

SIR,—

House of Assembly, Hobart, 25th July, 1895.

By direction of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the feasibility of establishing the sugar-beet industry in Tasmania, I have the honour to submit to you the following questions, and to request that you will be good enough to aid them in their investigation by replying thereto at your earliest convenience :—

1. In your opinion, is it possible to establish the sugar-beet industry in Tasmania?—Yes.
2. Do you think the soil and climate of Tasmania is suitable for growing beet-root fit for the manufacture of sugar?—Longford and other places.
3. Please state what, in your opinion, is the best way to establish the sugar-beet industry in this colony.—By inducing several farmers to simultaneously cultivate small areas of not less than an acre each.
4. Kindly submit any suggestions which you think will aid the Committee in the inquiry.—Apart from sugar is the great importance of winter fodder. Beet, mixed with chaff, &c., would tend to fattening of stock, causing crops to be more profitably consumed on the farm, instead of being sold at low prices in town.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. William Crosby, M.L.C.

HENRY T. MANING, Clerk of the House.

SIR,—

Government Laboratories, Hobart, 25th July, 1895.

In answer to your inquiry of yesterday's date, I have the honour to inform you that I have determined the percentage of sugar in several sugar-beets, the mean result being 13·6 per cent.—the highest 15·66 per cent., and lowest 12 per cent. The results, supposing the bulk of the crop to be about equal to the sample examined, are distinctly good as compared with any European results which I have been able to obtain.

I have, &c.,

W. F. WARD, Government Analyst.

J. C. VON STIEGLITZ, Esq., M.H.A., Parliament House.

SIRS,—

Green Point, Bridgewater, 30th July, 1895.

*Re Establishment of Sugar-beet Industry.*

My reply to questions submitted *re* above industry is as follows :—

*Question 1.*—It is possible to establish the sugar-beet industry in Tasmania.

*Question 2.*—I am confident that many portions of the soil of the colony are suitable for the production of sugar-beet.

*Question 3.*—Though the bonus system has pushed production ahead in Victoria, I should not recommend it here for any industry. We have only to look at our butter industry to see that production can be fostered without such aid, the coming season it is quite probable we shall export to England 250 tons. I think that communication should be opened with a firm of standing, with the view to ascertain what quantity of roots they would require to be produced to get them to come over to Tasmania and start a factory, the price they would be prepared to pay delivered at the factory, and also if they could recommend a good practical man to instruct the farmers of this colony in growing sugar-beet, and at what cost to the colony. I think he should be resident in Tasmania for a season, so that he could go from district to district all through the planting, growing, and gathering of the crop, because very few of us know much about the practice of growing this very valuable root. I may also add, I believe, the growing of this root properly will go a long way towards bringing about a better state of farming in Tasmania, in that we should have a much better rotation of crops.

I have, &c.,

GEO. E. PIESSE,

To the Select Committee on Sugar-beet Industry.

President, Council of Agriculture.

SIR,—

Westbury, 31st July, 1895.

In reply to yours of the 25th instant respecting your inquiries as to the feasibility of establishing the sugar-beet industry in Tasmania, I have the honour to submit the following answers to your questions :—

1. Yes, quite possible.
2. Yes, decidedly (unsurpassed); and this is backed up by the opinion of Mr. Van de Velde, of Sydney, an expert, and is also shown by an analysis of beets grown in this district examined by Mr. Ward, Government Analyst (a copy of which I attach); and, further, we have all that is necessary, such as limestone, coal, &c., used for working refinery.
3. By moderate bonuses to growers, and the Government employing an expert, whose duty should be to supervise and instruct the farmers in the proper manner of cultivating and harvesting the beet-root.
5. Mr. A. N. Pearson, Government Analyst of Victoria, is trying to improve an evaporator, which, if successful, will simplify the manufacture of beet-root into dried sugar-beet juice, which, being portable, could readily be conveyed to a central refinery, thus lessening the expense of manufacturing the sugar.

I have, &c.,

H. G. J. DREW,

Honorary Secretary, Board of Agriculture, Westbury.

Henry T. Maning, Esq., Clerk of the House of Assembly, Hobart.