

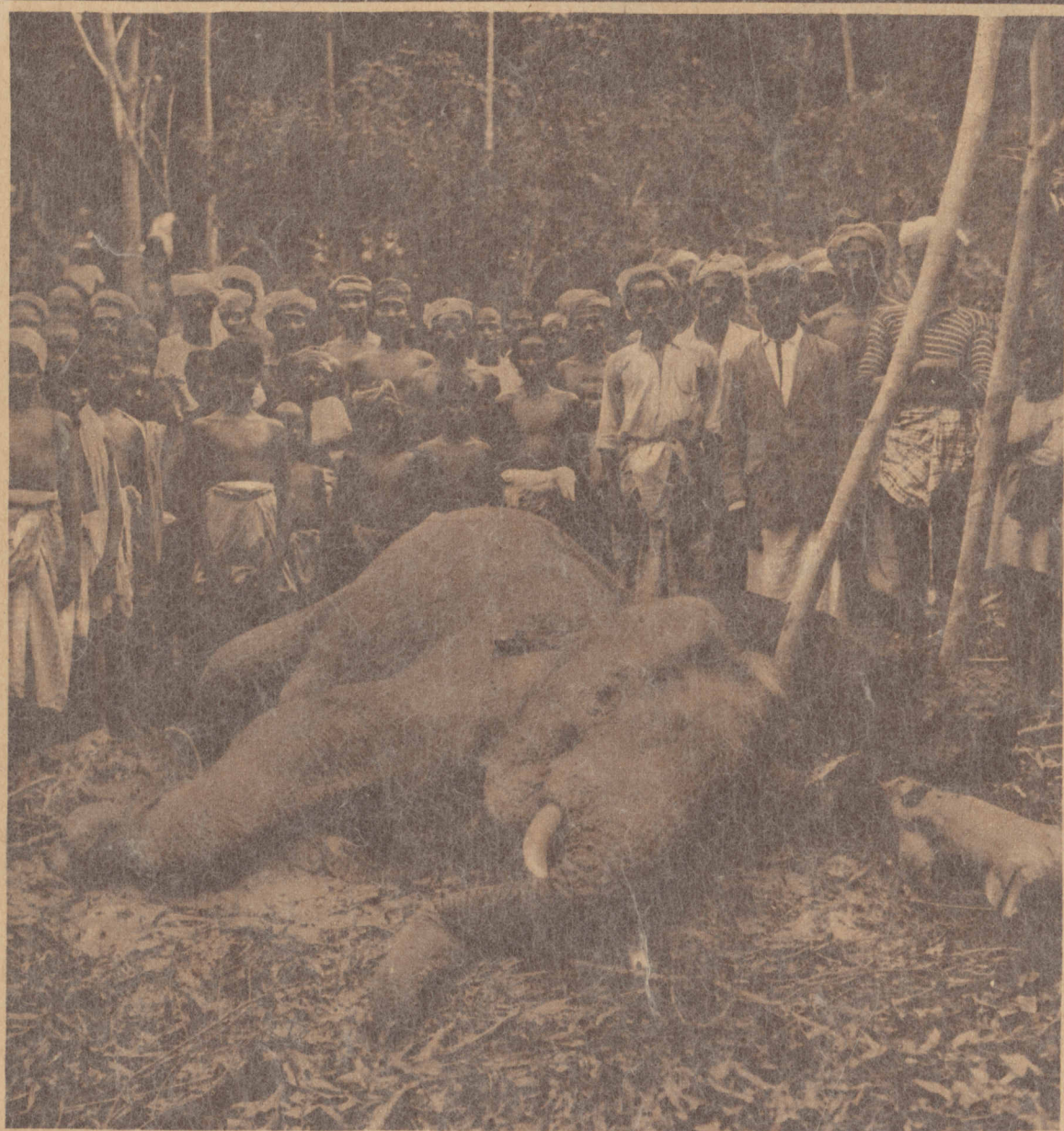
Where Rubber Tires Begin



SMOOTH RIDES FOR THE MOTORIST are made possible by such plantations as this in Straits Settlements, Malay peninsula, where Britain's rubber trees yield sap like the maple trees of Vermont in sugar time. The sap, latex, is collected in small porcelain dishes by the tappers and carried in buckets to the treating house.



NATIVES TAP THE TREES, season by season, on alternate sides. The tapping starts about five feet above the ground and each day a bit of bark is cut away, until at the end of the season the base is reached. The next season new bark grows on this side while the other side is tapped.



THE TREATING SHED is the first destination of the rubber sap. Here the latex is coagulated with acid in large vats, thoroughly washed to remove all trace of acid, and then rolled into sheets, rolled and rerolled to remove as much water as possible.

LIKE THE TRADITIONAL ANIMAL IN THE CHINA SHOP, a roaming elephant runs amuck now and then in the rubber plantations, uprooting trees and terrorizing the population. And occasionally one of the marauders runs into a bullet with fatal result, as did this one surrounded by native celebrants.



IN THE DRYING ROOM the crepe rubber sheets are hung until all trace of moisture is gone. Large plantations have steam drying rooms, but at best about a month is required to prepare latex for export.



BOUND FOR AKRON AND POINTS EAST AND WEST—A warehouse heap of crepe rubber destined for America. Just a few months after this stage of the process Fifth avenue and Main street alike are bowling along on the finished product, mindful or unmindful of the economic drama that has been played.

(Photographs from F. M. Starling, Singapore correspondent of The Chicago Tribune's Foreign News Service.)