DEPARTMENTAL NOTES.

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EXPERIMENT STATION, PERADENIYA:

FOR THE MONTHS OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1929.

TEA.

THE result of the banji experiment alluded to in the last report was that after plucking 100 marked banjis 46 of the shoots again produced banjis from the axil of the next leaf while 54 shoots produced good flush. The theory that a shoot which produces a banji will, if that banji is plucked, always produce another banji thus cannot be maintained. The matter probably depends on the state of vigour of the bush.

The drought experienced during January and February was the worst for many years and resulted in the death of a considerable number of supplies. Another examination of the Hillside tea, where strips of *Indigofera endecaphylla* alternate with clean weedings, was made towards the end of the drought. Again there was no *marked* difference between the appearance of the tea under Indigofera and the clean-weeded tea, but the tea under Indigofera appeared slightly more vigorous. It also appeared that losses of supplies were more numerous in the clean-weeded tea.

RUBBER.

Wintering was very early this year. The majority of the trees had their new foliage by the end of February.

In the Hill-top rubber where during the north-east monsoon *Dolichos Hosei* was planted along the terraces, alternatively in forked patches and in holes specially filled with jungle soil, no result has been obtained by either method.

CACAO.

The annual lopping of dadaps followed by a light pruning of the cacao was carried out in January and February.

Treatment of bark canker by light scraping and painting with 10% Brunolinum Plantarium was done in January. No treatment was carried out last year and the increased incidence of canker this year demonstrates the need for regular treatment.

Another serious problem in cacao is the loss of shade through dadaps falling down. This is constantly occurring and results in considerable damage to cacao trees by breaking and subsequent deprivation of shade. The replacement of shade by planting fresh cuttings is a very slow operation. No root disease has so far been found on dadaps in cacao. Shallow rooting would appear to be a serious disadvantage of Erythrina as a shade for cacao.

COCONUTS.

All the young palms of different varieties in the fodder grass plots were manured with a mixture consisting of 2 parts groundnut cake, 2 parts of fish manure, 3 parts steamed bone meal, and 1 part sulphate of potash, applied in circular trenches at the rate of 9 lb. per palm.

FODDER : PLANTS.

When grass ran short during the drought the cattle were fed for a fortnight on *Indigofera endecaphylla*. No other green food was given. All the Indigofera was invariably finished and the value of this plant as a fodder in times of drought is well worthy of note.

The Efwatakala grass in plot 167 has now been almost entirely superseded by couch and other grasses. It has certainly not fulfilled its early promise.

Guatemala grass which was planted in plot 160 in October last in place of *Paspalum commersonii* has come on very well indeed and has not been in the least affected by the drought.

CHAULMOOGRA OIL PRODUCING PLANTS.

All plants of *Hydnocarpus Wightiana* and *Taraktogenos Kurrzii* were given an application of nitrate of soda at the rate of 4 oz. per plant in January. Cheddy in this area was cut down.

THE IRIYAGAMA DIVISION.

On February 8th a sub-Committee of the Estates Products Committee consisting of the Acting Director of Agriculture, Major J. W. Oldfield, Messrs. C. E. A. Dias and T. H. Holland met to discuss the modification of the plans for planting this Division. The sub-Committee's recommendations have been embodied in a separate memorandum.

On February 11th the clearing of the remaining 20 acres of jungle was auctioned and the work is now in progress.

In September last all stumps in the budwood nursery were cut down, one bed to 1 foot, one bed to 6 inches, one bed to 2 inches, and so on. The percentages of stumps which have put out new shoots are as follows :

Cut down to 1 ft.	...	...	...	81%
,, ,, ,, 6 inches	...	...	...	65%
,, ,, ,, 2 inches	...	...	...	53%

All the remainder died. This would appear to emphasise the necessity of having young seedling stocks for budding on to since cutting down old stumps to 2 inches is likely to result in considerable losses. Cutting down to 1 ft, though possible in a budwood nursery, would not be feasible on trees to be tapped.

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