

SINGULAR VARIATION OF RAINFALL ON CEYLON ESTATES.

A striking instance was shown of the variation of rainfall lately. Two estates in the same district and within a few miles only of each other, measured respectively in June, inches 44.43 and 21.22, there being no apparent reason why one estate should be so much wetter than the other.—*Cor.* [Was there no hill or ridge between the estates? On the Wilson's Bungalow and Haldummulla roads, the traveller sometimes passes from pouring rain to a dry, dusty roadway within a few yards during the South-west monsoon; and in Laggala and Hantane we have seen rain falling heavily on one side of a ridge and the sun shining out on the other.—*Ep. T.A.*]

COFFEE AND TEA IN UVA.

A correspondent in Haputale writes:—Last week I had a ramble down to Badulla, round by Passara, over the bill by Tonacombe down to Demodera and back by coach to this. The weather was most propitious, and somewhat dry, only a few flying showers having fallen about Passara, and one heavy shower after my return here. The S. W., never very severe on this side, has been a failure this year and notwithstanding, tea and coffee bushes were looking in excellent health, especially old King coffee with any amount of crop, from 2 to 5 cwt. an acre, in good heart and very free of leaf-disease or green bug. Even such coffee as I passed at the Dabedde Gap, part of Wewesse estate, allowed to grow at its own sweet will into clusters of suckers and all kinds of gormandizers, the lucky Parses proprietor told me, had given him last year 8 cwts per acre of sound good coffee. This does not look as if the "old King" was dying or defunct. On East Gourakelle and Namanacully, I saw coffee looking and bearing as good a crop as it ever did in the past—and I speak as you know with some knowledge of coffee, after 38 years' experience in Uva and never a day out of the Island. Everywhere the rapid strides of progress in tea cultivation strikes one,—new clearings, new roads, new tea factories, springing up like mushrooms on the hillsides, and what were called by a facetious writer as "the bleak and barren patanas of Uva." Floreat Uva and long live the old King Coffee and young Prince Tea and Mr. Fisher as Rajah of Uva!

HOW THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES PADDY CULTIVATION.

It is now about two years since our columns contained a notice to the effect that Mr. Pole-Carew, of Hatton, had purchased a large block of land at Hambantota for the purpose of cultivating paddy thereon. The land was about 800 acres in extent, and was sold as fit for paddy cultivation and under a new irrigation work. That was, as we have stated, two years ago. Our readers will perhaps hardly believe it, but, in spite of prolonged efforts on the part of Mr. Pole-Carew, and much correspondence between him and Government, not one drop of water has been carried to those parts of the land referred to as suitable for paddy cultivation. The land in question is, or, we should rather say, ought to be, irrigated from the Welawaya ganga by an ancient and channel; but the latter, it was discovered after the purchase, was not cut as far as the land! Unable to get this work done by the authorities Mr. Pole-Carew asked to be allowed to cut the channel himself, Government paying him for the work, as he thought he could do it for considerably less than it would cost Government. This was permitted, and he has been paid for the work, but still no water reaches his land, because it is diverted on its journey by claimants to the land through which it runs! Govern-

ment so far has done nothing to remedy this disgraceful state of affairs, all attempts to make it fulfil its bargain having been met by shifty and evasive answers which would do credit to a pettifogging attorney, but which are highly discreditable to any Government. If this is how the employment of British capital and enterprise in the direction indicated is to be met and encouraged it is small wonder that progress is so slow throughout the Island. Not that the experience is novel. Far from it. It is the same old story which we have had to repeat whenever Europeans have attempted to improve the condition of the native agriculture of the country. Mr. F. Blatherwick had to abandon the attempt to grow paddy in the Southern Province below Tissa owing to his inability to obtain water from the irrigation work "restored" at great public expense; and a few years later Mr. Thomas North Christie's experiment below the Elahera Channel met with the same fate. Mr. Pole-Carew, however, was bold enough two years ago to disregard these warnings of the Government meets out to Europeans who wish to invest British capital in native agriculture; but he has met with no better success than they did.—*Local "Times."*

BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA: NYASSALAND.

INTERVIEW WITH COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON.
ENCOURAGING NEWS FOR INTENDING PLANTERS.

In the *St. James's Budget* there is a report of an interview with Mr. Johnston, some parts of which will be of interest to "£5,000" and others of our correspondents. Referring to the recent defeat and final collapse of a Native Chief who, from time to time, gave a good deal of trouble, Mr. Johnston mentioned,—

He also cut off the invaluable labour supply which comes down periodically from the west coast of the Lake to work in the coffee plantations of the Shiré Highlands. It is true that some of these men could be brought down by steamer; but in tens rather than in hundreds and thousands; and this method of transport is expensive. Makanjira used also to drive away from the south-west of the Lake numbers of labourers who had their homes there, and who, at no cost to the white planter, used to tramp to the Shiré settlements and do six months' work. The custom of the Nyassaland natives is to work for six months in the coffee plantations, return for three months' rest, and for the other three months cultivate their own crops."

"Is there an abundant labour supply?"

"Yes, that is the great factor in the future of Nyassaland—an abundant and willing labour supply."

"What is their race?"

Some of the best of Africans—Zulu hybrids, Angoni.

Then as regards Nyassaland, its colonists, coffee, minerals and transport service, we have the following interesting information:—

"Now, Mr. Johnston, what is the practical use of Nyassaland to the British race?"

"Inasmuch as the soil seems to be remarkably adapted to the cultivation of coffee, why should not the British grow their own coffee on their own territory, under their own laws, rather than get it from Brazil? As regards climate there is not much difference between Nyassaland and Brazil; that is to say, if a European can support the climate of Brazil he can equally well support the climate of Nyassaland. As Nyassaland becomes opened up it will probably be much healthier than Brazil. The only serious disease with which one has to contend is malarial fever. The risk in going to Africa is no more than that of going to tropical South America, to Singapore, or the Malay Archipelago; and there is no yellow fever in Africa as there sometimes is in tropical South America. The present ratio of deaths among Europeans in Central Africa is 6.5 per cent.