



Natives put on their most picturesque dresses when bringing cotton to the local market.

One Million Acres of Cotton Plants

The Congo cotton growing belt will no doubt expand in the future, thanks to the adaptability of the cotton plant. Already the cotton fields have spread to the north of the equator in the Uele and in the Ubanghi, to the south of the line in the Maniema, in the Sankuru, the Kasai, the Lomami, the Tanganyika.

The state follows the evolution of this culture very actively and closely. The societies are interested in it. They grant bonuses to the best farmers: tools, salt, or money.

The surface under cultivation is evaluated at one million acres, which shows an average output of 275 pounds of cotton seed per acre.

There is a progressive improvement of the quality, such

that from now on the Congo cotton will be particularly appreciated in the spinning mills and carded wool spinning mills.

As a general rule, the Congolese cotton resembles the Good Middling standard, with a length of fiber varying on the average from 26 to 30 millimeters.

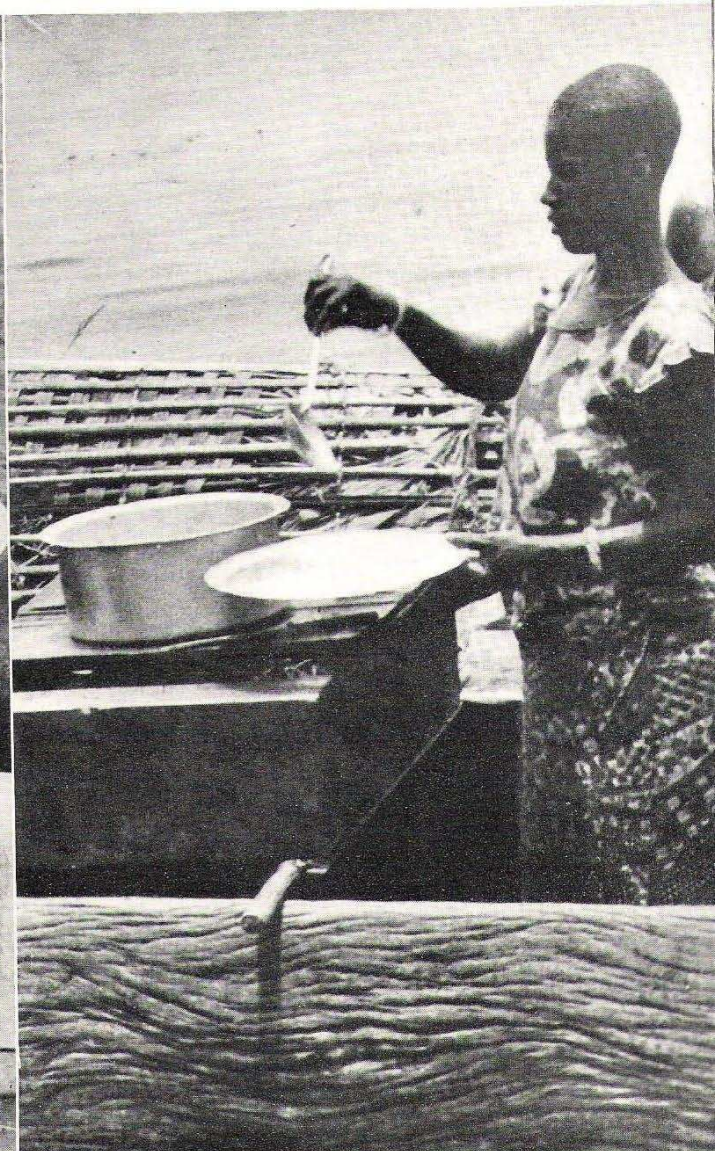
The Belgian Congo produces various fibers, including sisal, Urena Lobata, jute and banana fiber. The output of sisal alone exceeds 1,000 tons a year.

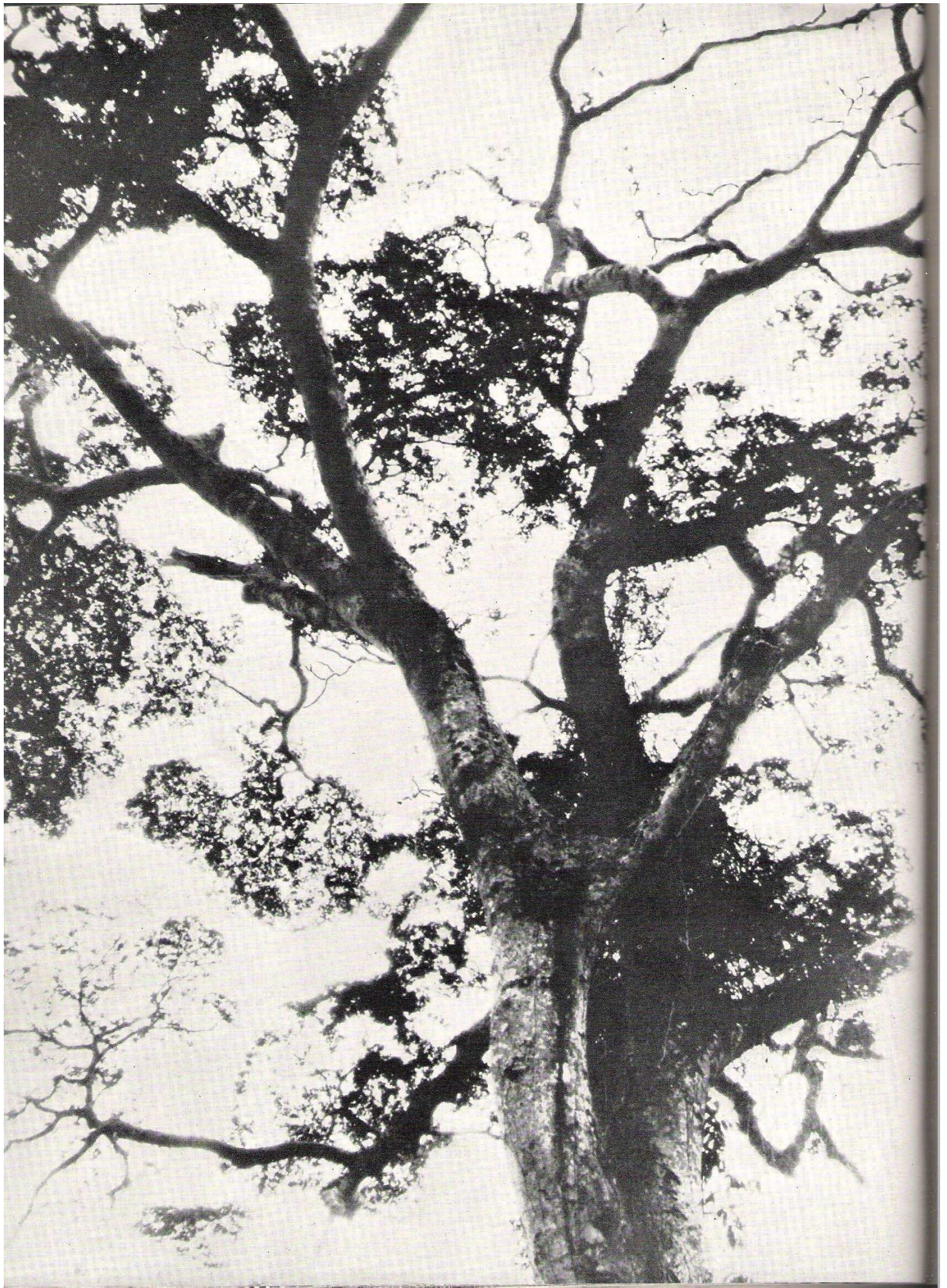
Natural silk is another product to which much attention is being given. It is expected that, by an increase of 400% of production, the Belgian Congo will soon make up for some of the shortage caused by the war with Japan.

*Native housewife
sifting flour.*



*Cooking at the
"Water Village."*





Timber from 275 Million Acres of Forests

The forest area, or rather the area of the Congolese forests, is not precisely determined. If it be but a simple estimate based on clearly settled boundaries, but not taking the "glades", very often considerable, into account, or the accidents of the ground which can greatly reduce the global estimate, one could quote an acceptable figure of between 275 and 375 million acres.

The woods of the Belgian Congo are classed in five categories: (1) Ordinary carpentering wood for building and paneling purposes. (2) Wood for fine carpenter's work, cabinet maker's work, and furnishing. (3) Ornamental wood. (4) Woods for work requiring a high degree of resistance. (5) Diverse woods.

The first are the limba and the kambala.

The limba is one of the finest trees of the Mayumbé: a very straight trunk, height often reaching to 1,200 feet, and having a diameter of from 40 to 90 feet. It is a magnificent wood, which enjoys an ever-increasing success, especially for furniture making, wall paneling, the paneling of railway carriages, of ships, and for all kinds of veneers.

The kambala is notable especially for its imputrescence, which gives it value as a building timber. It replaces the teak wood in naval construction.

Among the woods classed in the cabinet making section, let us mention: the Entandophragma (tchimaye), a dark red mahogany, very resistant; the Lifaki (Entandophragma congoense), pink mahogany; the Kalungi, reddish and flowery. All three are easily workable, polishable and have a satin-like appearance.

Under the third heading, decorative woods, let us name the Wenga, which has justifiably been called the rosewood of the Congo. It is black, streaked with brown. It supplies magnificent surfaces when used for veneering, and furniture makers take full advantage of its beauty. There are also the Mubangu, the Lusamba, the pterocarpus and the Diospyrus, these last being termed coral wood and ebony respectively.

In the timbers requiring a high degree of resistance, one should name the Limbali, imputrescent, and which serves splendidly for pile work in booms because it bears the immersions and emersions without harm.

Production of copal is increasing rapidly and averages 20,000 tons a year, a useful addition to the Allies supply of this essential war product.

A Congo teak.

Top of trunk of a Kalungi.





Rubber trees of the Belgian Congo.

Rubber a Future Source of Wealth

It is recognized today that throughout the equatorial region of the Belgian Congo the climate and the sun are suitable for the growing of Hévéa, a rubber of the highest quality. These plantations today extend over more than 12,500 acres and production is already 1,000 tons a year.

In the culture of Hévéa lies the greatest future of the Congo. The suggestion has been well made that plantation of Robusta coffee be undertaken along with that of Hévéa. Robusta is planted between the furrows and begins to produce at the end of three years. The period of waiting for returns on Hévéa is shortened and production is the fields increased, while the ever present danger of monoculture is avoided.

Still other products include ivory (150,000 tons a year) beeswax, skins and hides, of which important quantities are exported, pyrethrum, etc.