ART. IV.—*On the Agricultural, Commercial, Financial, and Military Statistics of Ceylon.* By E. R. POWER, Esq.

[Read 21st December, 1863.]

THE following brief remarks on the Agricultural and Commercial Statistics of Ceylon, past and present, may not be without interest to the Members of the Committee of Agriculture and Commerce of the Royal Asiatic Society.

First. In respect to the present great staple of the colony. In 1809, according to the records of the Local Government under the Dutch *régime*, the production of coffee in the island, both for consumption and export, was about 250,000 lbs. From that period the production continued steadily to increase; but it was in 1836, when the equalization in England of the duty on East and West India Coffee took place, that European capital and skill were brought to bear, and that to a large extent, in reference to the cultivation of the berry. Prior to the equalization of the duties, the import duty on Ceylon coffee in England had been 9*d.* per lb. In 1836 the duty was reduced to 3*d.* per lb., or 28*s.* per cwt.; and as the demand for the article continued undiminished, an equal rise of the price of coffee in bond simultaneously took place, the price to the consumer remaining much as before, and the importer reaping the benefit.

The quantity of coffee exported since the year 1838,—(at which year the interesting statistical information anent Ceylon, which is to be found in the printed proceedings of the Committee of Commerce and Agriculture, of March, 1840, page 145, ends),—is as follows:—

Year.	Quantity.	Year.	Quantity.
1839 ...	40,668 cwt.	1842 ...	80,584 cwt.
1840 ...	62,074 „	1843 ...	119,805 „
1841 ...	68,206 „	1844 ...	94,847 „

Year.	Quantity.	Year.	Quantity.
1845 ...	133,957 cwt.	1854 ...	328,971 cwt.
1846 ...	178,603 „	1855 ...	407,621 „
1847 ..	173,892 „	1856 ...	440,819 „
1848 ...	293,221 „	1857 ...	602,266 „
1849 ...	280,010 „	1858 ...	544,507 „
1850 ...	373,593 „	1859 ...	589,778 „
1851 ...	278,473 „	1860 ...	620,132 „
1852 ...	349,957 „	1861 ¹ ...	632,449 „
1853 ...	372,379 „		

An export duty of 1s. per cwt. is levied in Ceylon.

Coffee land, and land sold for coffee, consists of 462,254 acres, of which, probably, 132,000 acres is the area bearing coffee at present. Land for coffee cultivation is put up to public competition at an upset price of £1 an acre.

Cinnamon.—In the paper I have already alluded to,—(Proceedings of Committee of Commerce and Agriculture, March, 1840, page 145),—the writer enters into some detail in reference to the then state of the Ceylon cinnamon trade; and I will only therefore remark that since that paper was written all the Government preserved cinnamon gardens have been sold, with the exception of a portion in the immediate vicinity of the town of Colombo, which is retained by Government, and small building lots from which are exposed at public sale from time to time as the requirements of the public demand. The only duty on cinnamon exported from Ceylon is 2s. per bale of 100 lbs. net, without reference to quality. There is, I apprehend, little doubt but that Ceylon still produces the finest cinnamon, and that it is superior in flavour to both the Malabar and Java spice; but the increasing consumption of both the latter demonstrates that they can be substituted with effect for the finer bark of Ceylon. The preserved gardens purchased from Government by private individuals are, taken as a whole, in excellent condition. Magnificent samples of cinnamon, of the three qualities, were exhibited at the last International Exhibition from the estate of Mr. David Smith, of Kaderane, in the western province of Ceylon.

¹ Declared value, £1,599,223.

The following is a statement of the cinnamon exported from Ceylon from 1838 to the end of 1860 :—

Year.	Quantity.	Year.	Quantity.
1838 ...	558,110 lbs.	1850 ...	733,781 lbs.
1839 ...	398,198 „	1851 ...	644,857 „
1840 ...	596,592 „	1852 ...	508,491 „
1841 ...	389,373 „	1853 ...	427,666 „
1842 ...	317,919 „	1854 ...	956,280 „
1843 ...	121,145 „	1855 ...	784,284 „
1844 ...	662,704 „	1856 ...	877,547 „
1845 ...	1,057,841 „	1857 ...	887,959 „
1846 ...	408,211 „	1858 ...	750,744 „
1847 ...	401,656 „	1859 ...	879,361 „
1848 ...	447,369 „	1860 ...	675,155 „
1849 ...	491,687 „		

The land under cinnamon cultivation is about 14,400 acres.

Cocoa-nut Oil.—The history of the rise and progress of this article of export illustrates the beneficial results of the action of Government in a tropical and recent agricultural colony (for prior to 1830 Ceylon could only be regarded as a military post of importance), up to a certain point, in introducing new articles of export.

The Local Government of the day imported a steam engine from England, manufactured the oil in Colombo, and consigned it to London, to the island agent, where it was sold and brought to the credit of the Government. In 1831, Governor Sir R. Wilmot Horton directed that the account sales of the oil should be duly published in the Government Gazette, with a note, that the engine, etc., were for sale. A highly respectable firm purchased the engine, etc., and from that period commenced the export of cocoa-nut oil by private individuals, which has reached so high a figure at the present time.

The following is the quantity of cocoa-nut oil exported from Ceylon since 1838 up to 1860, both years inclusive.

Year.	Quantity.	Year.	Quantity.
1838 ...	638,677 galls.	1841 ...	475,742 galls.
1839 ...	242,680 „	1842 ...	321,966 „
1840 ...	357,543 „	1843 ...	475,967 „

Year.	Quantity.	Year.	Quantity.
1844 ...	726,206 galls.	1853 ...	749,028 galls.
1845 ...	443,301 „	1854 ...	1,033,974 „
1846 ...	282,186 „	1855 ...	1,059,272 „
1847 ...	123,981 „	1856 ...	1,046,326 „
1848 ...	197,851 „	1857 ...	1,679,258 „
1849 ...	311,526 „	1858 ...	777,161 „
1850 ...	513,279 „	1859 ...	1,188,637 „
1851 ...	407,960 „	1860 ...	1,549,088 „
1852 ...	443,699 „		

The export duty levied in Ceylon is $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ per cwt.

56,000 acres of land have been sold for cocoa-nut cultivation. The present area of land under cocoa-nut cultivation is, probably, about 129,000 acres.

Rice.—About 400,000 acres of land is under rice cultivation, perhaps more; but the island does not yield, by any means, the quantity required by its inhabitants and immigrants, and is a large importer from Continental India, etc. It is to be hoped that, sooner or later, the good effects of recent local legislation, enforcing former native customs, in regard to the irrigation of rice fields, will become manifest, by a larger area of land being under rice cultivation than is at present the case.

Cotton.—There are no cotton estates in the island: a portion of the samples of cotton sent to the late International Exhibition were from small patches of land in which cotton had been sown by European gentlemen as an experiment; the remainder of the samples sent were grown by the natives on their *cheynes*, or high and dry lands. Mr. Wanklyn, of the Cotton Supply Association, valued the samples sent as follows:—No. 1. Like good strong New Orleans, worth from 12*d.* to 13*d.* per lb. No. 2. Not good colour, but strong, worth 12*d.* per lb. No. 3. Short, weak, and coarse, worth from 10*d.* to 11*d.* per lb.

The cotton, which I perceive has been lately reported in a printed paper as being the produce of Ceylon, was grown in the Madras Presidency, and was only reshipped from Ceylon. A considerable quantity of native cotton was, doubtless, pro-

duced many years ago, and was manufactured into native cloth in the island, but not, to the best of my knowledge, exported. Small quantities of cotton are still produced in the northern, eastern, and north-west provinces, and are manufactured into cloths. The importation of manufactured goods of late years from England has led to a considerable diminution of the cotton grown on the island, and the quantity of native cotton sold is so small that no fixed price can be named as its local market value.

I am, however, of opinion that if a few cotton estates were opened under European superintendence, in suitable localities, and if prices maintain anything like the present standard, the natives would cultivate cotton to a far greater extent than they do at present: this has occurred in the case of native coffee cultivation in Ceylon.

The Government of Ceylon, with the ready sanction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, is prepared to afford due encouragement to persons who may feel disposed to embark in the cultivation of cotton. At present there exists no actual want of labour in the colony for estate purposes, drawn from the continent of India; but, individually, I hold the opinion that Chinese labour would answer the best for cotton cultivation in Ceylon. I mean purely agricultural labourers, drawn from the densely-populated provinces north of Shanghai. Considering their strength, capacity for work, and this latter of a *continuous* character, Chinese would not be found expensive, and are, in my opinion, well adapted, as I have already mentioned, for employment in the cultivation of cotton. Chinese, both *male and female*, have been introduced with good effect into British Guiana for sugar cultivation.

The large works of a reproductive character which are being carried on in Continental India by Government and private agency, it is apprehended will, sooner or later, disturb more or less the supply of labour in Ceylon drawn from India.¹

¹ There are, it is supposed, upwards of 146,000 immigrants employed in Ceylon, chiefly on the coffee estates. The rate of pay varies from 7d. to 9d. a day for an able-bodied man.

Financial Position of the Colony.—The revenue of Ceylon (1861) was £751,997; the expenditure (1861) amounted to £654,989. The only public debt is £100,000, which was raised to pay off the old Ceylon railway, and payable in 1868. A further sum of £250,000, being the first instalment of £1,000,000, which her Majesty's Government have sanctioned being raised, to be applied exclusively to railway purposes within the island, has just been borrowed: a high rate of premium having been given by the applicants, the debt is redeemable within fifteen years. The export duties levied in the island have been reimposed, to meet the interest of the loan, and their amount is kept distinct from the general revenue of the colony.

At present the colony pays £100,536 towards its military expenditure; and, from the statement made by the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies in the House of Commons in March last, it would appear to be the intention of her Majesty's Government to call upon the colony to contribute a further sum for military establishments. It is to be hoped, when this additional charge is imposed, the required steps will be taken to reduce the heavy and, what I have heard admitted by military men of experience, unnecessary charges for the island military staff, and to place the whole military expenditure under the control of the Local Government, who, while acting with due liberality to her Majesty's troops, would prune all unnecessary charges. The present military force consists only of *one* European regiment, one Malay rifle regiment, and a few Royal Artillerymen, while nearly the same staff is retained as when the military force in the colony consisted of *four* European regiments, and more native troops. A major-general and staff, with an adjutant-general, and quartermaster-general, etc., can surely not be required with a force of only two regiments; the senior colonel in the island could command these few troops, and a considerable and legitimate saving would follow. Again, the charges involved in keeping up the fortifications of the towns are considerable. To man effectively the very extensive fortifications of Colombo alone, would require probably treble the

whole existing military force in the island! If authority were given to the Local Government to remove the present fortifications, substituting in their stead one or more batteries, to be mounted with Armstrong guns, such guns, as the shore is very rocky, with a high surf, might be expected to do good service against a hostile squadron; while the sale of the site and *débris* of the existing huge fortifications of Colombo—constructed by the Dutch, doubtless to protect themselves from an internal enemy, the Kandyans being then an independent nation—would yield a considerable sum to the local treasury, and their removal would add much to the salubrity of Colombo, and be of considerable advantage to its greatly increasing trade.

In regard to the fortifications of Trincomalee, I would submit that the cost of their repair, etc., should be viewed as an Imperial question, as they are required for the safety of her Majesty's dockyard, and other naval establishments at that magnificent port (one of Lord Nelson's principal harbours of the world). Many years ago, it was recommended by the then Governor of Ceylon, Sir R. Wilmot Horton, and the Naval Commander-in-Chief in the Eastern Seas, Sir John Gore, that Trincomalee should be garrisoned by marines, to be relieved, from time to time, by marines of the men-of-war on the station: this plan is, I would submit, worthy of present consideration. In regard to the harbour on the south of the island, called Point de Galle, towards the close of last year a letter was addressed to the editor of the *London Times*, signed "A Bengalee," stating that enormous sums have been spent by the Local Government on this harbour. To my personal knowledge, this is a complete error; and it may be convenient if I mention the correct state of the case. It would appear, from Parliamentary papers that have been lately printed, relative to the improvement of Galle harbour, that the subject is at present under the consideration of her Majesty's Government; the Secretary of State for the Colonies being prepared, if the Treasury concur in his Grace's views, to propose to the local legislature a vote for an outlay not exceeding £25,000 for the improvement of Galle harbour,

the amount to be raised by loan, and to be repaid by additional tonnage dues. The Governor has strongly pressed the subject on the attention of the home authorities. His Excellency states in his published despatch to the Colonial Department, that the addition of a safe and commodious harbour only is needed to make Galle the most important port in the Indian Seas. In the letter above alluded to of "Bengalee," I gather that, while he takes a *couleur de rose* view of Bepore, as a port of call in preference to Galle, he still admits that it is exposed to a heavy surf, although not so bad as that experienced at Madras.

As I am under the impression that it is an admitted fact that Ceylon is far more salubrious than the continent of India, so much so, that several of the home life assurance companies (no mean authorities) have reduced the extra premia on the lives of residents in that colony;—looking at the admirable roads, far better than those on the neighbouring continent, indeed, as good as any in Europe, which connect the temperate climate of the interior with the sea coast; looking also at the railroad between Colombo and Kandy, now in course of construction, and at the electric telegraph connecting Ceylon with all India,—the proposition submitted some years ago by a former governor of Ceylon (Sir. R. Wilmot Horton) to the Home Government of the day, *i.e.*, that from the known salubrity of Ceylon, especially that part which is known as the Mountain Zone (Kandy and Newera Ellia, the latter station being about 6,200 feet above the level of the sea, with a very low range of the thermometer), the island would serve as an admirable dépôt for two or three European regiments for the Indian establishment, to be maintained, of course, at the cost of the Indian Government, and ready to move down at any moment to the seaports of Colombo or Galle, the latter being the great "port of call" for all steamers in the eastern seas,—is well worthy the present consideration of the proper authorities. I may venture to add, that, putting aside the great advance in prosperity of Ceylon, its geographical position, its truly magnificent harbour of Trincomalee, and the inoffensive and loyal character

of its population,—the latter fairly tested by a former governor (Sir H. G. Ward) being able to dispense with nearly all the European troops in the island, and to send them to Bengal on the breaking out of the Indian disturbances—Ceylon may fairly be considered one of the chief keys of our Indian Empire. Again, as it is stated in a most interesting article in a late number of the *Friend of India*, headed “The Sole Military Highway to India,” at Ceylon all the invalids of our force in the East might be periodically collected and despatched to the Mediterranean, from time to time, a course which would save many valuable lives, representing so much money, to the army.

As Mr. C. Fortescue, with much truth, stated in his place in the House of Commons, the proposal of annexing Ceylon to Continental India has caused alarm in the colony, and justly so. Ceylon has hitherto been foremost in the East, as regards liberality and progress,—she has had for many years an open council, and welcomed the arrival of European planters to develop her resources, and thereby benefit all classes. After years of close monopoly, the Government of British India is following, in many particulars, the example of Ceylon; and it would be most unfair to hand over this now flourishing colony to be a mere “apanage” of the huge Indian Empire; its vital interests to be, possibly, neglected, amidst the more absorbing demands of Continental India. The native inhabitants and European colonists have reason to be contented with the rule of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and have no wish for a change of home masters.