

COFFEE PLANTING AND PROGRESS IN THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

With two Surveyors at work here there is every prospect of a sale of agricultural land before the end of the year—but in the meantime European planters are being kept out of the District. It is a pleasure to report that the Europeans, who have recently taken up land here give clear proof that they mean business by appointing European Managers to open up their estates. Mr. A. Forsyth has a manager here (Mr. Innes); Mr. Bailey, who bought 600 acres from Mr. Lim Swee Keng, has a manager here (Mr. Walker); Mr. Rodger, who was recently granted 500 acres, has a manager waiting in Klang till he can get on to the land (Mr. T. Gibson); Mr. Aylesbury has also secured the services of an Englishman here who is to start opening up the 1,000 acres of jungle land which is to be known as the Forlorn Hope Estate.

Mr. Huttenbach's coffee mill, complete with engine and machinery, is now finished and in working order.

On the 17th of August, H. N. Tanhu Dia Ulin, who has been so energetic of late in opening up his 2,000 acres of agricultural land across the river, left Klang for Penang, being called away by urgent private affairs.

On the 24th of August the District Engineer and myself walked along the Klang-Kuala Selangor Road from Kapar to the boundary at Sungai Serdang, and were both of opinion that the road was eminently suited for the construction of a light railway to connect Klang and Kuala Selangor. I have since written in to the Government on the subject.

On the 30th and 31st Mr. Walsh and myself were engaged in assessing the amount of compensation to be paid to the 30 people through whose land the new Kuala Railway will pass. I estimate the amount of compensation to be about \$1,700. Mr. Walsh's assistance was most valuable.

Work on the Klang-Kuala Selangor Road is still progressing—the earthwork is practically finished, want of pipe culverts and bridges preventing completion of the work being chronicled.—*Selangor Government Gazette.*

HOME AND LOCAL TEA TASTING.

Mr. John Hughes' views on the above topic as communicated to our London Correspondent reopen a question that was some time ago discussed. It has of late been alleged that the discrepancies between the verdict of home and local tea tasters have a significant effect upon the biddings at the Mining Lane tea auctions. If this has any foundation in fact—and we are not prepared to dogmatise one way or the other—it is evident that the allegation has a more practical bearing than was supposed during the former discussion. It seemed then to be apparently only a matter affecting the convenience of the home traders in tea. It is now one that would appear to affect the profits made by the planters. There is, therefore, some reason why we should again consider the question in its more modern bearing. Mr. Hughes says that tea infused in Glasgow is quite a different thing to tea infused in London. The liquor in the first case is far stronger and of more excellent flavour than it is in the second. Mr. Hughes attributes this to the softness of the water drawn for the supply of Glasgow from Loch Katrine. He further gives a presumed analogy in this respect between our Ceylon water supply and that of Glasgow. The London water he pronounces to be relatively "hard" and he assigns this as the reason for the different results obtained by tea tasters here in Colombo and in London. This discrepancy he

admits may affect the sales. Why, we would ask, should not distilled water be used in all cases? We believe that in water so prepared, the proportion of mineral elements present that constitutes hardness, is altogether eliminated. There surely can be no special reason why this purified water, which must be of the same quality in all localities, should not be adopted as the standard for use? The varying practices now adopted, no doubt cause the discrepancy of judgment to which reference is made. If these were modified in the way we have pointed out, this discrepancy would disappear and the supposed valid objection taken to our local sales of tea might be removed. According to Mr. Hughes' view, it would seem to be likely that practised dealers are more willing to accept local varieties than those given by their own tasters. From the former they obtain a higher grading than they would themselves be justified in giving. But the outside buyers can have no equivalent opportunity for judging, and they therefore are said occasionally to pronounce the teas they purchase to be inferior in quality to the description given of them.

THE BEGINNINGS OF COCONUT PLANTING IN CEYLON:

REFERENCES TO THE COCONUT PALM IN THE "MAHAVANSA."

Besides the two references to the coconut palm which we have already mentioned, we find the following in the "Mahavamsa," Parts I and II:—

(Chapter XXV, page 98). During the battle between Dutugamunu and Elala (about 161 B.C.) Gottha (one of the former's warriors) is said to have seized a coconut tree and Mahasena (another warrior) a palmyra tree—with which they slaughtered the Damilas.

In Chapter LXXIV (page 214) the following passage occurs:—"He (Prakrama Bahu—1164 to 1197 A.D.) also adorned both sides of the road with fruit-bearing trees, as the king-coconut, plantain, areca, coconut and such like; and with water jars filled with bunches of beautiful flowers, and with many kinds of banners and flags, and with lamps, censers and such like."

Then, in Chapter LXXXVI, page 294, we read that King Prakrama Bahu II (1240 to 1275 A.D.) is said to have thought within himself saying:—"Great indeed his (Minister Devapala's) piety, for once he prayed that he might become a Buddha, and planted a coconut, having earnestly prayed and resolved (that some sign should be shown him that his desire would be fulfilled), and lo, there opened up three buds from the three eyes thereof." And the King ordered his Minister (among other things)—"At the Bhimatittha Vihara, where the King Nissanka planted an orchard, do thou likewise, in my name, lay out a large garden full of coconut and other fruitful trees."—Of course this refers to the Bentota-Kalutara coconut plantation which has been already alluded to in our columns.

In Chapter XCVII, page 335, we find the following reference:—"And this chief of men (Sri Vira Prakrama Narendra Singha—1701-1784 A.D.) formed a suburb named Kundasala, nigh unto the chief city, in the large coconut grove hard by the beautiful bank of the river," etc.

In Chapter C, page 357, Kirti Sri Raja Singha (1747-1780 A.D.) is said to have honoured the Tooth-relic daily with (besides other things) green and yellow coconuts.