TOBACCO GROWING

Edith Creek District

Successful Experiments

After years of experiment, Mr. S. Sutchkoff, of Edith Creek, has achieved results with tobacco growing which may lead to the establishment of the industry on the North-West Coast. With the aid of the Government and the advice of its expert (Mr. D. H. Malcolm), Mr. Sutchkoff this year grew 1½ acres of tobacco, and installed a drying kiln and a storing shed. Mr. Sutchkoff's success has caused a rush for suitable land in the Edith Creek district, and already approximately 1,000 acres of Crown lands has been applied for.

Interviewed with regard to the possibility of the industry being established, Mr. Sutchkoff said he feared undue publicity as to his experiment would not do good, for it might induce inexperienced people to grow tobacco, with the result that they would fail. He had discussed this aspect with Mr. Malcolm, supervisor of the industry in Tasmania, who had agreed that great care was needed, and it would not be wise for people to rush into the industry without experience and knowledge. It was fortunate for the tobacco industry in Tasmania that it started in the Derwent Valley, where growers had been used to scrupulous care in growing crops by long experience with hops, which required much similar care and treatment as tobacco.

"I am not sure," continued Mr. Sutchkoff, "that I have the right to express my opinion so far. Even the experiment this year is not yet conclusive, as cured tobacco requires several months before it attains some maturity and is fit for sale. I have an agreement with the Government to carry on experiments for three years, and to try different manurial treatment, and by the end of that time we will have both the right and duty to make experiments public. Before that time it might be misleading."

Mr. Sutchkoff added that in the meantime Mr. Malcolm intended to offer next season 50 plants to anyone willing to grow tobacco, and the crops would be cured in his kiln. He considered that would be the most suitable step at the present stage.

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