

(51)

28th July, 1948.

Sir,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter, F27/1/4, together with a sample of soil taken from around the roots of a "Buka" tree.

It will not be possible to make a complete examination such as will be required in this case, until later in the year. The Soils Chemist is busy with the field work concerned with the reconnaissance soil survey of Fiji and will not be conducting laboratory studies until the close of the year.

There would appear to be little doubt that the question is one of available plant food, a problem which is general throughout the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, and early attention will have to be given to field work by the Soils Chemist as soon as suitable transport arrangements can be effected.

In regard to laboratory work chemical analysis is useless unless the soil sample has been taken in accordance with standard practice. If the sample submitted is not representative no useful results would be achieved in conducting a chemical analysis. I would suggest therefore that you secure a representative sample and to aid you in obtaining this I enclose a reprint of a paper by the Soils Chemist which sets out in detail the necessary procedure.

The possibility of infertility being due to saline conditions was investigated by the Soils Chemist but the actual salt content of the soil submitted was quite normal. A copy of the report by the Soils Chemist is submitted for your information.

I hope that it may be possible to send the Soils Chemist in the near future to investigate the matter, but in the meantime a fresh soil sample should be submitted for chemical analysis.

Yours faithfully,

Chief Lands Commissioner,

TARAWA.

 Director of Agriculture.

Distribution:

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 Phoenix Island District,
CANTON ISLAND.