

METEOROLOGICAL NOTES AND CROP RETURNS

By W. R. N. NATHANAEL

A TOTAL rainfall of 9.72 inches has been registered at Bandirippuwa during the first three months this year.

The early part of the year was characterised by a severe drought with a rainfall amounting to only 0.38 inch till the 15th February. No rain fell at all between January 21st and February 15th, which is therefore a period of "absolute drought." (Any period of at least 15 consecutive days, to none of which is credited 0.01 inch of rain or more).

The dry spell was broken on the 16th of February, which was a day of appreciable rain totalling 3.61 inches. This heavy fall was followed by more rain in February, making a total of 8.06 inches for this month. This is very unusual for the month of February and is indeed a record fall for the past 10 years. The official average for this month during the past 15 years being only 1.89 inches.

During March the rainfall was again poor, the registered total showing a deficit of 4.72 inches from the official 15-year average of 6.00 inches.

The following is a summary of the rainfall figures for the first quarter recorded at six coconut-growing districts, including Lunuwila for comparison:—

Station	January, 1950	February, 1950	March, 1950
1. Negombo	0.41 ins.	5.69 ins.	1.94 ins.
2. Madampe	0.65 ..	3.60 ..	2.25 ..
3. Chilaw	0.56 ..	2.98 ..	3.61 ..
4. Puttalam	1.59 ..	3.04 ..	1.74 ..
5. Kurunegala	0.67 ..	3.26 ..	4.81 ..
6. Lunuwila	0.38 ..	8.06 ..	1.28 ..
Aver. for Lunuwila (15) years	2.38 ..	1.89 ..	6.00 ..

It will be seen from the above summary that the rainfall in general during January has been rather low throughout, Puttalam alone recording over an inch for this month. The February rains have been unusually good in all the coconut-growing districts, and the March rainfall has been fair.

In general coconut crops in the N.W.P. during the first quarter were below those in 1949 for the corresponding period. This may be attributed mainly to the failure of the S.W. and the N.E. monsoons in 1948, with consequent lowering of the water-table in many areas. The crops at Bandirippuwa during the first quarter were as follows:—

Pick	Crop	Crop per bearing palm	Crop per acre
January-February ..	1st ..	6 ..	397
March-April ..	2nd ..	10 ..	660

In view of the fact that the crop returns from the estates of the Coconut Research Scheme are affected by the experimental work in progress, the figures quoted are not really an accurate reflection of the effect of climate on crop.

It is proposed, therefore, to draw up a list of estates which have kept regular and reliable records of rainfall and crop figures, and in this way to make a quarterly survey of the crop position in all the principal coconut-growing districts of the island. Provided these returns are sufficiently reliable, this information should prove valuable to coconut growers.

WORLD SHORTAGE OF OIL AND FATS

IN the course of a recent address in New York, a leading spokesman of the Unilever and Lever Bros., reviewed the latest position of oils and fats in the world. According to him, the world trade in this sphere was still distorted and unbalanced. Although supplies were improving slowly, there was still shortage. Among the reasons for the distorted trade pattern, are the following :—(1) Shortage of dollars and scarcity of other hard currencies, (2) centralised buying and selling by Governments, (3) bilateral trading, (4) limited availability of even sterling and other soft currencies. In view of the shortfall in European internal production, the deficit in terms of the pre-war is likely to amount to 877,000 tons in 1950. The position in Europe has, however, improved in recent years. In the U.K., the rationing system in the distribution of oils and fats is stated to have been successful. In Holland, the situation is fast reaching normalcy. In Belgium, there is no rationing, trade and industry being free to buy their own requirements. In the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland, supplies are back to the pre-war level. In France, there is still shortage. Western Germany is fast becoming important as an importer of fats and oils, mainly due to rapid recovery made by her industries.

REVIEW:

The Pineapple Industry of the Hawaiian Islands

By

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THE Hawaiian Islands are a group of tiny islands, lying in the remote Pacific, with no coal or oil resources and with a population of only half a million people ; yet this small country is highly prosperous. Its prosperity depends on only three industries, viz. sugar, pineapples and tourism, and on the " American Way of Life."

The American Way of Life is based on the theory that labour-saving and labour-easing machinery will create employment, with high wages, providing goods can be produced at such low prices as to place them within the reach of all, and providing also that such goods are permitted to move freely and rapidly.

In the time of the great explorer, Christopher Columbus, only one of the first consignments of pineapples sent to Europe from the West Indies, reached its destination, and it was eaten by the King of Spain. Today, the delicious luxuries, canned and quick-frozen pineapple are produced by mass-production methods at such a low price as to place them within the reach of all, anywhere in the world.

In his profusely-illustrated book, Mr. Cooke has provided a complete account of the A to Z of pineapple-canning and he has explained how mechanical methods in field and factory have made it possible for the Hawaiian pineapple industry to produce millions of cases of canned pineapple products each year, at a competitive price, whilst paying high wages to the 20,000 employees, directly employed by this industry.

EDITOR.