

Herald Jan 18 - 27

RUBBER GROWING.

ONE of the mysteries of cultivation in this part of Florida is, why has not some enterprising grower or business man made some experiments in the matter of raising rubber commercially.

Perhaps no one article of commerce, other than food products, is in so great demand as is rubber, and there seems to be every reason to believe that the demand for the product will continue to increase indefinitely.

At present the supply of rubber comes from the far east and from some sections of South America and of Central America. The cultivation of rubber, that is the planting out of trees and their care, as distinguished from obtaining the crude material from the wild forests where it is indigenous, has developed into a great world enterprise, but even with the continued extension of the industry it has not been able to keep up with the enormous world demand, consequent upon the building of automobiles and the use of the product in other industries. Rubber has become one of the necessities without which the civilized world cannot get along. The constantly increasing price of the product is convincing evidence that the supply is not keeping within hailing distance of the demand.

While it cannot be said, with certainty, that Dade county can produce in sufficient quantities and quality the rubber necessary to make its cultivation a profitable industry, yet the indications are that the rubber tree can be grown here as successfully, as quickly and as freely as in any portion of the globe.

There are at present in this county numerous trees of the variety, the *Fiscus elastica*, that produces the best quality of rubber and they have been standing for many years, some of them having attained enormous growth.

Something like two months ago the *Manufacturers' Record*, of Baltimore, printed an article on rubber cultivation in Dade county and published a number of photographs showing trees that have been growing in this section since the time the Perrine grant titles were settled and Mr. Flagler obtained an interest in the grant. One of the trees shown is so large that it entirely overshadows a cottage built beneath its shade. There are many others of nearly the same size scattered throughout the county, indicating that with proper care rubber trees of the variety demanded by commerce can be grown here with little or no trouble.

Our people seem to have a one track mind with reference to growing crops. They either confine themselves to the growing of citrus fruits or vegetables and have not discovered that the time has arrived when true prosperity can only be served by a diversification of crops. That, and the fact that they are rather impatient for early returns from their lands, evidently accounts for the fact that nothing in a commercial way has been done to introduce rubber production here.

There should be an investigation by the federal government as to the possibilities of growing rubber in this section of the state and if that investigation should reveal, as it doubtless will, that rubber is one of the things that can profitably be raised here, enterprising men ought to take hold of the proposition and make money by their enterprise.



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