

In reference to a bonus to be given by the Government, it will no doubt stimulate many to grow it on small pieces of land, an acre as you suggest, because that could be easily cultivated by the farmer and his family, so that with the bonus, and the use or sale of the crop as cattle-food, he would make a good profit out of his acre. What I fear is (from my experience) many who might attempt it would not take the trouble to bestow the necessary labour, because, if such a thing should be done, the conditions should fix a minimum percentage of crystallizable sugar on analysis, and not less than a certain number of tons to the acre. Looking at the small quantity of seed sold by the Council of Agriculture, I certainly have great misgivings.

Then, again, comes the question of the money—Is the Government in a position to do such a thing? If not, when will they be? Might not the Government, as they do in Queensland, assist in the erection of a mill, or erect one entirely, by borrowing on special debentures at a good rate of interest, say, £50,000, to erect a 300-ton mill, and out of the profit pay the interest, investing the surplus for repairs and as a sinking fund to redeem the debentures, so that at the end of a few years the Government would own a valuable property, which they could either continue or sell to a joint-stock company.

The following figures have been supplied to me by a friend interested in the mill, working 300 tons per day, in Germany:—

	<i>Expenditure.</i>				Marks or Shillings.
30,000 tons roots, at 16s.	480,000
6,600 tons coal, at 20s.	132,000
Salaries and wages	100,000
Materials (used in the mill)	96,000
Rates, taxes, &c.	60,000
					<u>868,000</u>
<i>Returns.</i>					
9 per cent. white granulated sugar, 48,900 cwt., at 20s.	978,000
1·67 per cent. yellow crystals, 8,700 cwt., at 15s.	130,500
2 per cent. molasses, 10,900 cwt., at 1s.	10,900
					<u>1,119,400</u>
					868,000
					<u>251,400</u>
Profit	<u>£12,570</u>

These figures are to be relied on.

The large mills pay very much better than the small ones. The North German Beet-sugar Mill, a very large mill, pays large dividends. The mill above referred to did not cost anything like £50,000, because that sum includes careful packing, freight, and numerous incidental expenses not incurred when delivered in Germany. The actual cost of a 300-ton mill as furnished to me by the constructors in Germany is £27,721—a 200-ton mill costing £20,773: note the difference. Notwithstanding the difficulties that now present themselves, I fully believe the time is not far distant when this root will be extensively cultivated in this colony. I shall watch with much interest the progress of the Commission on this subject.

J. C. Von Steiglitz, Esq.

I am, &c.,

FRED. L. T. BOWDEN.

The Anglo-Australian Guano Company, Launceston,
23rd July, 1895.

DEAR SIR,—

Yours of the 18th to hand, and should have been replied to earlier, but I was away in the country, but am afraid I shall be able to give you very little information *re* sugar-beet, as I only saw a large acreage of it growing in California. On inquiry found it was cultivated by the Spreckel Brothers, who are also large growers of cane in Honolulu. The soil in which the beet was growing was very similar to the chocolate soils so often found in this country, and grown in drills, and as there were large irrigation-works in the vicinity supposed it was in connection, and on asking why they were growing beet found that the insect-pest was so bad in Honolulu they had gone into it to keep their large refining factories at work. Workmen engaged were Chinese and Portugese, and a large number at work weeding. Their wages were about the same as here.

I think your suggestion is a good one to get the farmer to grow a small quantity in the different neighbourhoods, and to test the soils to find out which is the best; and as a large quantity of the land is unfitted for wheat through growing it year after year would grow the root, and the cultivation required would clean it and bring it back into a good condition, especially if they used manures. Only to-day Mr. Bennell, who has grown some very fair roots from seed obtained last year from the Council of Agriculture, called to know if I could give him any information, so gave him the name of the Secretary, and he has promised to write to him. As they are grown in the Piper River district would be worth analysing, as I do not know of anybody else growing any so far north, and if they consent to do it he will forward any quantity required.

Several farmers have spoken to me in connection with cow-feeding, as they find it does not produce the disagreeable taste that mangolds do in the milk, so that they could consume by cow-feeding any surplus not required.

Hoping you may succeed in getting this industry successfully started, as I feel sure it will be for the good of the farmers, and will employ many who are hardly able to exist.

Yours, &c.

J. C. Von Steiglitz, Esq.

HENRY S. GLEADOW.