

Gleanings

State Aid for Marketing Crops. *The Coconut Industry Regulation Ordinance: (No. 18/1934)*—From the 1st of January, 1935, Regulations (No. 26 of 1934) concerning the export of copra came into effect. They provide that the moisture content must not be greater than 8 per cent, nor must defects and extraneous substances total more than 10 per cent, nor must there be more than 6 per cent mouldy plus immature pieces in a consignment. The defects mentioned comprise immaturity, insect attack, a smoky odour or discolouration by fire. *The Fruit Industry Regulation Ordinance. (No. 19/1934).*—Under this Ordinance the only crop dealt with to date has been bananas, the standards for which are laid down in Regulations (No. 25/1934) which came into effect on 1st January, 1935. Except for experimental purposes by the Department of Agriculture only the Canary (Cavendish) or Gros Michel varieties may be exported: they must be on the bunch, which in turn must not contain less than seven "hands," or combs: they must not be immature, over-ripe, damaged, bruised or broken, and must be free from disease. No bunch weighing less than 28 lbs. may be exported, and a prescribed standard of packing in a stout ventilated paper bag is laid down. A certificate of inspection under these regulations, which is given if the fruit is fit for export, is valid for 48 hours only. *The Bananas (Control of Exportation) Ordinance (No. 24/35).* Carriage of bananas by sea requires special cool storage accommodation on ships and it is unreasonable to expect that any shipping company would instal such accommodation on their vessels unless a definite assurance of sufficient freight is forth-coming. In the complete absence of any local marketing organisation, Government has assumed this responsibility and has guaranteed freight on 25,000 bunches in 1935-6 and 50,000 bunches in 1936-7. A contract with a shipping company on these lines is now under consideration. Having given this guarantee it is obvious that Government cannot permit the export of fruit through any channel other than that on which public funds have been expended. Powers were therefore granted under the above Ordinance to prohibit the export of bananas except under licence being for such a period and subject to such conditions as may be directed. (Extract from the Gold Coast Colony Agri. Dept. for 1934-1935).

Packing of Nursery Plants. One grave error on the part of growers and sellers of tree plants is the carelessness and ignorance shown in packing for despatch to customers. How often do we see four years' work ruined in four days! Some people's ideas of packing young trees are most primitive. I have had bundles of trees despatched loose in the guard's van without any form of protection, with the result that all the outside trees were useless. This year I received trees packed in straw with canvas coverings, which when opened were so hot that it was hardly possible to put one's hand into the centre. Needless to say, the planting of such trees is merely throwing the good money and labour after the bad money and ruined material.

Thirty-five years ago, when nursery stock was scarce and relatively more expensive than it is to-day, we used to get large quantities of trees from Germany. Many a time we have been on tenter-hooks knowing that these trees had been despatched three weeks ago and not yet delivered. We need have no fear. With the excellent packing of the German nurserymen, the trees arrived at the end of three weeks as fresh and good as if they had come out of our own nursery. Their system of packing is now followed by at least one firm in Britain, but should be universal. Large shallow circular wicker baskets with handles were used and the young trees carefully packed with their roots in sphagnum moss, the heads

exposed to the air. Three or four stiff sticks were planted round the basket, and a tent-like arrangement with sacking protected the trees from too much air and sun on the journey. The baskets were charged for but returnable. As a matter of fact the cost was so reasonable, that we used to pay for and keep the baskets for own use.

Let us hope that our nursery-men will take this hint to heart, and cease to ruin their young trees that have taken so much time and anxiety to grow. (*Jour. of Forestry, Vol. 29, March 1935*)

AGRICULTURAL JOTTINGS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, MADRAS

Cotton Pests in Bellary. In the 'Hindu' dated January 15, 1936, there appeared an alarming report that the 'Hingari' cottons round about Bellary were subject to a severe aphid attack called 'Karijigi' as a result of which 70 to 80% loss in yield was apprehended. An officer from the Entomology section, from Coimbatore was immediately deputed to visit the area, study the situation and take steps to combat the pest should it really be so serious. He traversed nearly the whole of the cotton belt in company with the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Bellary and found that there was absolutely no cause for alarm as the alleged pest nowhere existed on a scale depicted by the paper. Barring the presence of a few stainers and bollworms in isolated areas the cotton crop was generally found to be free from pest of any kind.

Bud and boll shedding was however found to be slightly more than normal in certain areas due to the drought conditions that had set in from November onwards. In certain tracts where drought conditions were acute immature bursting and mummifications of bolls known as 'Guggi' in vernacular were also noticed.

Spraying Against Betel-vine Wilt Disease. Satyavaram village of Yellamanchili taluk in Vizagapatam district has been famous for its betel-vine cultivation for the last half a century. It exports betel leaves to distant places like Bombay Poona, Calcutta and Malabar. But in recent years a disease called 'wilt' has appeared resulting in the withering, wilting and eventually death of the vines. Damage has been, of late, so heavy, that gardens have been entirely swept away by the disease. The pre-disposing cause of this trouble appears to be the local practice of growing the same crop over and over for 4 to 5 years in the same plot though an interval of 2 to 3 years is allowed by leaving land fallow. The fungi causing the trouble are *Sclerotium rolfsii* and *Phytophthora Sp.* which are both soil inhabiting fungi. To demonstrate the methods of control a series of trials were laid out during the season in 1935. A definite number of rows were each treated with bordeaux mixture 1%, kerol .07%, phenyl .25%, and liming with an equal number of rows untreated for control. The above treatment was done alone and in conjunction with provision for drainage channels. The results observed so far have been satisfactory and the indications are that the above treatment in combination with provision for drainage was more successful than that without drainage which shows the great necessity for drainage in betel vine cultivation.

Money in Growing Flowers. In Madura District, flower growing especially of Chrysanthemum is mostly taken up by the Christian ryots round about Tirumangalam, Ammayanaickanur and Dindigul. They are small holders intelligent and industrious and make good profit per acre.