

THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT DAIRY.

We have to go to the official papers of a neighbouring Colony to learn what is taking place at our very doors! The Report which Mr. Bellamy has furnished to the Selangor Administration, on the Dairy in our Cinnamon Gardens will be perused with much interest by a large number of our readers. To planters especially who generally have milching cows on their estates, the information afforded ought to be of considerable practical value. Colombo residents too—especially the ladies who as house-keepers, have most to do with the cattle and milk supply—cannot fail to gather hints from the accounts of the cows, which do best for milking, the dietary scale, &c.

It is very satisfactory to find that this local Dairy experiment besides securing for the Hospitals, the great boon of an ample supply of pure rich milk, is proving a profitable investment—indeed shewing profits so large per mensem that the whole cost of the building, cattle, &c. will very quickly be repaid to the public exchequer. This being the case, we would urge that a similar experiment be commenced for the benefit of hospital patients in connection with all our chief towns. What has succeeded so well in Colombo, should surely be a success at Galle, at Kandy, Badulla, Rainapura, Trincomalee, Jaffna, Kurunegala and other of our towns and principal stations. We do not expect all these establishments to be set agoing at once. The "Managers" and attendant coolies should be gradually trained at Colombo, and the stock utilised from those bred in the headquarters premises, with an occasional cow from Scinde. If the Government plead that no more money can be spared, the public interested may well reply that it will only require the expenditure of the profits of the Colombo Dairy, to secure all that is required—the gradual establishment of Dairies at each of the towns named, for the benefit, primarily, of the hospital patients.

We observe that Mr. Bellamy was so well satisfied that he strongly recommends the opening of a similar Dairy at Kuala Lumpur. It may seem strange to find our visitor pronouncing the site of our local Dairy to have been the bed of a considerable river. No doubt the Kelaniganga, at one time had its mouth considerably to the south of its present debouchure into the sea. The Colombo Lake is probably part of a lagoon or back-water at one time connected with the river and this lagoon no doubt extended through the Cinnamon Gardens, until the river gradually shifted Northwards. There is a marked difference in level now, however, between the river and the Colombo lake or Dairy site, although in a big flood, occasionally, the Kelani rises almost to the level of the lake at St. Sebastian.

REPORT ON CEYLON GOVERNMENT DAIRY.

District Office, Kuala Selangor, 5th March, 1894.
To the Acting Government Secretary, Selangor.

Sir.—In accordance with instructions on your No. 333-94 requesting me to devote a portion of my recent vacation leave to an enquiry into the working of the Government Dairy in Ceylon, I have the honour to report as follows:—

2. I waited on His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Noel Walker, and explained the wishes of the Selangor Government. His Excellency offered every assistance in the matter and gave me a letter of

introduction to Mr. Driberg, the Principal of the School of Agriculture, to which the Dairy is attached. On Wednesday, the 28th ultimo, I drove to the Dairy and spent some considerable time inspecting the place and getting information.

3. The Dairy is situated in the neighbourhood of the Cinnamon Gardens at Colombo, on a plot of ground which was evidently at one time the bed of a considerable river. The soil is composed entirely of fine loose sand with scarcely any vegetation in its immediate vicinity and judging from appearances the place seems altogether unsuitable for dairy purposes. It was started in June, 1893, principally with the object of supplying Government Hospitals and other public institutions with fresh milk. Only a small quantity of milk is supplied to the general public, as there is a desire on the part of Government to avoid competition with private enterprise. A sum of R3,300 was voted for the construction of the building, R4,500 were allowed for purchase of cattle, while materials, etc., cost R1,000.

4. The building is of brick and tile, and while of the plainest possible description it is constructed on highly sanitary principles. In shape it is oblong with a large open space inside the four walls. At one end, adjoining the entrance, are the quarters of the Manager and the offices. The cattle are arranged in the long sheds at the sides, which open on to the central space. The floors are of brick and cement, slightly sloping so, as to allow all objectionable matter to run off quickly into the brick drains which convey it to a cistern placed outside the further end of the building, where it is all collected with a view to utilising it as liquid manure. All droppings from the cattle are carried away at once and everything is done to keep the place sweet and give it a tidy appearance.

5. The Dairy is stocked principally with cows from Scinde and what are usually known as Coast cows, obtained from Trichinopoly and Tuticorin. The cost is about R120 each, but the Scinde cattle are far superior to the other variety. The bulls, which were until recently used for stud purposes, numbered three, one being of the Scinde breed, another from Aden and a third, which proved an unsatisfactory animal, was a cross between the Nellore and Aden breeds. Contrary to the generally received idea, I found that cattle of the Nellore breed were not favourites in Ceylon. They appear to require a good deal more attention and fodder than other varieties of cattle. Of late the Government Dairy has had the loan of a very fine Cape bull, which covered twenty-six cows. The arrival of the calves of this mixed breed is awaited with considerable interest.

6. The staff engaged at the Dairy consists of a Manager, on R40 per mensem, and eight coolies, on salaries varying from R8 to R15 per mensem each according to their qualifications. The food allowance for each cow is 50 cents (Rupee) per diem. The accounts for the month of June, when the Dairy was first started, shewed an adverse balance of R148, but only a few of the cows were giving milk. In July there was a credit balance of R33 for the month, and at the present time, when forty-two cows are in good milking order, the profits are no less than R580 per mensem. The actual receipts for January last amounted to R1,379-80, while the working expenses were R798-67. These figures will of themselves prove how profitable dairying work can be.

7. The routine of work at the Dairy is as follows:—Milk is drawn at 3 a.m. and 1 p.m., and as soon as it is all collected it is weighed by the "Dairy Herd Recorder," which shews pints and pounds, so that the richness of the milk is at once ascertained. It is then poured into a large tin vessel inside which there is a graduated scale and the hospitals, etc., are supplied according to the amounts recorded on the scale. The idea being that the milk undergoes less handling and can be more rapidly distributed in this way. Such milk as may be left over is then passed through the cream separator, a very clever contrivance, but too well-known to require description.