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NECESSITY MAY MAKE U. S. GROW LONGER COTTON.

Egypt, one tenth the size of the United States, with cotton fields one twentieth as big, can twist the elephant's tail. Although more than half of the world's crop grows on American soil and a third of all the cotton in foreign mills comes out of American gins, American manufacturers get exceedingly nervous if a few dusky Egyptian planters decide to make it lentils and beans this year instead of cotton.

The reason is that there is cotton and cotton. The kind that grows under Egypt's desert sun has the longest, finest fibers of any in the world, except the Sea Island cotton which grows in small quantities in the West Indies. American manufacturers like to use it for cord tires and tire fabric, and it is also used in making very fine cotton goods.

The Egyptian government, which regulates all agriculture, through the simple fact that it can turn off the water in its irrigation canals by a mere twist of the wrist, occasionally deems it advisable to take a tuck or two in the cotton acreage. This has been done at least twice in the last ten years, U. S. Department of Commerce officials say. And now, they claim, restrictions have been proposed for the 1926 crop which will be planted this spring.

A statement of Secretary Hoover to a congressional committee investigating foreign monopolies that control American necessities is as follows:

"The motive behind the restriction of acreage may be attributable to one of two reasons, or possibly both. Cotton in Egypt is raised under irrigation depending on the reservoirs of the upper Nile, and from time to time there are shortages of water, and we may consider this the cause. However there appears to be no such condition existing at the present time, and there is reason to believe that the intention to restrict acreage during the coming season is based upon the desire to influence prices."

Although the United States raises a small amount of Egyptian Cotton of its own in Arizona and California, it has not been as popular as the imported kind. Spinners claimed the American long staple or pima cotton could not be worked as well because it was not as carefully handled as that from Egypt. At any rate the demand tapered off, and the production of pima cotton dwindled from over ninety thousand bales in 1920 to about four thousand in 1924.

There is no real reason why the United States should be dependent on Egypt for this product, in case of need. The climate and length of season in Arizona is very much as it is in Egypt. It is a question of labor, and of prices. pima

cotton costs more to produce as it requires greater care. Egypt has cheap labor and can compete successfully in spite of transportation rates.

The prosperity of Egypt fluctuates with its cotton, the most important crop. It is believed by people who have observed conditions that the government manages this goose which lays the golden egg with utmost care. When cotton prices go low, Egypt restricts the area to be planted the next season, until prices climb up again. When they go high, the government attempts to peg the price by buying in the market and doling it out in wise quantities.

Whatever blame may attach to Egypt, it must be remembered that it is a country that has to maintain itself on artificial water supply because it practically never rains. It must exercise great economy to bring comparative economic comfort to the 14,000,000 people that crowd the narrow valley of the Nile. Although the area under Egyptian rule is over 300,000 square miles, only a little over 12,000 square miles is arable.

It is always possible to increase this farm land by more extensive irrigation, limited of course by the amount of water the Nile can supply. Thousands of years before the time of Christ, and back in the days of Tutankhamen, irrigation was practiced in Egypt. Practically the same old system was used until recent times, and under the rule of Great Britain it was developed to its greatest heights.

The Nile is a great artery that keeps Egypt alive. It begins in the heart of Africa at Victoria Nyanza and flows almost due north to the Mediterranean, a total distance of about 3500 miles, or farther than from New York to San Francisco. In about the last 1000 miles of its vast journey it is not augmented by a single tributary stream.

Although the most selfish methods of Egypt could never bring on an economic crisis in the United States, still they could cause a temporary discomfort in manufacturing fields. If the boll weevil should be conquered at some future time, the fine long Sea Island cotton might again be grown in the Carolinas as it once was.

Bringing cotton to the United States is like carrying coals to Newcastle, but it is, as has been said, a matter of the kind of cotton. China, India, Peru and Mexico also send us some of their cotton, which finds its way into blankets, wool mixtures and cheap yarns.

BENDING OF RADIO WAVES CAUSES "FRFAK" TRANSMISSION

Bending of the radio waves in the upper atmosphere, in somewhat the same way as a beam of light is bent when crossing a hot stove or highly heated ground, is responsible for many of the curious and apparently contradictory effects observed in radio transmission with short waves, according to William G. Baker and Chester W. Rice, of the research laboratory of the General Electric Company. Just as the bending of light waves over a desert sometimes brings into view objects far beyond the horizon, and produces a mirage, when the radio waves are bent it may be possible to hear signals from a distant station though nearer receiving sets cannot detect them.