

Basel Mission Archives

"Zimmermann's Quarter Report"

Title: "Zimmermann's Quarter Report"

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Description: Made a short visit to Logong on Feb 6th, to talk to the baptismal candidate Sang who lived there. The report also offers a summary of Zimmermann's activities in the agricultural field since his arriving in Christiansborg. He made an experimental garden around the church in Christiansborg, and had had rather slight success with cereals (Korn), beans, cabbages, kohlrabi, and Luzern. A certain amount of Luzern survived, and seemed to have acclimatised well, he has still also a few tobacco plants, one vine, one Kohlrabi plant, and a few been plants. So he has turned to experiments with tropical crops, which have been more encouraging. In the last quarter of 1851 the long-neglected plantation at Abokobi was taken in hand...little seems to have remained from the planting of the previous owners. Zimmermann blames the weather mostly, tho' the lack of constant attention was also to blame for this. In the new year (1852) Zimmermann recruited 9 labourers to work at a 5 1/2 x 7 hour week, at Fr. 3.20 per month, and a cloth yearly on Christmas Day. With all other expenditures 6 months expenditure should come to Fr. 140. Altogether he expects to have 6-8 Juchart of land under cultivation in the coming rainy season. He planned to plant these with a mixture of local food crops and cash crops, naming for the latter arrowroot, cotton, coffee, and perhaps sugar-cane. He advises the presence of European supervision, which he calculates would mean 25% more work being done. He hopes to go to Cape Coast to study Freeman's extensive plantation at first hand. As for the development of Christiansborg from this angle, cotton and other commodities could be grown - if the existing Institute were to be turned into a boarding school, the scholars could provide the labour. Two years ago they had four head of cattle, four more were bought later. Two of these were lost, two died, and five have been slaughtered. 6 head remain. The capital invested in cows is Fr. 250, Fr.150 has been paid as rent for their stalls, The value of the slaughtered cattle has been Fr 60 each, and allowing for cost of herding, the loss over two years has been Fr. 170. The value of the milk obtained was negligible. He suggests these attempts at cattle rearing should be continued in the grasslands around Christiansborg, remembering that with an increased herd losses will be reduced since the cattle will stick together better, the labour costs will average out at less per head of cattle, and there is some hope that they will become able to milk all the cows as they currently do at Elmina, As soon as possible therefore he proposes to buy cows from the lower coast, where they are cheap. Horses have also proved their worth - see the conference protocol asking the Home Committee for permission to increase the holding of horses on the Christiansborg station. The mission also possesses about 120 head of sheep and goats on the two stations and at Abokobi. In the last 9 months 30 have been lost through theft and negligence, and a lot have succumbed to disease, But even so 40-50 have

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been slaughtered, and 60 remain. Expenditure has been in the region of Fr. 650 for the animals, Fr. 50 for food, while the value of the remaining animals is Fr.240, the value of the slaughtered Fr. 200, and the milk (from the goats) has been worth at least Fr.130, together making a credit of Fr. 570. The loss in this field has been therefore Fr.130, but the last quarterly result have been much better and therefore he hopes to have better long-term results than this. (He names the most serious disease as "Reute", this may be the same as "Räude" which means simply mange). This means sheep and goats are easier and more profitable than cows to raise...they are easier to acquire too. A local goat costs Fr. 3 1/2, a goat from Europe Fr.7, and a sheep (provenance not clear) Fr. 5 on the average. One factor to take into account in discussing the raising of sheep and goats is that the missionaries are going to need fresh healthy meaty and milk, and these are not always to be had, especially the latter. Zimmermann lists the prices of different products like meat, fish, chicken, Welschkorn, yams , sweet potatoes, bananas, plantains and local maize beer. European food and drink is not much more expensive than that produced locally. It is the policy to reduce consumption of European commodities, but this is not altogether possible, since sometimes local foods are unobtainable, and the mission is not able to store foods for long periods. The European foodstuffs which are most essential to the mission are: rice, sugar, flour, oil, butter. Red wine is being drunk less, but some Rhinewine is needed for sickness. Beer is very valuable as a drink for journeys and other unusual exertions. Tho' even so, the merchants are selling the cheapest sugar at double the price they pay for it in England. He reckons the support of a pupil costs Fr. 12; much of the year he has to pay for water (this is in Christiansborg). Firewood costs Fr. 180 per year.

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