

First Coffee Plastic Plant In Brazil Nears Completion

Expect New Industry to Use 4 Million Bags Annually;
Government Plans More Aid for Growers and Merchants

By Theophilo de Andrade

RIO DE JANEIRO, September 15—The coffee situation in Brazil continues unsettled as is the case in all other coffee producing countries. Notwithstanding, the level of prices is not too bad compared to competitors in the international market. The position of low coffees may be referred to as steady, thanks, in all probability, first and foremost to the excellence of the position always enjoyed by Brazil as the producer of such coffees. The same cannot be said, however, about the prices of fine coffees, because of the keen competition of "mild" coffees in the United States markets, produced by other coffee growers in Latin America.

Small August Coffee Exports

Exports during the month of August was low. It did not exceed 778,712 bags. Santos exported 579,664 and Rio 137,342. Other ports reveal even smaller exports, such as Recife and Bahia during the month under consideration, the last two ports mentioned having exported nothing at all. That total is more or less at par with the exports for July, when 688,510 bags were exported, but it is lower than the average necessary to make up the exportation of 11 million bags, the estimated sales of this crop.

The fall of exportation provokes a reduction of the liberations of the product which arrive from the interior and is sent to the ports of shipment, which causes a stagnation of business.

This stagnation gave rise to the fact that certain circles of coffee growers decided to call meetings in the interior of São Paulo which resulted in the calling of a general meeting held in the Capital of the State. Present were representatives if not of the growers themselves at least of farmers of many coffee regions. Various resolutions were voted upon and have been brought to the Capital of the Republic, although they do not represent the majority of the growers. These resolutions represent exigencies of too wide a sense to render them practicable and are considered impossible of fulfillment.

However, the traditional associations which represent the coffee com-

mercial centers of Santos and Rio de Janeiro, reaffirmed their entire support to the provisions taken by the Government at the beginning of the new crop which figure in the Shipping Regulations relative to the crop and in resolutions of great import issued by the National Coffee Department.

Nevertheless the Government is resolved to adopt supplementary measures in the nature of credit facilities to the growers and commerce in order to assist them to meet present difficulties.

Within the present plan of action now being enforced with energy by the D.N.C., the equilibrium between production to be freed for the market and the possibilities for exports shall be maintained, thanks to measures which we have already brought to the attention of readers of this review in former articles, dated July and August, respectively.

Erect First Coffee Plastic Plant

Among the measures intended by the D.N.C. for finding an outlet for surpluses, which have now been doubled because of the closing of the European markets, is included the elimination by up-rooting, of hundreds of millions of coffee trees and the erection of "cafelite" factories—cafelite being a plastic made from green coffee beans. (Cafelite is spelled cafelite in the United States and will be marketed by the Caffe-lite Corporation, New York.—The Editors)

The resolution relative to the up-rooting of coffee trees of small economic production is now being studied, but nothing has as yet been made known to the general public.

Cafelite Considered Practical

As regards "cafelite" this is a matter that has already passed beyond the theoretical phase to step boldly into the practical phase.

The "cafelite" matter became active in the beginning of the second half-year period of this year. At that time the experiments made by national chemists fully confirmed the possibility of the industrial use of the new process, and the National Coffee Department did not hesitate to buy, immediately, the patents of

the process, by means of which the Polin Laboratories found an industrial use for coffee.

After ordering the machinery and installation for the erection of the first factory, in the beginning of August the complete factory arrived in Santos and was transported to São Paulo where it is now being erected. Mr. Polin is superintending its erection, thus fulfilling the provisions of the contract he signed with the Department.

Cafelite Plant Nearly Ready

The probability is that by the end of September the factory will be operating. Its capacity is 37,000 bags of coffee per year. As soon as practical experience demonstrates what is already proven theoretically, i.e., that it is possible to manufacture plastic substances with coffee, industrially, paying the growers a remuneration based on market quotations, the Department will see to the installation of new factories which will consume, annually, four million bags.

The process for obtaining the powder which constitutes the coffee plastic substances is simple as compared to other industrial methods. It consists in forcing the resinification of some substances contained in the beans after extracting from it both the oil and the caffeine.

With "cafelite," as well as with other plastic substances, it is possible to manufacture many articles such as tables, chairs, cups, rulers, inkstands, chips, cigarette holders, small statuettes, radios, telephones, electric switches, plates, trunks and even motor car bodies. It can also be used to cover roofs, floors and as casing for heating apparatus, etc.

The consumption of this product increases by 30% from year to year, in comparison with the previous year's consumption. It is felt therefore that eventually there need be no further over-production danger.

Announcement has just been made of a call by the Government for a new convention of the Coffee Producing States, to be held on September 19, for the purpose of adopting measures in view of the crisis brought about by the European War.

In this convention the coffee states shall be represented by their respective governors, i.e., the Federal Interventors, who will be seconded by the class representatives of the growers and merchants.

According to information received, among the measures to be studied are the financing of the crop on the basis of the cost of production and the up-rooting of coffee trees of small economic production.