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#### *About the Institute*

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

from Gayr

B. I. SS. Angora  
Bay of Bengal  
16<sup>th</sup> March 1922

Dear Prain,

Having escaped yesterday from the time wasting and distracting subtleties of office work as it now is in this reformed land, I am enjoying a welcome freedom from it all and an opportunity of acknowledging your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> December.

It is clear from the above papers that people in England generally speaking have not even yet grasped actual conditions in India. The state of affairs is very bad indeed and as far as I can judge little short

of a miracle now can prevent a series of disturbances all over the country. In fact they are already in

evidence in some of the provinces. In Bihar and Orissa - as the acting Governor Le Mesurier, whom you will recollect as Magistrate of Hoarah in Mysore & Duke, has plainly stated, there is practically a virtual disregard of law, and its replacement by mob rule.

The isolated European communities are in constant danger of assault, and the police force quite inadequate to afford them protection. In the Punjab a movement called the "Akali" movement has started.

Its aim is the raising of regular rebel forces and no  
secret is made about it. Bands of them are being  
drilled, and enrolment is going on as if for an army.  
There have been several cases of secret insubordination  
amongst the Sepoys, in one regiment a lot of the  
men appearing on parade in black caps. This regiment  
has been sent elsewhere, but this expedient is likely  
to cause only greater dissatisfaction as the families of  
these men are then entirely at the mercy of the non-cooperators  
who hang with them cruelly.

Assam according to all accounts is also in a state little short  
of open rebellion. The fall of the fear who has done so much  
to bring all this about, and the arrest of Gandhi may tend  
ultimately to improve matters, but I fear they will get worse  
before they can become better.

The services are pretty hopeless. They are all taking  
the convenience clause in the conditions as regards retiring  
on proportional pension very badly, and quite rightly too.

There is no convenience clause on the Government side, and  
it is unfair to impose one on the servants side.

The limitation of choice until 1924 is an iniquitous  
provision, for judging from what conditions are like  
and how they are developing in 1923, there is no hope

of any improvement after 1924, so far as European officers are concerned. Rather the reverse. Yet this previous report says that if an officer does not choose to retire on preferential pension before 1924, after that year, he will be entitled to no pension if he finds he cannot continue in Government service, and retires therefrom. Europeans are pouring in from all the services regarding these points, and service associations are being formed in each Province to fight for their rights. Apart altogether from the question of preferential pensions, there is a general fear of repudiation of all pensions a few years hence if the present political trend is allowed to continue. This may seem to folks at home, who are being kept in ignorance of the real state of affairs out here, an absurd fear; but we out here do not think so. It is not enough to have become ~~the~~ a topic in the Imperial Legislative Assembly. Anyhow streams show how the wind is blowing. During this last session of the Binque Legislative Council - which is overwhelmingly composed of Bahis - a resolution was brought forward that the next astronomers in pay - that were long overdue - should be cut down by half.



This resolution was lost only by 13 votes! Another proposal was that Transitory allowances hereafter should be only on a second class basis.

The U. S. Club gave a farewell dinner to Lord Ronaldsday the other week. He made a straight-forward speech - which unfortunately could not be reported - and the general impression was anything but optimistic. As regards repatriation of persons all he could say was that he did not believe the British Parliament would so far stiffen its traditions as to allow such a thing to occur.

In these days this is not much of a security, for after all a handful of opponents of the press policies have no voting power, and that almost seems to count. You will understand now how I

am anxious to get out of this country and get a job at home, no matter what it is, so long as I am not to depend entirely on a pension, which may cover some years hence. It is to be hoped of course that

things will not come to such a pass as repatriation but the possibility has to be faced.

Whether happens about Edinburgh I shall apply for long leave - I am due 28 months - presumably

& retirement.

The financial condition of the country is the worst in the history of British Rule. The Munro Finance Commission that went out in 1920 to form a scheme of distributing the revenues was rash enough to state that a deficit in its opinion was unthinkable, and in regard to Madras in particular, the only difficulty the Commission would see was how Madras was to achieve her huge surpluses. The wisdom of the wise has indeed turned to foolishness, for all the Governments are bankrupt, Madras being one of the worst! Although one would have thought that the fall of the rupee in 1920 would have alarmed the Govt. of India, yet for the revenue for 1921-22 they actually estimated on the basis of an average rate of  $1/8^d$  for the rupee. Of course the unmeted coin - except for a week or two when it reached  $1/5^d$  - has been below  $1/6^d$  and still is. As if the financial state of the country were not bad enough, a politically engineered strike has been paralyzing the E.I. R. for a month and a half now, and the Govt. of India does, what it is now an expert in doing, nothing.

One effect of the hopeless financial condition is that

all hope of expansion of any scientific department in  
work has gone for an indefinite period. On the  
contrary, there is to be a drastic cutting  
down of scientific departments, and I have been  
warned to prepare myself for a cutting down of the  
Botanical Survey, although how one can cut down a  
Dept. that scarcely exists is not very clear.

Inducement of the survey is going on in fact as  
far as possible, and by all means say I for as conditions  
are developing I think it little short of criminal  
to induce Europeans to come out into Government  
service. Certainly our European gardeners should be

induced to come out, unless it is explained to them  
very clearly indeed the risks they are running.

The agreement then made with the Sec. of State  
is not now with the paper it is written, as there is  
no longer a European Gardeners Service, there are only  
Domestic Gardeners Services. The agreement with  
the Sec. of State is not now accepted by the  
A. G. B. as authority for pay, and the "appointment"  
has to be "sanctioned" by the local Government  
before they can draw pay. Further the pay  
of Gardeners is "retard", that is, unless the



Bahm Parliament of Bengal votes the money, they may find themselves strangled. This is no imaginary contingency. The thing has already happened, although not in a Garden's case. The Government of Bengal appointed a Major Storey, as Director of Publicity, to counteract the lying and malignant propaganda of the socialists. He took up his duties, and then the Bengal Legislative Council refused to vote his pay, and the poor man was cast adrift. He is dead since.

Apart from this the looking now is to dispense with European Gardeners altogether. The assistant-director of the Eden and other Calcutta Gardens is now an Indian, and I fancy the next assistant-director of the Botanic will also become, as also the director of the Herbarium.

Before any man comes now out to India, he should if possible at all consult someone who is acquainted with present conditions. The opinion of a man who has been out of India for more than three years is valueless, so great is the change in so short a time.



Even for the Amcham Plantation in Burma, I have  
 been told that every effort should be made to  
 train Indians for the posts of Superintendents  
 and Assistant Dits. This in Burma of all places  
 where Indians are loathed and despised. The  
 suggestion of course emanated from a Madras  
 Imperial Commission, who have never been in Burma.

Of course all these developments are interesting to  
 watch, but I have paid too big a price for  
 the experience and I want no more of it. So if  
 I do not get the Edinburgh appointment on one of  
 them if it is to be split into two, I should be  
 glad to try for anything else that may be  
 going, before it is too late and I am too old.

So if you hear of anything, I would be grateful  
 for the information. I have inflicted a long  
 screed on you, but in view of the fact that you  
 will still continue to consult regarding Indian  
 conditions, I think it as well to let you have  
 my ideas. They may not of course be sound,  
 they may be unduly pessimistic, but if they  
 are, then at least there are many pessimists

& keep me company. Letters in a less dark  
 tint from others may help you & arrive  
 at a more concluded judgment than I fear  
 is possible for men and many more like me at  
 present.

In a few more days the mighty frost will  
 for a little time shelter me, our snow, and  
 after the exhausting struggle ~~with~~ already  
 spent & it will be a haven of rest  
 and peace.

You now will be now be free of office  
 harness, and not I suppose entirely sorry for it.

My wife tells me that Mrs. Thomson's condition  
 has improved to some extent. By the time this  
 reaches you no doubt you will have settled in  
 your place at Putney, with all the way of  
 sitting behind you. I hope Lady Prinn and  
 you are well.

With kindest regards to both.

Yours and  
 A. 1922