

## DEPARTMENTAL NOTES

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### A NOTE ON THE COTTON PURCHASE SCHEME, 1936

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**D**URING 1936, the purchase of village cotton was undertaken in the Southern, Central and South-Western Divisions by the respective Divisional Agricultural Officers. A larger area was brought under cultivation than previous years and the quantity of seed cotton purchased, particularly in the Southern and Central Divisions, was specially higher. The price paid for first grade seed cotton was Rs. 12 per cwt. less handling and transport charges which varied according to the purchasing centre. The money due to cultivators was paid in full on the day of purchase. This method of spot cash payment has found favour with the producers, as they receive money at a time when, in most cases, it is urgently required for domestic needs.

The season on the whole was good for cotton except that a portion of the crop was damaged by untimely rain at Embilipitiya, Middeniya and Dambulla. Malaria too was a factor that militated against the cultivation and maintenance of plots. In the Southern and Central Divisions, the crop purchased was more than double the quantity purchased in the previous year. This is most encouraging, considering that the epidemic of malaria had not altogether abated during the sowing season and cultivators were considerably undermined in health.

The area under cotton was approximately 1,160 acres in the three divisions, namely, 700 acres in the Southern, 400 in the Central, and 60 in the South-Western Divisions. The total

crop purchased was 3,029 cwt. of seed cotton. A crop of 200 cwt. produced in the Galewella District in Dambulla range was disposed of direct by the growers. Taking this amount also into consideration, a crop of 3,229 cwt. of seed cotton was produced from 1,169 acres, approximately  $2\frac{3}{4}$  cwt. per acre. Since most of the area under cotton was chena land, the yield per acre is satisfactory.

In the Southern Division, the present chena system allows for one acre of cotton to each cultivator on his two acre kurakkan chena permit. Crop rotation is not generally practised, as the size of the average holding is small and the rotation of crops is impracticable in chenas.

In the Matale district of the Central Division cotton cultivation, which is a new enterprise, has made steady progress each year since its inception. It is of interest to note that in this area the first cotton purchase, which was held in the year 1931, realised a sum of Rs. 283 only, while in 1936 the purchase has realised for the growers a sum of Rs. 7,269 approximately. Cotton has become a popular crop in Walapane district in the Central Division where a purchase was held for the second time during this year.

Altogether 1,080 cultivators grew cotton in the three divisions during the season under review—702 in the Southern Division, 308 in the Central Division, and 70 in the South-Western Division.

The cotton purchase was conducted during the first two quarters of the year, at selected centres where cultivators were easily and conveniently able to bring their produce for sale. The seed cotton was examined, sorted, graded and weighed at each centre before payment was made, under the supervision of the Divisional Agricultural Officers who conducted the purchase and who acted as Agents for the Spinning and Weaving Mills, Colombo, whither the produce was finally despatched.

The price paid to cultivators was Rs. 10·50 per cwt. of first grade cotton at Bata-ata and Rs. 10·25 per cwt. at all other centres in the Southern Division. It was Rs. 10·50 at all the centres in the Central Division and Rs. 10 at Embilipitiya in the South-Western Division.

The purchase centres in the three divisions were as follows :—

*Southern Division* :—

1. Bata-ata
2. Middeniya
3. Liyangahatota
4. Hambantota
5. Tissa

*Central Division* :—

1. Nalanda
2. Dambulla
3. Galewella
4. Walapane

*South-Western Division* :—

1. Embilipitiya

Details are given in the table.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE PURCHASE FIGURES AT THE SEVERAL CENTRES

<i>Division</i>	<i>Centre</i>	<i>Number of Growers</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Quantity of Seed Cotton</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Cash Payment</i>
				Cwt. qr. lb.	Cwt. qr. lb.	Rs. Cts. Rs. Cts
Southern	Bata-ata	200		740 - -		7,766 00
	Middeniya	320		592 - -		6,068 00
	Liyangahatota	76		424 - -		4,347 00
	Hambantota	39		139 - -		1,423 00
	Tissa	67-702	700	148 - -	2,043 - -	1,514 78 21,118 78
Central	Dambulla	234		618 - 13		6,221 17
	Nalanda	14		38 3 17		403 76
	Galewella	36		64 3 21		669 16
	Walapane	24-308	400	36 1 26	758 1 21	335 32 7,629 41
South-Western	Embilipitiya	70-70	60	227 2 22	227 2 22	2,199 46 2,199 46
		<u>1,080</u>	<u>1,160</u>		<u>3,029 0 15</u>	<u>30,947 65</u>