

IT PAYS TO MANURE!

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IN the Editorial of the last number of this Journal, a plea was made for more extensive manuring of coconuts in Ceylon in rehabilitating this essential agricultural asset of the country.

Data collected through the co-operation of the manure firms shows that there has actually been an extension of manuring since the price of copra improved. Before World War II, *i.e.*, 15 years ago, it was estimated that barely 10,000 acres of coconuts were manured annually with artificial manures. The extent of manuring has increased tenfold as shown below :—

Year				Tons of mixed fertiliser Sold				Equivalent acreage*
1948	...	...	...	9,800	...	...	...	98,000
1949	...	...	...	9,100	...	...	...	91,000
1950	...	...	...	11,800	...	...	...	118,000
1951	...	...	...	14,500	...	...	...	145,000
1952	...	...	...	11,500	...	...	...	115,000

* Based on 2 cwts. of mixed fertiliser applied per acre annually.

It will be observed that the peak year for manuring was 1951, when copra prices reached Rs. 300/- per candy ; copra prices have since receded and fertiliser sales have dropped.

The effect of prolonged neglect during the war years, and the result of the increased use of fertiliser in the last five years are reflected in the coconut crops as shown below :—

Year				Nuts per acre	Year				Nuts per acre
1943	...	...	...	1,907	1948	...	...	...	1,896
1944	...	...	...	1,844	1949	...	...	...	1,843
1945	...	...	...	1,731	1950	...	...	...	1,950
1946	...	...	...	1,453	1951	...	...	...	2,190
1947	...	...	...	1,434	1952	...	...	...	2,402

There is little doubt that the extension of manuring in the preceding years have contributed to the very satisfactory peak crops in 1952.

As previously repeated in the course of our publications, manuring pays handsomely at present prices, particularly on poor soils where the response is quick and very marked.

A further inducement to manuring should be the fall in the prices of manures as shown below :—

	July, 1952	May, 1953
	per ton	per ton
	Rs.	Rs.
Sulphate of ammonia	495.00	390.00
Saphos phosphate	200.00	190.00
Muriate of potash (50%)	360.00	320.00
Muriate of potash (60%)	400.00	365.00

The mixture consisting of 3 lbs. Sulphate of ammonia, 2 lbs. Saphos phosphate and 2 lbs. of Muriate of potash, which was Rs. 1.16 per palm in 1952, now costs only 98 cents to-day.

Owners of Coconut Estates owe a duty to themselves and to the country to increase National Income. It pays to manure !

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