

to insure its passage. Few amendments on the floor are tolerated. Debate is brief and most of it is perfunctory. In the main the members have to accept on faith the views of their party representatives on the committee, for they have neither time nor means to form an independent judgment on so elaborate and technical a measure. Here and there on both sides a few recalcitrants break away from party lines, and there is no little grumbling and discontent even among the faithful. But in the end the bill is passed with negligible exceptions by a strict party vote.

Proceedings in the Senate duplicate in large measure those in the House. But in some respects conditions are different. So long as the bill is in the House Committee on Ways and Means the public is ignorant of its terms. But when that committee reports it to the House it is published, and the brief debate that follows, though it contributes little to the result, does direct attention to its salient features. By the time the bill reaches the Senate, therefore, every interest it affects is roused to more strenuous efforts, some to maintain what they have got, others to get more, and many to defeat provisions that they consider unfavorable. The press, now furnished with a distinct mark at which to direct its comments, devotes less space to generalities and more to the specific provisions of the bill. Public discussion is diverted from broad tariff policies and fastens on significant particulars. Numerous adjustments are demanded by opposing sections and interests.

Open hearings are conducted by the Committee on Finance of the Senate, to which the bill is referred, in much the same way as by the Committee on Ways and Means, of the House. They seldom develop many new and helpful facts, but as feeling has grown more bitter the hearings are usually marked by greater arrogance among the claimants and resentment among the disappointed. Without exception the country has always appeared to receive a House tariff bill with disapproval. Protests come from some quarter against so many of its details as to give the impression that its enactment into law could not fail to oust the majority party from power.

Accordingly when the majority members of the Finance Committee of the Senate go into executive session it is with a clear understanding that for party safety they must make the bill more widely acceptable. To do so usually involves many hundreds of amendments and sometimes so radically changes the bill as to make it recognizable only through its title and number. In most of the recent tariffs these amendments have commonly been in the nature of an increase of duties, either directly by raising rates or indirectly by changing classifications. This is done because high duties tend more than do low duties to conciliate those opponents who are most active.

The committee is smaller than the corresponding committee of the House and there are fewer new men on it. Owing to their longer political experience the members are readier to make concessions to expediency, are more amenable to leadership, their proceedings are more dignified and less contentious; agreement, therefore, is more easily reached. But political considerations weigh even more heavily in the Senate than in the House; and interested Senators do not wait until the bill is on the floor before exerting their influence. Even during executive sessions of the committee it is not infrequent that Senators who are not members of the committee interrupt to argue and persuade and to introduce constituents who want a chance to present *ex parte* statements without being embarrassed by publicity.

The work does not progress far before the position of practically every Senator is known, and the committee is made aware of the particular provisions in which each is interested. It then becomes its task to arrange compromises in such a way as to secure a majority when it comes to a vote on the bill. Unfortunately, such compromises can not be in the nature of a general moderation of policy or a consistent and systematic adjustment of terms throughout; they consist rather in distributing disproportionately high or low duties in such a way as to satisfy "blocs" and individuals whose votes will be determined not by the merit of the bill as a

whole but by the manner in which it covers the special interests that concern them.

When the bill reaches the floor of the Senate it usually appears that agreement by majority of the committee does not mean that the bill will be accepted practically unchanged by the Senate, as is usually done, however disapprovingly, by the House. Debate is not cut short by the Senate rules; it is long and searching, and the committee must make more than a perfunctory defense of its proposals. Furthermore, sectional and factional influences are fully as strong and much more vocal in the Senate than in the House, and under the Senate rules insurgency is easier and more prevalent. In the main, the committee's recommendations are sustained, but amendments proposed on the floor by individual Senators are sometimes adopted that are quite inconsistent with the rest of the bill. In this way maladjustments and inequalities are apt to be further increased. On the other hand, the long debate occasionally shows up discrepancies in the committee's proposals that the Senate sees fit to smooth away. All in all, however, when the vote is taken in the Senate on the bill as a whole, it usually shows less of logical arrangement and systematic adherence to a common standard and a definite policy than at any previous stage.

From the Senate the bill goes to conference

in a committee composed of an equal number of members designated by each house. Meetings are held behind closed doors and sometimes continue for several weeks. Numerous concessions are made by both sides. Many of them are of minor significance, but some of them give to whole paragraphs and schedules a form quite different from that in which they were passed by either house. New information is seldom sought or offered. In deciding the points at issue less attention is given to their relation to the declared principle of the bill than to the impression that the action taken will make on the respective houses. Much effort is made to have it appear that each house yields in about equal degree to the other, and this sometimes leads to the sacrifice of important provisions. Sometimes agreement is difficult and settlement is determined in large measure by endurance and bluff.

The bill reported back by the conference committee is almost invariably voted on as a whole regardless of the changes made in it. Extremely seldom is it sent back to conference by either house for further adjustment; and although in its final form it is safe to say that no man in either house gives it unqualified approval, and that few even know just what it contains, yet it has never happened that a bill getting through the stages described failed of passage by Congress.

## Useful Plants in Foreign Lands

By P. J. WESTER

Wisely directed plant introduction is one of the most potent and significant factors in the improvement of agriculture. More than that, it creates new empires, nations and industries, destroys old ones and revolutionizes age-old world commerce and trade routes.

Corn and tobacco excepted, every important crop in the United States has been transplanted from some foreign country. Wheat spread from Syria through the temperate zones. The potato, originally from the highlands of South America, has become the world's most important starchy vegetable. The citrus fruits from the Orient transported to Florida and California have created new industries in a once barren unproductive land. The alfalfas introduced into America from Europe and Asia have proved of incalculable value.

Of no less interest is the fact that few plant

industries have been built up on the native heath of the species concerned. Brazil lost her one-time rubber monopoly to tropical Asia, but built up her chief industry, coffee, from the importation of a plant from Abyssinia, where coffee is of little or no importance. West Africa once had a monopoly of the oil palm that is now being threatened by the modern plantations in Sumatra and other parts of Malaya. Sumatra, by the way, has also been the first to seriously contend with our Abaca, so long a Philippine monopoly. The tea industries of Ceylon and Dutch Malaya are based on the introduction of plants from China and Assam.

In considering the Philippines in relation to plant introductions, we find that all our plant industries except that based on Manila hemp are based on foreign plants imported at one time or another. All our commonly cultivated ve-

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getables, with the exception of the tongo, are of foreign origin, true also of our best fruits and nuts, with few exceptions, such as the pili, kubilí, tabú and litoko.

We owe a vast debt of gratitude, which never can be repaid, to the unknowns who introduced the coconut, sugar cane, rice, mango, lanzon, and a host of other fruits and vegetables, but we can continue their work by introducing some of the many useful plants of foreign countries which still have not found their way to our shores.

Of the varied activities by means of which the agriculture of a country may be improved none is more fascinating than plant introduction. It satisfies the craving for achievement at the same time that it appeals to the gambling instinct in human nature. By no other means can betterment be so quickly and cheaply accomplished if wisely directed. For successful plant introduction does not mean merely the haphazard importation of foreign plants. The would-be-successful plant introducer must first ascertain under what climatic conditions, altitude, soil and rainfall, the "prospect" thrives; its exploitation or uses in the country into which he proposes to introduce it must next be considered, and in the case of staple crops if it can be profitably produced in competition with other countries in which it is already established. For if this cannot be done the money expended in introducing a given crop obviously would be wasted. Suppose we find, for instance, that flax and wheat thrives in Baguio. Where is the land where these crops could be grown in competition with the vast level fertile plains of the United States, Canada and Argentina? With fruits and vegetables the problem is more simple, for in this case any additional useful species would be an asset to whatever community it was introduced.

Most important crop plants adapted to our climate have been introduced into the Philippines, but an immense amount of plant introduction work still remains to be accomplished in importing better varieties of crops already grown. Then there is still a bewildering number of vegetables, in the broadest sense of the term, and of fruits and nuts, that play a more or less important rôle in the diet of the people in other countries which could to advantage be imported into the Philippines. Brief descriptions of such plants will be given in these articles for the information of those who may wish to try them.

*Zizania latifolia*.—The *coba* is a coarse perennial grass up to 2 meters tall, growing from coarse underground runners. It ranges from Indo-China to Korea and Japan, growing in swampy land and shallow stagnant water with a muddy

bottom. The tender sprouts make an excellent vegetable of pleasant nutty taste. In China the *coba* has been in cultivation at least since the 10th century, and it also is in cultivation in Indo-China. In Van ho, near Hanoi, it is grown on a large scale, the sprouts being marketed from October to January. In the Hanoi markets the *coba* is sold tied in bundles of ten somewhat like asparagus sprouts, but the *coba* is larger, 25 to 30 cm. long and 25 to 40 mm. across.

*Litsea sebifera*.—The *malai* is a large handsome tree to 20 meters in height, native of the Malay Archipelago. The leaves are large, lanceolate to ovate-oblong, up to 45 cm. long

and 12 cm. broad, and silvery velvet below when young. The fruit is roundish, flattened, 3 cm. or more across, reddish, with oily sweetish pulp. It is eaten steamed with rice by the natives. Europeans have found it of good taste mixed with lemon juice and madeira or brandy. It is also eaten after boiling water has been poured over the fruits until their color fades. The *malai* is one of the most commonly planted fruits in Banka, and comes into bearing at the age of 5 to 6 years. It is a close relative of the avocado.

*Momordica dioica*.—The *vahisi* is a perennial climber growing from a large tuberous root, a native of India and the Malay peninsula below 1500 meters. The large yellow flowers are followed by oblong fruits up to 8 cm. long, covered with soft spines. The *vahisi* is cultivated as a vegetable in India where both the fruits and the tubers are eaten. It is related to the chayote, which has proved so successful in Baguio.

*Borassus flabellifer*.—The *palmyra palm* is a stout robust palm 30 meters high, with a trunk nearly a meter thick; probably a native of tropical Africa south of the Sahara desert, but of ancient introduction into India to Indo-China and the Malay Archipelago, thriving from sea-level to about 750 meters altitude. The leaves are fan-shaped, with spiny petioles. In general appearance this palm resembles the Philippine buri, from which it differs in that the large flower clusters grow from the leaf axils like the coconut. The fruits are roundish and black—about 20 cm. in diameter, and contain one to 3 large seeds. The *palmyra palm* is one of the principal sources of palm sugar in India, obtained by tapping the flower stems like the nipa and coconut. The tree begins to bloom at the age of 12 to 15 years, continuing for a period of 50 years. The tapping is done during the hot dry season and continues over 4 to 5 months, with a yield of 200 to more than 400 liters of sap per palm, which, aside from sugar, also is made into arrack and vinegar. The soft jelly-like pulp of the immature seeds is eaten raw. The sweetish flesh surrounding the seeds is also eaten raw, made into a refreshing drink, or it is pounded into pulp and diluted with water into a soft mass which is spread on leaves and sun-dried, in which form it makes an important food. In Bengal the flesh is mashed and mixed with flour and made into cakes and fried. The large seeds are covered with a shallow layer of soil, and as they germinate the tender sprouts are eaten as a vegetable or pickled.

The leafstalks furnish a good brush fiber and the blades are used for making hats, mats, baskets and many other articles.

The *palmyra palm* is the most important palm in south India and northern Ceylon, and plays a more or less important rôle in the economic life of the people in Siam, Indo-China and the Malay Archipelago. It is very drought resistant, and should be a useful tree in all parts of the Islands having a long dry season.

*Cavanillesia arborea*.—The *barrigude* is a large tree with a trunk up to 20 meters high, related to the kapok tree, native of Brazil. The broadly ovate leaves, about 15 cm. long, are clustered at the end of the twigs. The large red flowers bordered with white, are followed by five-winged fruits, 13 cm. long and 17 cm. across, each containing a single big seed or nut of good taste eaten roasted.

*Couepia viti*.—The *viti* is a small tree belonging to the rose family and is also a native of Brazil. The small leaves are oblong and pointed, leathery and shining above, and white and velvety below, up to 6 cm. long. The yellow fruit is egg-shaped, pointed at both ends, 12 to 16 cm. long, containing a yellow pulp of unpleasant odor but of good taste and much appreciated.

*Dioscorea bemandry*.—The *bemandry* is a twining vine related to our ubi and tongo, found in northwestern Madagascar. It is peculiar in that a plant always produces twin tubers, which are long and smooth, 40 to 80 cm. long weighing 5 to 6 kilos each. They are tender, sweet and juicy, resembling a watermelon in taste, and are well liked in their native home.

*Dioscorea trifida*.—The *yampi* is also a twining vine related to the ubi, but a native of South America and the West Indies where it is generally cultivated. The tubers are relatively small.



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Sugar cane varieties introduced into the Philippines have made fortunes for progressive planters.

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