

# The Ceylon Coconut Planters' Review

---

---

Vol. III, No. 4

April-June, 1963

---

---

## EDITORIAL

### COCONUT PESTS AND DISEASES AND THEIR CONTROL

In the original set up of the Coconut Research Scheme (now Institute) there was no provision for carrying out investigations on pests and diseases of the Coconut Palm. Such work was carried out by the Department of Agriculture, while Advisory Work on pests and diseases was carried out by us in a casual way.

Barely a decade ago with the appointment of a Crop Protection Officer a small Unit was established, mainly with a view to providing a Crop Protection Service for the control of pests and diseases, while carrying out research as exigencies permitted. The Crop Protection Officer carries out work both on insect pests and fungus diseases and is in fact called upon to carry out the double duties of an Entomologist and Pathologist.

In the control of pests and diseases vigilance is the watch word, and particularly in the case of pest outbreaks it is necessary to build a *cordon sanitaire* to contain such outbreaks and prevent their spread over large areas.

At present in the case of the Coconut Black Beetle and Red Weevil, the Advisory Field Officers carry out control measures, while in the case of other pests and diseases, it is the responsibility of the Crop Protection Officer.

In the last Number of the Journal the work in connection with the control of the Coconut Caterpillar by the use of parasites was brought to light. While this work has been well established further methods of control are being worked out and in this connection, we would refer

our readers to the preliminary note on "Microbial control of the Coconut Caterpillar" by the Crop Protection Officer appearing in this Number.

Fortunately in this country the incidence of coconut pests and diseases is not so widespread as in other countries. But while this country has been spared the ravages of such diseases as Cadang Cadang of the Philippine, we have been recently concerned about a new disease in the Southern Province -- "Leaf Scorch" regarding which a preliminary article appears in this Number.

As mentioned therein we are able to report the interesting discovery of a parasitic nematode which is associated with this disease and in this connection we are grateful to Mr. D. Rhind, Adviser on Agricultural Research of the Department of Technical Co-operation, London, whose services were made available to us through the good offices of the U.K. High Commissioner. Mr. Rhind, is of the view that we should concentrate our investigations on the nematode problem first and work is being pursued on these lines. On his suggestion we have applied for the services of a nematologist under Colombo Plan Aid.

We have also stationed an officer at Gonapinuwela to carry out field trials on the spot, and with our limited resources, we are making every effort to tackle this disease.