

No. 17

| 17 | Ridley's Letter 1923

7. CUMBERLAND ROAD,
KEW, SURREY.

Jan 27 1923.

Dear Burkill,
I am very sorry though
not very surprised to hear the
Govt has or is about to take away
the Economic gardens, they would
argue, here is a bit of land
available cheap, the Kew Gardens
Agricultural Department can
and will do all Economic work
necessary for the peninsula;
no Economic work has been
done (or very little) in the Singapore
Gardens for some years, & for the
state of the grounds the Director
does not appear to think it
necessary, we had better take
the ground for our other
purposes.

wanted, I usually they appeared
to get so fed up that they quite
ignored you and your minutes.
This class of people wants a lot
of humbugging. They possess
nothing of science. It's utterly
outside their ideas, you have to
keep on the beat of terms with them
(even if you don't like them at all),
they are all weak on some point
and you have to play them care-
fully on that point.

Nothing lasts for ever, & no garden
except the Botanic gardens of
Singapore (in equal part) & Penang
have lasted as long as the Economic
gardens, that is in the Malay pen-
insula. The Economic gardens did
great & historical work in their
day, & now they are gone like the
hanging gardens of Babylon
HCR is very covetous of the herbarium
so save him making a fresh collection
He has been Don't let him get it
four summer
Henry & Ridley

Some years ago on one of my
Eastern visits I went round
the Economic Garden, & found
to my horror that the hillside
on which we had started our
Botanum, was a sea of lalang
in which stood a few of the trees
I had planted (without labels) some
dying ones, the larger number
dead, even the little ones at
the top corner which contained
a number of rare trees & shrubs
including the only known plant
of *Prunus punctulata*, & the probably
extinct *Dalbergia Hillebrandii* -
many of which there is now no
specimen in the garden, had been
killed and burnt and replaced
by lalang. The whole hill was
a hideous eyesore. I never
wanted to look at it again.

It was very conspicuous from
the Daloy Road and no one would
inquire it like a part of the
wild forest. Botanic gardens
in the world, as it formerly was
acknowledged to be.
I had during my time at least
three fights with the Govt. to
save or protect the gardens from
mutilation besides other scraps
but I always lost.
Your complaint re officialdom
and neglect of your appeals is to
some extent I think due to your
policy. I strongly urged you more
than once, not to adopt the Indian
method of writing long winded
minutes about trivial business
but at one of my visits to the
Secretariat, the Ass. Col Sec.
grumbled that your minutes
were so long that he never
looked at them but there
then to a half caste clerk to
put out in a few words what you

P.S. I hope you will not be offended
at anything I have writ. I have
attempted to show how they (Govt.)
look at things & undoubtedly did in
this case. I really do not know
much about their actions as I did
not find out why, what they
were up to, and your letter is
not very explicit & what is the
intention of Agric. there supposed
to do. I do not see any agreement,
It does not seem possible to
do much for the farmers from this
end, as we are quite in the dark
as to what is going on. I am
awfully sorry your letters sometime
back I gathered that the Govt. for
abolition of the Econ. farmers
had been given up.
But you will let us know all when
you come in March
Vol II of Flora put in February
HWR

Minute paper No.

Sheet No.

I put this into the file as proof Mr. Ridley's unfavourable opinion of the judges on his last visit, because I believe that he prompted Mr. Durbine to make his mistake. If I am right, Mr. Ridley was the scientific authority referred to.

Of course I think my course justified & Mr. Ridley's criticism null

W. S. Burdett



Botanic Gardens. Singapore.

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

10th. January 1906.

No:-- 17/06

Dear Sir,

If you could assist with seeds of any of the following Palms I should much appreciate your help and will reciprocate in any way I can and I send some Palm seeds by next mail which you may like.

The Palms wanted are :-

Rhytidlenas macrocarpa

Mauritia flexuosa

Maximilliana regia

-do- any other species.

Thrinax any species.

Synecanthus fibrosus

Copernicia cerifera

Attalea funifera

Any other rare South American Palms.

Yours truly

H. N. Ridley

Director of Gardens S.S.

The Superintendent

Botanic Station

British Guiana.

(1,000-Jan, 1905.)