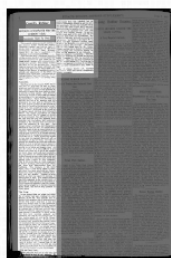




Home > Newspaper Catalogue > The Straits Budget > 1917 > June > 8 > Page 3 > Cromlix Rubber. DIVIDEND ANTICIPATED FOR THE CURRE...



Cromlix Rubber. DIVIDEND ANTICIPATED FOR THE CURRENT YEAR. Assistants Hard To Find.

The Straits Budget, 8 June 1917, Page 3

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<< Previous Article Next Article >>

Cromlix Rubber. DIVIDEND ANTICIPATED FOR THE CURRENT YEAR.





Assistants Hard To Find.

The seventh ordinary general meeting of the Cromlix Rubber Estate and Produce Syndicate, Limited, was held on April 17, at the Hall of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Moorgate Place, Moorgate Street, E.C., Mr. Jas. L. Anstruther, J P., chairman of the company, presiding.

The Chairman said: Gentlemen, as notice of this meeting, together with the report and accounts, have been in your hands for the usual period I propose, with your permission, to take them as read. The acreage remains the same as for the previous year. Since then we have had the estate surveyed, and as the result there will be some little modification of the figures. Regarding the general growth and appearance of the estate, our visiting agent reports that "the trees are all looking healthy," and that Field No. 5—i.e., the one planted in 1915—"is coming away well."

Accounts.


The final call on the original 40,000 shares was paid on September 16 last, so these shares are now fully paid. In my speech last year I pointed out that it would probably be necessary to issue a few more shares in order to provide working capital. Your directors accordingly decided to issue 5,000 new shares at a premium of 5s. each amongst the existing shareholders. These were all taken up, and the first call of 5s., together with the premium of 5s., was paid on November 15. We now propose, in terms of the circular of the 24th ult., to call up the balance by instalments of 5s. each, payable on June 1, August 1 and October 1 next, and so the whole of the capital issued will then be in fully paid shares. The capital expenditure for 1916



was only £3,611 10s. 7d. instead of £5,659 7s. 8d. as estimated. The difference is due to the fact that less crop was gathered than expected, and the factory and machinery included in the estimate were not paid for until the beginning of this year. The charges under recruiting and immigration assessment were also less, as unfortunately we were unable to get as many coolies as we expected. The estimated expenditure for the current year is £3,745 7s. on revenue account and £4,220 8s. 4d. on capital account, or a total of £7,965 15s. 4d. These figures will explain to you that it is desirable we should call up the balance of the new issue. It is also important we should be provided with sufficient capital, in view of the fact that we cannot in these terrible days of war realise our crop so quickly as in former and happier days. As you are aware, it is often difficult to get freight, and, when we do get it, the voyages are much longer and much more uncertain. Our expenditure on weeding again shows a further decrease in cost, which amounted last year to only 37.74 cents per acre, which the visiting agent reports as very moderate. This is due to the fact, as I have explained in former meetings, that Bukit Jalil estate has been kept clean-weeded from the beginning. The manager, in his latest report, says:—"The whole estate is clean, and there has been practically no disease; white ants, while requiring constant attention, are not serious." Tapping is being carried on with due regard to economy in consumption of bark. The method adopted was fully explained in the circular letter of December 18 last, issued to all shareholders. The directors are confident that the conservative policy adopted is in the best interests of the estate, and will be fully justified in future years.

The Crop.



It was thought that we might get 19,000 lbs. of rubber last year, whereas we only secured 14,389 lbs. The estimate was no doubt a little sanguine, but all such estimates for the first year's crop from a very few trees are always more or less guesswork. The number of trees brought into the tapping area by December 31 last was 26,803, and it is expected that 41,000 trees over 486 acres will be available for tapping this year. The crop estimate is 80,000 lbs.—a figure which has been most carefully prepared and examined, not only by the manager, but by the visiting agent, as well as by Messrs. Cumberbatch and Company. If this estimate is realised and anything like present prices are maintained the result of this year's operations ought to bring our company into the list of dividend-payers. As already stated, the crop for last year was 14,389 lbs., and the cost c.i.f. London was approximately 1s. 8d. per lb., as against an estimate of 1s. 9½d. For the current year the estimated cost is



For the current year the estimated cost is 11½d. c.i.f. London, and after careful consideration of the detailed figures your directors are hopeful that this may not be exceeded, but much will depend on the cost of freight, etc. Turning now to the profit and loss account, you will see that there is a small credit balance of £248 11s. 3d, and we propose to carry this forward.

Not an Easy Year.

The past year was not an easy one, and that credit is due to our manager, Mr.



much longer than was intended, but we found it exceedingly difficult to get him suitable assistance. No one was available locally nor obtainable from Ceylon, and it was only after searching for months at this end that we secured an assistant—one who was exempt from military service. He arrived on the estate early in the year, and will, we sincerely hope, fulfil our expectations. Mr. Wilkin-son has done well and our thanks are due to him. As stated in the report, Mr. C. Henly has been appointed visiting agent in lieu of Mr. Majendie, who came home last year in order to join the army. The estate will be well looked after by Mr. Henly. Thanks are also due to Messrs. Cumberbatch and Company, the company's agents, for their careful attention to our interests. I have now pleasure in proposing, "That the report and accounts, as printed, for the year ended December 31, 1916, be received and adopted." After this has been seconded by Mr. E. Jenner Davies, J.P., I will be glad to receive, and answer to the best of my ability, any questions shareholders may desire to put.

Mr. E. Jenner Davies, J.P., seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously without discussion.