

TOBACCO CULTURE.

Mr. E. W. GOTCH to His Honor T. B. GILLIES, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—

Papakura, 16th September, 1872.

I received your letter dated the 7th instant, yesterday. I sowed four different kinds of seed, viz.: Havana, Columbian, Virginian, and German seeds, in August, and the plants appeared in due time, growing healthy and vigorous; but to my dismay I discovered that cabbages had been grown in the same ground previously, and innumerable slugs made their appearance and committed great havoc among the plants, just as I was congratulating myself on being able to transplant an ample quantity of healthy plants. I used every remedy I knew to destroy the slugs, but with very little or no success. The whole of the Havana plants were destroyed, and most of the Columbian, and I was obliged eventually to sow a fresh quantity of seed; but, unfortunately, I had no Havana seed left, and very little of Columbian, but had plenty of Virginian and German seed. This caused a delay of nearly two months. The transplanting should have taken place in the latter part of October, but in consequence of the delay, I was unable to commence to do so until the 4th December, and did not accomplish it until the latter part of the same month, in consequence of the great drought during that time, and which continued for some time afterwards, as doubtless you may recollect. I was compelled to cut most of the crop before it was properly ripe, because of the advancement of the season, and a great deal of weight in the tobacco was lost in consequence, as the weight increases as the leaf ripens. I was also unable to obtain a second crop, which is usual in the cultivation of tobacco, making, of course, a considerable difference in the yield. The curing was necessarily delayed to a time when the weather became changeable and cool, the thermometer being down as low as 47 on one occasion. The disasters of last year are, however, not likely to occur this season, as I have taken every precaution to prevent the encroachment of slugs and other detriments to the growth and advancement of the plants. I have all my seed in, and a great number of healthy-looking plants are appearing, and all promises well. I expect about eight acres of tobacco planted this season, chiefly by different settlers in this district, as preliminary experiments previous to their entering into the growth on a larger scale next season. I have every confidence in its ultimate success, and of its being a profitable source of cultivation.

You requested, in your letter, to be informed of some particulars concerning the price and quantity of the tobacco manufactured into cigars; and of the growth of tobacco and cost of same. In answer, I may state that the price of the cigars I am now manufacturing is £4 per 1,000; the quantity made has been 5,600, out of which I have 1,200 on hand. The quantity of tobacco leaf I obtained from a little over two acres was eleven hundred weight, three hundred weight of which is Columbian and German leaf, suitable for cigars, and the remainder of the leaf, being Virginian, is suitable for the manufacture of plug tobacco only. This is what I obtained in spite of all the obstructions to last year's growth and curing. The amount I calculate that can be grown to the acre is from 10 cwt. to 13 cwt. of cured leaf, which will be worth from 1s. per lb. upwards, according to quality.

The following is my calculation of the cost of cultivating one acre of tobacco, according to rate of wages here:—

	£	s.	d.
Forming and sowing seed beds	1	10	0
Two ploughings and harrowing	2	0	0
Manure	3	10	0
Forming furrows for hillocks	0	10	0
Forming hillocks with hand hoe	1	4	0
Transplanting	2	10	0
Three scarifyings	1	2	6
Grubbing, general working, and attending plants until ripe (man's labour)	6	0	0
A mere boy, however, is sufficient for the last-mentioned kind of work, gathering in crop, and curing	5	0	0
	£23	6	6

The cost of cultivating on a larger scale would be much less in proportion.

T. B. Gillies, Esq.

I have, &c.,

E. W. GOTCH.

MINERALS.

Mr. J. W. TATTON to the CHAIRMAN, Colonial Industries Committee.

GENTLEMEN,—

Wellington, Mulgrave Street, 2nd October, 1872.

I have much pleasure in acceding to your request that I should lend you my descriptive map of the Province of Nelson, exhibiting the mineral characteristics of the various districts, with the exception of iron, which abounds throughout.

Secondly, with reference to your expressed desire that I should suggest some plan by which Government might aid the development of industries, and more especially that of the mineral resources of Nelson, I proceed to give my opinion on the subject. My idea is, that Government should offer subsidies in the usual way (as lately with glass, paper, and woollen manufactories), towards the working of silver, copper, iron, chrome, lead, zinc, antimony, or their chemical compounds, and also towards the utilization of animal refuse, such as horns, hoofs, and dried blood, all of which can be profitably used in working the above, to produce colours, dyeing materials, &c.; such subsidy to bear a certain proportion to the export value of the manufactured articles.

I have in a former paper pointed out how large an opening exists for the profitable undertaking of these works. I may add that it would have the additional advantage of throwing open a wide field of