

# We'll soon be drinking Aussie coffee

**North Queenslanders will soon be drinking Australian coffee — for the first time in their lives. It will be Jaques Bros. Coffee, grown, harvested and roasted near Mareeba.**

The new Aussie coffee all but made its bow to the public last Friday when Mr Bob Katter (jun.), the Minister for Northern Development, opened the Jaques' brand-new coffee factory, right beside their coffee plantation.

The coffee roasting factory, a sparkling white and grey concrete complex, was all set to go, except for one thing. The special super sealing packaging machine had not arrived. It had been held up somewhere along the way from America.

The grader, the colour sorter — that rejects all but the perfect bean — the roaster and the grinder were all there. And so were good looking 250 gram Jaques Bros. boxes, ready to be filled with fragrant home-grown coffee in its sealed envelopes.

The Jaques, Nat the farmer and Dick the factory manager and marketer, had hoped to have their product on sale this month in North Queensland and Brisbane.

It is now likely to be October before the local coffee is competing on supermarket shelves with imports sold in Australia under world brand names.

Australians today, Mr Katter said, were drinking more and more coffee. Consumption per capita per annum had risen from 1.5 kg in 1976 to 2kg in 1982, and they were spending \$205 million a year on coffee.

This is the market that the Jaques Bros hope to tap. As production from their 240,000 coffee trees, covering 77 hectares, increases they will go national.

At this stage the plantation is only five years old. Orderly forests of leafy blue-green young coffee trees cover otherwise barren hill slopes at Ivicevich Road, 9km from Mareeba, on the West Barron irrigation channel.

Here Dick and Nat Jaques, coffee growers from Tanzania, East Africa, have already proved themselves

both pioneers and innovators.

Theirs, they believe, is probably the only coffee plantation in the world with a drip irrigation system.

Their drip irrigation system enables them not only to regulate liquid fertiliser and nutrients according to the requirements of specific areas of trees, but to control both tree flowering and fruit ripening.

The control of flowering to achieve uniform ripening of the coffee berries was vital to the success of the Jaques' venture. They had to find an alternative to hand picking — the reason that coffee is mainly grown in third world countries where labour is cheap.

Once that problem was solved they had to find a harvester. They settled on a berry harvester, used in New Zealand for blueberries, red currants and raspberries. This they had modified to 'pick' the tough little coffee berries by gently shaking them off the trees.

Only two other

## Aussie coffee

companies in the world, in Brazil, according to the Jaques, use similar machines.

Establishing their plantation of Arabica

coffee has cost the Jaques \$1.2 million. They have spent a further \$650,000 on the new factory with plant. And they have plans for continued

development, including a tourist complex in front of the new factory.

The guests were served a light lunch and coffee — made

from freshly ground Jaques Aussie coffee.

"Excellent!" said the Federal Member for Kennedy, Mr Bob Katter Sen., as he sampled it.



*The Jaques brothers, Dick and Nat, with Mr Bob Katter (jun.) at the opening of their coffee roasting factory last Friday. Mr Nat Jaques is holding the 250 gram box in which the coffee, in a laminated sealed pack, will be marketed next month.*