

One wonders if the value of the publication would have suffered if attention had been called to the work of the Indian Institute of Science during the years 1917-1927, for a full period of 10 years during the time of Professors Fowler and Norris. It is difficult to deny that the foundations of biochemical and technological research on lac were laid at the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore, and the circumstance that all the assistants in the physico-chemical and biochemical sections of the Namkum Institute are men trained at the Institute, bears ample testimony to this fact.

This unfortunate omission of a substantial portion of the recent work on the biochemical, entomological and technological aspects of lac carried out in a sister institution, lends a propagandist touch to the publication.

It would have been of some assistance to the interested public if a financial statement of the Institute were appended to the report. It is difficult to assess the value of fundamental research but where research is definitely meant to assist an industry, the public are taught to estimate the value of research in terms of the increased prosperity or stability which research may bring to the industry.

The revenue from the Lac cess levied by the Government of India amounts to nearly two lakhs a year and the aggregate amount spent on the founding and maintaining the Lac Research Institute at Namkum during the last 10 years, might now exceed twenty lakhs (precise figures are not available). The volume concludes with an impressive array of 88 publications issued from the Institute which we propose reviewing on a future occasion.

M. S.

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REPORT ON THE SOAP INDUSTRY IN CEYLON. (BULLETIN NO. 1, COCOANUT RESEARCH SCHEME, CEYLON. By R. Child, F.I.C., B.Sc., Ph.D. (Lond.).)

This is the first of a series of bulletins issued by the board of management of the Coconut Research Scheme of Ceylon. As the Chairman points out in his introduction "This review of local raw materials that can be used in the manufacture of soap, of soap making process generally and of

suggestions helpful to the local industry, comes at an opportune time and from one who has a knowledge of the technology of the industry."

The author commences his report with a critical and exhaustive examination of the various raw materials used for soap manufacture and proceeds to discuss the several soap-making processes now in vogue everywhere. An account of the chemistry of oils and fats is given in a manner, that should appeal itself even to the soap manufacturer who had not had the benefit of a systematic chemical training. Next a fairly detailed examination is made of the local raw materials available with special reference to the different varieties of cocoanut oil.

In discussing the different soap-making processes, the author dwells at length on the *Cold Process*, as the majority of soaps made in Ceylon at present are by this process according to him. Minute practical details are given and this should be of immense benefit particularly to the untrained soap maker. A brief account of the semi-boiled and settled processes of soap-making is also given.

In his recommendations, Dr. Child observes:—

".... the local industry is quite capable of producing cheaply a reasonably good household soap in sufficient quantities. As an encouragement to develop a moderate increase in import duties would probably have good effect; ... The local industry is not in a position to compete in the toilet-soap industry at present and 'prohibitive' increases in tariff are undesirable for that reason. An increase of 5 p.c. on all tariffs would not seem unreasonable"

Apart from this he suggests the establishment of a Government factory on the model of the Government Soap Factory, Bangalore, and a bureau of chemical advice. There is also a suggestion to control the quality of the soap by the Government by the issue of labels. These are recommendations worthy of serious consideration by the Government.

The report as a whole should commend itself to everyone engaged in the soap industry, directly or indirectly. The board of management of the Coconut Research Scheme deserves the thanks of the public for having decided to issue this valuable report gratis to all.

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Erratum.

Vol. III, No. 10, p. 493, column 2, para 2, line 4,
For *Ophicephalus stolatus*, read '*Tropidonotus stolatus*'.