

### THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ENTOMOLOGIST IN CEYLON.

It seems passing strange that at a time when the Government of India has expressed a readiness to appoint not one Entomologist, but two or three such scientists for the benefit of agriculturists throughout the country including tea planters, Mr. Haly should virtually tell us—in his letter given elsewhere—that what has already been done in India removes the necessity for any appointment at all in Ceylon. We are, in fact, to go on depending on, and learning from India! "Annexation"—with all its dreaded drawbacks—would at least bring us the *direct* service of the Entomological and also of the Geological Staff of India. The deficiency that most marks the official letters before us, is the absence of any recognition of the needs of coconut as well as tea planters, and indeed of our native agriculturists generally. The accomplished Director of the Botanic Gardens writes as if only the tea planters were concerned whereas perhaps the question of insect pests is an even more vital one for the coconut cultivator. After the devastation (even though temporary) wrought on certain tea estates some months ago—and all that we have seen of the ravages of the coconut beetles—it scarcely does, in our opinion, to speak lightly of our insect enemies in Ceylon.

But it is not so much in reference to lack of knowledge regarding local insect pests among the agricultural community, that the Government might well be requested to take action. We know that the hope of a great many planters in urging the appointment of an Entomologist was that the office might be associated with certain legislation by which careless agriculturists could be compelled—on the report to Government of a responsible officer—to do their duty in capturing or killing any pest, or in clearing away debris calculated to afford a breeding-ground. Our series of articles in reference to the effect of such neglect on coconut cultivation will not be forgotten by our readers, or the practical illustration afforded in the case of Mr. W. H. Wright of Mirigama, who is in the habit of paying the owners of native gardens adjoining his property, for the privilege of entering on their grounds, and taking and burning beetle-infested palms at the rate of 50 cents per tree. Now, owners who do their duty by their land ought not to have such a tax imposed on them, and indeed very often native neighbours are not accommodating enough to allow entrance to their grounds on a destructive mission, even for a consideration. And, moreover, natives are not the only culprits. From the Kelani Valley last year and early this season there came several complaints of estate owners or managers who seemed so inert or indifferent about capturing *helopeltis*, that their more energetic neighbours felt as if *their* labour was in vain, since the pest, multiplying on adjacent tea, flew in to the bushes which had been cleared. If we remember rightly, Mr. G. A. Talbot published a letter on the need of simultaneous and sustained effort in a campaign against the chief insect enemy of tea; but it is most difficult to secure this desirable end; and practically impossible, save under official influence, where natives are concerned.

It will be asked then what should the Sub-Committee or Committee of the Planters' Association do in the face of the rather discouraging letters from the three "Directors," and the evident disinclination of our Government to follow the example of that of India? Well, if we were in their place, we should act on the principle—"Better half a loaf than no bread." We would accept,

and back up, Mr. Haly's recommendation that an Entomological Referee in the person of Mr. E. E. Green of Pundaluoya should be appointed by Government; but apart from fees for special work, we think the Government ought to pay a certain retaining fee, of at least £1,000 per annum, to enable Mr. Green to deal with general inquiries from native as well as planting and other correspondents, and to impart information in such cases. Mr. Green can scarcely be expected to charge a fee for each letter, and yet references are sure to be made to him which can be dealt with by correspondence without any personal visit. Later on, and arising out of Mr. Green's work as a Visiting or Inspecting Entomologist, may come up the question of whether there ought to be any special legislation to enforce a prompt and uniform campaign against the insect enemies of tea, coconuts, paddy or any other product.

### THE PROPOSED ENTOMOLOGIST FOR CEYLON.

#### THE OPINIONS OF DR. TRIMEN, MR. HALY AND MR. CULL.

KANDY, June 20.

SIR,—I enclose for publication copy of correspondence with Government regarding the appointment of an Entomologist for Ceylon.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,  
A. PHILIP,  
Secretary to the Planters' Association of Ceylon.

Kandy, Feb. 28th.

To the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Colombo.  
SIR,—I have the honour to submit for the consideration of Government the annexed copy of a resolution passed at a recent General meeting of the Planters' Association of Ceylon.—I am, sir, yours most obedient servant,

(Signed) A. PHILIP.

Secretary to the Planters' Association of Ceylon.

#### RESOLUTION REFERRED TO.

That the Government be asked to arrange for the appointment of an Entomologist to be attached to the Colombo Museum.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Colombo, March 10th.

SIR,—With reference to your letter dated the 28th February 1894 submitting copy of a resolution, passed at a recent general meeting of your Association, requesting the Government to arrange for the appointment of an Entomologist to be attached to the Colombo Museum, I am directed to request you to be so good as to state for the Governor's information what class of officer the Association desires, what salary should be paid to him whether he should be paid by the Association, or by the general taxpayer, what should be his duties, what are the special objects to be served by the appointment in question, what are the present difficulties in now obtaining information on the subjects to be dealt with by the Entomologist; whether the officer should be permanently employed or for a term of years only, and any other information which in the opinion of the Association would enable the Governor to arrive at a decision on the subject.—I am &c.

(Signed) H. HAY CAMERON; for Colonial Secretary.  
The Secretary to the Planters' Association of Ceylon.

Kandy, 20th April 1894.

To the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Colombo.

SIR,—Having read your letter of the 10th ultimo, on the subject of a Government Entomologist for Ceylon before the Committee of the Planters' Association a Sub-Committee was appointed to reply to your enquiries.