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Bujong Rubber Estate.

Straits Echo, 8 July 1911, Page 7

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Bujong Rubber Estate.

The first annual general meeting of the shareholders of the Bujong Rubber Estate Limited, was held on 12th June, at Winchester House, London, E.C., Mr. Methold Sidney Parry (chairman of the company) presiding.

Mr. John Owler, A.C.I.S. (the representative of Messrs. Paterson, Simons and Co., Limited), having read the notice convening the meeting, and the auditors' report.

The Chairman said: The report is in many respects a less favourable one than we had hoped to lay before you. We had expected to have extended the property by about 250 acres during the first financial year, but, as I stated to you at the statutory meeting, your directors did not wish any extensions made until the acquired area was in first class order. Various difficulties concerning the management have caused your directors very considerable anxiety during the past year. Your directors had made, as they thought, very good arrangements, in placing your property under the visiting agency of Mr. E.B. Skinner, who was then the visiting agent of the Kuala Lumpur Rubber Company, as well as the general manager of the Federated Malay States Rubber Company, and a planter of the highest order. Unfortunately he was obliged to come home, and two of the managers had to be changed during his year's supervision. Everybody connected with the planting world will fully understand what that means, especially when dealing with an estate which has only just been taken over. You will remember from Mr. Malcolm Cumming's report, as published in the prospectus, that the estate was not then in very first-class order. An analysis of the prospectus shows that there were 167 acres partially cleaned and 323 were under passiflora. The change of management and the labour troubles conse-

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Bujong Rubber Estate. (The first annual general meeting of the shareholders of the Bujong Rubber

Human Crocodiles.


Human Crocodiles. Delhi, June 6. A curious form of crime has just been brought to light in Delhi. It appears

Tide Table For Penang.




Tide Table For Penang. July, 1911. H. W. L. W. H. VV. L. VV. AvM. A.M. P.M. P.M. Bth -51, 3 58, 10.05, 414

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quent thereon prevented a very rapid development of your property. However, on Dec. 31 you had 197 acres clean, 38 acres partially clean—namely, not in the regular weeding ground—and 236 in the process of being cleaned. You have now in Mr. Gow a thoroughly competent man, and he has been appointed your general manager, and Mr. Mansergh, of the firm of Messrs. McGregor, Mansergh and Douglas, has taken over the visiting agency. I think that as Mr. Zacharias, who is representative of Messrs. Paterson, Simons and Co., Limited, in Kuala Lumpur, is here now, he will be able to tell you something about the present position of affairs, and as the visiting agents have reported most favourably of Mr. Gow, and have asked your directors to give him a permanent agreement, we may consider that we have passed the corner.



The actual position for June I was that, instead of 197 acres cleaned, he had absolutely got 284 acres clean; instead of 38 acres being only partially clean, he had got 28 acres partially clean; and that instead of 236 acres being in hand he now has 186 acres in hand; so that, you will see, considerable progress has been made. This has been done by a three-weekly system, which is, I think, the cheapest, and so practical progress is now being made. Labour has been coming in gradually; but, owing to the absence of contractors, it was found impossible until January last, unfortunately, to get permanent, or even temporary, lines erected. Orders had been given to put up coolie lines as long ago as last May; but, for some reason or other, owing to the original management breaking down, these coolie lines were not put up; but they have been put up now, and a small hospital and also a small factory have been erected at the same time, so that, generally speaking, considerable progress has been made. The number of coolies on the estate, according to the last report, was 95 Tamils, 20 Chinese, and five Javanese, while labour was coming in freely. This is apart from contract labour. The tapping foreshadowed at the statutory meeting has been begun on 2,800 trees, and some 1,400 lbs. have been harvested, which has been sold at an average price of 5s. 11d. There are now 13,000 trees marked out, and an estimated production up to the end of the year of 10,000 lbs. is obviously a conservative one. Every effort is being made to get an ample labour force to deal effectively with the estate, and we hope that the estimate of 10,000 lbs. will be exceeded. The expenditure, taking it all round, has not been quite so heavy as we expected, although it came to £5,000, as against £4,000, but that expenditure is extended over eighteen months; so that, on the whole, we cannot complain, and it is satisfactory to know that the cost of the weeding is now rapidly going down. Fields that in January took 118 coolies now only take 32 coolies.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

In regard to future developments, we have at our disposal some £12,000 after the exercise of the options, and I hope that we have sufficient to carry us on to January 1 without making the final call. Owing to Mr. Gow's illness in December and January, we have not yet had the estimate for this year, but eventually, to carry out our programme, we may have to raise £4,000 or £5,000. We know that the initial expenses of opening up the additional 517 acres which we are going to open up have been estimated at about £2,000 for the first year, or about £4 per acre; but I assume that it will cost a little bit more—namely, £5, and £4 for the second year and £4 each for two more years. We shall thus have to face an expenditure of about £11,000, of which some £4,500 will probably have to be

borrowed, and I am in a position to-day to announce that we shall not have any difficulty in borrowing what we require at a moderate rate of interest. The directors are all largely interested in the company, and we want to keep the capital cost as low as we possibly can. Mr. Welldon (one of your directors) is about to proceed to the Malay States. We have discussed several points with him, and he will be able to tell us exactly what we want to know about things. He knows our position; he will see for himself exactly how things are when he gets there, and the various points that we want discussed will be discussed with him. I will now formally move that the report and accounts be received and adopted.

Mr. A. H. Drew seconded the motion.

The Chairman, in reply to questions, stated that plenty of labour was coming into the country now, and the last report stated that the labour question was quite satisfactory, that there were a good number of new labourers at work, and that the general clearing up of dirty places was being taken up in a most thorough manner. An expert had told him the other day that this was a first-class property, and that if it had been properly handled first of all they ought to have had a much better return. He was himself satisfied with the estate.

Mr. Zacharias (the representative of Messrs. Paterson, Simons and Co., Limited, in Kuala Lumpur) said that just before leaving the East, in April, he went over the estate, and there had certainly been a very great improvement. He thought they had been very fortunate indeed in securing the services of Mr. Gow, who had turned out an excellent manager. Illness had caused him to go into the hospital for two months, but he was now quite well and fit. It was very difficult to carry on an estate, even of the size of Bujong, with one European in charge, and it was a very good move on the part of the directors to send out a second superintendent. Mr. Ingram arrived there in February, and had created a very



favourable impression. One of Mr. Gow's strong points was that he knew how to handle labour. The estate was in a very excellent condition now, as he had been able to attract a large number of Chinese coolies there. The general aspect of the estate was most favourable. The trees, in regard to healthiness, compared most favourably with all the estates that he knew of, and, in fact, what struck him most of all was practically the total absence of disease. Personally, he thought the shareholders had got a very excellent investment in the Bujong Rubber Estates.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Ross, who was formerly manager of the estate, and Mr. M. S. Barry, the chairman, were unanimously re-elected directors of the company, and the proceedings concluded with the re-appointment of the auditors (Messrs. McAuliffe, Davis and Hope).

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