

Search Newspapers

Browse Newspapers

I am looking for



Advanced Search

Home > Straits Times Weekly Issue > 10 September 1890 > Page 3 > Planting Enterprise in the Straits from a Ceylonese standpoint.

Planting Enterprise in the Straits from a Ceylonese standpoint.

Straits Times Weekly Issue, 10 September 1890, Page 3

Article also available on Microfilm Reel NL5210

Add to Citation

Previous Article

Next Article

Previous Page

Next Page

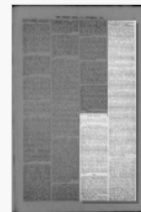
Planting Enterprise in the Straits from a Ceylonese Standpoint.

A correspondent of the *Ceylon Observer* has been taking notes how planters stand in the Protected Native States, the following being some of the points that struck him most.

MORE PUSH REQUIRED.

The good people in the Protected States of Perak and Selangor apparently don't make noise enough—they don't shout out sufficiently loud to attract British enterprise and capital. Possibly the greater number of the residents in these States do not particularly care to have a lot of outsiders running over the country, criticizing the position and comparing one State with another; but if we are to suppose that the authorities are wishful—as they say they are—to facilitate the development of the resources of the country and to attract European settlers, it may respectfully be suggested they should take the trouble to say so, and say so in such a way that planters in the colonies and capitalists in Europe cannot fail to hear them. How often have we heard discussions about suitable localities for agricultural investment, and when these Protected States were mentioned the reply has been: "Oh! those Native States, you never know where you are; neither life nor property is safe when a ruffian of a native has the chance of getting anything by interference in your affairs." To this assertion there is probably no reply, simply because people don't know what in reality is the fact, that the Sultans of these States have no more to do with their administration than have the editors of the *Ceylon Observer*. Were this state of affairs more widely known, and could capitalists at home realize the fact that life and property are as safe in the States as they are in Ceylon, there would

Information



Newspaper: Straits Times Weekly Issue
Date: 10 September 1890
Reel Number: NL5210

Share



Table of Contents

< Previous | Page 3 | Next >

Planting Enterprise in the Straits from a Ceylonese standpoint.

Planting Enterprise in the Straits from a Ceylonese standpoint. A correspondent of the *Ceylon Observer*

View Full Table of Contents



without doubt be a better chance of speedy development of the resources of the country than will otherwise be the case for many years to come.

PERAK.

Liberian coffee on a few bushes at about 1,900 feet flourishes exceedingly, as also down at almost sea level. At Kamouning, probably 500 feet above the sea, there is an estate of some 140 acres in different stages up to eighteen months or two years, and the coffee is looking vigorous and promises to do well. There is some fine soil on this property, and plenty of limestone available in one part of the estate. As far as could be ascertained there is no estate of any size in Perak at present where Liberian coffee has been proved to be a success, but the proprietors of Kamouning have estates in bearing in one of the adjoining States and are very confident of similar results from its cultivation in Perak.

Around Lady Weld's bungalow—some 15 or 16 miles from Thaiping—a variety of trees have been planted as an experiment, and amongst them are some very fine specimens of

Liberian coffee, say fifteen feet in height, bearing well, with flower and fruit in all stages, as becomes the nature of the plant.

The Hermitage is a bungalow built on an isolated spur of the Buboo mountain, some 3,600 feet above sea-level, and is reached by a riding road nine miles in length, cut through the jungle from Lady Weld's bungalow which is 15 or 16 miles from Thaiping. On the steep sides of the knoll on which the Hermitage stands, tea, coffee, and cinchona have been planted and have apparently done a great deal better than might have been expected, considering the steepness of the land and its exposed situation. Immediately around the Hermitage, but half-way down the hill is an estate called "Cicely," where tea is made and coffee is grown in a small way. Just now the Perak Government is advertising 1,000 lb. of tea for sale; but it is understood that the garden has been rented out to a Chinaman. Some of the tea made at Cicely is very nice indeed, and fully justifies the encomiums showered upon it by some of the home journals; but, again, some of it—as served at resthouses and other places—is very poor weak stuff.

There can be no doubt that the moist warm climate of the Peninsula is especially adapted to tea, but in the meantime there is no possibility of its taking any place in the London market simply because there is none to send at present.

Perak has, no doubt, a great future before it when the labour supply is put on a better footing and capital is attracted by the advantages that are offered by the administration.

Reference will be confined to coffee and what was learnt about it from personal observation. In the neighbourhood of Kwala Lumpur there are two Liberian estates in bearing and a number of promising young properties lately opened. The largest of the two estates in bearing is Weld's Hill, some two hundred acres more or less in bearing and some young clearing. The lay of the land is (generally speaking) of an easy gradient on both sides of a valley. The oldest coffee, a few acres, is about ten years old, but the bulk of the bearing coffee is from six to seven, and is planted rather too close to allow of the trees doing their best in crop, say seven and a half to eight feet square, and topped at five to six feet.

In spite of the poor appearance of the soil on the knolls, the young Liberian plants are coming on fast and doing extremely well. In fact the younger estates are very promising indeed, and should give handsome returns in a few years. The other property in bearing is Batu Cave estate, and here again large crops have been taken off a twelve-acre field. In the present year, as far as could be learned from inquiry on the spot, the yield will be about eight hundredweights an acre or thereabouts. It must not be forgotten that this little field is about five years old, and lies at the foot of an enormous limestone rock, in which are the famous caves full of bats' dung manure. One of these caves is open at the top, and the rain washes out the manure into the jungle at the foot. In fact this field may be said to be a "pocket" of the best possible soil, most favourably situated, with only one drawback, if it may be so termed; and that is its being on a level instead of on a slope. The younger coffee on this property promises to do as well as that which is now in bearing; but in the same way as Weld's Hill the Batu estate has been manured, and the yield can hardly be quoted as a fair sample of what coffee should do unaided. On the principle of taking advantage of a favourable market, manuring in order to insure handsome returns cannot be taken exception to; with present crops and current prices, a few years should give the proprietors a very handsome profit indeed. The greater part of the soil in Selangor is laterite, in various forms and stages of decay. There is plenty of limestone in huge masses cropping up in various directions. The principal rock is the white and grey granite, which seems to be present in all parts of the Peninsula. It may be added that the limestone is of very close, fine grain without presence of other gritty material; some is pure white and some of dark slaty blue. It seems rather unfortunate that the authorities at Selangor do not see their way to the appointment of a Superintendent of Agriculture, part of whose duty it would be to

report upon the agricultural capabilities of the several districts of the interior of the country, &c., &c. Such reports would be of interest to all who had any wish to make investments in the country.

JOHORE AND THE MALAY PENINSULA GENERALLY.

Having been told by the proprietors that there was nothing in the way of soil, it was an agreeable surprise to find that, compared with the majority of the estates visited in Perak and Selangor, there was some very fair soil in parts of the property in Johore. The coffee is Liberian and planted on undulating ground, close to the seashore, a narrow belt of coconut palms and native gardens separating it from the open sea. The highest points are probably a couple of hundred feet above sea-level, and the higher you go, the worse the soil and the greater proportion of cabook gravel. This is exactly the opposite to what may be found in the hills of Perak, where the higher you go the better the soil as a rule, of course there are pockets of fine *surface* soil in the hollows. Amongst these little hillocks and sloping fields in Johore there are great stretches of swamp with black soil, and in these positions sago palms flourish, and great numbers (some hundreds of acres) have been planted up. The Liberian coffee is very much exposed to the winds from the sea, and is without shelter from the tropical storms that come tearing across the Straits. Very bad weather prevailed at the time of our visit. In spite, however, of this drawback and the want of richness in most of the soil, the coffee bushes looked very well—fine fields, dark-green trees, bearing a good crop. They had been a long time growing before they gave any appreciable profit, but there were many other reasons for this, apart

from the conditions of soil and climate. The coffee is peeled on the estate by means of hammer pounders, working in mortars, and the superintendent could well be congratulated on having obtained the highest price for Liberian in the London Market. This estate can boast of an engine and steam worked machinery.

Speaking generally of the impression received during a trip through Perak and Selangor and a short visit to a small portion of Johore, it would appear that the Liberian variety of coffee is admirably adapted to the soil and climate of the country throughout the Malayan Peninsula, and that the Arabian coffee does very well on the hills in Perak. With present prices the estates are paying well, and future prospects are very brilliant. The great question at the present day is that of labour. Present prices may admit of a daily wage of twenty-five cents of a dollar, but that amount is a very heavy one on which to estimate the working of the estates as a general rule for

...the future.

Related Articles



No related article found.

