

DEAR SIR,—

Wynyard Buildings, Sydney, 1st July, 1895.

I have forwarded to-day a letter on the sugar-beet question to the *Mercury*. I hope they will insert it, and that you will approve of its contents. I am very pleased to see the great interest you take in this question. The establishment of this industry would change the face of your colony.

I suppose you are aware that your Council of Agriculture has sold to the New South Wales Government all the seed they had imported and not used, therefore it is impossible to get your farmers to take it up this season.

But what could and ought to be done is the ploughing, under proper supervision, of an acre of sugar-beet in the two or three districts of Tasmania which are suitable for the erection of factories. The result being good, the experiments would attract great attention from all public men and farmers as well, and immense progress would be done in a short time. The season after, the cultivation could be taken up by a large number of farmers, who would then feel encouraged to do so. This is mostly what has been done in Victoria and New South Wales, where the introduction of the industry is already in an advanced state. I am quite confident that companies will be successfully floated in these colonies after the coming season.

I do not suppose there is anybody in Tasmania who has the required experience in the cultivation of this crop to guide those trials, but, if your Government will undertake to pay my actual expenses, I am ready to undertake the thing, provided two or three farmers are found willing to grow the acre under my supervision. There will be no difficulty in getting the seed for those few acres, as there will be some available in Victoria. This would necessitate three trips to Tasmania; but I do not think my expenses would exceed £50.

Your farmers will never take this matter up until they are themselves taken in hand, and I will be pleased to do it with the assistance of your Government or the Council of Agriculture, as the case may be. I will train your farmers into the proper methods of beet-cultivation, and will find my profit in the formation of the company as soon as the supply of raw material can be guaranteed.

You are at liberty to transmit these proposals to the Government if you think it is advisable. I wish to remark that, if advantage is to be taken of the coming season, a decision ought to be taken without delay, otherwise another year will be lost.

I am, &c.,

The Hon. William Crosby, Hobart.

C. VAN DE VELDE.

DEAR SIR,—

19th July, 1895.

I have allowed your letters of 26th June and 1st July to remain longer unanswered than I intended, but I have been hoping to be able to write something more definite than I can even do now.

The Government financial position just now precludes the possibility of getting even £50 voted for the beet, but it has assented to the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire and report, as per enclosed printed notice of motion tabled by Mr. Von Stieglitz.

The whole question continues to engage the attention of Mr. Moore and the Council of Agriculture, and I hope the Agricultural and Pastoral Society will notify shortly that it will offer a good money prize for the best exhibit of roots at its proposed autumn show, such prize to be awarded on the sugar analysis. When there is anything more likely to interest you I will let you know, and I will be very glad if you will continue to send me newspapers or letters connected with the matter. I sent you a copy of the *Mercury* containing your letter of 1st instant, which appeared on the 11th, and I have to acknowledge with thanks four newspapers from you.

Yours, &c.,

C. Van de Velde, Esq., Wynyard Buildings, Sydney.

W. CROSBY.

DEAR SIR,—

Westbury, 22nd July, 1895.

I have much pleasure in replying to yours of the 18th.

My views most entirely accord with yours, that the first thing to do is to induce farmers to grow the root in small allotments, cultivating it on the absolutely necessary scientific system that alone will insure the production of the largest percentage of sugar. With that view in mind, I gave away small quantities of the best varieties of seed from Germany to several farmers I knew, and who I thought would gladly give it a fair trial, but I regret to say that I was much disappointed. I gave them detailed instructions, and impressed on them the absolute necessity of deep ploughing, drainage, and using well-decomposed stable-manure at the proper season (autumn preferably) so as to get the land in good condition for the sowing in October, pointing out to them that, though there was not at present a market for this root, they would be very valuable as cattle-feed. Some, I found, gave it as fair a trial as they could, others simply put the seed in the ground without manure and but little subsequent attention, whilst others were very indifferent, and did not care to take the trouble to make the trial.

The minimum percentage at which the mills in Germany will purchase by analysis is 9 per cent. of crystallizable sugar.

That beets will flourish in this colony with a most satisfactory percentage of sugar is now an established fact, the Government Analyst having given the percentage of crystallizable sugar in roots grown by Messrs. Allen and Woolnough in this district at 13 and 15 per cent. respectively. I have myself analysed others, not grown with nearly so much care as these, at over 9 per cent., sufficient for a mill to purchase. Such satisfactory results must, I take it, be owing to the soil and climate being well adapted to the requirements of this root, the sugar, as we know, being to a great extent formed in the root through the leaves, with the assistance of the sun and atmosphere.