

## CHEMICAL CONTROL OF WEEDS

H.N. Hasselo

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**Question:**—“Why has the T.R.I. ignored herbicides at this Conference? Is the T.R.I. in favour of use of herbicides or not? (Mr S.S. Perera).”

**Reply:**—This question has three aspects.

- (a) Whether herbicides kill weeds common in tea land.
- (b) Whether they are economical.
- (c) Whether herbicides have deleterious long-term accumulative effects on growth and quality of tea.

Sub (a):—the chemicals used for controlling weeds may be classified as: contact herbicides, hormone or growth regulating herbicides, translocated or systemic herbicides and soil (sterilizing) herbicides. They can also be grouped into selective and non-selective herbicides. Non-selective are the contact herbicides, which kill all top growth. Selective are the hormone weed-killers, which affect the broad-leaved plants mainly. Herbicides which are translocated from the leaves to the root system control the deep-rooted perennial weeds. Finally the non-selective soil sterilizing herbicides are not intended for use in tea, but can be used to sterilize the soil along roads, on factory compounds *etc.* The all-purpose, single herbicide has yet to be found. An experiment to see the effects of different herbicides has been laid down at St Coombs, but it is too early yet to comment on the results.

Sub (b) This depends on the conditions pertaining on each estate.

Sub (c) Because of the small amounts of active ingredients applied (generally 2 lb per acre or 1 part per million parts of soil) and the quick decomposition of these ingredients (generally within 6 months), the chances of deleterious effect are greater soon after application. A long-term trial will be laid out this year.