

# Sarawak Gazette

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the language incomprehensible, it must indeed have seemed a formidable undertaking. Some of the officers were of course members of the Civil Service; a few, who were not, have since been given appointments; and, while it is impossible to regret the disappearance of certain names now only too familiar, the majority carried out a difficult task with determination, and on the whole carried it out well.

One event during the military regime must not be allowed to pass unrecorded. Early in December, 1945, an application was received in the Legal Office, Kuching, for registration of a birth which had occurred some twelve months previously. In these circumstances it has been the practice to require an affidavit and within a few days several applicants appeared. By the new year there were forty women in the office every day, each carrying a baby and generally accompanied by several other children. To cope with the work it became necessary to print urgently one thousand affidavit forms. These were rapidly exhausted and another thousand were obtained. To cope with the noise a special office had to be opened. It soon came to light that with the aid of a birth certificate milk could be obtained at the Supply Depot. A rush of work was caused at the Depot and great concern as to the adequacy of the supply. In several instances the fathers collected the milk and sold it on the black-market. In the end it was necessary to stop the distribution of milk in such cases and the demand for birth certificates closed down as suddenly as it had begun.

This story lifts only one small corner of the curtain. No other information has come to hand concerning the hectic early months of the year. On April 15th His Highness the Rajah arrived in Kuching and on the following day the civil authorities took over from the military administration. His Highness was accompanied by a few officers who thus joined their colleagues, now released from the control of senior army officers who inevitably knew less, both about Sarawak and about the government of backward peoples, than these trained subordinates. Little by little other members of the service trickled back, some after demobilisation from the forces and others after recuperating from a long period of

*The Sarawak Gazette.*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2nd, 1947.

**Birth.**

DIGBY.—On Sunday, 8th December, 1946, at the General Hospital, Kuching, to Mutal, wife of K. H. Digby, a son.

**1946.**

1946, the first year of peace, has departed to its fathers. Its birth found Sarawak still in the throes of the military administration, and it is difficult for those of us who were not in the country at the time to assess fairly the duty that was done and the work that was accomplished. "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interr'd with their bones." So let it be with the B.M.A. The difficulties of that first attempt at recovery and rehabilitation must have been enormous, and the civil government owes a great debt of gratitude to its predecessor for the conditions of comparative calm under which it resumed the helm. Sarawak is a difficult enough country to understand and administer even to those who have spent years on the job, and to complete newcomers, to whom the people were strange and

internment. Familiar figures arrived on practically every boat and plane, but as they came back the gaps that the war has left became more apparent. The proportion of officers of the Sarawak Civil Service, who in one way or another lost their lives since the day the Japanese landed in Kuching, is probably almost as high as that of any similar body of men in the world. It is believed that one-third is not a very inaccurate estimate. Those who returned did not find Kuching very different. One of the most important innovations was a daily paper in English, the *Sarawak Tribune*, which represents a definite improvement in local amenities.

In May the Council Negri met and the eyes of a considerable part of the world appeared to be focussed on its proceedings. It made provision for the public service for the remainder of the year; passed the necessary and conventional indemnity law; adopted certain military proclamations; and authorised the payment of money to dependants of the Rajah and other persons; but all this work was overshadowed by the Bill empowering His Highness to cede Sarawak to the British Crown. This Bill was passed by a narrow majority, and His Highness, together with His Majesty's accredited representative, forthwith signed an instrument of cession. On July 1st Sarawak became a Crown Colony by Order-in-Council implementing that agreement, and an impressive ceremony attended by His Excellency the Governor-General, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, took place in Kuching on that day. The former British Representative appointed under the 1941 treaty, Mr. C. W. Dawson, became Chief Secretary, and, by virtue of a dormant commission, assumed the administration of the government pending the appointment of a Governor. On October 28th Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke, C.M.G., arrived in Kuching and took the oaths as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Sarawak on the following day.

It is to be regretted that no review of the year 1946 would be complete without some account of the cession controversy which continued in varying degrees until the end. The fire was lit and the flames were fanned outside Sarawak. Repeated reference is made by Mr. Anthony Brooke and his friends to the Malay National Union and the Dayak Association, but only the foolhardy would contend that the former represents the Malays and only the ignorant can believe that the latter represents the Dayaks. If Mr. Brooke's object had been to retard rehabilitation in this country, and to waste the time and energies of a depleted staff of Government servants, his agitation might have been understood. It is thought however that he himself is sincere, although the same cannot be said of some of his supporters, spokesmen, and satellites, who

had hitherto refrained from revealing their deep concern for the liberty of dependent peoples, and whose motives are apparent to the least discerning. One is equally astonished at the reasoning which equates "independence" to the personal rule of a British subject, at the shameless chatter of editors and politicians, who have never been in the country and would not know how to conduct themselves if they arrived here, and at the self-complacency of Mr. Brooke, who appears to think that most of Sarawak is nightly drinking a toast, in orangeade and *tuak*, to the rajahlet across the water. This heir presumptuous is in danger of confusing the divine will of the heavenly father with the "political will" of an earthly grandsire. Many Sarawak officers served for some years as colleagues of Mr. Brooke. They know him as a likeable fellow, but they also know the country well enough to recognise his claims and his pretensions for the twaddle that they are. On December 13th the Chief Secretary issued an order prohibiting the entry of this effervescent emancipator into the Colony. There the matter rested at the end of the year.

It is with relief that we turn from these Bonnie Prince Charlie futilities to the really important matters of the latter half of the year. The position with regard to essential commodities gradually improved and there was a slight reduction in the cost of living in most Districts. The hardest hit Division was probably the Fourth where rather more physical destruction had been occasioned by the war than elsewhere in the Colony. Disease, particularly malaria, was rampant; natives, especially in the Ulu Baram, were short of food; the numerous bomb craters in Bintulu District were not filled in; and to these woes was added the destruction of Marudi bazaar by fire in the middle of the year. On the other hand, as far as prices and supplies were concerned, Bintulu appeared to be well in the vanguard of recovery. Bad health and malnutrition were common all over the Colony and District Officers continually complained of the shortage of medicines. Other commodities, the absence of which was severely felt, were guns and cartridges; the depredations of monkeys and pigs causing great damage to padi crops.

Agriculture indeed loomed large in the economy of the Colony. The pre-war schemes were pushed on as far as financial stringency permitted and the Agricultural Department increased in stature as the year progressed. Its activities were divided between the development of the large-scale projects, the distribution of propaganda designed to expand productivity and encourage everyone to plant food, and the rendering of practical help to farmers and amateur cultivators. It is not only the ex-internees who are now more competent at swinging a *changkol* than they were in 1941.



The work of this important department culminated in the Kuching Show in December which is dealt with elsewhere. *Engkabang* flowered and fruited profusely, but until towards the end of the year it appeared that the uncertainties of the market would once again render this crop less profitable than it ought to be. Arrangements were, however, then made for purchase by the agents of the British Ministry of Food at the price of \$16.20 per *picul* ex-ship's side, Singapore, for minimum quantities of twenty tons. It remained to be seen how far the Sarawak producers and dealers would take advantage of this good fortune.

Crime cannot be said to have been non-existent, but Sarawak can congratulate herself that it was less serious than might reasonably have been expected. Armed robbery was extremely rare but one Chinese fired at the Sibu police, who were attempting to arrest him, in November, and was shot dead in return. Bau District was in an unsettled condition, but this neighbourhood has always sheltered more than its fair proportion of anti-social elements. Until about October burglaries in Kuching were frequent, but they almost ceased in the last two months of the year. This was possibly due to the arrest of a Labuan Malay who admitted to being concerned in two cases. He was placed on probation, and this leniency does not appear to have been attended with untoward consequences. After the Kuching burglaries ceased a similar outbreak began in Mukah, but this seemed to have been terminated by the arrest of a Malay woman. A distressing feature of the "crime wave," if it can be properly so called, was the high proportion of youthful offenders. It is difficult to deal with these in the absence of any reformatory or industrial school, but a convenient expedient has been found by sending those convicted on serious charges to work on agricultural stations. The success of this experiment depends on the maximum amount of co-operation between the department and the boy. The assistance of the former is never failing, but in some instances the attitude of the culprit has resulted in his being sent to prison after all. In Kuching children have been prominent amongst the principal perpetrators of minor nuisances, notably in conducting small-scale black-market activities and in gambling on the five-foot way.

There was no Dayak "trouble" in the familiar sense during the year although various unfounded rumours caused minor stirs from time to time, and feeling between the natives and the Chinese in the upper Rejang appeared to be getting more and more exacerbated. It is to be hoped that the recent visit of the Chinese Consul-General has helped to restore harmony in that area. The Colony was little disturbed by labour

disputes but a serious strike occurred in Miri in August and September. A particularly noticeable feature of the year was the number of new societies that were registered, and it is probable that a proportion of these will have to transfer to the register of trade unions when the appropriate legislation is passed.

The Chinese and the up-river races seem to be recovering from the comatosity induced by the years of occupation rather quicker than the Malays. Particularly in the field of education the latter were being left behind. The proportion of Chinese children attending school is far above that of any other race, but the most backward peoples have recently evinced an urgent desire for the education of their children and schools have been started amongst the Kenyahs, Kayans, and Kelabits. The Sea Dayaks have of course always been well to the front in such matters, and their bent for trading, which was becoming obvious before the war, is now expanding more abundantly than ever. There seems to be a wide field, amongst the Malays as well as the other races, for the development of producers' co-operative societies, and it is to be hoped that facilities will be available for the encouragement and guidance of this movement. It is not entirely to be regretted that a Malay shop will probably always be a rarity, but many members of that race are as eager as other indigenous peoples to reap the fruits of modern learning and culture, and to take their part in the progress of the nations. The reluctance of some to look ahead instead of over their shoulders can be understood but it must not be allowed to retard the advance of others.

The interest that the new authorities take in the welfare of all races, their repeated assurances that there will be no drastic innovations without prior consultation with the representatives of the people, and their obvious desire to listen to suggestions and requests and render every assistance in their power, have made a deep impression. His Excellency the Governor-General has visited Kuching on several occasions and in August he made a most successful and popular tour of the outstations. The Officer Administering the Government, Mr. C. W. Dawson, also visited other parts of the Colony in October, and in November His Excellency the Governor, who had only just arrived in the country, visited Miri, Sibu, and Simanggang. The age-old complaint that Kuching got all the attention and nearly all the money looks as if it is going to lose its substance. At the turn of the year the Colony squared its shoulders, brushed away the irritating gnats, took up the burdens which are so much lighter than they were twelve months ago, and strode out hopefully and confidently along the path leading to the future.

## Meeting of the Council Negri.

The Council Negri met on Monday, December 2nd. His Excellency the Governor opened the Council with the following speech:—

"Mr. President, Members of Council,

I am very sensible of the honour that is mine of opening this, the first session of the Council Negri, since Sarawak became a Crown Colony, and I have much pleasure in welcoming you all here to-day.

For many years your Council has played a valuable part in the administration of Sarawak. In 1941 its importance and responsibilities were greatly increased when it became vested with legislative and budgetary powers and it is to exercise those powers that you are met to-day. I can foresee a steady growth in the functions, powers and responsibilities of this Council.

It is the policy of His Majesty's Government here, as elsewhere, to guide the peoples of this country on the road that leads to eventual self government. That goal is as yet far away but it can be attained more quickly if there is mutual trust, co-operation and goodwill between the various races and between the peoples and their Government and if their representatives sitting in this Council are loyal and united in support of the measures necessary to achieve our common aim.

One such measure His Majesty's Government has announced its intention of bringing about as rapidly as circumstances permit, that is to broaden the basis of representation in this Council with a view to associating the people more fully with the management and administration of their own and their country's affairs. I am in consultation with my advisers on this important matter. Council may rest assured that these and any other changes which the progress and development of this country may in the future require will only be brought about after full consultation with the people and with the advice and consent of this Council.

Constitutional progress must keep step with and is largely dependent on progress in the social and economic spheres. Last week I was able to announce that the British Government had allocated \$5,000,000 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund for the development of this country's resources and the improvement of its social services, and that Sarawak would in addition receive the benefit of topographical, geological and other surveys, of the scholarship schemes and of the other services paid for from a central fund. Council will be better able to appreciate how timely is this generous measure of assistance when members have considered the budget for the coming year and the financial position of the country.

One of the conditions on which assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act is given to any country is that there must be adequate Trades Union legislation for the protection of the rights of labour employed on development and other works. Sarawak has no such legislation. The necessary Bill will be prepared and published in the *Gazette* in due course and will be introduced for your consideration at the first meeting of this Council in 1947.

To ensure that a balanced and well ordered programme of development over a period of years is prepared, it is also necessary that our local schemes for spending the sum allocated to us should be submitted for the prior approval of the British

Government. We shall be faced with the difficult task of balancing our urgent and immediate needs to develop Sarawak's mineral, agricultural and forest resources in order to increase the people's wealth and the public revenues against the equally urgent and immediate need to develop our social services, particularly that of education, before we have obtained sufficient revenue to maintain them. In the preparation of these schemes I propose to enlist the advice and assistance of the people through their responsible representatives.

The country is faced with the heavy task of making good the serious losses and damage it has suffered during the war and the years of enemy occupation. Sarawak is fortunate in that it still has an unappropriated surplus balance in the public exchequer which can be devoted immediately to this purpose. It is sound policy to spend boldly on the work of rehabilitation and I trust that Council will make as generous provision as the Colony's finances and the supply position permit to speed up rehabilitation in the coming year.

There is a slow but steady improvement in the supply position. Rice and other foodstuffs, textiles and consumer goods though still in short supply are being received in greater quantities. Despite this improvement it will be a long time before conditions return to normal or control of certain essential foodstuffs and of the commodities in shortest supply can be lifted. It is still of vital importance that the people of this country should grow more food. Sarawak can and should produce all the rice its people need and no effort must be spared until this has been achieved.

It is with reluctance that I mention what was at the beginning of this year a controversial issue in this country—the question of cession. I mention it only to dismiss it. The final decision in this matter was taken in a proper legal and constitutional manner by the Supreme Council and by this Council last May and an order of His Majesty in Council thereafter gave final effect to that decision as from the 1st July. Unfortunately a small but vocal section of the people has seen fit to attempt by propaganda and other means to cast doubts on the validity or finality of that decision. I repeat what has already been made clear in a message from the Secretary of State that the question of cession is no longer a matter for discussion or negotiation; the decision taken is final and will not be reversed; Sarawak is and will remain a Crown Colony. I only repeat this here because many of our people are ignorant and uneducated and therefore apt to be more easily misled; because it is to you, who sit in this Council, and their other responsible leaders that these people look for guidance and advice, and because it is the duty of the people's leaders to make the position clear to any who may still be in doubt.

Sarawak is small, undeveloped, inhabited by a diversity of races. It has a long and hard road to travel before it can become a prosperous state governed by and for its own people. That it can do so I have no doubt but it must not let itself be distracted from the tasks before it and all races must live and work in harmony together.

Mr. President, Members of Council, you have a heavy programme of work for this meeting and many important bills to debate and discuss. I leave you now to your task in the knowledge that one and all of you will be animated by the desire to serve the best interests of the Colony and promote the welfare of its people."



When His Excellency had left, the Council proceeded to the business of the session. It was found that work was conducted so expeditiously that the whole agenda could be concluded on four mornings and it was unnecessary to sit in the afternoons. On the first day the draft Standing Orders, which differed little from the 1941 Standing Orders, one copy only of which survived the occupation, were adopted without amendment, and the sixteen Bills before the Council were read a first time. On the second day nine Bills passed through the remainder of their stages, the sole debate being in Committee on the Mohammedan Marriage Bill, which resulted in one clause being deleted and another substituted. On the third day five more Bills were finally dealt with, the only one occasioning controversy being the Rhinoceros Protection Bill. Native Officer Benedict Jarro and Temonggong Koh protested that the enactment of this law, without previous warning, would cause dissatisfaction amongst the Dayaks and might lead to unrest. It was accordingly agreed in Committee to postpone the operation of the Ordinance to an indefinite date to be fixed by the Governor. The Revised Edition of the Laws (Repeal of Obsolete Enactments) Bill was read a second time and referred to a Select Committee, it being felt that this Bill, repealing as it does a large number of Green Book Orders, needed particularly careful scrutiny.

On the fourth and last day the most important Bill of all, the Supply Bill, 1946, came up for consideration. The following extracts are from the speech of the Honourable the Acting Treasurer in moving the second reading: "..... I now turn to the Statement of Assets and Liabilities of the Colony as at 1st January, 1947. You will note that this is an Estimate and indeed, at this stage, it could be nothing else. The Colony was unfortunate in that in the closing days of the Japanese occupation the enemy destroyed the Treasury ledgers which contained the whole of our records for the years 1939 to 1941.

Not content with this, they also destroyed certain subsidiary records essential to their accurate reconstruction, and it is for this reason now doubtful whether this will ever be possible. However, this Statement of Assets now before you has been compiled from every source of evidence that is available to the Treasury and it is considered to be as accurate as could reasonably be expected.

The statement shows that the total assets of the Colony amounts to some \$19 million but it must not be imagined that this large sum is at the free disposal of the Colony. Much of it is already earmarked for specific purposes. There is, for instance, our obligation to the Junior Service for their Provident Fund, and I should particularly like to make reference at this point to the pride which Government has in this section of the Public Service, whose loyalty and devotion to duty have resulted in the saving of very many valuable records, and for their intense application to their work since re-occupation with very few grumbles, over a very trying period. Government recognises the debt which the public owes to this part of the Service and is in the process of examining proposals to bring the salary scales and other conditions of service more into line with modern needs and practice.

You will note that after provision has been made to meet liabilities a sum of \$8,600,000 remains to the credit of Surplus Funds account. This is the total of free and unencumbered balances which

Government holds that may be applied to meet the very considerable sums that must be found for the rehabilitation of the Colony, and, when the printed detailed Estimates to the Supply Bill are available to you, you will see that the greater part of the proposed Special and Extraordinary Expenditure is directed into works of a rehabilitatory character and that only new works are proposed where they are absolutely essential and can no longer be put off.

Turning now to the Supply Bill the total expenditure envisaged amounts to \$10,060,756, excluding expenditure provided for by law, which you will be shortly asked to vote. The total figure is more than \$3 million greater than the highest expenditure ever budgeted for in the history of Sarawak. It is the policy of Government that for the economic recovery of the Colony we must spend, and spend boldly. This does not mean that we must, nor that we will, spend unwisely.

The Sub-committee which you appointed to be Finance Committee in May of this year has had a most arduous and responsible task in considering the preparation of the details of the Bill now submitted to you. Members have had to give up many hours daily for the past three months to the detriment of their own official duties and their private interests. They have been guided all along by a sense of public responsibility which I cannot commend too highly. I offer them therefore my own and the public's thanks for the way in which they have met ungrudgingly and with good humour the heavy demands made on their time and patience.

Rehabilitation is being retarded, not only from lack of qualified staff, but particularly from the lack of materials; and both of these causes have the urgent attention of Government and there is every hope that next year will see an improvement.

One other item to which I specifically wish to make reference is that of the expenditure in the Medical and Health Department which amounts to no less than 1/7th of the total revenue of the Colony. This compares favourably with the sums allocated by other Colonies to this purpose, and I may add that the Finance Committee were in support of the Medical Authorities in their demands on the public funds for the restoration to the people of the Colony of an adequate and, as soon as personnel are available, an expanded medical service. Expansion in this Department, as well as in those of Education and Agriculture, must depend on the amounts that can be devoted to them from the \$5 million allocated to this Colony from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and must await the preparation of the schemes to be included in the Colony's development programme.

It is clear that we can expect no great drop in the expenditure under these two main heads in the immediate future; indeed increases would be more probable; and, since the balance remaining to us in Surplus Funds will, by 1948, be greatly reduced, it is therefore the urgent and imperative duty of Government to search for new sources of revenue.

The present taxation of the Colony is, in the main, raised by indirect means. Consideration will therefore be given to the extension of taxation to articles not so far included in Customs' Duty lists, and it must also be considered whether it may not be necessary for Government at a not too distant stage to introduce some form of direct taxation. The examination of the whole revenue

position is not one which can be completed in a few weeks. Nor is it one to which officers already overburdened with their duties can devote that time for research which will be essential. It may therefore be necessary to ask that an officer be lent to this Government whose duty it will be to examine the entire fiscal organisation of the Colony and to make his recommendations to Government in the light of the results of his investigations.

I would also add that Government has not lost sight of the needs of the public for financial aid in rehabilitating themselves, and to this end consideration is at present being given to the question of loans to persons and firms. These loans will in the main take the form of advances to repair war damage or damage arising through enforced neglect, and will be particularly directed to those forms of primary production which will result in the greatest economic benefit to the Colony.

Before I conclude I wish to make a passing reference to a question which I know many of you have had very much before you since the date of re-occupation, that is "When are we going to receive compensation for war damage?" It is hoped that, early in the new year, a War Damage Commission will visit Sarawak, which will examine all claims that may be placed before it. But I must caution you at this stage. Damage claims will have to be met eventually by the Japanese and although the effects of war have had a serious and damaging effect on the economic position of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the effect on Japan has been incalculably greater and we must not therefore expect either a full or immediate settlement of our just claims. I would add, however, that His Majesty's Government are in consultation with the Governments of those other countries who contributed directly to the defeat of Japan on this subject, and I am authorised to say that as soon as any concrete information is available for publication you will be immediately advised.

In Committee Mr. Khoo Peng Loong wanted to know what, if anything, was going to be done about the construction of waterworks in Sarikei and Binatang and Father Anthony Mulder asked a similar question with reference to Mukah. In each case the reply was that no scheme had yet been completed. The Bill was duly passed without amendment. On the motion for the adjournment the only subject raised was the accommodation available for future meetings of the Council. The President undertook to look into the matter.

It will be gathered that there were no fireworks during the meeting, but nevertheless it is apparent that members are gradually finding their feet and greater volubility can confidently be expected as time goes by. There is no doubt that the proceedings were more orderly and properly conducted than was the case in May, and a close perusal of Standing Orders should enable members to comprehend their rights and privileges and to grasp the intricacies of procedure. There appears to be no reason why the Council should not, during the next few years, develop into a model legislative body.

### Notes and Comments.

"As representing the line of succession to the Raj, I tell you I would rather see this line of succession come to an end, than that any family differences of opinion on this subject should be the

cause of quarrelling or ill-feeling among the people of Sarawak." So said His Highness the Tuan Muda at the Council Negri debate on the Cession Bill, and surely he does not now repent those words. Let their wisdom serve as a text and a guide to all of us at this dawn of the year 1947.

In the early part of the month Kuching seemed to be full of visitors from outstations. The members of the Council Negri, ranging from the familiar but conventional figures of the Residents and Native Officers, through the dignified clericalism of Father Anthony Mulder, to the picturesque attire of Temenggong Koh, shed light upon the capital for a week or more. It looks as if these meetings of the Council will take the place of the old-time race-weeks, as providing occasions on which government officers and unofficials from all parts of the Colony can foregather in temporary reunion.

Dr. Wu Paak Shing, Chinese Consul-General at Singapore, arrived in Kuching on December 5th on a brief visit to the Colony. He was welcomed by a large crowd of the local members of the community and a dinner was given by the reception committee in his honour on the following day. We publish on another page a report of the speeches delivered at his visit to the All India Muslim League, partly because it is typical of the warm welcome he received wherever he went, and partly because it has been contributed and the *Sarawak Gazette* cannot afford to look gift copy between the full-stops.

Attention is drawn to the contributed article on another page entitled "The Climb to the Summit." It is important that the public should realise the work that has been and is being done in connection with the distribution of essential commodities, and the real achievement of the Department in question. The facts revealed are of great weight in the life of the ordinary man, and those who sympathise with the buffoonery of the anti-cession campaign would do well to ponder them deeply.

In accordance with our policy of encouraging the discussion of subjects intimately affecting the life and concerns of Sarawak, we publish in this number an article from a contributor setting forth some ideas on education. Contributed articles are not required to conform with editorial opinion, and they must not of course be taken, any more than the editorial articles, as in any way expressing "official" views. Although we have received no representations on this matter, and have no evidence that there is any misunderstanding on the part of the public, we think it desirable to emphasise the point by quoting from the leading article of the first issue after the liberation, when an attempt was made to define the standing and objects of the *Sarawak Gazette*: "The views expressed in its columns do not in any way necessarily represent the views of Government, nor is it to be regarded as a guide to Government policy."

The Agricultural Show in Kuching on Saturday and Sunday, December 14th and 15th, was a great success. We explain to ourselves that our *ubi kayu* would have been as large as that enormous root of Mr. Ong Eng Hin's if it had not been dug up by chickens when it was four months old, and our *jagong* as splendid as that of Mandor Sarip's if we had not made the mistake of planting four seeds in



each hole and placing the holes six inches apart, but somehow we never quite believe it. The *victor ludorum* of the whole show was undoubtedly the small boy, who, having been asked to produce a poster in condemnation of the "black-market," gave vent to his natural instincts with a drawing of a magnificent railway engine, and got in under the wire by appending a caption explaining that the only way to crush the black-market was to run it down. An interesting illustration of the appreciation of the public was the fact that the prize *rambutans* were all consumed by enterprising spectators. A fuller account of the exhibition appears elsewhere.

It is understood that several notifications will appear in the first *Government Gazette* of the year appreciably raising the rate of tax in respect of certain matters. For instance the tax on motor-vehicles is increased by 50%. Those who heard or read the speech of the Honourable the Acting Treasurer, when introducing the Supply Bill at the Council Negri, will understand that these steps are essential in view of the serious condition of the Colony's finances. It is a relic of the old days of absolute personal rule that a large measure of taxing power is vested in the Governor in Council, and some even in heads of departments, without any consent of the Council Negri being necessary. Many of the new increases, however, are imposed by the Kuching Municipal Board, and apply to the Kuching Municipal Area only, although they will very likely be copied, if this has not already been done, in the other municipal areas in the Colony.

"I read the *Daily Express* for entertainment, *The Times* for serious instruction, the *News Chronicle* for moral uplift, *The Telegraph* to find out what the Government's foreign policy is, and the *Daily Herald* out of loyalty"—Maurice Edelman, Labour M.P. for Coventry West. The *Sarawak Gazette* shyly wonders what he reads to find out what is going on in Sarawak.

## Parliament and the Colonies.

From time to time references to the British Parliament appear in official announcements and the press. Many inhabitants of Sarawak understand that this distant body is the final arbiter over the destinies of the Colony, but few could give an accurate description of the institution, and fewer still have any knowledge of the rules and conventions which form the basis of its procedure. This being the case it is fatally easy to whip up resentment and hostility against the sovereign authority in the same way as silly and ignorant chatter can breed fury and contempt for "Whitehall rule." It should be made clear at the outset that the denizens of this unpopular locality called "Whitehall" are civil servants, and in that capacity are, or at any rate are supposed to be, merely the agents of the government of the day. Parliament, on the other hand, consists of two "Houses," and only a small proportion of either are actually members of "the government." Civil servants, in somewhat violent contrast to Sarawak's Council Negri, are not eligible for membership of the House of Commons, the most important of the two assemblies. The majority of the members of the House of Commons are supporters of the government in power, because otherwise that particular administration could not continue to

exist, but the House always contains a considerable number of opponents of the government, who are prepared to question and criticise each and every action which comes to their notice. The House of Lords, the other branch of the legislature, is not constituted by election, but by the inheritance of titles and the creation of new peers. It is inevitably a conservative body and consequently a progressive government has only the support of a minority therein. Its powers are, however, to a certain extent limited by statute, and to an even larger extent by a kind of self-abnegation which results in the House generally bowing to the will of the people, as expressed by the democratically elected House of Commons, even on subjects on which the personal opinions of the members are violently opposed to those of the government.

In view of the fact that Parliament is the final authority in respect of all matters affecting the Colonies it is important that Colonial peoples should feel assured that a real and active interest is taken by members in their welfare and their future. It is unfortunate, but no doubt unavoidable, that there are only a few members of Parliament with a thorough first-hand knowledge of Colonial affairs. The result is that back-benchers, who have spent a short period of their lives in one or other of the dependencies, often in a subordinate commercial post, are elevated to the status of "authorities," and are credited with a knowledge, wisdom and experience which their erstwhile colleagues and acquaintances are well aware that they do not possess. On the other hand it is usual in all walks of life to find that a better perspective is obtained from a distant view. It is possible to take a serious and informed interest in a Colony without having had practical experience of administration there. Members of Parliament are, as a whole, intensely concerned with the welfare of the peoples dependent on them and eager to give them the benefit of their valuable services.

A contrary view is sometimes expressed based upon the apparently sparse attendance at debates on colonial topics. A Parliamentary debate cannot, however, be compared to a lecture or to the meeting of a local government body. It continues for at least six or seven hours without interruption. Members have, of course, scores of other important preoccupations in connection with public business, which take them away from the actual debating chamber in order to proceed with constituency or committee work in other parts of the House. In some quarters criticism has been levelled at the number of members absent from the recent discussion on Colonial Estimates. This was in fact little higher than is normal in a debate in which no controversial announcement is made by a minister. It is understood that an unusually large percentage of those present were seen to be ready "to catch the Speaker's eye" and there were enough members desiring to contribute to have carried on the proceedings for another day or two. The debate itself is said to have maintained a high level of useful and constructive speeches from both sides of the House by members who had either direct experience of the Colonies or who had taken considerable trouble in obtaining and studying the facts.

The tabling of the Estimates is not of course the only occasion for discussion on these matters. During the recent session of Parliament there were in all twenty-four debates on Colonial affairs, of which ten took place in the House of Lords. There is evidence that, during the debate on the 1945

Colonial Development and Welfare Act, under the provisions of which £120,000,000 was voted for the Colonies from the pocket of the British tax-payer, the House of Commons showed a sound practical interest in Colonial progress and the act was unanimously welcomed.

Formal debates are, however, not the only and probably not even the most important way in which members are enabled to render assistance to the dependent peoples. Question hour at the House of Commons is usually very fully attended and on one day in each week questions are asked mainly on Colonial affairs. Sometimes these questions are merely directed towards the eliciting of information, but often they result in the remedying of a grievance or the removal of an anomaly. The greatest care and attention is given to preparing the Minister's replies and the Minister himself is generally very ready, as far as lies within his power, to right any wrong which is brought to his notice in this manner. Of course members, particularly members not directly conversant with Colonial matters, do not always formulate their questions of their own volition. The ammunition has to be prepared and handed to them by individuals or bodies interested in the point which it is desired to raise. The member himself cannot generally spare the time for the careful inquiries and rigorous sifting of the evidence that is necessary before any complaint or criticism can properly be made, and so he must to a large degree rely on the industry and discretion of persons who bring the particular facts to his notice. In the past such non-party organisations as the National Council for Civil Liberties and the Union of Democratic Control have rendered invaluable aid in this connection.

Sometimes so many questions are set down on a particular topic, or it is itself of such importance, that it is more convenient, if, instead of giving formal replies, the Minister lumps them all together and delivers a full statement on the subject. This is how the matter of the proposed cession of Sarawak was dealt with last February, on which occasion the writer was privileged to be present. After the Secretary of State had given an account of the negotiations which had taken place, and the policy which it was intended to follow, supplementary questions were fired at him from all parts of the House. A few members, who knew something about Sarawak, made useful contributions, and a few, who did not, tried to. The member who wanted a referendum taken might have changed his mind if he had ever had to explain rubber restriction on the *ruai* of a long-house, but the questions and answers as a whole certainly revealed a deep interest in the welfare of this country and her future.

Colonial citizens can therefore have confidence that their interests are a source of real concern to the legislators who have such abundant authority over them. The goodwill and sincerity is there, and the only thing that appears to be lacking is sufficient knowledge. The Colonial Office have recently set up in Palace Chambers, which is opposite to the House of Commons, a Reference and Information Section, which is part of the Information Department. This is in charge of Sir William Maclean who is himself an ex-member of Parliament. It is primarily intended for the benefit of members and there is a good deal of evidence that they are making use of it more and more frequently. It contains in classified form

most of the information available on Colonial questions, taken from sources in the United Kingdom and the Colonies. It is by dint of such measures, as well as by the efforts of individuals and non-official bodies to keep members fully supplied with facts, that the British Parliament is enabled to carry out its arduous task of watching over the dependent peoples, protecting their interests, and furthering their welfare.

## The Climb to the Summit.

### SARAWAK'S ECONOMIC POSITION REVIEWED.

The Government which resumed power in 1946 had to undertake one duty which did not fall to the pre-war administration. It was recognised that the country could not regain its former standard of living and economic stability could not be achieved, unless Government itself procured essential supplies from abroad and distributed them to the people.

Thus the Supply Department came into being. There was, of course, a Food Control Department before the war but that organization had a very different task to perform. Its function was to guard against possible deficiencies in supply which never actually occurred while it was in operation. The main task of the 1946 Supply Department was to find supplies abroad, bring them to Sarawak, and relieve the serious shortages of practically every conceivable essential commodity.

The difficulties were great. Little Sarawak lacked everything necessary to bring into being an efficient supply organisation. Trained staff were lacking, equipment was almost non-existent, communications were everywhere inadequate, and the social and economic upheaval caused by the Japanese occupation presented a forbidding obstacle to organised rehabilitation.

There existed one great compensating factor to speed the days towards prosperity. The United Kingdom, while still fighting against awful odds, had not forgotten that the occupied territories must one day be free again, and that freedom would be very hollow without food and the necessities of modern life. Thus, while the war was still being fought, arrangements were made in London to deplete still further the resources of Great Britain and the Empire in order to supply the liberated territories. The organisation was immense and Sarawak occupied only a very small place in the scheme. Yet the share allotted was in proportion to her size, and if we received stocks rather later than some other occupied territories it was because we were further from the source. Thus by the foresight and planning of Great Britain supplies were made available, at first in very limited quantities, but gradually increasing in volume. These commodities often arrived irregularly; sometimes they were not particularly suitable; occasionally losses were suffered in transit; but those were small inconveniences attendant upon a plan so large and so difficult of execution.

It must not be forgotten also that all these goods were purchased by the United Kingdom at a time when no one knew if Sarawak would ever be able to pay for them. Probable financial loss by the United Kingdom did not interfere with supply. No



element of profit was introduced, and, although the people of Sarawak have paid higher prices for these relief supplies than they did before the war, this is not because there has been profiteering somewhere, but because the cost of production today is much greater than in 1939.

At the end of the war the world faced a food crisis. Starvation loomed in most places; and Sarawak, being a territory deficient in food production, was faced with famine. Then the International Emergency Food Council sitting in Washington took a hand. Organisation was necessarily slow, but Great Britain appointed a Special Commissioner for South East Asia, Lord Killearn, who sat in Singapore and collected information for the British Government. By his advice and through his agency all territories in South East Asia received representation before the Council. Lord Killearn and his colleagues have been a target for much criticism and abuse, but Sarawak should have nothing but gratitude for his efforts. He has been the guardian of the small countries, and it is through his organisation and the I.E.F.C. that Sarawak has received a share of rice and flour, admittedly small, but in just proportion. Had there been no international control, and had there been no Killearn organisation, then the big countries closer to the sources of supply of rice and flour, and in better economic condition, would have taken everything and we would have got nothing.

In Sarawak itself progress appeared slow at first. No administrator can make his plans effective without the men and tools to put them into practice. Trained personnel were lacking, equipment was almost non-existent, the people were tired, and the moral tone was such that profiteering at the expense of one's neighbour was considered by many as natural and justifiable. Sarawak, like all other countries, has suffered from this despicable type of person, but fortunately not to the same damaging extent as some.

Gradually the Supply Department obtained control. Rationing was extended throughout the country. At first it was a rough and ready business and has never in fact achieved the refinements of more civilised countries. Nevertheless the majority of people it was effective. The Food Card system was used in the big centres, where food was in greatest need, and the pre-war food cards were brought back into use. Naturally there were many defects and a few individuals gained at the expense of the majority, but it was the only method possible in the circumstances.

Besides food every other type of importable commodity passed through the Department; cotton and needles, cloth, fishing nets, *changkols*, medical supplies, boots and shoes, fountain pens, machinery, pig poison, padi mills, hammers, and so on. Fortunately the help of importers had been enlisted and although it cannot be said these firms lost money on the work they did, nevertheless they did not ask, nor did they receive, reimbursement in any way comparable with pre-war profits. Always they co-operated loyally in rationing schemes, even when they themselves were doubtful of success.

To many retailers also must go much credit for their public-spirited assistance. Some of this class were undoubtedly profiteers, but the majority—usually the old established firms—came to the assistance of Government and supplied the medium for the rationing of supplies. Inevitably, because of the nature of their trade, the retailers as a class

fell under suspicion of profiteering, but in fact the many were stigmatised for the ill-behaviour of a few opportunists.

The Sarawak Food Control regulations are probably the simplest and shortest in the British Empire. They have this advantage—they do not call for over much regimentation. Whether they are effective or not only the general public can say, but they do appear to be assisting in achieving the ultimate object of bringing prices down to a reasonable level and distributing supplies fairly. Naturally the importers and retailers suffer most from the imposition of such regulations, but these business men have complained little and have given much assistance throughout the Colony.

The following comparative "black-market" prices are of interest:—

Commodity	Unit	July 1946	Aug. 1946	Sept. 1946	Oct. 1946	Nov. 1946	Dec. 1946
Sugar, Brown	Kat	\$1.80	\$1.30	\$1.00	\$ .87	\$ .73	\$ .32
Sugar, White	"	2.40	2.00	1.85	1.30	1.30	.40
Salt	"	.16	.13	.10	.104	.09	.08
Flour	"	.40	.30	.27	.45	.26	.25
Cigarettes	Stick	.06	.04	.044	.03	.02	.014
Kerosene Oil	Tin	11.00	9.00	11.00	7.50	5.30	3.80
Milk, Ster. Cond.	"	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.10	.45	.45
Rice Local—							
Patched	100 lbs.	2.10	2.30	3.35	3.30	3.30	2.10
Unpatched	"	2.00	2.10	3.15	3.00	3.00	1.80

These figures speak for themselves. There has never been a controlled price for locally produced rice and the striking fall as respects this most essential food is in no way due to a fixed price, though it is influenced by other indirect means of official control. The "black-market" in flour, sugar, salt, tinned meat, tinned milk, cigarettes and other commodities has disappeared, and in fact it may be said that the Government is now being undersold in some cases.

The supply of rice is still much too small, but Sarawak is fortunate in having big brothers to watch her interests; and though we cannot expect to be free of rice rationing for at least another year, yet increasing quantities of other foods are making this burden less heavy to bear. It should not be thought that these supplies came forward without any trouble. Sarawak must render long lists of statistics, endless and repeated calculations must be made, many telegrams must be exchanged with numerous foreign countries, shipping must be arranged, and representations must be made personally once a month in Singapore.

The policy of the Government has been to re-establish normal trade as early as possible. Six months ago that goal was completely vague and might be years away. Now we know that the procurement of foods (excepting rice, flour and sugar) is being handed over to commercial interests as from 1st January, 1947, with the certain knowledge that trade is gradually recovering and supplies are assured. It is true that some goods are still short and a quota system is in force, but the quantities available are reasonable. The inconvenience of quotas is irritating but in all fairness to other countries they must be recognised. Soon they too will disappear. The procurement of supplies other than food is also fast returning to business channels and the Supply Department may not require to place any more orders after 31st March, 1947.

Thus in the space of less than one year trade will be on its feet again, wobbling a little, but gathering strength. It is true that pre-war prosperity will be long in returning, and the rice situation must remain precarious for at least another year, but we have no reason now to fear the future. It remains for all to practise economy, keep in mind the lessons of the past, and remember that the spirit of co-operation and good-will is the greatest factor leading to national happiness and progress.—  
(Contributed.)

## Facing Reality.

The natural urge for further education is very evident among all races in Borneo, as elsewhere. Those in authority are doubtless anxious to provide it. Among essentials they lack are trained teachers and materials. While they are awaiting these it is probable that they are laying down their policy and their plans, within the means likely to be at their disposal. Let us consider an important matter which they have to take into account. We have on the one hand the vital urge to learn; on the other there is the inescapable fact of the fewness of "good" posts (European included) in the whole of Borneo, in proportion to the population, for those educated in speaking and writing English and in other subjects which go to form a normal curriculum for higher education. The authorities, who have any knowledge of these parts, recognise this fact but do those who wish to be educated or their parents and elders? It would be doing an ill service to all if the country became flooded with qualified persons for whom there were no posts. The unemployment problem would arise at once unless many of those concerned went back to the land.

The object of this note is to emphasise how very important it seems to be for all those who comprehend this problem, and who come much in contact with the elders of those so naturally anxious to learn, to discuss this aspect with them so that at least they may be warned that there are only good posts for the few. As times goes on we can anticipate that the few will increase but it is probable it will be a slow process. If some of those concerned can follow this it may be possible to persuade them

that the people of this country, who will be as well off as most, are those with a few acres of land who can raise enough to live on and have a surplus to sell either of foodstuffs or of native crafts or jungle produce. Here too will be a few more opportunities for those with initiative and ambition among those natives, who have not yet had the chance of attempting such things as rearing better strains of poultry, cattle, and pigs. They may learn to plant better coffee, sugar and tobacco. Can this urge to learn be directed into the channels which seem best for the people concerned? Most of it must be on agricultural lines. The programme whereby the few are selected by fair test for higher education must go on. At the same time the educational facilities for all must be increased, and we must hope it can be done by teaching the countryman how to improve his lot and not result in what we have seen in so many lands, a flocking from the country to the towns with much unemployment and hardship.

How best can the countryside be made more attractive and how soon can much needed amenities be brought to the *ulu*? Of recent times, when the black-marketeer and other unscrupulous trader has been making his fortune at the expense of the public, many have thought "we must open a shop." For those with a flair for business this may be fair enough—for a while. As soon as supplies increase the black-marketeer is doomed, margins of profit all round will fall and many will find business too highly competitive for them. The family with their few acres and growing sufficient for their needs will be richer by far than many of the shopkeepers. Whether it is possible for the local countryman to understand this is another matter. The more black-marketeers in gaol the easier it might be to convince him.

There is I hope nothing in what has been written here, which could be taken as being in any way "against" improvement in educational facilities for all as soon as such can properly be arranged. If this should be published it is hoped that those who read it may appreciate that its intention is, as its title states, to face realities; to show sound reason why education should largely take the form indicated, at the present stage, if it is to be for the ultimate benefit of most of the community.

A brief quotation from his description of urbanisation taken from Spengler's "Decline of the West," though certainly pessimistic (and very far ahead as regards this country), is not altogether out of place. "World city and province—the two basic forms of every civilisation—bring up a wholly new form of History, the very problem that we are living through to-day with hardly the remotest conception of its immensity. In place of a world, there is a city, a point, in which the whole life of broad regions is collecting while the rest dries up. In place of a type-true people, born of and grown on the soil, there is a new sort of nomad cohering unstably in fluid masses, the parasitical city dweller, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact, religionless, clever, unfruitful, deeply contemptuous of the countryman and especially the highest form of countryman, the country gentleman. This is a very great stride towards the inorganic, towards the end . . . . ."—(Contributed.)



## The Kelabit Peoples of Upland Borneo.

By  
TOM HARRISSON.

*(This is the fifth of a series of six articles by Major Harrison who recently spent eighteen months amongst the Kelabits.)*

### VII. KELABIT HEALTH AND HOPE.

The white men brought peace to the Kelabits, who suffered much from the raids of the more numerous Kayans on the upper-middle Baram, and from the Potok Muruts to the east over the Dutch border. The Kelabits, outnumbered, specialised in foray, ambush, surprise, night attack. The Kayans and Potoks sought always to impose a stand-up battle of spear and shield, while the Kelabit stalked, shadowed, blow-piped and knife-chopped. The Kelabit was thus able to keep his end up, being as a hunter and walker superior to the more comatose Potoks and canoe-minded Kayans. Originally the Kelabits were much more widely distributed, and were probably driven further and further inland by the later waves of lowland river and Iban Dayak tribes.

Hose and Douglas first brought peace into the Ulu Baram, and Douglas' great expedition, of over one thousand armed men, into what is at present regarded as Dutch territory, finally banished fear in the Kelabit country. This is the greatest reason why the Kelabit feels that profound gratitude to the white which I described in my last article. Government gave them the sense of security which was needed to round off a pacific nature and the homely outlook of natural farmers, the Dorset yeomen of Borneo.

Peace enabled them to grow more rice than ever. Before only the women had worked, the men always guarding them or the tracks, or going on aggressive patrols. It enabled them to develop the numerous salt springs and to become the main salt and tobacco wholesalers of the interior. It enlarged their whole outlook, so long bottled up in their mountain fastnesses that no white men had seen them until seventy-one years after the first Rajah occupied Sarawak.

BUT—and this is a big one—the Kelabits lost one vital thing when they lost this artificial seclusion. When they began to contact the lowland tribes, and then go down to the different world and climate of Marudi, they lost their immunity from epidemics. Waves of small-pox, flu, measles, swept through and decimated them. The process had, of course, started before. The opening up of any country, the European advent, inevitably introduces new diseases to which the native people have no normal immunity (whooping cough once killed off a whole small island in Melanesia). One way and another these diseases had reached the Kelabits before. But after Douglas' initial visit, the flood doors of death were opened. (Only to venereal disease are the Kelabits practically immune so far). In the last thirty years there is no doubt that they have gravely declined, probably from over ten thousand to less than fifteen hundred. Even since the 1940 census the decrease has been 9%.

These disadvantages of "civilisation" have not, unfortunately, been offset by corresponding medical attention. Pre-war the Kelabits were on two occasions visited by passing medical dressers. They, and the Murut hill peoples as a whole, are at a great disadvantage as compared with all other tribes, who can readily be reached by river. The Kelabit country requires a long and arduous journey. In consequence, and through no one's fault—indeed almost unrealised—they have been left to dwindle away, and presently must perish unless active and permanent steps are taken to look after them. They are not numerous. But medicine, like all government, cannot be quantitative—any more than the Post Office refuses to deliver mail to the remotest home in Wales, or the Flying Doctor to visit the far lonely homestead way beyond Cloncurry. The Kelabits are a unique people and they inhabit some of the richest country in Borneo. They cannot be permitted to perish for a few pounds sterling.

The Kelabit birth rate is quite high. It is the mortality, especially at and before middle age, which is so serious. Some villages have literally no old persons. The Kelabits say also that the racial physique has declined in the last two or three decades—though it is still fine enough. Death is the commonest event of tribal life today. Among these people it is underlined in the most extraordinary fashion, according to their traditional rites. Where other tribes, including the rest of the Muruts, celebrate birth or marriage above all else, here death is the festival.

A month after death, and again a year or two after, immense feasts, already mentioned, are given by the relatives. The more belongings the deceased left behind him, the bigger the killing of cattle, buffalo, pig and the swilling of rice beer. It is nothing for these feasts to last four or five days. They are not orgies. They can better be described by the old undergraduate phrase "blinds."

On the first death festival, the by-now dry body of the deceased is removed from its coffin to a special site in the jungle. A large Chinese vase is cut in half horizontally, the bones placed inside, and the vase sealed up again. This is its last resting place. On the second death feast, a year or more later, all the guests make a memorial to the deceased. This may be either a cleared stretch on some high skyline or a stone monument. Stone monuments are of two kinds; either upstanding stones, generally in pairs, one taller than the other, and roughly representing the extraordinary twin limestone peaks of Batu Lawi which dominate interior views (incidentally I had the pleasure of being the first to approach and climb this weird mountain), or alternatively, and less often, a flat stone table on three low stone legs. There are also many remarkable drawings and carvings in stone throughout the area, and the legends of origin, flood, war, famine and fear associated with them would require a whole series of articles to themselves. They reach back beyond known history, and some must, from geological evidence, be at least five hundred years old—probably much more. They still today make stone designs in the same style. As always in Sarawak, the designs are dominated by an inability to draw straight lines, the spiral obsession of the crocodile tail, hornbill's casque, snake, leopard's tooth and twisting vine. These monuments, the great stoneworks, such as the stone "forts" made on hilltops up till the turn

of this century, seem greater than the people who made them, like the ruins of some fine city in the Arabian desert. The decline of Kelabit numbers has left little margin for these ambitious projects today—where a single stone may need fifty carriers.

The decline shows in many ways, not least in the tendency for already dwindled villages to split off into smaller and socially inefficient fragments. This is due to the effort to get away from the traditional lands since depopulation is thought to spell disease and death. And the rapid dying-out of the older people, holders of tribal lore and tradition, reduces authority, the ties which bind the community together.

Yet the Kelabit is not pessimistic. He has not thrown up the sponge, like dwindling races in many places. He is personally as cheerful, energetic and hopeful today as anyone could be. He recognises and deeply regrets the decline. But it is "bad luck," that's all. The solution does not lie in his own hands. His herbal medicines, bleedings and massage will not cure pneumonia or scarlet fever. But the Kelabit makes the best of a bad job and continues to hope without drifting into a negative fatalism which can be the downfall of any race. Quite a little effort could save the Kelabits, and presently turn them into an important part of Sarawak life; just as, a few miles east, in Dutch Borneo, energetic medical and educational measures are causing the same people to thrive and increase, under exactly parallel conditions of climate, economy and history.—(To be concluded).

### Robert Wilfrid Chater.

Bob Chater has gone. The usual hackneyed opening to an "obituary" seems inadequate. His many friends of all races, who knew and loved his generous and warm-hearted personality, do not need to be reminded of the depths of their regret. He was born on 23rd February, 1878, and at an early age entered the printing trade. For over twenty years he was in the employment of Messrs. Kelly and Walsh in Singapore before coming to Sarawak in 1924. During his time in the Straits Settlements Bob Chater served as Honorary Secretary of the Cricket Club, and Honorary Secretary of the Swimming Club, and for many years he was an R.S.M. in the Singapore Volunteers. He played an active part in suppressing the famous Singapore Mutiny in the first world war, and was in charge of one of the firing squads which carried out wholesale executions. He himself was a crack shot and was several times in the King's Hundred at Bisley. His house in Kuching was full of trophies won by his unerring aim.

On December 4th, 1924, Bob Chater became manager of the Sarawak Government Printing Office. Up to that date the Printing Office had been run as a part-time occupation by successive administrative officers. It had become apparent, however, that the increasing volume of work required proper professional supervision. The new manager soon effected numerous economies and completely re-organised the establishment, which he transformed into a highly efficient and up-to-date department. On January 1st, 1926, his title was changed to Superintendent.

For many years Bob Chater was Secretary of the Sarawak Club and it is sad to think that we shall no longer see his familiar and slightly rotund figure leaning up against the bar, with a cigar in one hand and a *stengah* whisky *ayer*, in a *suku* glass, in the other. He "bowled" in the alley when he was over sixty years of age. On the day the Japanese landed in Kuching in December, 1941, Bob Chater escaped through Dutch Borneo to Australia, and thence to England. There he was employed under the Admiralty in the accounts department of Portsmouth Dockyard. He returned to Kuching in April, 1946, and resumed duty, but it soon became apparent that he was a sick man. In July he was invalided home and on December 11th he died. He leaves a widow, a daughter, and two sons, one son having died in Bangkok some years ago. They have all the sympathy of their friends whose own loss is so great. The two sons are both in the employment of the Government of Sarawak, the eldest, John, having succeeded his father in the Printing Office.

### Chinese Consul-General welcomed by Indians.

Dr. Wu Paak Shing, Chinese Consul-General, was invited by the Indians in Kuching to tea and a warm reception was given by Indians with a big gathering in All India Muslim League's premises. Then Mr. D. M. Deen, Indians' representative, delivered a speech as follows:—

"Exalted Consul-General Dr. Wu Paak Shing, Chinese friends, India brothers,

We, the Indians, are very pleased to take this opportunity to give you a warm reception and are very much pleased for your kindness to visit us. At present I have to express our mutual feelings in this auspicious occasion as we feel as one without discrimination in every aims of our life whatever it is.

The present gathering is quite expressive of our unity in the Far East which we never did before at any time; the first time we meet here has got a peculiar significance to show the spirit in us that we have reached our goal of self realisation and freedom in the prospects of life.

We, the Indians, here in Sarawak as elsewhere in Malaya and far east are always living side by side with Chinese population and our connection with them in the social and commercial relations have always been friendly and brotherly. The present friendly visits have much to cement our relations which would eventually lead to better co-operation in all spheres of life.

To have some understanding about India, we should know something about the geographical nature of the peninsula, the diversity of races living there, the political divisions and the previous history for centuries, the mentality of the different kinds of people and their main differences in religion and language, the present ruling system of the British rule, agricultural and economical conditions prevailing there.



Though we have no time to trace out the whole in this short time, we could know that each of the above features has much to influence the destiny of India and its people; and it is this or due to this reason that Indians are unable to keep pace with modern times in the advancement of life and freedom; and the law of the destiny keeps them in its hold.

For example, the present world is trying its best to root out the racial and religious difference, but Indians more stick to that differences and grow that feeling as their beloved ones. What is the end of it? Communal riots and confusion among themselves. They become the laughing stuff in the eyes of modern world. The slavery and destruction is the accompaniment of their action.

It is a very essential point to educate them with benefits of social and affectionate feelings rather than to arouse their enthusiasm to the independence which has no meaning in its support.

Independence must be supported by unity and the unity could only be made with better feelings and mutuality with no selfishness and supported by moral feelings.

If every one of the society or community want to use their cunning diplomacies to win over the other, where is truth and where is justice! There will never be a success if the actions of every one of a society or community could only be to suppress the other by untrue ways.

I am generally speaking to the welfare of all the humanity of the world and nothing is spoken particular to any one.

In conclusion I send a message through your goodness to the outside world that we are very happy in Sarawak under the present conditions and we ever look forward for peace and prosperity with sincere feelings to all in this country.

Happy reception to your Consul-General.

Dr. Wu replying, said that he wished to thank the members of the League for the reception. "It is my greatest pleasure to see the Indians and the Chinese living in mutual co-operation and friendship and it is my duty to direct all my compatriots in Sarawak to achieve this aim for the good of this State." He added that as the Chinese in Sarawak will be under his direction, he would have to make frequent visits to this country and that he would be meeting the Indian community again.—  
(Contributed.)

## Kuching Agricultural Show.

December 14th was the date of the first Agricultural Show to be held in Kuching since the end of the war, so for once the Saturday afternoon siesta was waived and we went to the Maderasah Melayu with more than a little expectancy of a grand display.

After His Excellency the Governor had opened the Show, we went into the school with the milling mass of people, and our attention was caught at once by the brilliant array of flowers—the exquisite, exotic orchids ranged round the side of the court were even more beautiful, if less imposing, than the giants standing in the middle. And the bougainvillea, with flowers clustering as thickly as bees round their nest, was the cynosure of all eyes. Mr. Kho Soon Ewe is to be congratulated, especially as rumour has it that the plant was given up for dead only a month or so ago.

Tearing ourselves away from the flowers, we went to look at the handicrafts in one of the school rooms; and no country in the world could produce more beautiful embroideries than the ones arranged there—handkerchiefs, laces, traycloths, tiny dolls—every stitch a miracle of dainty achievement, and most of them made by school-girls. The ones from the Roman Catholic Schools were so lovely it was not surprising that their young creators did not want to sell them, and to my mind the most enchanting entry of all were the Chinese slippers worked by Mrs. Ong Hap Leong when she was first married.

On to the picture gallery, where we enjoyed an amusing ten minutes in front of the "Down with Black Market" posters. Could these young artists be given a free hand, Black Marketeers would soon be quashed for ever—one enthusiast dealt competently and completely with his tyrant by running him down with a steam engine! An excellent solution. Real skill was shown with both brush and pen in the other sections, Jolhi taking firsts in two classes of very high standard. The arrangement and detail of practically all the exhibits were outstanding.

Passing the Ice-Cream booth we went around the Agricultural Department exhibits, and, though rather overpowered by odoriferous durians, examined fruits, vegetables, rat-traps and the model farm, passing on our way the pens of bewildered poultry, goats, cattle and pigs, quite out of their element.

In the main classroom all the vegetables were on show. Magnificent specimens which have to be seen to be believed—cucumbers, tomatoes, beans, jagong, rambutans, mangosteens—every imaginable fruit and vegetable to fill amateurs with envy and to fire us with the determination to try again. The pièce de résistance of this hall was Mrs. Lim's cake in *truly* glorious technicolour!

Last but not least in this challenging display we came to the Forestry Department, and wandered round amidst a variety of polished panels and resins, etc., guarded by their glass cases, under the watchful eyes of two smartly uniformed forest guards.

In every section of the Show we were impressed by the helpful, smiling faces of the stewards and attendants, with their red, white and blue rosettes. The organisers and judges are to be congratulated very heartily on the hard work which they must have done before we idle spectators were able to spend such an enjoyable afternoon, and I can vouch for at least two who came away inspired with the determination to "GROW MORE FOOD."—  
(Contributed.)

## Lessons of the "Flower Section."

The Kuching Agriculture Show was mainly organized in order to stimulate an interest in the "Grow More Food" Campaign. The "Flower Section" was incorporated, not to distract people's attention from growing vegetables and other food crops, but to keep us in touch with what could be done to beautify our gardens when things become normal again.

The "Flower Section" was not by any means a real success, but the first lesson of course is that much is due to the existence of a few enthusiasts and their co-operation. They sent whatever they could and whatever they had in flower, not with

any hope of winning Diplomas or Certificates but in order to swell the volume of flowers at the show and to do what they could to help it. These exhibitors deserve the thanks of the Committee and of the public generally. In contradistinction to these there were some who could have helped either greatly, or at least a little, but who did nothing whatever. They came to the show looked at the exhibits and remarked, "I have some much better plants than this in flower."

Another lesson for the flower gardeners is the possibility of selling their plants after the show. The "Arts and Crafts Section" did very good business where the articles were marked with placards "For Sale." Some exhibitors may be desirous of selling their plants though not in the ordinary way professional flower gardeners. The possibilities of sale were not realised until the show was almost closing when a few enquiries were made to purchase plants. It is understood that the Kuching Agriculture Show will become an annual event and it is proposed to hold the next one in May next year. It is hoped that the flower enthusiasts will get busy at once and plan to make the next show a real display.

Before concluding these short notes, a résumé of the flower exhibits will not be out of place. In the Orchid Class there were two outstanding exhibits, both being awarded Diplomas. One was a *Grammatophyllum Speciosum* sent in by Mr. Ong Chip Yan and the other a *Dendrobium Treacherianum* belonging to Mr. Kho Leng Guan. Both of these orchids are natives of Borneo, and if one were equipped with a strong pair of binoculars these plants probably could be located in the forests around Matang or Batu Kawa Road, but it may be an arduous task. Mr. Eng Peng Kim and Mr. Matarill of the Astana Gardens are to be congratulated for their exhibits of Dahlias and Hydrangeas respectively. These were conspicuous in their magnificent leaves and flowers. They were certainly very well grown. The Chrysanthemums were poorly represented and a great disappointment to the judges. Chrysanthemums are easy to grow and more effort should be made to cultivate them properly, because a well grown plant is indeed a glorious sight.—(Contributed.)

## This Sarawak.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.)

Two outstanding Christmas Dances were organised; one at the Astana given by His Excellency the Governor and Lady Arden Clarke, and another at the premises of the Teo Chew Association sponsored by the younger set of socialites.—*Sarawak Tribune*.

A Chinese gardener at Sungei Krokop attempted to commit suicide by cutting his throat with a rusty piece of corrugated iron. Despite the fact he had severed his windpipe he was found trying to eat a papaya. No reason has yet been found for his behaviour, as he is a bachelor with a first rate garden, etc.—*A monthly report*.

Dayaks are still busy in the farming plantations, and not a few are enjoying themselves rather than attain to preferable work. Shortage of rice is the frequent occurrence and bad physical aspect of starvation is the usual cause, and there is no other

ingredient more economical than sago is pleasantly served and admirably consumed. . . . . By sensible instructions given in consideration of sanitation, the health condition is highly improvised.—*A report*.

Woman's wife.—*Tattooed on arm of Dayak woman in Ulu Baram*.

I didn't really believe him because we Dayaks often tell the most colossal lies when we're drunk. I know I do myself.—*Evidence of witness taken on commission*.

EVERYBODY'S HONOURABLE BUSINESS. —Manufacture domestic, chemical, technical, pharmaceutical products and miscellaneous specialties. Conduct at home—selling like wildfire. No trouble, no competition, no personal contact. 15 cents bring you the "Money Making." Resembles "A Bar of Gold." WORLDWIDE BUSINESS INSTITUTE, Labran.—*Sarawak Tribune*.

If I am not impertinence I beg to inform you that I carried out my duties with unshaken responsibility. . . . . Though I underwent many fears during the journey, I bore them with entire fortitude and I allowed nothing to withhold me back.—*A letter*.

The price level remains much the same as last month, however bulk sugar and flour prices have fallen sharply and it is now possible to purchase these commodities at controlled prices on list.—*A monthly report*.

A new "Hard Luck" story was produced by one Penghulu who complained that the shortage of cloth meant that none of the young women could get married. Owing to the shortage of mosquito net, they were forced to sleep with their parents, which severely restricted the opportunities of the young bachelors.—*A monthly report*.

The Legal Adverser of Sarawak.—*Address on letter*.

(The Editor is unable to follow the example of our illustrious contemporary and offer a prize for the best entry in this column. Contributions from all parts of "This Sarawak" will, however, be warmly appreciated, and the most favoured will be given pride of place.)

## Sidelights on Internment: 5.

This camp appears to be full of Scots. Mr. Angus is our patriarch. He is over seventy, very short, and very wiry. He is an inveterate worker and the good health of the internees is largely dependent on the vegetables which he and his disciples produce. We all remember with enjoyment the occasion on which he told us that, when he was in charge of a factory at home during the last war, he did not have to be at the office before seven and so could get in an hour in the garden before he went. He possesses most of the few tools in the camp, having had them smuggled to him by his business friends and colleagues. Consequently any one desiring to do a job of carpentry is compelled to assume the role of borrower, and the humbler he is the better it will be for him. Mr. Angus' "wee hummer" has become indispensable to our social well-being, but Mr. Angus' sense of humour is not as well developed as his agricultural lore, and one who is so accustomed to the strenuous life has little sympathy with the frivolities of weaker souls.



Some of our bright young sparks have acquired a dart-board and a nail. The board can be hung on the nail when the nail has been knocked into the wall, and an appropriate implement is therefore essential before the sport can proceed. A small deputation is accordingly sent to wait on Mr. Angus, who as usual inquires to what end the request is made. In an unguarded moment the leader of the petitioners blurts out the truth, only to be routed with the firm reply, "Nae, nae. Ah never len' a tule for pairrposes of pleasure."

### Fifty Years Ago.

THE SARAWAK GAZETTE, JANUARY 4TH, 1897.

ORDER.

No. XV, 1896.

I HEREBY direct that in future should clerks and other assistants employed by the Government, more especially those engaged in the Land and Medical Departments who show no signs of advancement and improvement in the duties with which they are occupied, and are unable to obtain satisfactory certificates to that effect from the Head of the Department in which they are employed, then such clerks or assistants will not be entitled to increases of pay on the expiration of their agreements.

C. BROOKE,

Rajah.

The Astana,  
December 1st, 1896.

#### Our Notes:—

From a cutting from the London Sportsman which has been handed us, we notice that His Highness the Rajah Muda is a sprinter. At the Magdalen College (Cambridge) sports he ran second in the 100 yards, after winning his heat, and won the 150 yards handicap from scratch, time 16 3/5 seconds.

The house on the Rock Road, known as Springfield, the property of Captain Joyce, was put up to public auction on the 7th. It was knocked down to a bid on behalf of the Government for \$3,450 and is now occupied by the Principal Medical Officer.

#### Simanggang Monthly Report:—

The highest tender for the Gambling and Arak Farms, Saribas, shews a decrease of one dollar per mensem. It will be remembered that these farms increased over eighty per cent for 1895, but, after further consideration and inquiry I am not disposed to view that increase as an advantage for it is undoubtedly due to the fact that the Dyaks near Betong have recently developed a strong taste for Chinese Arak, and, I am sorry to say that upon several occasions when I have been at Betong I have noticed excessive drinking by Dyaks who should know better. I am informed moreover that Dyaks are constantly in the Betong Bazaar under the influence of liquor and can be heard shouting and yelling war cries but otherwise not misconducting themselves.

### News from Far and Near.

#### FIRST DIVISION.

At the end of November there were twenty-two Resident's Court cases outstanding in Kuching, eight in Bau and one in Simunjan. The Honourable the Resident comments that the need for a full-time Magistrate of the First Class in this Division is acute, and the ordinary work of administration suffers badly as a result.

The District Officer, Kuching, visited Lundu in November and found that practically every house in the *kampong* had one or more cases of malaria to report. The drains and roads of the *kampong* were very over-grown and pools of standing water were prevalent. The need for proper clearing and drainage was fully explained.

Consequent on accounts received of famine conditions in the Batang Kiri, Kuching, two probationary native officers and a dresser were sent to carry out inquiries. Their report was most quieting and arrangements were made to issue free relief supplies. No applications were, however, received, and, when one Orang Kaya arrived to purchase rations, he was most averse to taking maize flour. The Honourable the Resident reports that subsequent investigations have revealed that the matter had been greatly exaggerated.

There have been a good many prosecutions in Bau for offences against Order No. A—2 (Arms and Explosives) 1931.

A case is pending in Bau District Court in which five members of the Constabulary, including the Inspector stationed there until recently, are charged with accepting a bribe.

Some Dayaks in Bau District are going to be short of rice owing to the fact that Chinese entered on their farming land during the Japanese regime and are still in occupation. The Chinese claimed that they had permission to take over the land, and the Honourable the Resident comments that this practice has been going on for years and in the past it was found that the Dayaks themselves were largely to blame. A few bottles of arrack and a *kati* or two of tobacco invariably obtain the consent of the Orang Kaya. He says that instructions are being sent to the District Officer to inform the Chinese that after the coming harvest they must vacate the land.

Work on the farms having been reduced to weeding only many Dayaks have been applying in Bau for permission to open shops (mostly coffee-shops) in their *kampongs*. The District Officer is doubtful on the subject of policy and the Honourable the Resident comments that his remarks indicate the urgent need for Rural Area by-laws in the First Division, a matter which he hopes to attend to in the near future. The *Sarawak Gazette* points out that the Honourable the Resident, Second Division, recently dealt with this subject by by-law, and there appears to be power in the Ordinance for the Chief Secretary to apply to other Districts the legislation thus promulgated in the Second Division.

The Krokong Gold Mining Company, which continued its operations on a limited scale in November, remained the only mining concern in operation in Bau District at the end of the month, although, as usual, there were a great many unsupported rumours of the opening of others.

Notwithstanding that the provisions of Order No. E-4 (Edible Birds' Nests) 1940 have for some years applied in respect of all edible birds' nests collected in the Colony, it appears that the first public auction by Government of these nests in Bau took place in November, as a consequence of the publication of the Edible Birds' Nests (Collection and Auction) Rules. The District Officer says that there are at present fifteen principal caves from which nests are obtained in the District, all of which are exclusively owned by local Dayaks. It is believed, he adds, that if the caves, as well as the collection and sale of the nests, are properly controlled, they should prove a good source of income to their owners, although past experience seems to show a capacity among the latter to borrow more money as *belanja*, when collecting the nests, than is realised by their sale.

The only two prisoners in Simunjan gaol were released in November because, the Native Officer says, their sentences had expired. The prison warder was given employment as office-boy and carrier of notices, it being understood that he would return to his normal work on the appearance of a suitable client.

*Durian* has been added to sago and tapioca in the diet of Serian natives as a substitute for rice. The price of this fruit when it first appeared in Serian bazaar was over a dollar each, but it had dropped to below ten cents by the end of November.

According to the padi inspector's report the proportion of hill padi to *payah* in Serian District is approximately 7-3. The Native Officer says that the natives decline to plant large areas of padi on *payah* lands because these are liable to be flooded in the rainy season. Last year swamp padi was almost totally destroyed by swollen waters which continued for more than three weeks, just after the time the padi began to flower. The Native Officer thinks that these floods could be avoided by removing the *tanjongs* and thus giving the river a freer flow.

In November the price of rice in Serian dropped from \$3.00 per *gantang* to \$2.40. The Native Officer reports that the hoarders are worried by calculations. Some choose to dispose of their stocks now while others hold back, dreaming of a more profitable future.

### THIRD DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that during October news of three murders in this Division was received. The police were actively pursuing investigations.

There were several prosecutions in Sibu during October under the Movement Control Rules, following a police examination of all *bandongs* trading in the Igan. In this connection the District Officer suggested that legislation was desirable to enable Chinese farmers to move their

own padi and rice without a permit. The Controller of Essential Commodities concurred in this view and the Rules were duly amended in November.

In October, Jackie Yong, a former Kempeitai detective and interpreter, was committed for trial in Sibu on three charges of being concerned in the murder of Mina anak Kaba during the Japanese occupation. In November he was convicted on one charge and sentenced to death, verdicts of acquittal being returned by the assessors on the other two charges. On December 19th this conviction was quashed on appeal to the Supreme Court.

T.R. Apieng reported to the District Officer, Sibu, in October that strangers had been heard around his house at night and that suspicious foot-marks had been found. The inmates of the house were scared of an attack by Dayaks from another district. N.O. Abang Zainudin was travelling that area at the time of the report and the matter was mentioned to him. Penghulu Imai was of the opinion that the scare was caused by "Antu Inong," who can disguise themselves as human beings. The Dayaks were advised not to take the matter too seriously but to stay in their houses at night and to report any future developments to Government.

The District Officer, Sibu, reports that the trouble between Igan Dayaks and Chinese traders appears to be confined entirely to one house, where the Dayak co-operative shop resents the competition of Chinese boat-hawkers. All other houses welcome the visit of Chinese traders.

The old gambling farm at Sibu is being converted into a vegetable market. Credit is due to the District Officer for refraining from referring to this as "a sign of the times."

The medical authorities in Sibu are particularly embarrassed by the absence of medicines. The local private practitioners can procure the drugs from Singapore and retail them at fantastic prices, while Government is unable to bring the cost of treatment down owing to lack of supplies.

A conference of all Chinese school headmasters, attended by a few other eminent Chinese, was held in the Island Club, Sibu, on October 17th. The Director of Education's questionnaire was fully discussed. The opinion of the Missions remained to be sought.

A thoroughly scurrilous wordy warfare in the local press in Sibu in October was eventually closed by the intervention of Chinese arbitrators, and by the District Officer explaining the law relating to defamation.

Residents in Kuching will be interested to note that two prosecutions were instituted in the Lower Rejang District in October for the offence of riding bicycles without lights.

The District Officer, Lower Rejang, reports that on October 31st two Foochow boat-hawkers, father and son, were murdered between Bunut Ulu and Kampong Selmas. Their bodies were missing and the only clues were blood in the boat, and the left hand of the son which had been cut off and left behind.



As a result of complaints received from the Malay Schoolmasters of certain villages in the Lower Rejang District, to the effect that the people were objecting to the erection and repair of school buildings and teachers' quarters in their particular *kampongs*, meetings of the persons concerned were held by the Native Officers. It was firmly pointed out that the Government was doing all in its power to bring education to the children. Owing to the lack of training facilities during the occupation, it was difficult to supply enough teachers to meet the demand. It was further explained that if co-operation is not forthcoming it would be necessary to withdraw teachers from schools which are in need of attention and transfer them elsewhere.

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that during October a series of burglaries occurred there, several shops being broken into and cigarettes, cash and cloth being stolen. Early one morning a Malay woman was arrested carrying a suit-case and the incidents then stopped.

Students of News from Far and Near will note that the sentences passed for breaches of the Movement Control Rules appear to vary widely in different parts of the Colony. The comparative severity of a sentence, however, is largely dependent on any order that is made with regard to the disposal of the property in question. In Mukah in October a Chinese was fined \$50 for moving cotton piece goods and an Indian \$80 for moving rice and padi. In each case all the goods were confiscated.

In view of the well-known apathy, if not hostility, of many Malays with respect to European medical treatment, it is interesting to note that at a meeting of Tua-Tua Kampong in Mukah in October a request was made that the dresser should pay regular visits to the *kampongs*.

On October 29th the District Officer, Mukah, visited a sago factory at Bedanga in which the whole process from rasping to draining sago into *jalors* is done by machinery. The rasping is done by a circular saw and the treading out by rollers in the form of a mangle. The raw sago drops through a sieve into a chute and is taken away to a specially constructed *jelor* sunk into the ground. The waste is thrown out and removed by surface drainage, helped along by water. The whole process appears to be extremely simple and only one engine is required. The District Officer feels that if enough factories of this kind were set up by Chinese they might kill the native sago industry. He adds that, if the Melanaua could be induced to combine, they might be able to run their own factories.

On receiving a telegram from the District Officer, Sibiu, to the effect that three Formosans were alleged to be in the Ulu Mukah, a police patrol was sent from Mukah to investigate. On their return they reported that they were none other than two well-known and rather queer Chinese, who, while they were in a certain Dayak house, probably under the influence of drink, had told some very tall stories concerning their deeds during the occupation, apparently with the Japanese army.

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that a Chinese rubber-tapper was murdered in the Poi on October 14th. The comment of ex-Penghulu Inggon on this was that controlled goods should

not be distributed through Penghulus. They were all *nyau bedagang* and not attending to their proper duties.

Dayaks of some seven rivers in Kanowit District will be really short of food. This is due, the District Officer says, partly to their having planted less, but partly also to their own foolishness. For instance a Maloh called Tali from Song sells metal ornaments. In exchange for twelve *utas enkrimong* the Ngemah people have been giving ten or twelve *passu* of padi, one pig and a silver dollar; and, for twelve *utas rawai*, forty-eight dollars, eleven *passu* of padi, one pig, and six gold teeth.

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that Dayaks of the Poi and Ngemah have been a little uneasy of signs of strangers moving between the two rivers and they cannot find out who is there. Dayaks are in general, the District Officer says, rather put out by what seems to be tactless boasting by Chinese of Kanowit and Sibiu. Some Chinese have been making out that China has strong armies and calling the Dayaks ignorant bumkins.

A Chinese agent of the Borneo Company, Ltd., has appeared in Kanowit ready to make a tentative offer of seven dollars per *picul* for *engkabang*.

The District Officer, Kanowit, says that white salt will not sell at nineteen cents a *kati*, the Dayaks preferring coarse salt at fourteen cents. Wheat flour goes slowly, the Dayaks favouring raw sago and not having learned to use flour without oil. Cloth has been sold at two yards per family and there is still over a thousand yards left for padi planters.

The Chinese in Kanowit, unable to enter small rivers, now engage Dayaks to go for them. People of the Poi and Ngemah complain that stranger Dayaks from all over the Division eat them out of house and home and profit hugely. The Chinese at any rate did their own cooking.

Fifteen forged temporary food cards were found in Kapit in October. Two Chinese were convicted for using these in November, but a third, alleged to be the actual forger, was acquitted for lack of evidence.

The District Officer, Kapit, reports that erosion, caused by farming on steep hills, has resulted in a certain amount of damage in the Pelagus area. There is, of course, power to control this but the *Sarawak Gazette* doubts how far it is practicable to administer the law in present circumstances.

The District Officer, Kapit, who has only recently taken over that District, and is the first European to be posted there since the restoration, was warmly welcomed at Belaga, which he visited in October, special entertainments being put on for his benefit. He found that various buildings there had been washed away by the record flood at the end of 1941; notably the dispensary, dresser's quarters, and police barracks.

A small gang of Chinese was causing trouble in Kapit in October. They were mostly former rubber-tappers and were said to be led by a local barber.

One October report from this Division mentions that the presence of a strange European in the bazaar was reported to the District Officer, and that this, on investigation, was found to be correct. Since the liberation there has been an unwonted influx of visitors to Sarawak, who, while not in any way intending to be discourteous, are nevertheless unaware of the good old custom that a European visiting an outstation should, if possible, inform the District Officer beforehand, and must at any rate report his presence to the District Officer immediately he arrives. It is perhaps not wholly understood that a new white face in most places is still something of an event. This convention, which in these days cannot be said to amount to law, is important from the District Officer's point of view, but it is also of considerable value to the visitor, who will find that by observing it he will receive advice and assistance which otherwise he might have to forego.

The Honourable the Resident reports that, in November, a Dayak named Kallang anak Dudong was sentenced to death for the murder of his wife. He says that this was a particularly savage case, the unfortunate woman living for seven days with a severed backbone. This man's appeal was dismissed by the Supreme Court in December.

The District Officer, Sibn, reports that a case of moving 23,000 cigarettes, contrary to the Movement Control Rules, was heard in Sibn in November. The two accused were each sentenced to four months' rigorous imprisonment.

In November an inquest was held in Sibn into the death of Sia Ah Lai, who was shot by the police while attempting to evade arrest and after the police had first been fired on. A verdict of justifiable homicide was returned, and the District Officer comments as follows: "In connection with the above inquest, it must be pointed out that there is at the moment a good deal of gang robbery and extortion going on around Sibn. Defamatory placards and threatening letters are also much in evidence. It is known that many of the 'bad hats' are in possession of illegal firearms, and, as was shown in the Sia Ah Lai shooting episode, they are not afraid of using them. The police are making very creditable efforts to 'clean up' these gangs, and have made several arrests; the great difficulty which they face is the refusal of the Chinese victims of robbery and extortion to come forward and give anything but anonymous evidence. Following the shooting of Ah Lai, and the arrest and detention of some eight suspected persons, the police received an anonymous letter commending the efforts of the force, and praying for their success. Prayers, however, are not much help towards the conviction of evil-doers in our courts to-day, and a meeting of the leading Chinese was held on Sunday, the 24th, at which this was pointed out. The Chinese were urged to persuade their people to come forward and make reports in person, in order that Government might co-operate in the suppression of these menaces to society."

The stories which come in from all parts of the country concerning the encroachment of other races on Dayak farming land, and the breaking up of long-houses during the occupation, are repeated in the November report of the District Officer,

Sibn. As regards the former difficulty Malays from Matu appear to be amongst the principal offenders, while as regards the latter the District Officer makes specific reference to the Dayaks of the Leba'an and Lassa areas.

The following is an extract from the November report of the District Officer, Sibn: "A small minority of Malays, obviously 'infected' by Kuching (if not by London!) came out with a lot of violent and most unsightly anti-cession propaganda during the recent visit of His Excellency the Governor to Sibn. During the subsequent days deputations of the more worthy members of the local Malay community approached the District Officer, expressing the regret and shame felt by the Malays at this action by a few unbalanced and ambitious hot-heads, and requesting Government to take action against them. These deputations were informed that His Excellency had been made aware of the true facts, and that the best course of action to be taken against the malcontents was to ignore them with contempt."

During November an effort was made to ship lepers from Mukah District to Kuching. Unfortunately the attempt proved abortive as, owing to the rough weather, the "leper ship" could not get in.

The District Officer, Mukah, in November visited nearly all the Melanau *kampungs* in the Batang Oya. The inhabitants were informed of the contents of the statement of the Secretary of State concerning the cession of Sarawak and also of a letter from the Director of Lands and Surveys with regard to the present bad quality of Sarawak sago. They suggested that this latter was probably due to the sago being shipped in a wet condition, and also to the fact that, during the recent boom, bad and good qualities were indiscriminately mixed together by the Chinese traders. They agreed that there was probably more second rate than first rate sago produced and said that this was due to the lack of such supplies as cloth and nails.

The District Officer, Mukah, is troubled by the deterioration of Government stocks of salt in his possession. He is also embarrassed by the fact that milk and wholemeal flour sell very slowly. The District Officer, Kapit, is similarly worried by supplies of sugar which are being attacked by bees. The difficulty in these cases generally is that the natives have not sufficient cash to pay for their rations.

The District Officer, Kanowit, suspects that many Dayaks in his District cheerfully sell their padi to make quick profits, and expect to rely on a charitable Government when they run out.

In November cases were under investigation and inquiry in Kapit concerning the alleged forcible removal of rice, covered by movement permits, from launches by Chinese coolies.

The following is an extract from the November report of the District Officer, Kapit: "On the night of November 5th an attempt was made to set fire to the *dapor* of one of the bazaar shophouses, belonging to Tan Sit Pah. Fortunately the outbreak was discovered in time, and quickly put out



before any appreciable damage was done. The fort alarm gong was sounded about 12.30 a.m.; but by the time the police, S.N.O., and District Officer arrived on the scene, it was all over bar the shouting, of which there was plenty. A quarter-empty bottle of kerosene was found on the spot, and also a piece of cloth on the roof of the *dapor*. It appears, however, that the cloth was in a tub of water, which was thrown on the fire, and was not connected with the crime. No evidence has been discovered to throw any light on the perpetrator, and it is feared that the mystery must remain unsolved."

Believing as we do that the "credit system" is one of the gravest handicaps of the native of Sarawak, we are glad to note that the District Officer, Kapit, reports that, unfortunately owing to the size of debts still unpaid, all business there is now strictly on a cash basis.

The District Officer, Kapit, reports that the news that *engkabang* will definitely be bought this year has been received with much enthusiasm, and that the good price to be paid is also welcomed.

It is interesting to note that a District Officer's bungalow is being built at Kapit. This is probably the only station where a District Officer is now posted and has to live in the "fort." Lubok Antu was, until the occupation, another relic of the old days in this respect, but no District Officer has been in charge there since the liberation, and it is understood that in any case the "fort" has been razed to the ground.

#### FOURTH DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that most of the Javanese had been repatriated by the end of October. There remained a few in the employment of the oil company and others were still trickling in from the *ulu*.

The malaria epidemic in this Division was still the most serious matter on hand at the end of October. It was beginning to make itself felt with regard to padi planting and the Pujut Scheme was suffering in this way.

Kayans in the Ulu Baram reported that they would be harvesting their *padi agit* by the beginning of December. The Honourable the Resident has been told that the Kayans are the only people who go in for this early variety of padi. The *Sarawak Gazette* understands that it is also planted by Kayans and others at Belaga and in Kapit District, and by Muruts in Lawas District. The Honourable the Resident says that Dayaks at Bakong have reported considerable success with what they call "Padi Stengah Tahun." They planted it immediately after the last harvest and reaped it during October. This has caused considerable relief of rice shortage in that area and it is proposed to induce the Malays to follow this example next year.

A Kenyah school has been opened at Long Akar in Baram District and a Kayan school is being built at Long Pila.

The first prosecutions in this Division under the Movement Control Rules have been successful and heavy penalties have been inflicted with the result that the price of rice in the rice producing areas has fallen.

The Honourable the Resident reports that the desire of many up-river tribes to be converted to Christianity is amazing. The Muruts were, he says, a dying race fifteen years ago, but they have since changed their religion and have given up their bad habits such as excessive *borak* drinking and *pantangs*. There is no doubt that they are now a virile people and on the increase.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that a young Malay from Kululit, Sibuti, was admitted to hospital suffering from seven wounds inflicted by a crocodile. This is the third case from Sibuti of attacks by crocodiles in the last few months.

The Baram dressers have agreed to give lectures on first aid and elementary medicines and hygiene once a week to the Marudi schools. This should dispel, the District Officer says, any fears the children might have of medical treatment and give them more interest in their own health and hygiene.

Native Officer Galau, who returned from the Tutoh and Apoh during October, recounted an incident which greatly impressed both himself and the Kayans who accompanied him. While eating some fish a bone got stuck in his throat. The Kayans were unable to suggest a means of removing it and so Galau sought help from the Kelabits. They told him to sit with his head bowed and they commenced to pray. To Galau's astonishment, after the prayer was over, he lifted his head to find the bone gone.

Bong Siong, salt manufacturer of Kedurong, was convicted in Bintulu District Court in October of a breach of the Movement Control Rules, and was sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of five hundred dollars. This sentence was upheld by the Resident's Court on appeal.

The following extract is from the October report of the District Officer, Bintulu. "A new Penghulu was elected in traditional Dayak fashion in Tatau on the 14th to replace Penghulu Saran who died early in 1942. A preliminary ballot had indicated that Kana, son of T.R. Enchana, was the favourite. Unfortunately he refused to take on the job. No. 2 was T.R. Kijun, at present *wakil* for Saran, but he, mainly on account of his age, is not considered suitable by Government. The Tuai Rumah then asked Government to choose for them. Government (which had been hoping for this) nominated T.R. Taiyai, who is young, go-ahead, and able to write. This seemed to go down all right and conversation became general. After a few minutes discussion about guns, cartridges, cloth, etc.,

somebody suggested T.R. Nabau would be a more suitable candidate; he was immediately elected unanimously, and, as he has the advantage of living right in the middle of the Anap district, Government made no objection."

The Honourable the Resident says that Bintulu must now be one of the cheapest places to live in. The District Officer reports that there has been another fall in the price of native rice, and that coffee is now on sale at reasonable prices in a Government-sponsored shop. This is mainly intended for the benefit of Government staff but it is also open to the public. It has enabled Government to get rid of a certain amount of apparently unsaleable "dumped" army surplus stores.

#### FIFTH DIVISION.

In October a Tua Kampong in Limbang District blew off most of his arm with a hand grenade. The dresser took him to Brunei hospital. As the medical officer was away the Limbang dresser and the Brunei dressers performed an emergency operation which has proved successful.

The District Officer, Limbang, reports that the road from the 2nd Mile, Panderuan Road, through the bazaar to about half a mile up Berawan Road, is now fit for motor traffic and one small bus has started a somewhat irregular service. The passengers may often be seen pushing.

Over two hundred Muruts from the Ulu Trusan and over sixty Kelabits from Bareo visited Lawas in October with rice for sale. The Kelabits stated that the journey from Bareo took fourteen days. They said that if they carry their rice to Baram for sale it takes them a month and they have to eat it all on the way. If they come to Lawas, not only is the journey shorter, but the Muruts entertain them hospitably.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of correspondents.]

### Gold Mining Supplies.

KUCHING,  
SARAWAK.

9th December, 1946.

The Editor,

Sarawak Gazette.

SIR,

Mention is made in your issue of December 2nd of the fact that gold mining companies in Bau district are awaiting long expected supplies of Cyanide to enable them to extract larger amounts of gold.

We would like to point out that several months ago, at the specific request of the gold mining industry, we ordered Sodium Cyanide and obtained high priority from the manufacturers as its need was urgent. Our order was duly executed and supplies have been available in Kuching since the middle of October last.

Yours faithfully,  
SIME, DARBY & Co., LTD.,  
(Sarawak Branch).

A. D. DANT,  
Manager.

It must be remembered that there is a considerable time lag between the occurrence of events in various parts of the country and the recording of those events in the *Sarawak Gazette*. On inquiry from the District Officer, Bau, we learn that the cyanide situation has now been duly remedied.—ED.]