

Altogether, it is evident that a good many rivals to Brazil are rapidly being developed both in its own neighbourhood of the Far West; in Africa, West and Central; and in the Far East of Netherlands India, the Straits Settlements and North Borneo; and we see no reason why success should not attend the several new efforts we have noticed, even if prices do not keep quite so high as they have done of recent years.

COFFEE PLANTING IN THE AMAZONIAN VALLEY, UPPER PERU:

AN ABERDONIAN REPORTS A PROFIT MARGIN OF 200 PER CENT. RAPID EXTENSION OF CULTIVATION AMONG THE NATIVES.

[We now give the main portion of Mr. Jas. Robb's letter from Central Peru addressed to Mr. Arthur Sinclair, Aberdeen, on which we wrote the other day.—Ed. T.A.]

What you say re the labour question reads well, and I note that you have ascertained that there will be no difficulty in contracting Chinese or Indian coolies for the Perené. The difficulty is that the Peruvian Government would not admit them into the Mollana. The attitude of Peru is the great difficulty, though at the same time the Perené valley will never be properly developed until we have Asiatic labour.

On account of the number of people now going in for coffee-growing, labour is becoming a serious question, and it will become more and more so, as the colony develops.

Regarding affairs here I may say they are fairly satisfactory, although we have had a rough time. Our Italian colonists, or rather those who came out with Mr. Mackenzie, have all gone. They proved a rotten class of people, and thought they came out to pick up gold instead of working for it like honest men. The remaining colonists are now settling down to honest labour, and have every appearance of doing well. At one time things looked so shaky that I thought the whole scheme was to be a complete failure, but a better tone is now prevailing and I have great hopes of yet seeing this part of Peru develop into a great country.

Since taking over charge, I have cut down expenses all around and it was about time somebody acted; for the Corporation was being robbed in every department, and was becoming a scandal.

It has been a difficult job for me to get the colonists to settle down to work, and I had to give them a little assistance to get a commencement; but I think we can jog along nicely now as the most of them have planted or are planting coffee which is giving them more interest in their chacras.

We have now a good bridge over the Rio Colorado and an excellent road to La Merced; but communication with Dentville is in no way improved; and the Pichis road, which you traversed, is now in such a deplorable state that mules sink in mud to the belly-bands, and two or three journeys nearly kill them.

A colony of good people are establishing themselves along the bank of the Perené, about 8 miles below the confluence of the rivers, and all will plant a lot of coffee this season.

The present prices are indeed encouraging and when one considers that it only costs about 6 Solés* to produce 100 lb. of cleaned coffee, and it sells locally at 22 Solés and in Lima at 30 Solés. Freight to Lima about 4 Solés per 150 lb.

This is the country for good Scotchmen with a few hundreds. Italians have proved a total failure; French nearly so. Give us north country people such as Scotch, English, Irish, Germans, Swedes, &c., of good character and a trifle of means, and our success is assured.

* Depreciated Solé now worth 2s.

† With plenty of coolies: no use without.—"Old Colonist."

I may add that I am only in charge of the colony for a short period, and at its expiry will most probably take up land myself and have done with service. I can see my way to do well as a coffee grower, and I like the life.

The Chola labourers cost about 0.70* per diem with food and I find growers can afford to pay that, and still do well. My chief grievance is that we cannot get them to stay any length of time, for as soon as they get a little money they leave us and go on the spree until it is finished. If I can manage it I will come home for a short spell soon, as I would like to induce a number of Aberdeenshire young men to come out and join us in Peru.

A BIG COFFEE COMPANY WANTED FOR BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA:

A BLOCK OF 100,000 ACRES OF GOOD LAND READY FOR A COMPANY:

A COUNTRY LIKE UVA.

[The following is the letter addressed to "Old Colonist," to which we referred in a recent issue.—Ed. T.A.]

British Central Africa, 10th June 1894.

DEAR SIR,—Having heard from ——— that you take an interest in this country and that you might help in the starting of a Company for coffee cultivation, I take the liberty of addressing you on the subject.

About a year ago I bought a tract of land comprising about 100,000 acres from Navuso, the paramount chief of the Machinjeras, a few hours' journey from my own estate, Dunraven, but on the other side of the Ruo (which is the boundary between the British and Portuguese sphere of influence) and within the latter. Although the Portuguese have never governed or presumed to govern those people, an attempt was made to conquer them about 10 years ago when the Machinjeras drove them to Quiliman with heavy loss and would have destroyed the town had it not been for the interference of the English.

The chiefs and people are on the most friendly terms with me and pressed me to buy land and open a coffee estate in their country, which I did as stated above, and H. M. Commissioner and Consul-General Mr. H. H. Johnston, after becoming conversant with the facts, wrote to say that my purchase was perfectly in accordance with the Brussels Act and Anglo-Portuguese Convention. Subsequently to receipt of this acknowledgment I went to work and put down a nursery of 6 bushels of coffee estimated to give 180,000 plants fit to put out during the next rainy season—December to April—and have also built a small bungalow and godowns and am felling a small clearing.

My deed of purchase was witnessed by 3 European residents, Messrs. Lloyd, Bradshaw and Imlah, and the interpreter was Dr. Geo. Robertson of the Mlanji Mission, and is considered a sound and good title.

The acreage is only estimated at 100,000; but no one has been over the boundaries; neither has a survey been made.

The country is well-watered by numerous streams and is composed of, for the most part, well-timbered land, mostly forest with stretches of grass to be met with here and there. The elevation is, from 2,000 to 2,500 feet, slightly undulating with small hills here and there; the whole is surrounded by larger hills which comprise the boundaries. The soil on the portion I visited is of a deep rich chocolate varying to black loam, but of course there is poor soil to be met with as well. The rainfall is the same as on my own property from 60 to 80 in. per annum distributed over 118 to 130 days. Climate—from November to April is our wet season, and hot, this averaging about 80°; from May to October dry and cool with monthly showers for a few days about the fall of each moon; it is 60 to 71, but it sometimes goes so low as 54 during June and July.

Cents of a Solé—about 1s. 6d.