

Coffee soon from this N.Q. farm

NORTH Queensland soon will have Australia's only commercial coffee plantation.

The Lands Minister (Mr. Hewitt) said yesterday \$200,000 would be spent to establish 67 hectares of coffee bushes and a processing plant on the Atherton Tableland over the next three years.

It is on an irrigation block in the Mareeba-Dimbulah Paddy's Green district, and will be operated by A.C. and R. W. Jaques and D. Nicholson.

This will be the first time this century that coffee has been produced commercially in Australia.

Federation — and its tariff cuts — and extensive frosts in 1902 wiped out what was developing into a strong coffee industry on 60 farms at Kuranda, near Cairns.

At the same time, several plantations being established at Buderim Mountain, near Nambour, were ruined also.

Mr. Hewitt said the Land Administration Commission was considering allocation of irrigated land for a second coffee plantation in the Mareeba area.

Trials were also being conducted in several other regions along the coast, particularly in the Ingham-Townsville area.

Coffee growing at Paddy's Green

The Queensland Water Resources Commission has leased a block of land in the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area for coffee growing and processing.

The Member for Barron River, Mr. Martin Tenni said he had been advised of this by the Lands, Forestry and Water Resources Minister, Mr. Max Hewitt.

Mr. Tenni said the leasees, A.C. and R.W. Jaques and D. Nicholson, proposed to grow and process the coffee bean to its final stage (roasted) on an area of about 67 hectares in the Paddy's Green section.

The lease required that \$200,000 be spent on development of the farm within three years.

Mr. Tenni said the introduction of coffee growing to the irrigation area could increase its flexibility and the results obtained would be of interest to all landholders.

Mareeba coffee sprouts

AFTER overcoming initial setbacks, Mareeba Coffee Plantation owners report their second crop has shot and the young coffee plant seedlings are making good progress.

When the seedlings are mature they will be taken from their protected surroundings and planted in an open paddock.

The first consignment of seeds to the Mareeba Coffee Plantation was inadvertently damaged and owners had to wait for another consignment before planting could start.

Coffee has been grown in the Far North earlier in the century but this is the first attempt at growing a crop on a commercial basis in recent times.