

**HORTICULTURE AND EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS.**

(From Administration Report for North-Central Province.)

In this Province there is practically no horticulture. There are the experimental gardens, but these being watered from Tissa tank scarcely afford a fair test of adaptability of new introductions. They might, however be easily worked into a valuable institution, though at present they may be characterized as small, well laid out and pretty when not eaten down by the cattle I usually see in them.

*Eucalyptus alba* promises well, and as it has balsamic qualities ought to be largely planted round the bathing, drinking, and washing tanks, and in similar damp and unhealthy spots in the town as a protection against malaria.

CACAO exists here precariously without being watered, but only in favourable places, and can scarcely ever be of economic value except in Tamankaduwa, where I believe a large area is suitable for some of its varieties.

COCONUT is proved to thrive here by the one coconut grove of the Province—a plantation made in Anuradhapura by the enlightened enterprise of Godage Mudaliyar. Coconut trees exist in most villages, and afford enough young nuts for the hospitality exercised by the villagers to their visitors, and very little more.

JAK TREES exist in the moister villages below bunds of tanks. The experimental garden ought to be supplied with seeds of many varieties, and specimen plants established there, whilst the others are distributed as widely as possible. Seeds procured from the drier Malay States might afford a race of jak that would suit the conditions of this Province better than the Ceylon varieties, but all those also should be introduced and tried. The Peradeniya Gardens have done almost nothing for village gardens as yet, and the Anuradhapura branch might easily be made to redeem this one deficiency in the record of that invaluable institution. I myself observed that the jak of Perak is a fruit very superior in flavour when ripe to the best I have eaten in Ceylon. It may possess other qualities differing from the trees grown here. As a vegetable, cooked while half ripe with a little coconut juice, the jak is as wholesome and important to the Sinhalese peasant as the potato is to the peasants in England.

BREADFRUIT.—This grows here and there as a single tree. Two closely allied varieties are found in Ceylon, introduced long ago from the Maldives, and probably prior to European rule. There are a great number of distinct varieties in the South Sea Islands, and several in the Malay Archipelago. A German official from Samoa, who tasted the Ceylon fruit, assured me that it was one of the worst varieties he knew. As there is steam communication between Samoa and Sydney it would be no great task to introduce new varieties, some of which might prove adaptable to the villages here where the Maldivian variety fails to thrive.

VINES.—As grapes grow well at Kalpitiya, Trincomalee, and Jaffna, they certainly would thrive here. The experimental gardens ought to make a special feature of viticulture and introduce new varieties. The grape grown at Jaffna, &c., is of a most inferior quality, and it is probable that selected vines from Persia and Syria would succeed better than the variety now grown, and afford a good quality of fruit. The grape at present grown appears to be identical with the outdoor grape of England, formerly grown in vineyards there and is presumably the variety least likely to succeed in North Ceylon. Vine culture is well adapted to native habits, and the villagers would soon learn how to train, prune and cultivate the vine and thin the fruit, if an example were made at the gardens. Those who elsewhere grow a vine or two gain a considerable profit from it, and the care required is a wholesome and educational effort.

Figs would probably grow very well here, though at Galle and Colombo the fruit is poor. I do not see a single fig plant in the gardens. This tree, if a

variety could be selected that adapted itself here, would be a pleasant addition to the villager's little compound, which at present has only its pomegranate tree, and its bilimbi bush, and perhaps a guava of the old and inferior variety, or an orange tree.

To sum up. The Gardens here, if to be of any use to the Province, should introduce and test the varieties of well-known fruit trees and vegetables grown elsewhere or in Ceylon, as well as introduce new kinds. Little nurseries should be made of trees useful for food or affording, by profit or luxury, an incentive to careful home-culture by the peasantry. Soursop, pomegranates of better quality than now exist, oranges, limes, even country damsons, uguressa plums, West Indian papaws, and all such fruits could be sown in small plots of ground for distribution to the villagers.

Mahogany, eucalyptus, and other such trees might be experimentally introduced for ornamental planting in the district with advantage. Vegetables suited for village growth, such as improved varieties of beans, egg-plant, chilly, bandecai, gourd, jams, &c., should be systematically grown to stimulate the peasant's curiosity and emulation.

At present none of these economical branches are taken up, and yet the Director complains that no local interest is taken in the gardens! A few scorched selaginæ and sun-bleached foliage plants, five gardenia bushes, a score or so of trees of botanical interest, and some cow-browsed palm plants, added to a thriving row of mandarin orange trees, is my own present impression of the Anuradhapura Gardens.

**AGRICULTURE.**

The usual rice cultivation exists here, and chenas are sown with kurakkan or gingelly. One or two Tamils have small plots of tobacco in the Province.

I believe cotton might be grown with great success, somewhat on the Egyptian system, over a large area in Tamankaduwa, but at present no cotton is produced here.

In regard to chenas the policy was initiated in 1892 of diminishing this wasteful and unsatisfactory system, so far as Crown lands are concerned. Owing, however, to the exceptional distress of the year, and uncertainty in regard to the expected rains, it was thought best to allow chenas in 1893, carefully restricting them to scrub jungle under ten years' growth.

**BREAKS OF TEA: AND ENTOMOLOGIST FOR CEYLON.**

LONDON, June 15

Mr. Francis Long, of Messrs. J. S. Long & Co., Tea Brokers, of 10 and 11 Mincing Lane, whose interview with myself on the subject of the sale of

**SMALL BREAKS OF TEA**

was mentioned in a former letter of mine, has written me taking exception to some points in my report of that interview. Mr. Long thinks that in some respects I unintentionally misrepresented the meaning of what he said to me. Of course, under such circumstances, I can do nothing less than reproduce here his written remarks to myself as to the points on which he considers me to have misrepresented him. His attention was called to the extract of my letter given in the *Overland Observer* of the mail before last, (see page 828 of Vol. XIII.) by Mr. Leake, as Secretary to the Ceylon Association in London. The last mentioned gentleman thinks that what I reported Mr. Long to have said reflects upon the procedure of the Tea Committee of the Association, as well upon himself in his capacity of Secretary. If you refer to my letter of April 20th you will, however, see that I was careful to state to Mr. Long—conjointly with Mr. Roberts, who was present—that we both knew that communication had been made by Mr. Leake of the result to the Committee's consideration of the Brokers' proposal. Mr. Leake's letter to Mr. Long reads in part:—"The statements imputed

to you convey so wrong an impression of what has passed on this subject between the Brokers' Association and my Tea Committee, that I am obliged to send by the mail tomorrow an accurate statement of the facts." The recent correspondence was opened by me, not by the Brokers at all, in a letter dated 10th October last. To this letter I received a reply dated 28th December, which was submitted to my Tea Committee on 15th January, and a reply sent on 19th January containing the proposal of which it is said that you never heard. In reply to that letter the Brokers made the proposal for increasing the limits for small breaks. On that subject Mr. Price came and saw me, and on my saying that we were not likely to have a meeting till May, he replied that as any change would date from 1st July, the May meeting would be quite soon enough for us to consider the matter. Had he wished it I was prepared to call a meeting at once. I write, as you may wish to put yourself right before I write to Ceylon."

MR. LONG'S

letter to myself contains the following observation in reply to my suggestion that he should offer them to me for the purpose of communication to yourselves:—

"The first error that I wish to draw your attention to is that you make me say—'As for the proposal you tell me of the Tea Committee of the Association, of which I now hear for the first time, that small breaks should be sold on Tuesday' &c., &c. This was the point raised in the letter sent to the Brokers' Association by Mr. Leake in January last, and on which the Brokers were invited to give their opinion, and it was as an amendment to this proposition that I moved that the small breaks be sold on Thursdays—this is a point which Mr. Leake mentions. I enclose you his letter, and with regard to his second point, I have nothing further to add except that I did ascertain after seeing you that a verbal message had been sent to Mr. Price saying that merchants did not care for the Thursday plan, however I may add no official reply was sent till the middle of May last. My remarks about the buyers not wishing for an alteration in the sale are a little misleading as reported, inasmuch as I was referring to the present system of selling small breaks, which are now in the hands of a very few buyers, and who naturally did not wish for an alteration that would tend to throw open their sales to better competition. With regard to the buyers generally, I believe they would hail with great satisfaction any change that would prevent such a large amount of tea being forced off on one day. So far the results of the arrangement that the quantity should be divided between the Tuesday and Thursday are as follows:—

Tuesday	May 22	..	20,567	Thursday	24	..	5,884
"	" 29	..	18,972	"	31	..	5,089
"	June 8	..	19,880	"	7	..	1,150
"	" 12	..	15,656	"	14	..	2,400

Thanking you in anticipation for your kind attention to these alterations.—Believe me, yours faithfully (signed) FRANCIS S. LONG."

I would suggest that, if possible, you should allow the above reference to this subject to be given in full in the next issue.

The information given above by Mr. Long as to the result to date of the arrangement agreed to by the importers to attempt to equalize their offerings between Tuesdays' and Thursdays' sales, is interesting. The evidence the figures given afford is not fully satisfactory. For two weeks, it is certain the Thursdays' entries showed improvement in the direction sought; but in the subsequent two weeks there would seem to have been a relapse towards former low standards of offering. Rome was not built in a day, however, and there must be difficulty in forcing trade out of the course to which it has been long accustomed.

Having read with a great deal of interest your editorial remarks and connected correspondence relative to the desirability of engaging the services of an

ENTOMOLOGIST

to enquire into the insect pests that attack

TEA

bushes and the

COCONUT

tree, I took an opportunity occurring to me to enquire of Miss Ormerod if she would feel disposed to go out to Ceylon in that capacity. Miss Ormerod replied to me that it would be quite beyond her power to undertake the office. In the first place, she informed me that consideration for her health must form a paramount obstacle; and in the second place she tells me she is so occupied with the "really enormous" amount of agricultural entomologist work referred to her here, that she could not possibly spare the time that would be required to make the full and complete investigation needed. Finding that there was no chance of obtaining the services of Miss Ormerod, I proceeded to enquire of her if she knew anyone who would be capable of taking up such enquiry and would be likely to accept an offer to do so should it be made. Miss Ormerod replied that a very "trustworthy" person would be needed, and proceeded to remark that

PROFESSOR WALTER BLANDFORD

would, in her opinion, fulfill all the requirements needed for the quest mentioned. She has obliged me with the Professor's address at 48, Wimpole Street, Cavendish Square, and has suggested my communication with him upon this subject. She tells me that Professor Blandford "has a good knowledge of entomology—a very perfect knowledge (so as to be a chief authority) of one department of beetles; and while his learning and taste is for careful scientific research, he also works in reference to agricultural and forest bearings of the subject." Miss Ormerod further informed me that this gentleman is on the Council of the Entomological Society, and is the Lecturer on Entomology at the Royal Indian Engineering College at Cooper's Hill. She believes that Professor Blandford formerly spent some time in the West Indies, and that he might like to have the opportunity of studying the Entomology of Ceylon. Miss Ormerod concluded by observing that she did not know if the Professor would wish to accept the duty if offered to him; but that whatever he might decide she would feel that anything he undertook would be both ably and thoroughly, and honestly done. Miss Ormerod has kindly invited me to visit her sister and herself at St. Alban's, Hertfordshire, and as soon as I am tolerably free of many other engagements now pressing upon me, and which will probably occupy all my time to fulfill until about the 20th July, I hope to be able to avail myself of her invitation, and so to have the opportunity of more fully discussing the various entomological questions in which Ceylon is interested with her. I forgot to ask her if she sees the *Tropical Agriculturist*, but must do so on the next opportunity. She would doubtless obtain much special information from that publication that would indicate to her the line of enquiry needed in Ceylon.

#### INDIAN TEA SUPPLY COMPANY.

"A company for fostering a taste for tea among the masses" is something far beyond anything attempted yet in Ceylon:—

The report of this concern for the year ended 31st March is issued. The company was subscribed to