

the aroma. Perhaps some Nilgiri planter found this out ages ago, and in the endeavour to develop the aroma the planters burn their tea.

"Mention is then made of the cold water system. I wish it had been stated whether this is Mr. Bamber's "spray of cold water" on the rolled leaf. I remember that in 1881 a planter watered all his rolled leaf—not a "spray" but buckets full. I think the idea is very old. I don't know its original discoverer. I have made very good tea from slightly over-withered leaf by mixing in a pailful of water through three maunds of rolled leaf; there is also a "Cold System" of manufacture: it is a very good system but you want really good, fine leaf. I was asking a planter once whether he had heard of a certain firm who spent 1½ lakhs in starting a plant of Cold System Machinery, and he said, "Yes; and although it failed there was a good deal in it." I don't think the Cold System will make coarse acid tea."—*S. of India Observer.*

### IS COFFEE DRINKING ON THE INCREASE?

Certainly there is nothing in the Customs returns to indicate that coffee is increasing in favour, but the number of coffee drinking resorts is certainly on the increase. People sip coffee, and at some cafés they know how to make it. With tea it is otherwise. The abomination served out and called tea in nine out of every ten of the shops or bars where it is sold is totally unlike anything but medicine, and unless more care is taken in the use of tea in the pot a reaction will set in. It is not surprising that medicine men condemn tea-drinking as it is known at present. The only wonder is that the consumer does not protect himself against the stuff he is served with and abandon tea drinking. In many private houses it is much the same as at the public places. Planters take trouble, dealers blend judiciously, and grocers supply tea of good flavour, merely that some ignorant and careless user of tea may make a stew of it, and spread the idea that tea is a form of irritant poison rather than a refreshing and invigorating drink.—*H. and C. Mail.*

### COFFEE AND TEA: THE EASTERN PRODUCE AND ESTATES COMPANY.

The following is an extended report of the principal speakers' remarks at the annual meeting recently held in London:—

The CHAIRMAN said: Gentlemen, in rising to propose the adoption of the report I really have very little to say, but I think it is right to claim your congratulations upon what the directors consider is the best report we have yet presented to you; indeed, there is almost a monotony about our business, for so far each year has been better than the previous one and has shown a great improvement in the position of the company. We hope that this may continue and that, as years go on, our profits will show as large an increase as they have in the past year. If you will look at the report before you, you will see that our net profit after satisfying interest on debentures, during the year own under notice is nearly double what it was in the previous year, and that is in the face of a fall in the price of tea to 8d. per pound. I must confess that if, six years ago, we, your board, had been told that the price would fall from something like 1s. to 8½d., we should almost have despaired of ever doing any good, much less of bringing about the results that we are now able to place before you. These have been obtained through the great care which has been exercised on the other side, and I may tell you that our only instructions to our managers there are, "quantity if you will, but above all things quality." (Applause.) I must say that in that we have been well supported by our men there. We are represented, as you know, by a very able man in Mr. Stavey, and in these days, when the idea prevails that in the East everything is so

prosperous, it may not be out of place to say that the officials of this company deserve your warmest thanks. They work well, intelligently and zealously. (Applause) I think it is due that that should come from this side of the table, so that you may join us in, and they may read of, this appreciation of their efforts. (Hear, hear.) If you will turn to the accounts for a moment I will not trouble you by going through each item, but I will take the assets, and first briefly refer to them. You will see that, under the head of outlay on tea extensions and acquisition of land, there is an addition of £3,733, owing to the purchase of some new land for cocoa and some tea extensions. A little lower you will find that in our estates reserve account and realisation and recoveries there is a reduction of £5,427, and on the other hand, down lower, there is the item of cost advances outstanding, £2,312 18s 3d, which perhaps you may like to know are advances made for procuring labour. Another item I would direct your attention to is produce on hand, £20,609; I may tell you that that has nearly all been realised at good prices since the date of these accounts. The large item of sundry debtors—£22,220—consists of amounts due from brokers and others, and is all money of a good and liquid character. Investments, representing £11,869 16s, are entirely in India three per cents, standing at a price lower than that at present ruling, and we consider that is a good investment for the moment. You may, perhaps, ask why the cash on deposit was so large on December 31st as £22,940. If you look on the other side you will see we have to disperse £20,000 if this report is adopted. I do not think there is anything further which I need allude to, except that we notify here that "the directors have the satisfaction to inform the shareholders that they have succeeded in renewing the debentures of the company for a further period of three years." (Applause.) These debentures would have matured on December 31st next. You are all aware that debentures are in a very few hands, and are powerfully held, and that the debenture-holders are also largely interested in the concern as shareholders. We hope that at some future date they may meet us, as they have met us in the present instance, not only in the renewal of those debentures, but possibly in some amelioration of the terms of interest, seeing how good the security is. (Hear, hear.) I can only say we feel satisfied that, realising as they do that we are all in the same boat, they will see that every saving they can give to the company is a saving also to the debenture-holders themselves. I will ask Mr. Cameron, our managing director, to second this resolution, and I have the more pleasure in doing so because, if there is one of his children, or it may be his only child, in which he takes a deep and sincere interest it is the Eastern Produce and Estates Company. (Applause) I will now formally move—"That the report of the directors dated April 12th, 1894, be received and adopted, and that a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent per annum on the capital paid on the preferred shares, and at the rate of 3 per cent per annum on the ordinary shares, for the year ending December 31st, 1893, be declared and made payable on May 2nd." When Mr. Cameron has seconded that I shall be happy to answer any question that may be put. (Applause.)

Mr. RALPH A. CAMERON, the managing director, in seconding the resolution, said: In response to the suggestion of the chairman, I have a few remarks to make on points which I think deserving of attention, and first of all I would speak regarding the landed property, which of course we must all admit is the most important, in fact the all-important item in our accounts, because every thing hinges on the character of that asset. If you take into account that, after adding all we have spent on improvements and extensions in the last six years, and after deducting realisations and the debentures sinking-fund, the amount of the landed property account now stands at £15,000 less than it did in 1888, whilst I feel I am well within the mark in saying that the estates have doubled in value within that time—I think you will all admit that this is

a very satisfactory state of things. This improvement in value has come about by the extensions and developments which have been carried on from year to year, the profitable result of which is shown by the fact that, whereas in 1888 the crop of tea was 986,000 lb., and the profit amounted to £12,000, in the present accounts the crop recorded is 2,638,000 lb. of tea, giving a profit of £30,000. (Applause.) I think that is very good evidence of the improvement that has taken place. Further than that, I do not think the whole of the improvement in value which we may expect has yet come about, because there are about two thousand acres of tea still more or less immature, and we may reasonably look for a further improvement as they become fully developed. With regard to the price of tea, no doubt 8<sup>d</sup> is a low price, and we shall like to see it higher; but it is a matter of satisfaction to us that, while the price this year is nearly a penny less than last year, the cost of cultivation has decreased to a larger extent, so that we have really made more profit per pound of tea than we did in the previous year, notwithstanding the fall in price. And that is not accounted for to any great extent by a lower rate of exchange; it is due almost entirely to a greater production per acre, which makes the cost per pound less; and also to greater efficiency and economy in management. This result is obtained, too, after writing more than £5,000 off the cost of buildings and machinery, which is equal to a halfpenny per pound of tea produced. That heavy charge will continue for about two years more, but after that time the amount will fall considerably. Our machinery and buildings are practically completed, and we write them off in a very drastic way for the sake of the future so that we shall hereafter get the benefit to be derived by pursuing this policy. With regard to the debentures, I have nothing to add to what the chairman said, beyond this. I think it is a matter of satisfaction that we were able to carry out their renewal by friendly negotiation with the holders, for the mutual interest of all parties, and that it cost us nothing in commission or brokerage. (Hear, hear.) I thoroughly agree with what fell from our chairman as to the services of our staff. We are indebted to them both in Ceylon and at home for what they have done during the past year in bringing things to the point at which we see them. A great deal depends upon them, and I feel it a satisfaction to take this opportunity of recording our appreciation of their services. (Applause.)

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN next moved that Messrs. C. B. Smith and E. Wahab, the retiring directors, be reappointed. Mr. Smith, he said, knew every acre of their property in Ceylon and every man employed there, so that he was very valuable to the company. Mr. Wahab brought to the board very great experience of Eastern matters. The motion was seconded by Mr. D. REID and carried.

Mr. WELTON said that the connexion he had with the foundation of the company was not so well known to the general body of shareholders as to himself, but he thought he might fairly congratulate all concerned on the happy issue of the terms that were arranged at that time. The prospects held out as to the future of the company had been more than fulfilled, and he might say that the great interests that he represented in the matter were thoroughly satisfied with all that had been done. Mr. Cameron had taken an important part in the conduct of the company, and he (the speaker) felt that something more than a mere acknowledgment of the services of that gentleman was due. He therefore moved—"That the sum of £250 additional remuneration be paid to Mr. R. A. Cameron, as managing director of the company, for the year 1894, and in future years until further order. (Applause.)

Mr. MALCOLM seconded the resolution in a few well-chosen words, and Mr. ROBERTS heartily supported the proposal, testifying as well as to the ability of Mr. Cameron as managing director, and to the uniform kindness and courtesy he had always received at the hands of that gentleman when seeking information with reference to the affairs of the company.

The resolution was carried with acclamation, and Mr. CAMERON briefly replied, remarking that it was pleasant to possess the confidence of those for whom one was working, and that the vote just passed would be an incentive to him to continue to do his best in furthering the interests of the company.

#### VARIOUS AGRICULTURAL NOTES.

**TEA MANUFACTURE.**—The whole question of tea manufacture is now being argued both in the North and Ceylon in planting journals, and if the correspondence only continues as briskly as it has begun, the student of the literature on the subject, should obtain some "tips" of use. None the many different systems advocated.—*Nigiri News*.

**LIBERIAN COFFEE.**—Someone is trying to boom Liberian Coffee in Ceylon now. There is certainly money and perhaps a fortune in it, if judiciously planted, it is said, and specimen berries are being sent round to the local press to show what can be done. Liberian Coffee has certainly sometimes proved a success where Arabica has failed, in some parts of the Straits for instance.—*Pinang Gazette*.

**COCONUT CULTURE AND LEGISLATION.**—Our correspondent "Proprietor" while arguing as to the need of legislation in reference to the extirpation of beetles and especially the red beetle (*Kandapanuwa*), enemy of the coconut palm, does not see how it is practicable to prevent the overcrowding of palms and other fruit trees in native gardens. He asks if a young clearing should be interfered with. Now, our idea is to allow a wide latitude in the definition of what is overcrowding. Where there is a reasonable prospect of trees bearing fruit, we would not intrude and seldom or never is a young clearing begun without such prospect.—It is afterwards the mischief is done through the owner sticking in a tree here and a plant there until he has added 50 to 100 per cent to the original clearing. We had in view native gardens so overcrowded that it is almost impossible for any single tree to bear fruit, and we would, in such cases, have a headman or Agricultural Instructor, with a small jury of the villagers to decide what should be done, to enable such gardens to bring forth fruit in due season.

**AGRICULTURAL TEACHING IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS** of Jamaica, seems to be going ahead. We read in an exchange:—

If the 90,000 children on our school registers have their eyes directed to lessons from the plant life around them, and are taught to see, the adult peasant mind of a new generation will, not in a merely appreciable degree, but by many degrees be far in advance of the present. From the very nature of the case there will on the part of the foremost be a demand for further advances in agricultural education. Young teachers have for years been getting instruction on physics, chemistry, physiology and botany on the same lines as their English and American brethren, and the application of these to agriculture has also been introduced and is now in force. The Code shows that they are required to know "the principles influencing the supply of plant food in the soil, the necessity for cultivation, and the circumstances making tillage more or less effective; the principles influencing the more or less perfect supply of plant food; manures as supplementary sources of plant food; the principles regulating the growth of crops, and the variations in their yield and quality." These things spread out in the simple lessons that may be given to children of twelve to fourteen years, as has been done in the rural schools of England under the guiding influence of Tanner and others, are of the essence of all agricultural education and cannot fail to work out a revolution in the habit of the peasant mind.