

BEET-SUGAR.

No. 29.

Mr. ROBERT ALLAN to the Chairman of Local Industries Commission.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 24th May, 1880.

Some time ago the Government offered a bonus of £5,000 in each Island for the production of a certain quantity of sugar from the beet. This was freely advertised in the colony, and was not taken advantage of. I am not aware of the steps that were taken to make the question known in other countries, but it appears to me that this industry is one specially developed in France and Germany, and where they have capital and knowledge available for the industry. I think it might be worth while to bring the subject prominently forward in those countries, and I am led to this conclusion by reading an extract from an American paper where it is stated that a party of Germans had offered to go to Baltimore and start the manufacture of sugar from the beet, and the only condition imposed was "that the farmers in the neighbourhood should grow not less than 2,000 acres of beet," which they undertook to purchase at the rate of £1 per ton. If this industry can live in a country where they produce sugar from the cane, why not in New Zealand, where no such competition exists? I have read lately in the Australian papers that sorghum is spoken very highly of, and as being more productive than the beet.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT ALLAN,

Chairman, Local Industry Association, Christchurch.

VINES, OLIVE AND MULBERRY TREES.

No. 30.

Mr. G. B. FEDERLI to the Chairman of Local Industries Commission.

Hokitika, May, 1880.

CONSIDERING that it is the duty of every man to contribute to the welfare and prosperity of the country in which he lives, I hope that I shall not be considered too presumptuous in humbly representing to you some of my views on three branches of industry which, if I am not mistaken, have neither of them had a proper trial. The cultivations to which I allude are—vines, olive-trees, and mulberry-trees. Italy, my former country, which I left five years ago for this colony, obtains its revenue chiefly from these three productions; and why should not New Zealand, with its beautiful and very similar climate, situated under the same degrees of latitude, and presenting almost the same natural features, have those resources likewise? I have no doubt that the North Island would answer the purpose, if a start on a sound basis could be made. Unfortunately, I have had no occasion of visiting the North Island, otherwise I should be able to state positively the localities most suitable, especially for the cultivation of the olive and vine; but, nevertheless, it is some time since I concluded that such cultivations would produce a successful result, and in that direction I have taken occasion to procure information from an Italian settled in that Island, and I was much pleased that his opinion confirmed my own convictions. I consider it superfluous to state here the importance of the cultivation of the olive-tree, this having been done already by Mr. John Glynn, of Leghorn, in his report of August, 1875, presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of the Governor in 1877. The only thing which I find it my duty to add to what Mr. Glynn has expressed—and it is of vital importance—is the selection of the olive-trees, and their choice possibly from localities where the soil is of the same nature as that in which the olive-tree is to be transplanted. Everything which Mr. Glynn has expressed in his report is perfectly accurate, with the exception of his statement that "it is not advisable to cultivate the olive and vine together." In that respect I am of a contrary opinion. The cultivation of the vine requires the identical kind of soil that is necessary for the olive, and the same treatment in planting, consequently when they are cultivated together the labour is at least lessened one-third, and without the slightest disadvantage to either. One more important item is that, if it should occur that the olive-trees fail for one year—as is the case sometimes in the countries where it is cultivated—the vines assist in lessening the loss, it being rarely the case that both fail. In this way the plot of land will never be unproductive: in fact, the practice of cultivating olives and vines together is now much extended in Italy. On this principle an English gentleman (Mr. Lloyd) in Tuscany successfully converted a scrubby conical hill into a grove of olives and vineyard. I saw this property in a most prosperous condition a fortnight before leaving for this country. Now, I pass to the third branch of industry—namely, mulberry trees, and consequent cultivation of silkworms. The mulberry is far more easily cultivated than the olive, and almost every kind of soil is suitable for its growth. I have every reason to believe that the cultivation of silkworms can be introduced not only in the North but also in the Middle Island. This tree, when once properly planted, requires no more attention. Regarding the cultivation of silkworms, there is no doubt that it requires some skill, but that can be easily acquired. In Italy and France it is well known that, where the climate is suitable, this industry is extended to a very large scale. Hundreds of thousands of families who possess not a palm of soil obtain support from this cultivation. Every landowner, as a rule, grows more mulberry trees than he requires for his own production, and the surplus is given to those people who are willing to cultivate a certain quantity of silkworms; the owner receives half the value of the produce contained in the cocoons in exchange for the leaves. This industry is not only carried on by the lower, but also by the better, classes. This cultivation requires some care and attention, and is well adapted for women, and generally ladies of good standing also take great interest in this important and fascinating industry. I have no doubt that, if a start were made, in a short time the result would be satisfactory. It is not my idea to suggest to any one to start at once on a large scale, and with the idea of a speculation. For that it is not yet time, labour also being so dear, and a speculation implying the construction of