feel than the sample submitted. This sample more nearly resembles what is known as Allenseed or Peeler cotton, the staple in it being from  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches to  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inches long, and fine and silky in texture. It is not, however, as strong as the Peeler cotton grown in the bottom lands of Mississippi and Arkansas, and would not, I think, produce as much cloth pound for pound.

"The cotton submitted is, however, good spinning cotton, very well ginned, free from nits, and would, I think, be worth to-day about 14 cents, delivered here, while upland commercial of same grade is selling for about 11 cents. *Some of the samples show boll stain, and this would lower the price if it was general.*

"Samples marked 'Jannovitch Egyptian':—This sample is decidedly inferior to the Egyptian, both in length and strength of fiber, is not as silky, and when received was much browner in appearance, though it has lost some of this since. Egyptian Jannovitch is more like cotton grown from 'Sea Island' on the mainland of lower Georgia and upper Florida, in place of which it is sometimes used, and is lighter in color than the sample submitted, and has a staple or fiber fully  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length.

"The Honolulu cotton would not bring anything like the price of genuine Jannovitch, which is selling for 21 to 22 cents per pound delivered here today. I doubt if it would be worth more than the sample marked 'Upland,' though it is hard to tell from such a small sample.

"I have shown these samples to several buyers of cotton, and their opinion agrees with mine. If I can be of any further service to you in this matter, please let me know.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) "CHAS. M. SHOVE."

It will therefore be seen that in order to get the best price for such cotton as we may produce, the proper selection of seed is imperative. The shortage of crops in the United States is in the main caused by the attacks of an insect called "the Cotton Boll weevil," and much care will have to be exercised by importers of seed to prevent its introduction into this Territory, although so far as we know, it may be here already. In any case, it would be wise for agriculturists who intend experimenting with cotton, to get the variety of seed they most need from cotton-growing countries that are not infected with diseases injurious to the growth and production of cotton. In a case of this kind, prevention is better than cure.

In this issue we reprint a few notes on cotton and its cultivation in the West Indies, these having been taken from one of our exchanges.

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