

Some parcels of dried stems have been received and more are expected, from which samples will be given to persons anxious to compete for these prizes. The Government of India wishes it to be distinctly understood by all persons to whom the samples are given, that the required machinery will have to operate on green and fresh stems, and that these dried stems are merely sent in order to give the manufacturers a better idea of the nature of the plant, and of the difficulties to be overcome, than could be obtained from a mere verbal description of them.

Applications for samples are to be addressed to the Reporter on the Products of India, India Museum.

The GOVERNOR-GENERAL in COUNCIL to the Duke of ARGYLL, K.T.

MY LORD DUKE,—

Fort William, 8th February, 1871.

In continuation of our Despatch No. 130, dated the 28th December, 1870, we transmit herewith copy of an amended advertisement, in substitution of the one enclosed in your Despatch No. 4, dated the 11th January, 1870, offering prizes for the invention of machinery for separating the fibre and bark from the stem, and the fibre from the bark, of the Rhea plant.

2. We shall feel obliged by your Grace directing the same publicity to be given to this as was given to the previous advertisement.

3. Your Grace will perceive that the public competition of the machines will not be held until the 1st April, 1872, and that all machinery intended for trial must be brought by the competitors at their own charge to the Saharunpore Rhea Plantation, and kept ready before that date, to be there worked under their own supervision.

4. Your Grace will further observe that arrangements have also been made for affording to parties, whose machinery is in a sufficiently forward state, facilities for testing the same at the Government Plantation during the hot weather and rains of the present year.

5. We beg to call your Grace's attention to the 9th paragraph of the advertisement on the subject of the notices of intention to compete, which we wish to be submitted, as far as possible, prior to the 1st May, 1871. It is not our intention to exclude necessarily from the competition machines in regard to which notices may not reach us until subsequent to that date; but we desire to be as soon as possible in a position to estimate the quantity of material likely to be required for the trials, and, should the supply available at the time of the commencement of the trials prove insufficient for testing all the machines presented, priority will be given to those of which due notice was received on or before the date fixed.

6. We also enclose, for your Grace's information, a copy of our Resolution* dated the 26th ultimo, on the subject of the provision of Rhea stems for the use of intending competitors. Of the quantity mentioned in the 1st paragraph of the Resolution as intended for transmission to England, a portion has already been shipped, and the remainder will be forwarded as soon as possible, probably the whole of it during the course of the current month, and due notice given of its despatch.

NOTIFICATION.—Fort William, 26th January, 1871.

The Governor-General in Council is pleased to direct the publication of the following advertisement, in substitution of the one published under Notification No. 145, dated the 11th January, 1870:—

Advertisement.

The Government of India, after communication with various Agricultural and Horticultural Societies in India, and with persons interested in the subject, has arrived at the conclusion that the only real obstacle to the development of an extensive trade in the fibre of Rhea, or China Grass, is the want of suitable machinery for separating the fibre and bark from the stem and the fibre from the bark, the cost of effecting such separation by manual labour being great.

2. The demand for the fibre is now large, and, no doubt, might be extended with reduced prices; and there is a practically unlimited extent of country in India where the plant could be grown.

3. The requirements of the case appear to be some machinery or process capable of producing, with the aid of animal, water, or steam power, a ton of fibre of a quality which shall average in value not less than £50 per ton in the English market, at a total cost, all processes of manufacture and allowance for wear and tear included, of not more than £15 per ton. The said processes are to be understood to include all the operations performed, after the cutting and transport of the plant to the place of manufacture, to the completion of the fibre of the quality above described. The machinery must be simple, strong, durable, and cheap, and should be suited for erection at or near the plantations, as the refuse is very useful as manure for continued cultivation.

4. To stimulate the invention or adaptation of such machinery or process, the Government of India hereby offers a prize of £5,000 for the machine and process that best fulfils all the requirements named above.

5. Rewards of moderate amount will be given for really meritorious inventions, even though failing to meet entirely all the conditions named.

6. Owing to the delay that has taken place in maturing the preliminary arrangements, the Government of India has decided that the competition will not be held until the 1st April, 1872, thus affording a much longer time than was originally intended for the preparation of machines and their transport to the locality appointed for the competition. The Government Rhea Plantation at Saharunpore, in the North-Western Provinces, has been fixed as the place where the public competition will be held, and the Government of India will provide one or more small steam-engines to work the machines during the public competition.

* N.B.—Not given, as merely affecting the supply to competitors in India.