

as an economic crop in Trinidad and British Guiana; the gums and resins of British Somaliland; the Xanthorrhœa resins ("yacca gum") of Australia; the market for "eel grass" from Newfoundland; the manuring of Para rubber; the cultivation of citrus fruits in Rhodesia and East Africa; machines for decorticating ground nuts; and the industrial utilisation of palm nut shells.

Investigations.

The examination of Empire raw materials of plant and animal origin, in order to determine their possible uses in industry and commerce, forms an important part of the work of the Department, and during 1926, reports were furnished on 490 samples. This figure is exclusive of samples not requiring laboratory investigation, such as those sent for identification, the enquiries relating to which are included in the previous section.

The materials received for examination included specimens from most parts of the Empire, viz., Great Britain, Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Samoa, Union of South Africa, Newfoundland, India, Ceylon, Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, North Borneo, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Kenya, Seychelles, Mauritius, Somaliland, Cyprus, British Guiana, British Honduras, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Virgin Islands and Falkland Islands; also from Egypt, Palestine and Iraq. Investigations have also been carried out for the Department of Overseas Trade on materials forwarded by their Officers in various foreign countries.

In most cases the materials for investigation are forwarded by Government Departments of Agriculture, Forestry, or Industries overseas, principally in the Colonies and Protectorates, many of which make extensive use of the Institute for obtaining reports on the commercial possibilities of their products. A few typical investigations from those dealt with during the year, are summarised below in order to indicate the scope of this branch of the work:—

Timbers. A comprehensive collection of Gold Coast timbers was displayed at the British Empire Exhibition and, at the request of the Conservator of Forests, a systematic investigation of the more promising species has been undertaken. The selected timbers are being examined in order to determine their mechanical properties and working qualities, and the opinion of the Advisory Committee on