Supply of Fruit and Vegetables (production of)

From Whom

Place

Date

SUBJECT.

Re Fruit-Vegetable Supply

Aug 1920

Connected Papers.

MINUTES.

GROVE ESTATE.

SINGAPORE.

Dear Mr. ...

The raison d'être of the Botanic Gardens is to supply people with plants, & for more essentially such as are required for food. & for this purpose they print & circulate a list of various plants & prices of same.

I recently wrote in for a supply of limes, lemon & avocado pear seedlings and the reply is they cannot let me have any.

If the economic gardens are maintained at a high cost simply as a play ground for Amahs & children, then it is time to consider whether it is worth while.

With fruit at the present abnormally high price, surely there is all the more reason why the Govt. should have such seedlings for disposal.

Yours sincerely

W.D. ...

How to ...

DRAFT.

(G 17)

FAIR COPY

SIGNED BY

DATED

14. 5. 70

To

The Sec

Con P

V. M. H.

S.

SIR,

Attached I h/le to forward
a memorandum on the points
raised in your letter of 6th inst

Yours etc

7.75

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SUPPLY

As the answers to the questions asked rather overlap I have treated the headings slightly differently.

The opinions expressed are my own personally ones and must be accepted in that light.

Fruit and vegetables

I do not consider there is at the present time an adequate supply either in quantity or variety of either. The shortage in quantity is due to a falling off in supply concomitant with a steady increasing population. The ~~poorness~~ ^{me}poorness of variety is owing to total lack of interest in the subject except for the cooly market gardener who has no need to trouble about it.

The shortage of supply is in both cases due to former market gardens and orchards being built upon where in the vicinity of towns, or planted with rubber or more remunerative crops where further afield. It must be borne in mind that this is steadily going on and consequently the supply is steadily decreasing although the population is increasing.

Remedies.

1. By importing from countries outside Malay. This is a subject on which I am not qualified to express an opinion, but at the same time I consider very unsound.
2. By increasing the homegrown supply. In this connection it is not possible to consider Singapore or the Colony separately from the remainder of the peninsula, as they are by nature one country and the Colony cannot of itself grow sufficient crops in proportion to its population. I suggest therefore two schemes one for fruit and one for vegetable.

Fruit

Under this heading is included woody plants such as Mangosteens Durians Jambu, Limes, Oranges, Lemons, Chik~~as~~, Rambutans etc.

The first difficulty is that there is a total absence of young stock in the country neither is it worth any ones' while to

start a fruit nursery when ~~when~~ there are many more remunerative crops to be grown. At the same time there is a very large demand both from estates and private individuals for stock, so that they may have their own independent supply. The only solution is for a fruit nursery to be started under Government control and support such as is done in other tropical colonies. A scheme for this purpose has been receiving the consideration of the Government. From this nursery stock can be distributed at a reasonable price, and would come into bearing shortly afterwards. This alone in my opinion is sufficient to meet the requirements for fruit.

Vegetables. Here I include bananas, pineapples, beans, sweet potatoes, ~~salads~~, papayas, and herbs generally.

The difficulty in this case is the total absence of the big market gardener in the country and the fact that the main crops of the country are not food crops. I cannot conceive that a sufficient number of individual Chinese working their own small allotments will ever be able to keep pace with a large and growing town like Singapore even if land was available. It seems that the matter must again be dealt with by the Government in the absence of the necessary type of big market gardener. Sufficient land not being available in the Colony, suitable land must be alienated upcountry to preserve it from rubber growing and other crops. This land must be adjacent to the railway so that the towns can be supplied by special service. The land must be ~~opened up~~ opened up and worked by the Government. If any private individuals wishing to take up work of this kind as a livelihood should apply they must be given every facility to acquire suitable land.

The question of ^a big Government garden supplying markets will seriously affect the small Chinese grower and this will need considering in fixing the selling price, but the subject of sufficient supplies is too real for this to affect the ~~question~~ question as a whole.

Both these schemes appear to me practically and financially sound though not so remunerative as the industries ⁱⁿ to which the private individual is prepared to invest his capital. Something must be done and done ^{quickly} ~~quietly~~ as even if started at once it is a matter of a few years before any relief can be expected.

The only way to reduce prices is to increase supply.

DRAFT.

FAIR COPY

SIGNED BY

DATED

7. 5. 86

To

The Sec.

C. P.

V. M. H.

S.

SIR,

I beg to acknowledge
the receipt of your letter of
6th inst. and to state that
a report will be submitted
shortly.

Yours faithfully

Memorandum.

From

THE SECRETARY,
COMMISSION ON PROFITEERING,
VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL,

Singapore, 6th. May, 1920.

To

Acting Director of Gardens,
Singapore.

Sir,

I am directed by the Commission on Profiteering and the High Costs of Living to ask you to submit to the Commission a memorandum on local fruits and vegetables in especial dealing with the following points:-

(a) Fruits

As to the falling off in production and the causes.

(b) Vegetables

Whether the supply is adequate. If not what steps could be taken to increase it.

(c) Any suggestions as to methods of reducing the price.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. Barlow

No Minutes should be written on this page. A separate half-sheet to
be used if required.