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New Terms of Service.

The new terms of service for Government officers on the permanent establishment, published some twelve months after the Borneo Salaries Commission met in Kuching, are in essentials more or less what might have been expected. After the report of the Trusted Commission had been made, a small Government Committee was appointed to reconsider the recommendations; since the Committee, which included the President of the Junior Service

Association, took full advantage of discussing proposed changes with Heads of Departments in Kuching, the published terms are more equitable than those originally recommended by the Trusted Commission. The salary revisions are not likely to give cause for wild jubilation but equally so they are not likely to cause bitter dissatisfaction.

The revision follows a period of sharply rising prices and, particularly for those officers in the lower salary grades, a period of mounting debts or diminishing savings. Various expedients like Cost of Living Allowances, Special Allowances and Children's Allowances have been used to alleviate a financial distress of which Government has been keenly aware. These allowances, with the exception of the first, become merged with the revised salaries as from 1st July, 1946, at which date officers have the option of converting to the new scales. The arrears of salary after the deduction of Children's and Special Allowances, are likely to amount to a substantial sum and provision has been made for payment by instalments. Had a lump sum of possibly more than one and a Half million dollars been released for circulation, a tendency towards short-term inflation would have been set up but, with due allowance for the payment of debts, the repayment of loans or the replenishment of depleted savings, the prudent staggering of back payments will ensure that

there will be no pickings for opportunist traders.

The Cost of Living Allowance remains at present unchanged and possible changes are naturally likely to be small. There is no indication in the Trusted Commission Report or elsewhere of what year was taken as the basis to assess the present and any future allowances; indeed the Commission considered it undesirable to tie the scheme of such allowances to any cost of living or retail price index. If this allowance is to serve its proper function of 'ironing' out minor fluctuations in the costs of living, then there must be some standard by which those changes may be measured and a retail price index is an immediate need to be followed by a cost of living index as soon as possible. It is understood that Government has already appointed a Price Control Committee whose duties include compiling a price index.

In the new scales some of the wretched anomalies which existed between departments have been removed. Making due allowance for educational and technical qualifications, the basic salaries will now stand comparison as between one department and another and in all cases a reasonable career is offered to recruits. The professional office boy disappears; instead of reaching \$24.00 p.m. after ten years service, he now starts off on \$30 p.m. but remains there until he can fit himself for some other job. The previous maximum to which the Printing Office staff could hope to aspire without Special Appointment was \$125 p.m. and most could anticipate a maximum of \$80 p.m. The revised terms do offer a reasonably attractive career and give to the Printing Office and similar departments access to the same pools for recruitment as previously more favoured departments. It is reasonable to hope that promotion to the superscales in those departments which do not enjoy a high maximum will be fairly liberal.

However, within departments, there is a class of officer who, compared with his more fortunate colleagues, has had an indifferent deal. In every service, there are men who by hard work and honest endeavour become singled out from the crowd and receive early recognition of their work in the appointment they hold and the pay they receive. There are other men who work equally hard but, for one reason or another, have to climb the ladder rung by rung. At the top of the grade, this latter class of officer had some recognition of his efforts relative to his juniors. In conversion to the

new scales, however, differences of as much as eight years in seniority merge in the same salary level. This is unfortunate; an officer so affected is not likely to be happy until his relative seniority is reflected in his salary. But the axe must come down somewhere and wherever it strikes there will be most pressing and urgent reasons why it should have struck somewhere else. Of any alternative, it is clear that a lesser injustice will result if the axe comes at a point where an officer is well known and where he has reasonable hopes of promotion to a superscale post.

The new terms introduce into Sarawak the principle of expatriation pay for officers of the Senior Service recruited (roughly) outside South East Asia. The allowance is intended to cover expenses which an officer would not have to meet were he serving in his own country. For an officer who joins the service in the first year of the revised Standard Time Scale the allowance is adequate; the officer who benefits half way through his service at a time when he has children to educate is likely to feel the pinch. He will not have the opportunity of providing in advance for the period of heaviest expatriate expenditure which the prudent recruit will enjoy. In spite of this, however, in most cases the officer with two children now enjoys an advance in total emoluments of \$130 per month which is a substantial help towards meeting his admittedly heavy commitments. There can be no just case for burdening the public funds with provision for children who are unlikely to be of ultimate advantage to the Colony.

A comparison of total emoluments in Sarawak with those in Malaya is likely to be a sore point and there is no good reason why Time Scales in Malaya should be so much higher than in Bornean territories. However, our immediate concern is not

with our neighbour's good fortune except insofar as it may concern us here. On present terms of service, Sarawak is likely to have second cut at the cake as regards officers recruited from a common source but we doubt whether, granted the option of service in Malaya or Sarawak, any substantial body of officers now serving in Sarawak would elect to plunge after the higher rates.

Given that the purse from which Government salaries are paid is not inexhaustible, the revised salaries give a fair and equitable deal within the service. In a wholesale revision of this nature, anomalies can readily be found; but such anomalies are not major ones and the benefits of the

revision are.

The difficult conditions of the revision period have emphasised the marked sympathy and understanding which exists between Government and the newly fledged Civil Service Associations. Help from each side was given without stint and the fairness achieved by the revised terms of service is, in large measure, due to this healthy co-operation.

Visit of His Excellency the Governor to Brunei and the 5th Division.

On September 27th Their Excellencies the Commissioner-General and the Governor, and Lady Arden Clarke, accompanied by Major M. J. Gilliat, m.b.e., Comptroller to His Excellency the Commissioner-General, and the Private Secretary, arrived at Brunei by RAF Sunderland. Miss Jenifer Arden Clarke, who had been paying visits to friends at Miri and Seria, joined the party at Brunei.

On landing and after inspecting a Guard of Honour of Brunei Police, Their Excellencies were introduced to members of the State Council by the British Resident, Mr. Pretty. His Highness the Sultan was absent, being still indisposed at his private residence in Kuching.

The following morning His Excellency the Governor, in his capacity as High Commissioner for Brunei, drove in uniform to the Government offices. After inspecting the Guard of Honour, His Excellency presented the insignia of the o.b.e. to Inchi Ibrahim bin Mohamed Jaffar, who later, in company with the Ministers of State, attended a luncheon party at the Residency.

In the evening about 60 persons, representing all communities, were guests of His Excellency and Lady Arden Clarke at a pahit party held at the Residency.

Most of the time available was taken up by discussions with the British Resident, Departmental officers, and members of the State Council. The Kuala Abang Agricultural Station was inspected and the customary visit was paid to the silver-smiths and straw-workers at the River Kampong, which left all members of the party enriched by pleasing examples of these crafts but considerably poorer in pocket.

Unfortunately, owing to pressure of engagements, His Excellency the Commissioner-General had to fly back to Singapore on October 1st, so it was a reduced party that left Brunei for Limbang in the

"La Follette" on Thursday afternoon.

That evening His Excellency and Lady Arden Clarke held a reception at the Limbang Residency for members of the Government Staff. A popular topic of conversation amongst the guests was the revised salary scales, about which they had heard cheering rumours, which fortunately could mostly be confirmed.

The following morning His Excellency presented Surat Kuasa and flags to Tua Kampongs and Penghulus, and then addressed members of the District Advisory Council on the proposed Limbang Local Authority.

The whole party then drove out to the Limbang Agricultural Station, which has been constructed on the site of the former golf course and owes much to the enthusiasm and efforts of the Resident and the members of the local junior staff of the Agricultural Department.

After declaring the Station formally open. His Excellency, Lady Arden Clarke, and Miss Jenifer Arden Clarke each planted a tree, the site being marked with a suitably inscribed brass plate.

His Excellency and party and the members of the District Advisory Council were then conducted round the Station, inspecting its remarkable variety of crops ranging from cocoa and tobacco to fodder grasses which it is hoped the Cadet Officer's goats will prefer to their present diet of flowering shrubs and garden plants.

After a welcome pause for refreshments, the party watched a demonstration of a mechanical hoe. Finally, a popular diversion was trying the electric fence. Members of the District Advisory Council could only be induced to take the electric shock treatment via the hands of the Resident and Cadet Officer.

On the way back from this interesting morning His Excellency inspected the demonstration plots of irrigated padi at Bengkita.

During the afternoon His Excellency paid visits to the hospital and Malay and Chinese schools.

Next day, leaving Lady Arden Clarke at Limbang owing to the arduous nature of the programme, the party left in "La Follette" at 6.30 a.m. for Kuala Trusan, where they transferred to M.L. "Pelandok" and reached Sundar at 10 o'clock. After His Excellency had greeted local notables and

inspected the station, the party continued up the Trusan river, enjoying the pleasant change of fertile river banks free from a screen of nipah, to Trusan, where considerable numbers of Muruts were awaiting His Excellency's arrival.

The time available only allowed for a short visit to the Kubu, now a dilapidated reminder of the days when Trusan boasted a Resident and a garrison of Rangers, and a short talk with the Headmen. On the way back to the launch three elderly cocoa trees behind the bazaar were inspected, a proceeding which the local population found somewhat incomprehensible. The Cheese-man report considers the Trusan to be the area in Sarawak best suited for cocoa, and the healthy condition of these trees, survivors of the pre-expert era, was observed with interest.

After a stay of an hour the party left Trusan, this time in the Lawas launch "Leonora," and under the skilful handling of Juragan Bujang successfully negotiated the narrow and winding loba from Sundar to Aawat Awat. At one of the turns the "Pelandok," which was following, lived up to her name and attempted to take to the jungle.

At Awat Awat yet another change of craft was made, this time to an outboard to negotiate the Kuala at low tide.

Boarding the "La Follette," which was anchored outside, the party reached Lawas after twelve and a half hours travelling. Both the Government area and the kampong across river were decorated with lines of lamps.

On Sunday morning His Excellency presented Surat Kuasa and flags to Tua Kampongs and Penghulus, and had a talk with the Datu Pengiran Haji Matusin, now in his 84th year.

After going round the hospital and schools, the party visited the Lawas Rubber Estate, where Mr. MacLaren showed them round the factory, planting areas, etc. This was followed by an excellent curry with Mr. and Mrs. MacLaren.

Next morning the party left Lawas early in "La Follette" and reached Limbang before noon. The rest of the day was free from engagements.

On Tuesday the party arrived in Labuan at noon, being met on arrival by Mr. Calder, Officer Administering the Government, North Borneo, and Mrs. Calder, who owing to the war-shattered

state of Labuan, entertained a large party to luncheon on the s.s. "Darvel".

On going ashore His Excellency, at the request of the Officer Administering the Government, inspected a very smart contingent of fifty men of the North Borneo Armed Constabulary who were on their way to Malaya.

His Excellency was then shown the air-strip and hospital by the Officer Administering the Government and the District Officer, Labuan, Mr. Chisholm.

After tea the party watched a football match in which the Labuan team suffered defeat at the hands of the Constabulary contingent. Although at times there was a slight suggestion of rugger, the game was played in a most friendly spirit.

The following morning Lady Arden Clarke left by air for Kuching, whilst the rest of the party went by the "La Follette" to Kuala Belait. On arrival His Excellency was met by the British Resident, Brunei, Mr. Marriott, General Manager of the British Malayan Petroleum Co., Ltd., and the Assistant Resident, Kuala Belait. His Excellency and Miss Jenifer Arden Clarke were entertained during their stay by Mr. Marriott.

The next morning was occupied by discussions with the General Manager, whilst in the afternoon the layout of the proposed Seria town plan was inspected on the ground. The area at present consists of jungle, a dilapidated temporary bazaar and vegetable gardens. A planned township at Seria is regarded as an urgent necessity.

The party sailed from Kuala Belait at 5 o'clock on Friday afternoon in "La Follette" and after a somewhat cold, wet and uncomfortable passage anchored off the Astana midnight on Saturday. October 9th. (Contributed.)

Preparing sago at Kampong Tian, near Matu. Hedda Morrison

Sago Production in Sarawak.

When sago is mentioned, it conjures up in one's mind different impressions. To the Europeans here it probably has somewhat unpleasant associations with childhood, for which perhaps tapioca and not

sago is to blame. To old residents of this colony it may arouse memories of certain outstations in Sarawak, of sluggish rivers with dark coffee-coloured water, of mosquito infested swamps, and of the smell of certain bazaars. To our local merchant princes and to Government it means money. To the Melanau it is food, work, wealth, and everything.

Sago is the starch obtained from the trunk of several species of palms, the most important of which are *Metroxylon sagus*. the smooth sheathed sago palm, and *Metroxylon rumphii*.. this colony sheathed sago palm. Another palm, ?pantu.? which grows wild in hilly inaccessible areas in the Interior of certain parts of Sarawak. also produces sago. ?Pantu?? is, however, not of economic importance though to certain native tribes in Sarawak it is like ordinary sago a useful supplement to their food supply when their rice runs out.

The sago palm grows on swampy land. Though the palms appear to grow in a wild state it is now definitely a cultivated plant. Like other economic plants it must have grown wild at one time. Sago's history as a product of commerce, however, goes much further back than that of rubber. According to Burkill, sago was mentioned in the writings of Chinese writers (like Chau Ju-Kau in 1200) who were interested in accounts of this crop which

reached China. Marco Polo is said to have met with it in Sumatra in 1298. Sago manufacture was carried on in Malacca prior to 1116 and pearl sago was manufactured by Chinese in the same place as early as 1815. By 1818 Malacca pearl sago had already a reputation for lustre in the London market, so that sago pudding must have become popular as food for children in England quite a long time ago. To come nearer home, our local ethnologists will no doubt retort that the native sago eaters preceded the rice eaters in their "invasion" of Borneo much earlier than sago pudding was ever discovered or invented.

A recent rough survey by the Sarawak Department of Agriculture puts the area under sago in Sarawak at roughly 150,000 acres; no detailed information is available concerning the plant population or age. The main areas under sago are to be found in the Saribas and Kalaka districts in the 2nd. Division, and in Matu, Daro. Lower Bating Igan, Oya, Dalat, Mukah and Balingian in the 3rd. Division. Smaller areas exist in the Samarahan in the 1st. Division, Bintulu in the 4th. Division, and Limbang in the 5th. Division.

Sago occupies a very important position in the economy of Sarawak. Its export comes fourth in

order of value in 1917 being only exceeded by rubber, crude oil, and diesel oil. To the statistically minded it may be of interest to note that in the year 1947 sago exports exceed rubber exports in quantity, sago exports being 658,918 pikuls and rubber 597,243 pikuls. although in value sago's \$10,588,863 is just more than one third that of rubber's \$26,084,589. Admittedly, 1947 was a peak year for sago exports but even in 1940 the export figures for sago. 388,790 pikuls valued at \$2,184,997. which, though much less than rubber's 590,470 pikuls valued at \$26.167,140, indicates no small contribution to the national income of Sarawak.

Much more important than its export value, however, is sago's position as a subsidiary food supply among certain natives, particularly the Melanaus, in this Colony. The Melanaus subsist partly on sago in normal times, but in time of rice shortage can live entirely on sago instead of rice.

While pepper planting is a purely Chinese enterprise. the cultivation of sago is entirely in the hands of natives. The Chinese, however, play a prominent part in the processing and marketing of the final product, sago flour.

Sago is generally grown on swampy land close to the banks of rivers. There are few gardens at a great distance from rivers because sago cultivation depends on ease of access or exit by river. The

soil is usually peat of various depths overlying alluvial clay. The cultivation of sago is simple compared with that for other crops. The jungle is cleared, and burnt, and the land is then ready for planting. In planting, young plants called suckers which grow up around the rootstock of the old plants, are used. The suckers are carefully severed from the parent plant, the leaves are pruned off close to the crown leaving the stalk of one leaf for handling, and then they are laid down in single layer roots downwards in a damp place and allowed to sprout and to grow roots. Sprouting may take as long as one month. Once the suckers have sprouted they are planted in a field spaced about 5 fathoms apart giving about 48 plants to an acre. Planting distance varies in different localities being sometimes as wide as 8 fathoms in Daro and Matu and as narrow as 3 fathoms in some gardens in Oya. After planting little care is needed beyond an occasional slashing round the young plants to prevent them being smothered by grass or secondary jungle growth. The garden is usually left unattended during the years of waiting. Some sago garden owners deliberately leave some jungle trees to grow up, the idea being that the competition for light leads to the growth of taller palms. It is of course forgotten that growth in height may occur at the expense of girth, and that the total starch content in a palm does not necessarily depend on the height of the palm.

The sago palm reaches maturity in about 15 years from planting when it produces flowers and seeds. The palms are generally cut sometime before they start to flower when the crown of the palm begins to reduce in size. The natives are able to tell by eye when the palms have the maximum starch content, and they have special names for palms at various stages of maturity. Generally speaking a sago palm can be cut for extraction of flour from twelve to fifteen years after planting, depending on soil condition and also perhaps the age of the suckers used for planting. If the palm is cut too early the starch content is low. If on the other hand it is allowed to pass the optimum stage and allowed to flower the starch content is also considerably reduced.

Sago is one of the palms which produces a number of sideshoots or suckers from its rootstock, so that from the one palm planted originally by the time it reaches maturity one sees a clump or cluster of palms at different stages of growth. When the mature palms are cut down therefore, they are replaced by others from the old rootstock. This has led to the unfortunate impression that a sago

garden once established is an inexhaustible gold mine and can be worked indefinitely. In actual practice after a few crops have been obtained over a period of years the garden deteriorates and has to be replanted. All suckers are slashed back and the land allowed to revert to secondary jungle. After resting for 10 to 15 years the jungle may be cut down and replanted.

The sago palm after it is felled is cut into logs of usually of 3 feet lengths, rolled out of the gardens along paths on which the palm fronds are laid down to act as rails onto the river. At the river the logs are joined together to form rafts and floated down or towed to the place where the starch is extracted, usually near the home of the sago garden owner.

Extraction of the crude starch from sago is a simple process. The bark is stripped off from the sago log by means of a heavy parang. The stripped log is then rolled on to a bench and fastened on it. The log of sago is then scraped with a rasper, which consists of a piece of plank about five feet long and six inches wide, through which a large number of nails or tacks have been knocked through at about quarter inch spaces. A handle is attached at one or both ends of the rasper. The rasper is drawn forward and backward over the sago log and the pointed ends of the nails scrape off fine dust from the logs. This sago dust, which looks not unlike saw dust and is in fact saw dust, is collected on a mat below the rasping bench. The sago dust is then washed on the washing platform usually a small attap shed with slatted floor built on the river bank or standing in the river. A good supply of water is essential for the efficient extraction of the starch. The sago dust is put on a mat called the "idas" made from the covering of the stalk of the palm leaves or in a large basket made of the same material. Whichever is used the principle is the same. The sago dust is treaded with the feet, while water is constantly poured over the mass of treaded sago dust. The water washes out the starch from the sago dust, and the water with the starch in it flows into a long trough called "jalor" usually made out of the hollowed out trunk of a tree. A piece of cheesecloth is usually placed at the end of the trough where the water enters in order to prevent any sago dust getting into the trough. In the trough the sago starch gradually settles to the bottom and the water escapes through holes at the other end of the trough. When the trough is full of starch the water is drained off. The crude starch, which is called "lemantak" is then ready for sale as such or can be turned, into pearl sago or "sago

biji? for home consumption. The so called pearl sago as produced by the Melanau for home consumption should not be confused with the pearl sago of commerce which is turned into the too well-known sago pudding. The sago ?biji? as it should be called is a mixture of sago, rice bran, and sometimes a little rasped coconut meat, made up into pellets about 1 cm. in diameter by a process of sieving, rocking, and frying. With raw fish it is a Melanau delicacy possibly much superior to the sago pudding.

Considerable changes have taken place in the sago industry in recent years. The sago industry from cultivation up to extraction of the crude starch was until the Japanese occupation essentially a village or home industry. The men planted the sago, felled the palms, and rasped it. The women washed the sago and extracted the starch, handed the resulting lemantak to the men for sale or turned the lemantak into sago biji for home consumption.

The lemantak was before the war usually sold to owners of bandong or sailing vessels, which went round the sago areas to collect lemantak for sale to Chinese refineries, which were located in towns like Kuching, Binatang, Saratok, and Bintulu where good water supply is available. The refining process consists of sieving the crude starch through cheese cloth or muslin to get rid of the coarse refuse, and sedimentation in long troughs to separate out the fine powdery refuse. The latter is quite a skilled process and is done by experts. The refined starch is then dried on mats in the sun and bagged for export. The sago flour was then in pre-war days shipped and sold in the Singapore market to big European firms who then re-exported

the flour to Europe, India, Japan, and other places. The first change occurred just before World War 11 when some Chinese with an inventive turn of mind set up the first sago mill with an old motor car engine, a length of belting, an old pulley and a circular rasping board. This contraption did the work of rasping in a few minutes that would normally occupy the native the whole day. The natives were not slow to see the advantage of the invention, but as capital costs of such machines were beyond their means they could only either sell their sago logs to the millers, or come to an arrangement whereby they could have their sago rasped and washed at the miller's factory in return for their selling the lemantak at a slight discount on current prices to the miller. The sago miller then sold his

lemantak to the refineries, where it is turned into sago flour for export. The natives were not worse off apparently, but as washing at the miller's place was done by the men themselves, their women folk became "unemployed" or had much needed leisure, whichever way one looks at it.

Then came the Japanese occupation. The Japanese were hungry for starch of all kinds. The big combine of Mutsui Bussan Kaisha was given the monopoly among other things, of sago. This firm made an all-out effort to increase production of sago. Any form of sago flour regardless of quality was acceptable and a demand was thus created locally for sago flour of inferior quality. At the end of the occupation large quantities of this inferior sago flour were left in the hands of merchants and natives. The world soon after the end of the war was short of starch and there was a good demand for sago flour. Big European firms and Bombay merchants competed with each other for whatever supplies there were on the market. The Japanese occupation stocks of sago were soon liquidated at extremely good profits. To cope with the demand sago mills sprang up in all the sago areas. As no refining was necessary sago flour was produced on the spot. Local exporters competed with each other for the flour as fast as it could be produced with consequent deterioration of the quality of the product. Refineries particularly in Kuching and Binatang continued to produce the refined product for export. The margin offered for the refined flour was, however, very small and the competition of the small mills in the sago areas made it impossible to get sufficient lemantak to keep the refinery going. The Binatang refineries had to stop operating, and the Kuching ones were only able to keep going by cutting out the sedimentation stage of the refining process, thus producing a sago flour below the pre-war quality but better than the bulk of the flour exported.

Post-war Singapore with its labour troubles and high costs of handling made it necessary for local exporters to ship their sago flour on through bills of lading. This has resulted in considerable saving and greater margin of profits. Unfortunately, whereas pre-war sago flour was bulked in Singapore and Sarawak F.A.Q. sago flour was in fact no more than a trade name. Sarawak had to accept full responsibility for the very inferior sago flour that was shipped on through bills of lading after the war. As the sago market becomes saturated buyers are becoming particular about quality and there is danger therefore that the Sarawak product because of its post-war bad reputation might be

discriminated against. It is important therefore that something be done soon to restore the buyers confidence.

Much can be done and is being done by a few concerned in the sago trade, but it is important that Government should also do its part. Various schemes for improvement of the quality have been put forward. Of these a system of licensing of factories, coupled with marking and inspection of the product, appears to be the most feasible. It is important to bear in mind the fact that the quality of the product depends primarily on the water supply and in licensing of factories this should be the prime requisite.

As regards the cultivation side of the industry the problems are many. The Department of Agriculture are well aware of these problems and have made several surveys recently. These surveys indicate that among other things the industry is faced with a situation where machinery is working the palms faster than they can mature, so that there is a tendency to cut down immature palms. Recent improvements in machinery have made it possible not only to rasp sago but also to wash the sago in the extraction of starch mechanically. The natives appear to be at the moment concerned mainly in cashing in on the boom. Little interest is shown in planting new areas, and as it takes fifteen years for a sago garden to come into production this is not surprising. There are large areas in Sarawak which are suitable for sago and for nothing else. In some of the major padi schemes such areas are met with and sago planting schemes might with the advantage be combined with padi schemes. It is difficult for people other than natives to take up sago planting as the present terms of tenure of sago land (which is free from payment of quit rents) are not extended to them. A reconsideration of this policy might result in more land being taken up for sago, but much will also depend on the future of the market.

No mention has so far been made of pests. These are important. The principal pests are monkeys, pigs and bears. Monkeys are fond of the young shoots of the suckers and do considerable damage in certain areas. Wild pigs attack the palm by feeding on the starchy tissue. Bears climb up the palms and feed on the crown and bud of the palms. Of these the wild pigs are the greatest menace. Systematic control of pests is essential for the success of new areas and also for the maintenance

of existing ones.

In conclusion, sufficient has been written to emphasise the importance of sago in the Colony of Sarawak. Mention has only been made of one product, sago flour. It should not be forgotten, however, that in general utility the sago palm rivals the nipah. To mention only a few of the by-products. Attaps are made from the leaves, brooms from mid-ribs of the leaf, baskets from the cuticle of the leaf stalks, planks from the bark, etc., etc. Much of the equipment which is used in the manufacture of sago flour and 'sago biji' is made from various parts of the palm. The sago palm is therefore a plant which ought to command the interest of all those who have the interests of Sarawak at heart.

Ono Kee Hui.

References.

Use has been made of the following in the preparation of the above article for which grateful acknowledgment is here made :—

1. Burkill's 'Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malaya Peninsula.'

2. Technical information with regard to sago cultivation supplied by the Department of Agriculture on the basis of recent reports.

3.

Published report of Mr. Ong Kee Hui in 'Visit of Inspection to the Sago Areas in the 3rd. Division.'

4.

Sarawak Department of Agriculture Annual Report for 1947.

5.

Department of Trade and Customs Annual Statistics and Accounts for the year 1947. Thanks are due to the Director of Agriculture for permission to use some of the above papers or reports.

Notes and Comments.

His Majesty the King has approved that Sunday, the 7th November, be observed as Remembrance Day.

The Mohammedan feast of Hari Raya Haji fell on the 13th of October and was celebrated as a public holiday. A very successful sports meeting for the Malay community was organised by the Astana Bintawa Angkatan Satu of Kampong Boyan and free bangsawans were given at Kampongs Safok and Bintangor, the former intending to play for six nights and the latter for eight but, by popular request, both were still performing at the end of the month.

Lady Arden Clarke, accompanied by Miss Jennifer Arden Clarke, left on the Rajah Brooke for the United Kingdom on the 30th October.

Miss Wilhelmina Tan, a senior staff nurse from the Kuching General Hospital who has been awarded a scholarship under the Colonial Development Welfare Fund, left for the United Kingdom on the 30th October. Miss Tan is to take a three to four years' course at the Royal Free Hospital, London. This is the first time that a student has been selected from the Nursing Service in Sarawak to pursue her studies in the United Kingdom.

Work is now well advanced on the construction of a new pavement linking the Union Club premises with the Municipal Buildings.

The Weekly Times reports the marriage of Captain R. W. Large, M.C., to Miss Binda Urquhart on the 16th August in London.

It is proposed to start a Colonial Service Journal published in London under the name "Corona. The Journal of His Majesty's Colonial Service." It is designed principally to act as a forum for the exchange of professional opinion and information and will be under the editorship of Mr. Kenneth Bradley, C.M.G.

A United States Army War Graves Unit visited Kuching for the purpose of registering any American war graves and, where possible, recovering the bodies. The Unit left in the United States Army Vessel F.S. 548 for Pontianak on the 16th October.

A contributor to the Sarawak Tribune writes : "I am sure it has escaped the notice of many that the ugly old corner behind the Pavilion and the car

park, which used to hold a kitchen and a bath room, is now turned into a miniature garden in blazing colours. The little old man, in the service of the Municipality I believe, who lives in one of the

workers? rooms there tends it in his spare time. He is evidently making a very thorough job of it. for besides watering the plants in the morning and evening I noticed him picking up fallen flowers and placing them back on the stems.?

The Double Tenth was celebrated in Kuching with the traditional lantern procession. A big procession, headed by decorated lorries, left St. Thomas? playground at seven o?clock and paraded through the main streets. The lanterns, some illuminated with candles and some by electric bulbs, were of every conceivable shape and size that ingenuity could devise.

Some minutes after the tail-end of the procession had passed, two small children carrying lanterns as big as themselves straggled by. The amused throng of spectators good-naturedly opened a lane for the two children as broad as that which the main procession had used.

The shops in the bazaar area are well decorated with dragons, goldfish and one curiously enough, with an outsize model of an Optimus lamp.

The Kuching Dairy Farm in its present form is to be closed down. For various technical reasons there is no prospect of milk being produced on the Farm in the near future at a price and quality to compare with imported milks and, were the Dairy Farm to be run at a loss, one very small section of the community would benefit at the expense of the rest of the Colony.

The closing of the Dairy Farm will make available for work in the whole Colony, those few members of the staff of the Department of Agriculture who have practical experience of tropical animal husbandry.

The best of the existing herd will be used for experiment and demonstration at Tarat and, later, at other centres.

The Sunday morning game of cricket in Kuching on the Police Padang across river has, after a few false starts, become firmly established. A good cross-section of the community is interested.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies has appointed Mr. L. S. Greening, o.b.e., M.c., Administrator of St. Kitts-Nevis to be Economic Liaison Officer for the Pacific and North Borneo area.

Mr. Greening?s duty will be to maintain the closest touch between the Colonial Office and Colonial Governments in the area on all aspects of economic development. He will inform the Colonial

Governments of current views in the United Kingdom on economic policy and will convey to the Colonial Office and other United Kingdom Government Departments the needs of the Governments in carrying out their economic development projects especially in supply matters.

Mr. Greening is expected to visit Sarawak in November.

On the 3rd of October, Mother Clare of St. Teresa's Convent, Kuching, celebrated her Diamond Jubilee as a religieuse.

Mother Clare was born in Ireland in 1861 at a time when there was still insurgent strife in Sarawak. As a missionary nun she landed in Kuching in 1889, some four years after the establishment of the Convent in Kuching. Since that time, she has taken only one leave in Eire.

During the occupation of Sarawak, the Japanese spared her the rigours of internment for most of the time on account of her great age.

It is a fitting distinction that Mother Clare is now one of the only two nuns in the Society of Missionary Sisters of St. Joseph who have celebrated a Diamond Jubilee in this religious order.

It will be noticed that this month there is no article re-published from Adversity Internment Quarterly; we have exhausted the supply of articles and stories which were suitable for publishing in the .

Adversity was founded on the 1st July, 1943 with the triple objects of providing an outlet for creative energies, some entertaining reading and a lasting, 'though perhaps shabby,' record of life in internment. In achieving those three objects. Adversity Internment Quarterly, also provided readers of the with a considerable amount of interesting reading.

We are grateful to those concerned for the opportunity of reprinting the articles and stories which have appeared in the .

The Island Club has been very fortunate in regaining possession of the Christmas Challenge Cup for bowls, presented by the late Mr. J. B. Archer in 1937.

Unfortunately the plinth is missing and there are no records available to give the winners of the Cup for 1938 onwards.

As far as can be ascertained, the Cup was never won outright, and it is the intention of the present Committee to re-open the competition at Christmas.

Any information regarding past winners of the Cup would be most welcome, and would enable the Club to have the new plinth properly inscribed.

The Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for 1947 was published in October. This is the first full report to be published by the Department since 1940.

By far the largest part of the population is engaged in agricultural pursuits and this well-presented Report is to be recommended as one which gives an admirable survey of conditions in Sarawak.

Readers may recall the correspondence appearing in the columns of the concerning the Almanac. The need for a certain amount of revision is apparent and we would welcome pertinent suggestions from our readers.

Rural Credit.

The smallholder, whether he cultivates rubber, pepper, padi or other crop, is faced with the eternal problem of lack of ready cash to sustain him during unproductive periods. All over the world the picture has been the same, but in some countries the problem has been attacked and solved. In Germany in 1849 a man named Raiffeisen organis-

ed the first "Village Bank" from which idea grew the rural credit societies that have brought economic emancipation to so many small farmers in different parts of the world. Other methods have been employed to solve the problem, and not infrequently Governments have attempted by various means first to settle the debts of the smallholder, then to attempt to make it impossible for him to fall into debt again, but the only Governments which have achieved any conspicuous success in the field are those which have carried the ideas of Co-operation to their people through Departments of Co-operation, concentrating in the first place upon alleviation of poverty and indebtedness of the rural population by the operation of rural credit societies of the Raiffeisen model.

To the ordinary man, untrained and inexperienced in the methods of Co-operation, the idea of Co-operative Societies appears to him to be solely a means to obtain honest market prices for his produce and to buy at the lowest possible market prices the requisites to maintain life and continue production. This is one major aim of co-operation. but it can never be achieved so long as the

smallholder remains in debt and therefore must seek ready cash from moneylenders and traders. Many of these latter people are honest, or attempt to be. but some are not, and in any case personal profit and security must be achieved by them at the expense of the borrower.

The first problem to be attacked in any country where rural indebtedness exists on a large scale (and this has been true of all countries whose economy relies mainly upon the primary producers) is the provision of short term credit at low rates of interest. Grants from Governments and such-like assistance have had little success, and experience has proved that the smallholders must provide their own short- term capital through their own rural credit societies, while Government concentrates upon provision of medium and long-term loans through Agricultural Banks.

If the economic condition of the smallholder in Sarawak is to be improved, then the immediate purpose of Co-operative Department cannot be the promotion of marketing and requirements societies, but the creation of rural credit societies in order to eliminate mass indebtedness. Out of the experience gained from the success and efficiency of these societies will come a knowledge of the true principles of Co-operation, and only then, emphatically only then, will it be possible for the smallholder to advance the next step, to organise and run efficiently against all private competition the marketing and requirements societies which, being his own, will deal honestly with him. A knowledge of buying and selling does not come easily in this modern world; nor can efficiency be achieved through the honest intentions of a few inexperienced men when the majority see in their Society just a way to get better prices and will at any moment undermine their own marketing or requirements society by forsaking it in search of temporary gain. Rural Credit Societies provide credit and teach thrift and integrity and offer a preparatory education in business and in Co-operative principles. All of these must be acquired before entry into business can be made in safety.

In conclusion, the following is an example of the formation of a Rural Credit Society. Suppose that after some preparatory work by the Registrar or his staff, twenty Melanau smallholders of good character, belonging to the same village, wish to form a Society to pay off old debts and provide funds for the future. They agree to pay \$10 each at once thus providing a capital of \$200 and with

the assistance of the Co-operative Dept, the by-laws of their Society, which will be of unlimited liability, are drawn up. Their Society is registered and the Registrar authorises them to borrow from some rich person or from a Bank up to a specified sum, say, \$1,000. The Committee is then empowered by the Members at a meeting to borrow the sum on the security of the property of all the members. Loans are then granted to members (or refused) on two sureties after very careful consideration, and it is understandable that, as the private property of the members is at stake, the Committee will not lightly grant loans. These loans must be made at a rate of interest high enough to cover expenses, pay the interest on the capital borrowed, and set aside a small reserve. The Society will encourage deposits from members and will pay interest on these at a rate lower than that at which the Society lends to other members. An official of the Co-operative Department will watch the operations of the Society very carefully and instruct the Secretary in the correct method of book-keeping. This official will act as their guide, philosopher and friend, and it will be his job to see that the Society does not get into difficulties through ignorance. Gradually the members of the Committee will become more expert in their duties and correspondingly supervision may be relaxed somewhat. At the end of the first year the accounts will be audited by a member of the Department and a balance sheet prepared. The audit will be considered by the Registrar who will make a report to the Committee. A General Meeting will then be called and the accounts and the other matters discussed. Probably by this time membership will have grown to perhaps fifty as other small-holders see the advantages of membership. It may be that the general meeting will wish to discuss the formation of a Store or a Marketing Society, and as the Registrar or one of his staff will be at the meeting, the members can be advised of the best way to go about this, but it is probable the advice will be to go slowly and gain more experience.

All the profits of the Society will be paid into a Reserve Fund, and gradually, year by year, this Reserve Fund will grow, deposits from members will increase, and loans from outside will be paid off. Rates of interest will come down and members will be released from indebtedness except to the organisation in which they place their faith.?(Contributed).

Long-term Contracts between the U.K Buying Departments and Colonial Agricultural Producers.

The declared policy of His Majesty's Government is to push ahead with all possible speed with the economic and political advancement of the Colonial Empire. The importance of rapid increase in Colonial productivity has been accentuated by world shortages of many of the raw materials and food-stuffs which the Colonies produce and by the special balance of payments difficulties in the sterling area of which the Colonies form part.

It will clearly be a great help to Colonial producers in any plans to increase the volume of their production if they have an assurance of a market for their goods for some years to come. His Majesty's Government have, therefore, been considering the general principles which should, in the interests alike of Colonial producers and of the United Kingdom as a consumer, underlie contracts made between the two parties for the sale and purchase of Colonial agricultural export surpluses. Of necessity the principles are stated in general terms. Because of the variety of the commodities involved, the varying degree of organisation of Colonial producers and the varying arrangements for purchase in the United Kingdom, each commodity and each contract will require individual treatment.

Such contracts should as far as possible be freely negotiated between the producers and the purchasing Department of His Majesty's Government. Wherever possible negotiations should be conducted direct between representatives of the producers themselves and the purchasing Department. It is part of the policy of His Majesty's Government to encourage the growth of statutory marketing organisations in the Colonies and these organisations will be able to take part in the negotiations. Colonial Governments and the Colonial Office will assist producers in these negotiations to the best of their ability and, where there is no satisfactory organisation of the producers, they will themselves undertake the negotiations as they have done in the past.

Period of Contract.

The United Kingdom purchasing Departments will be ready to enter into long-term contracts for many Colonial products. The periods of such contracts will vary according to the circumstances of the individual cases, but, where appropriate, they may extend up to ten years.

It is recognised that there is a special need for long-term assurances in the case of tree crops which

take a considerable number of years to come into bearing. While a contract for more than ten years will probably never be practicable (and, indeed, contracts for this length of time present many difficulties), it should be possible to provide in some contracts for the question of their extension to be considered some years before they come to an end.

Quantity.

It will be the policy to give Colonial producers as precise estimates as possible of the future requirements of the United Kingdom for home consumption and for export in manufactured form. It will not generally be possible for the United Kingdom to undertake to purchase Colonial production in excess of these requirements.

Both the United Kingdom and the Colonies will, of course, have in mind the desirability of Colonial producers nursing or developing other markets. In particular, balance of payments considerations will be of major importance in this connection and must be kept constantly in mind by both sides in all negotiations.

The exact quantities to be included in any long-term contract must, therefore, depend upon a variety of factors which can only be assessed for each product at the time when the contract is being negotiated. The probability of changes in market conditions during the currency of the contract may make it desirable for quantities to be expressed as

minima and maxima. The contract could if necessary provide for different minima and maxima in different years.

Price.

With the present disturbed market conditions and the special economic factors which now affect prices in world markets, it is not wise to attempt to agree a fixed price over a period of years. The longer of the period of the contract the more speculative a fixed price becomes. The fact that a large proportion of certain commodities does not now reach the world market often means that countries competing in the limited free market are prepared to give grossly inflated prices for the relatively small quantities available. It cannot, therefore, be expected that where actual prices are written into contracts negotiated while present conditions of scarcity remain they will be comparable with those

marginal prices. Moreover, in the view of His Majesty's Government, Colonial producers in negotiating prices for inclusion in contracts should have due regard to the security they received from the making of long-term contracts. The extent to which this particular consideration will affect prices will, of course, depend upon the length of the contract and the measure of security which is given to Colonial producers.

In many cases, however, it may not be desirable to fix actual prices at the time when a contract is made, and it may be preferable to agree a formula by which the price is varied from time to time.

In some cases, for instance, it may be found most convenient to both buyers and sellers for the price to be negotiated periodically in the light of current market and other, factors. It may be possible in such cases to specify in the contract the factors to be taken into account in these negotiations, such as the prices ruling in established markets in which an appreciable proportion of the product is traded; or, where no such markets exists, the prices received by other Empire producers for substantial quantities of the same or similar products.

It may also be possible in some cases to specify in the contract upper and lower price limits beyond which the price will not vary.

His Majesty's Government hoped that this statement of principles will facilitate the conclusion of contracts which will be mutually beneficial to His Majesty's Government, Colonial producers and the Commonwealth as a whole.

An attempt to Reconstruct the Development of Binatang District

BY

The Assistant District Officer, Binatang.

Both the Chinese and Malays claim to have been the first to settle in Binatang.

The Malay version of the first settlement is that about 100 years ago Datu Patinggi Abang Abdul Bahman (a direct descendant of Rajah Ali Adam) was a Malay chief in Kelaka and Sarikei. Presumably this is the same man as the "Datu Patinggi Abdulrahman" mentioned by Hugh Low in his trip to "Serekei" in April, 1845. On his death his nephew Sharif Masshor started trouble, but this was soon stopped by the Rajah of Sarawak. On

account of this, more than half the Malay population of Sarikei removed to Mukah, returned once more to Sarikei, and then moved to Muara Payang (between Sarikei and the present Binatang) and left Sarikei without a leader. It was at Muara Payang that Abang Adeng and Abang Drahman (former prime ministers of Sarikei) died. Abang Amin was appointed chief by the Rajah. Three years after their arrival at Muara Payang a fire occurred and burnt all the houses to the ground. The Malays then moved to Sungei Kelili (in Pulau Bunut, which is on the opposite bank of the Rejang river to Binatang) and felled the jungle and started farming. After five years the Rajah ordered them to move to Binatang, and they were the first people, to fell the jungle and live there. However the Malays found it inconveniently far from their farming lands, and furthermore they feared for the safety of their women on account of wild Dayaks of Ulu Sungei Binatang and Ulu Sungei Meradong, so after twelve years they moved to Sungei Spinang (also in Pulau Bunut) and left Binatang uninhabited. After nine years at Sungei Spinang the Malays removed to Bunut itself and while there Dayaks from Lamanak, Krian and Undup came to borrow land for farming. This was allowed by Abang Amin and the Dayaks felled some jungle. Seven years later a Chinese named Kong Sang, believed to be a Cantonese, obtained the Rajah's permission to buy and work belian at Binatang with the Dayaks. Because of this the Malays were once more ordered by the Rajah to return to Binatang, but Abang Amin died before this could be carried out and at Binatang Abang Metahir was appointed chief by the Rajah. The date of this is estimated as being about 1899.

A Chinese version of the first settlement of Binatang is that the first building was an attap shed built before 1879 between the mouths of the Binatang and Meradong rivers by a Chinese named Ah Poon (Siong Poon Chiew) great uncle of the present Cantonese Headman and great great uncle of the latest probationary clerk in the Binatang office. This shed was built on the Rejang river bank at the foot of the present Kubu hill, and this place was chosen as being convenient as a stopping place for sailing boats plying on the river. At this time the whole area was under virgin jungle and Ah Poon and his coolies made money felling it and forming log rafts, but for this privilege he had to pay timber royalties to the Tua Kampong Abang Amin who lived in Pulau Bunut. As this was not found convenient, Ah Poon requested a change of system and the Datu of Sibu asked the Tua Kampong

to move to the present kampong area of Binatang. This was done over forty years ago under Abang Haji Metahir, son-in-law of Abang Amin and grandfather of the present Tuan Imam. At this time there were stockaded Dayak houses in Sungei Meradong and the upwaters of the Binatang and Mador rivers. Later on Ah Poon built a second attap house owing to the river eating away the site of the first one.

In 1878 Ah Poon with his nephews Ah Chi and Ah Tang built three shophouses with belian attap roofs. The business was known as Chop Hap Aik and Ah Poon died in Sibu. A year later another shophouse was built by the Hylant, Ah Kok, and the Luichew, Ah Sang, who planted coffee across river at Sungei Puloh, and later two more shop- houses were built until in 1908 there was a total of seven shophouses below the Kubu Hill and facing the Rejang river. The Malays were in Kampong Ulu on the site of the present temporary cinema in the former Bee Chiang sago factory, and in Kampong Ilir in the present kampong area. The first masjid was built about forty-one years ago. Kampong Ulu later joined Kampong Ilir and each house owner received \$70.00 from Bee Chiang and Ah Poon's nephews received \$800.00.

In July 1909 Ah Kok had had a new coffin made for his own use, and to celebrate its completion he had a feast and prayed with burning joss sticks, but the wind blew the joss papers and the result was a fire that lasted six hours, burnt three shop- houses and the new coffin, but a providential shower and change of wind saved the remainder of the bazaar.

The Sea Dayaks lay no claim to having settled in Binatang town, but their story is of interest as confirming part of the two previous versions and for checking up on some of the dates. It also gives a good illustration of Dayak wanderings and of the settlement of Binatang district. It appears there were three distinct movements from Betong, Skrang and Saribas into different parts of the Rejang valley and at different times.

Rentap was head of the Dayaks in Betong and he refused to follow the rule of the Rajah and put up a big gun at Bukit Sadok. Rikayainsul was on the flank, but when he heard the Rajah's party coming to the attack he let them through. Rentap surrendered and his name disappeared (about 1861?). Rikayainsul had two sons in Betong, Haji and Letan. Letan had three sons, Rakayaluyoh,

Kari and Rikayananang. Kari's sons were Tilah, Tandang and Jantan.

Kari started the trek from 2nd to 3rd Division and arrived in the Julau valley and there were no Dayaks or men of any other race there at that time. Tilah moved on to Ulu Sungei Binatang from Julau, while Jantan became penghulu in Nanga Darau in Julau. and Tandang stayed at Nanga Pakan also in Julau valley. Penghulu Busang replaced Jantan. but as a result of Ah Soon's case was dismissed and replaced by Penghulu Umpor in Julau and by Penghulu Ajah, son of Tilah, in Ulu Sungei Binatang. Incidentally Indit and Bantan who were involved in this case are still living in this district. At this time Dayaks were only in the upwater parts of the rivers and there were none in Sungei Meradong. It was in Tandang's time that the Malays came to Binatang. Eight years after Penghulu Tilah arrived in Ulu Binatang there were Chinese in the present town area and they were two boat hawkers.

After Jantan's death, Penghulu Brinau (who had previously ruled amongst the Skrang people and gone from there to Nanga Julau) came to Ulu Sun- gei Mador. He was followed by his son Impaleng who was penghulu in Mador for about twenty-eight years, and in his time there were only Chinese boat hawkers in Binatang. Penghulu Lani succeeded his father Impaleng and four or five years later the first Chinese shops were opened, these belonged to Ah Soon, Ah Kot and Pi An. Meanwhile the Dayaks had been spreading ever more down the rivers towards the Rejang and up other Rejang tributaries. All taxes were paid in Sibu Kubu. Penghulu Ugak followed Lani, and on the latter's death Penghulu Ajah took over all the upriver area of the Binatang river and its tributaries, while Peng- hulu Nyipa took over the lower Binatang river, Sungei Meradong and the Batang Rejang. Peng-

hulu Nyipa himself was born in Saribas and his father brought him to 3rd Division. Nyipa is still penghulu here after twenty years' service. Mera- dong was populated by Saribas Dayaks who came via Sungei Sebelak. Ajah was penghulu from 1934 to 1938 and Bajah followed him until 1947 when Penghulu Tegong, son of Ajah, took over as the present leader of the upwaters of the Binatang river.

Whereas there are obvious discrepancies in the above versions, there is unanimity as to how

Binatang got its name. The story is that the Binatang river area was so called as a result of the unusually large number of monkeys, wild pig, deer, big snakes and even orang-utans who lived in the region. When the fruit season arrived, large numbers of pigs swam the Rejang to the present Municipal area, where they were killed. A further development in the history of the name of the river and town occurred in 1925 when the Tuan Muda was on a visit here. He considered the name 'Binatang' as being ugly and ridiculous and ordered that the town should in future be known by the name of 'Bintang' with its pleasanter associations. For three or four months the postal address was 'Bintang,' but when the Rajah returned from leave he ordered the name to revert to 'Binatang.'

The coffee plantations of the Puloh and Meradong rivers produced smaller crops each successive year and the Chinese gardeners started to saw belian in the upwaters of the various rivers and supplied this wood to Kuching, Sibu and elsewhere. Then as the belian supply began to give out, the Chinese switched to pepper in 1910, and in 1929 between 500 and 600 gardens were planted. However due to disease and a drop in price, the pepper gardens were mostly abandoned, though some Foochows took over from the Cantonese, a lot of whom returned to China, and most of the people turned ever more to rubber. The war put the final touch to the dissolution of the pepper gardens. It is encouraging however to note that the Foochows have already submitted sixty-four applications for pepper gardens in 1948. Altogether three sago factories were also opened in Binatang, though these are going through difficult times.

After the 1909 fire, the bazaar increased to forty-seven wooden shophouses, when in February 1938 there was another conflagration which lasted three days and burnt down the whole of the old bazaar with a vast loss in wealth but the loss of the life of only one child. Only a few charred stumps in front of the present offices and along the river approach to the Malay kampong now bear witness to the existence of this old bazaar.

After the fire two rows of temporary shophouses were built facing the Kelepu Road and they and a block of six wooden shophouses had to be pulled down because they were leaning over, and so by 1940 there were only eighteen out of the original twenty-four wooden shophouses in Wharf Road built in 1926. The residential area was also beginning to take shape.

Five concrete shophouses, the market and the present Assistant District Officer's bungalow in Kelupu Road were all completed by the Japanese, and the shophouses used by them or those who worked for them. The present position of the new bazaar is that there are twenty-nine concrete shop-houses built or under construction and eighteen

wooden shophouses. It is interesting to note that the wooden shophouses cost about \$500.00 to put up in 1926 while the present concrete ones are costing \$16,000.00, but Government are helping with a loan.

The first kubu was built about 1916 and a wireless station was established which was later removed to Sarikei. The kubu was dismantled and a temporary one built which lasted for several years. The present one dates from January, 1948. Abang Haji Metahir was the first officer in charge and Louis Wong the first Court Writer. Inche Mor-shidi followed as Native Officer and Mr. A. J. N. Richards was the first and only pre-war Assistant District Officer.

The Roman Catholic Mission was first built at Sungei Selidap, but moved from there to the present Chung Kuok School and then to its present position in Kelepu Road. The original building was burnt down at the same time as Rumah Legak, but it is encouraging to note that Rumah Legak is now a house of over fifty rooms and beside it is St. Patrick's Public Dayak School. The Methodists opened a school in the old bazaar (the house was the one in which started the disastrous 1938 conflagration) and later moved to the present Kai Wen School area. There are now both Roman Catholic and Methodist sponsored schools throughout the district.

About twenty years ago the Kelepu Road was constructed by Mr. Ling Ming Lok, the first Foo-chow Headman in Binatang. It goes past Sungei Kelepu to the Sungei Bakong area a distance of about nine miles before turning into a mere track, and there is a branch to Tanjong Genting. It is possible this is the embryo of a future Sarikei-Sibu road. When the road was completed it was possible to cycle from the old bazaar to Sungei Bakong in forty minutes, and pre-war it was still possible to cycle to Kelepu police outpost. There was a telephone line between Binatang and Kelepu and Binatang and Sarikei, the latter of which still exists. The Kelepu and Tulai police outposts are now being dismantled. This year the Kelepu Road is being made motorable for three miles.

Many of the events enumerated above are commemorated in the names of the Municipal roads.

Due to good luck and even more to good management Binatang survived the war without much damage to her buildings. When the Europeans had left and before the Japanese arrived there were disturbances, an attempt was made to rob the Customs Godown, and the telephone line to Kelepu was repeatedly cut. Some Dayaks from Ulu Lasi came to attack Sungei Labas gardeners and one Chinese woman was shot and her head taken back to Lasi and various gardeners' houses were burnt. However the Cantonese headman with the help of Native Officer Inche Morshidi managed to persuade the Dayaks and Chinese to swear friendship and a pig was killed in front of Kelepu outpost, and another at Bukit Changkol on the 3rd mile of the Kelepu Road. Then twelve Japanese under General Mitsui landed and order was restored. Native Officer Inche Morshidi was later replaced in Binatang by Wan Hussein, but Yoshisawa of Mitsui Norin looked after the area. As Japanese go, Yoshisawa was considered fairly reasonable and his chief interest was agriculture, but at the end of 1944 he was superseded by Eda San (Ataisan) and he was very bad indeed and tortured a lot.

As the Allies were advancing from Kapit the

Japanese assembled the Dayaks from far and near to kill a pig at the Chinese cemetery and they had a feast and then they all went to the present Assistant District Officer's bungalow at Bukit Kichap and the meeting with the hundred Dayaks lasted all night behind closed doors and windows. However three Dayaks found an excuse to get out and warned the Cantonese headman that Yoshisawa's instructions were that the Ming Tee School (at Bukit Changkol), the kampong, the Roman Catholic and Methodist Schools, the residential houses and bazaar should all be burnt and the Malays and Chinese exterminated. The headman decided not to flee but sent another Dayak to get hold of Tuai Rumah Legak who was in the meeting. Meanwhile the Japanese and some Dayaks had set off to burn the school at Bukit Changkol, which is at the 3rd mile on the Kelepu Road. Legak and the headman together managed to persuade the Dayaks to return home, when Yoshisawa returned he found only twenty Dayaks left and had to give up the idea of sacking Binatang. Thus by a very close shave and the resolution of the Cantonese headman, Binatang avoided the disasters

that occurred in Kanowit, Song and Kapit.

The headman with his son and some Dayaks then went by devious routes to Kanowit, as Sibü was still occupied by Japanese, and brought Sergeant J. K. Barrie and some twenty Dayak soldiers via the Assan and Mador rivers. The Japanese meanwhile had been led by devious routes to Sarikei, and so once again Binatang was safe from hostile depredations.

The Concrete Wharf was badly damaged during 1946 by the 'Shofuku Maru,' which itself was unscathed.

The post-war story of Binatang is one of steady progress. The Municipal Area has been formed and divided into zones : a Municipal Board functions : trade is flourishing so that in 1947 Binatang was the fourth town of Sarawak from both the export and import points of view: the Kubu and the Bee Chiang hills are fast disappearing as they are being used to fill in under the new shophouses and build up Kelepu and kampong roads from the surrounding swamp : there have been many applications to plant pepper, while more and more people wish to obtain land to plant rubber, padi and fruit : from 1st January, 1948, to 31st July, 1948, there were 210 applications for land apart from other land transactions: shady trees and lawns are slowly materialising in the Municipal Area : electricity has been restored and may be expanded. As from January 1948 the staff position once again permitted of the establishment of an Assistant District Officer for Binatang.

If Binatang's present stage of development from her first settlement, which is within living memory, is any indication to her future, she should well deserve the epithet 'Floreat Binatang.'

Pasai Siong.

[In a roving letter, the contributor of this article, Mr. A. J. N. Richards, writes. 'Your reprint of the last issue reminded me of the story that I had heard a little over a year ago. It arose out of a curious jar that was covered with finely drawn four-toed dragons and had human faces on the 'ears' of it. It was said to have come from Tugau's house. On the same occasion there were about a dozen people eating together with me and I noticed that three men kept away in a corner of the room to eat almost furtively. I asked questions, and got this story. It is perhaps worth noting that Cerridwen is the White Sow of Welsh legend, the horrifying 'Death-in-Life' aspect of the goddess

who was also the Flower Goddess of Love and the Corn Mother. The Athenians used to sacrifice a white pig to the goddess at midwinter, which is the fruit season here, but that would be before the sowing.?)

Now Tugau, the king, dwelt at the mouth of the river Pasai. at the joining of two streams. His house was large and prosperous and full of people : as it is said,

"The house reached the heavens, it was so high;

Its length took a swallow a day to fly.? And the posts of the house were whole trees that Tugau alone could lift, and they held the floor of the house firmly ten fathoms from the ground.

There Tugau lived and passed the time gaily in feasts and diversions with his family and his friends about him, while his retainers and slaves laboured and waited upon them.

Among his people was a man of gentle birth whose strength and magic were such that Tugau could not look upon him without jealousy, even though the man was accounted one. of Tugau?s sons-in-law. His name was Siong, and Tugau set him impossible feats to perform in the hope that he might be rid of him.

One of these feats was to build a boat large enough to carry an hundred men out of a single tree, with all its parts and the paddles from the same tree. Siong found a tree by the hill as you pass over to Oya and returned in the boat he had made and finished within three days.

For this feat Siong was rewarded with a feast and the best portion of the largest pig to be found in the country. When the feast was ended. Tugau bade Siong go hunting to find another pig of the same size and lent him for his hunting a magical spear with a golden blade.

After many days Siong found a pig in the forest that was pure white and it ran swiftly. He hunted this pig and at last speared it in the side, but the spear-head came off, so that the pig ran and disappeared among the trees while Siong stood dis- mayed with the useless shaft in his hand.

When Siong returned to the Pasai to tell of the mischance that had befallen him, Tugau was so enraged that he drove Siong out and told him he might not return again until he came bringing the spear-head with him.

So Siong set forth once more and began to follow the tracks of the pig. They led him for many days

over rivers and swamps and mountains. At a branching of the way the tracks led to the right, into a country unknown to Siong and, as he pressed forward, he began to hear drums boating and sweet music. He was afraid lest he had come upon an abode of spirits, but to return empty-handed was worse than to go on. So he continued following the tracks and they brought him to a house of great size and prosperity. An old man met him and greeted him, supposing that he must be skilful in medicine because, as he said, "The daughter of the king is beset by a grievous sickness and you cannot have come here at this time save by the will of the gods to secure her recovery."

Thereupon the old man led him up into the house to the room where the king's daughter lay, and Siong saw that the golden spear-head was fixed in her side. His first thought was to obtain the spear-head and hide it, so he said, "This night must I make ready and tomorrow ; the next night will I use the magic that I have, but no man must be near and there must be no lights within the house." In the morning he went down from the house and made ready a short piece of bamboo, and in the night he went back to the room where the king's daughter was. He took out the spear-head from the wound and hid it within the piece of bamboo, and he left the wound covered so that none might see what had happened.

The king's daughter recovered and her father and his people were overjoyed. The girl was given to Siong in marriage and they lived in that house in peace and plenty until a year had passed.

One day the bees came swarming down the river past the house and the people asked them the reason. The bees replied. "The trees in the hills have been in flower and so many were the flowers that we are well-pleased. Soon there will be a great harvest of fruit for you." The king and his people wore joyful at the thought of the fruit and began to prepare for a journey in search of it. Siong and his wife set forth with the company and they came at length to a great lake. There Siong stood amazed for, as the people touched the water, they became pigs and began to swim across the lake. Siong was afraid but his wife persuaded him to go into the water first. As he touched the water he became a pig, but he could not swim and scarce regained the shore. So his wife made him plunge into a smaller lake nearby and he was returned to his human shape. She bade him return to the house for a boat in which to follow the company, and she said, "Beware of a white pig on your

journey; should such a pig cross your path, capture it but kill it not, for it will be myself.?

Siong puddled for many miles until he reached Assan. There he saw a multitude of pigs swimming and crossing the river. At the end of Pulau Kerto he found the water swirling and turning slowly with the water, a white pig. He took up the white pig into his boat and found that it was dead. So then he returned again to Tugau's house at the end of a year, rejoicing that he had with him the golden spear-head and sorrowing over the daughter of the king. But he found that the white pig was filled with gold ornaments and jewels of every kind, so was he enriched.

Long afterwards Siong quarrelled with Tugau. and Tugau died at Siong's hand in the midst of a feast. The people scattered out of that country so that the great house was left desolate and fell into ruins. It is from the great deeds of Siong that the river is now called Pasai Siong. and because he killed Tugau at a feast Tugau's descendants eat apart by themselves at feasts, even to this day.

The Shrine of Syed Kedah.

(as told by Wakil Tua Kampong Harun of Kampong Baru Melayu.)

Long ago, when the Sultan still ruled what is now Sarawak, there was living in Brunei a holy man named Syed Kedah. In those days Malays nominally followed the Hindu religion, but in practise they were poor ignorant people full of superstition and fear.

Syed Kedah knew that Tuan Allah is the only true god. and that Mahomed is his greatest prophet, and he determined to bring the light of the True Religion to his foolish people. So great was his zeal that he left his comfortable Brunei home and went out into the wilds to teach and to instruct.

Finally he settled in the big Malay Kampong of Bukit Panchor, on the Samarahan River. There he laboured for many years, teaching young and old to read, write and figure. He strove too to gain followers for the prophet. So successful was he that the entire population of the Kampong embraced the new religion and Syed Kedah became the first Tuan Iman of the Bukit Panchor Mosque. This position he held until his peaceful death from old age. Loud was the lamentation when he passed on to Heaven, and he was reverently buried at the foot of the hill on which the village stood. His grave was care- fully marked with two stones for the place that houses the remains of so holy a man must

itself become holy.

Pleasant it would be to record that his lifework endured, but it was not to be. Not long after he was laid to rest the fierce Skrangs raided the Samarahan River, looting burning and murdering. The three Malay Kampongs of Muara Tuang, Tan- jong Buah and Bukit Panchor all suffered; none survived the massacres at Tanjong Buah and Bukit Panchor. These two kampongs were razed to the ground and were never rebuilt; today there remains no trace where once they stood.

But the grave of Tuan Iman Syed Kedah still remains, and is still revered by the Malays of Samarahan. Those who wish to see it will find it at Panchor (27 1/4 Miles along the Kuching Serian Road) some 30 yards from the true right hand bank of the Samarahan and some five yards from the road.

Notes.

Harun remembers only so much of the story as is recorded above, nor has it been possible to locate any other person who can supply more detail. He can throw no light on the dates of the happenings, but it is reasonably certain that Syed Kedah came to the Samarahan not long before the 17th century, and most probably later than that. The massacre by the Skrangs does not appear to be recorded in available histories?one informant stated that the last raid on the Samarahan took place ?about 30 years before Rajah Brooke?? and this may well be correct.

The narrator insists that the holy man was a ?Malay,? yet the honorific ?Syed? indicates that he was an Arab, or at least of Arabic descent. Surprisingly enough, the narrator also insists that the people of the Samarahan were ?Malays? although they followed the Hindu religion. The latter is a reversal of the common practise of using "Malay? as synonymous with ?Islam.?

A number of commentators have referred to reports that the Samarahan Dayaks descended from immigrants from Pequ (Burma). This is definitely wrong. Mr. E. Banks in his ?Ancient Times in Borneo? draws that the ?Malays? of the Samarahan are legendary descendants of the Peguans. He also refers to the remains of a Hindu temple at Bukit Bahala on the Samarahan. However it has never been explained why a Hindu temple (&/or cemetery)

should be situated so far from known ancient settlements. Bukit Bahala lies just halfway be- tween

Bukit Panchor and Tanjong Buah, which our legend quotes as former settlements of ?Malays who followed the Hindu religion!!?

D.O. (Sadong).

Birds in a Bornean Garden?II.

Of the smaller birds the common green Tora moved in family parties with a call note of a long single plaintive whistle, sometimes together with families of a small Pied Shrike, grey breasted and black beaked with a dark eye-stripe. Very small orange-bellied Flower Peckers fed on the Blossoms or seeds of flowering rubber trees and an unidentified small bird whose Malay name was said to be ?Chin- Chew Raia" called frequently from some rubber trees for a time.

In cultivation by far the commonest was the Spotted Dove, ten years ago quite rare but now so common as to be a pest to newly planted rice, corn, peas, beans or any kind of grain; they were very partial to freshly dug ground and may be partly insectivorous. Pairs were frequently seen of an evening, cooing and bowing and wing slapping in the rubber trees, and although nuptial flights were observed, a sudden rise to stalling point and then a sharp turn over?coition was not once seen and it is not yet clear if the pairs were of opposite sexes or sometimes two cocks. The Black and White Magpie Robin was almost as common and of great interest. They were quite fearless, pick:ng up worms and insects as clearing and digging was progressing, taking grasshoppers, locusts, eating robber nuts and four-angle bean flowers, pecking in the head of a Flying Lizard?trying to eat it. pecking at and driving off a tree-snake near their nest. They were first to spot hawks and cats and give the alarm, in the former case streaking for a large tree, the tame ducks taking the hint and diving into their house. Cats were mobbed but got at least one robin. Bulbuls, Fan-Tailed Flycatch- ers and the Pied Cuckoo-Shrikes were driven off and they used to have quarrels among themselves after the communal singing matches so often follow- ing the end of a shower of rain. Cocks and hens were solicitous of the young, a hen catching a young centipede was bitten in the face near the eye and made repeated assaults on its prey, attacking its young almost as fiercely when the latter joined in.

The small red-headed Tailor Bird was very noisy, its cry no doubt giving it the Dayak name ?Bri-ak,?

though to a European it sounds like 'Rich-ard'; they were insectivorous and very common in the beds of egg plants. The Pied Cuckoo Shrike was also common, usually feeding in pairs, solely insectivorous and rather easily driven off by other birds. At night they congregated twenty to thirty at a time in some Jack-Fruit trees, their double call note not unlike the croak of a frog, as they were going to roost. The Yellow Vented Bulbul was also common and omnivorous, feeding sometimes like a Flycatcher, sometimes on bean blossoms and particularly on the very smallest, ripest, reddest, red-hot chillis, young and old swallowing whole from half-a-dozen to a dozen at a meal, one being enough to burn me up! One pair nested in the

tapioca but as the leaves fell off the nest eventually fell too. The glorious song of the Golden Crowned Bulbul was heard some mornings from down-stream. Most confiding of all were the Fan-Tailed Fly-catchers. which fed right up to one, flirting the tail and drooping the wings in characteristic attitudes soon mimicked by robins, young and old; although ready to join in mobbing cats with its 'chuar'-like alarm note these Flycatchers were the most sensitive of all, easily discouraged and driven off by stronger birds like robins.?(To be continued.)

A Review: 'East and West'

BY

Somerset Maugham.

This new volume of short stories runs to just under 1000 pages, and is Maugham's own selection. As the title suggests, it is a cross-section of his tales from all lands. But those that predominate, and are given pride of place, are his tales of the South Seas, Malaya and Borneo.

No writer has ever caused more indignation in this part of the world than Maugham, though, in this somewhat localised way of life (i.e. a numerically small and specialised European society) any writer can easily make him or herself unpopular. Nor has that indignation much abated in the more than twenty years since he was hereabouts. He has since attained international status as a writer, and his eastern stories have contributed materially to that achievement. Let us now re-examine his writing and see how far this is justified.

Reading through 'East and West,' one with no partisan feelings about it must be struck by the

extreme artificiality of so much in it. Does Maugham (like many a journalist) rely on the ignorance of most his readers, who have not been much east of Greenwich? The missionary in his most famous story, "Rain," is a fantastic figure, who can control governors and business houses by a mere threat. His system of conversion must seem quite incredible to anyone with experience of the hard job even the toughest missionaries have, and the way in which traders more than keep up their end in Christianity's eternal dog-fight. Take the missionaries' "sin" with Sadie Thompson, and his immediate seashore suicide; just possible?yes. But as we read on, the formula is repeated until we see it as a Maugham Mannerism. In the second story, "The Fall of Edward Barnard," the centre figure commits intellectual suicide?as the story displays it?-by "going native" and abandon- ing his civilised ties. This is a theme beloved of Maugham, who developed it into a full length novel probably based on the story of the painter Gauguin. "The Moon and Sixpence."

In the third story, "Mackintosh," the centre figure causes the murder of his Resident, then, in remorse, commits marine suicide, just like the Rev. Davidson. And in "The Pool" much the same occurs, the man drowning himself with a stone. Even in "The Letter," which earned Maugham his special Malayan Hate, there is considerable inference of eventual suicide as well as the central murder. In "Before the Party," a Borneo tale, the Resident's supposed D.T. Suicide turns into a wifely murder. It is a scene of fantastic artificiality starting with the mother in a hat of egret's feathers ?all the way from Borneo.? sent by the deceased?most improper conduct from a Resident, since the export of plumes was prohibited years before Maugham ; and ending with the father, after hearing the vicious story of his daughter's slaying, going off to the party, ?I ought never to have been told. I think it was most selfish of you.? In "The Outstation," the Borneo story for which he earned most hate, the Resident practically connives in death of his no-gentleman assistant, and hushes the thing up in favour of the murderer, his Malay boy. In "P.&O." the murder of the white by a Malay is done magically.

Reading one story, it is possible to accept Maugham's method. Reading a whole series, one increasingly sees through the method. By dealing with situations unfamiliar to most people, and inserting into each just enough "truth" to carry the weight, he is able to simplify and emphasise

aspects of the affair into a degree of sordidity. meanness and self-interest beyond relief. Nowhere in these stories is there a decent, civilised action, unless it be done magically. Nowhere do we find any of the sort of persons all of us know in the east?ordinary, decent people. Horrible things happen in all lands. But here the land itself is tainted and stinking.

It may be argued that such emphasis and dramatisation is part of the writer's craft. Yes. indeed. But the fine writer, the creative artist, blends sympathy in his scorn, reality in his romance. The cheap writer, the playboy of words or the man who regards writing as nothing more than a way of making money (irrespective of falsifying values and distorting readers' minds), cares only to impress, excite, blandish and amuse all round. Maugham clearly regards himself as in the first category. He has written a long and revealing preface to this anthology, in which he discusses, at length, the writings of de Maupassant and Chekov; with his criticisms of each. He obviously puts himself in their class, and he goes on to scorn critics who have described him (Maugham) as 'competent'. This, he feels, is not enough. But isn't it? To the careful reader today it would seem that some of his tales are emphatically incompetent, stiff, jerky, badly constructed. It is true, as he claims, that they have a beginning and an end. But so does a rotten prahu or a dying penghulu. It's what's in the middle that counts.

Perhaps one reason for the failure of stories like 'The Outstations'?except as a hot-up for outsiders and a near-the-bone scrape-up for locals?is the artificiality of the persons, their over-exaggeration. Taking the general outlines of a really fantastic character (and heaven knows, there are enough around) Maugham applies the peculiarities to every detail, and leaves the person with no basic character, no trace of normality whatever. In the foreword, he has something to say on the origins of 'The Outstation,' because he has 'heard that the Resident of a district in Sarawak, which I described in the story, was much affronted because he thought I had him in mind.' And he tells us the real model was 'a British Consul I had once known in Spain,?' who had died ten years before. 'The two men had not a trait in common.' Whether or not this will reassure claimants for places in Maugham's immortality?and, as is well known, some people will do anything for notoriety. even up to confessing a murder they could not have done? the result is unsatisfactory. Not even

Sarawak's weirdest-ever Resident got up to the Warburton standard of vindictive prejudice. The most convincing is the tale with least drama and dynamite in it. "The Yellow Streak," another Sarawak story.

The bones of fact are in these tales, and sufficiently so to clatter in the skeletal cupboards of eastern unease; hut the flesh stinks. "East and West" is as readable?and as representative?as any sensational newspaper.

Behind all this lies Maugham's disgust at man- kind as a whole. So much of his writing is centred on a generalised hate, and some of his best books focus, in one way or another, on a "hero" who liberates himself from all the bonds of material civilisation. In one way and another this colours his whole idea of the east too. At one and the same time he sees the beauty of peace and the ugliness of stupid men and women violating that peace. Here he is nearer to the secret of a real theme for that "great" writing to which he evidently aspires. And "The Fall of Edward Barnard." despite its superficialities (e.g. the madly overdrawn Chicago lad and girl), captures that fleeting sense. Yet the solution to this dilemma, today underlined for some of us by the world mess (e.g. see Alan Dant?s letter in your last Gazette), is not the easy way-out of escape a la Barnard or Gaugin. Perhaps the last word on that has been said by another and really "sincere" writer, thus: "There was, of course, even for Conrad's Lord Jim, no running away. The cloud of his special discomfort tire followed him like a pup. no matter what ships he took or what wildernesses he entered. There is no escape in the unplanned tangent, the sudden turn. In Martinique, when the whistle blew for the tourists to get back on the ship, I had a quick, wild and lovely moment when I decided I wouldn't get back on the ship. I did though. And I found that somebody had stolen the pants to my dinner jacket.?"

James Thurber could teach Somerset Maugham plenty: never mind Chekov and de Maupassant.

Dryad.

Books Recently Added to the
Library.

(It should be explained that nowadays it is not easy to buy books from England, owing to acute paper shortage; a large quota there are kept for export. But even from Singapore one often cannot

get what one wants, as the whole stock of new books may be sold out in the time it takes the mail to travel to and from Singapore by return of post).

Novels.

"Too much Love of Living" by Robert Hichens.

For those who like it the Hichens way, extremely pleasant. And he has updated himself with a stylish contemporary lay-out: Book I Psychology, II. Poetry. III. Chivalry, Epilogue. But don't worry. The mixture is as before.

"None but the Lonely Heart" by Richard Llewellyn.

By the author of "How Green was My Valley".

Like many second books by first-book successes, rather an anti-climax. Told through the eyes, ears and not over sensitive nose of a cockney. Ernie Mott. Sometimes Mr. Llewellyn's cockney slang sounds slightly LL. But it is a good story, well told. A book we have bought before; but it disappeared, and we have had requests for it since.

"The Heart of the Matter" by Graham Greene.

The action is in West Africa. It is as well-written as one expects from Mr. Greene's entertainment with something extra. But embittered, depressing reading, especially for the Civil Servant's equatorial degradation and the eventual suicide of a police officer.....

"Mount Ida" by Monk Gibbon.

Take this book slowly, and wholly or not at all. There is a lot of it - nearly 500 pages. And quite a lot on each page and in each sentence. It is a closely written study of a man's emotional development in different parts of Europe. For those who like peaceful, untrammelled reading, this is just the long, slow, sentimental slope to climb :

Beauty, goodness, truth, these three.

Found a boy, no shepherd he.

Nor of Priam, nor indeed

To high destiny decreed.

Thus the author prefaces his book with delicate verses of his own, which well describe his mild

achievement.

?Dark Hero? by Peter Cheyney.

The hyper-slick Cheyney stuff, Lemmy Cautionary to one and all.

?Mine Own Executioner? by Nigel Balchin.

A welcome second copy of this popular and brilliant study of the border-lines of lunacy and hate, complete with dream psycho-analyst and dream girl.

?The Three Bamboos? by Robert Standish.

Mixture of history and fiction, always easy to read, and often exciting?the story of a Japanese family over four generations and into the last war. On the whole the tale is sincerely told. It is a book to brood over.

?The Flesh of the Orchid?

?Miss Shumway Waves a Wand?

by James Hadley Chase.

Miss Otis regrets she cannot stomach this lunch to-day; but fans will scramble as usual. The publishers call one hook "a worthy successor to the author's No Orchids for Miss Blandish," ? and the other (hold your seats, folks!) "The story of Carol Blandish, daughter of Miss Blandish by the homicidal maniac, Slim Grisson.? In case you think Sarawak is above this kind of reading, try and get your name on the waiting list!

?Silver Nutmeg? by Norah Lofts.

Miss Lofts in her easy, graceful way, this time a . semi-historic novel of the Dutch East Indies with Belanda situations. Over average reading and interest.

??Champion Road? by Frank Tilsley.

A seriously thought-out story of the industrial north (of England) by one of the most observant and wise of writers. Ideal for a month at Pusa (692 pages).

"Enemies? by Peter Vansittart.

An unusual historical novel of Franco-German bitterness, by a new young writer. A little amateur at times, but on the whole very tolerable.

?Catalina? by Somerset Maugham.

Far off his usual beat?old Spain, romantics. For those who have not over-read the man, this will be an acceptable few evening?s worth.

?East and West? by Somerset Mauham. (Review- ed separately).

?Mr. Fortune?s Maggot? by Sylvia Townsend Warren.

A delicate satire of missionary effort, neatly set and kindly done.

?Last Post? by Ford Madox Ford.

A master of close writing; some may find him dull but none unreadable.

?The Horse's Mouth? by Joyce Carey.

Carey is a tip-top writer (?A House of Children? and his African tales). Here the artist-and-society theme is not absolutely his cup of tea, but it rates a good enough beverage anyhow.

?Yeomen?s Hospital? by Helen Ashton.

Twenty-four hours in the life of a country hospi- tal, deeply and clearly etched by a very competent writer (herself a doctor).

?Down the Garden Path? by Beverley Nichols.

A flitter-back reprint of this excursion among the flowers.

Humour

?Nonsense Omnibus? by Edward Lear.

The limericks, songs, fables and fun of the kind- liest of verbal comedians, great grand-father of Shaggy Doggery, inventor of the recipe for Amblongus Pie, Mr. and Mrs. Discobbolos and the Dong with the Luminous Nose.

?My Life and Hard Times? by James Thurber.

As funny as ever.

?Mr. Petre? by Hilaire Belloc.

Belloc?s barbed, sly, faintly impossible wit, read- able even in a prahu.

?Better Bed Manners? by Ralph Hopton and Anne Balliol.

Funny successor to its predecessor, and acute. Some nice chapters : ??How to get up." "In Bed with

a Nice Person,?? ?Suzygophilia? and (local patients please copy) "How to make a Hospital Proud of You." Sobering thought to the fiance(e) : "Your head is going to be a pillow for a third of your remaining life.? Puzzle sentence : ?Absolute- ly no blankets have ever been made that will stay over one sleeper, and not over the other."

"Jailbird Jottings? by Iris Parfitt.

A deliciously feminine and witty paper book of a Singapore internee, nicely illustrated by the author.

Bags of fun with no nonsense. The all- time antidote to ?Three came Home.?

Politics, etc.

"Government by Assassination? by Hugh Byas.

Not just another anti-Jap dreary, but a wide and informed study by a journalist who spent quarter of a century in the country'. Full of red meat, absorbing in its analysis of the Jap-pie?combined Marxism and Naziism. Hopeful in a few of its pointers towards possible Jap democracy.

?A Short History of the World? by H. G. Wells.

Thinker?s Library edition of this classic.

"Tory Heaven? by Margharita Laski.

Professor Laski?s almost as leftiste-dynamitic bit of daughter tears at the trousers of Conservating in a book half fantasy and half furious pamphleteer- ing, which manages to be alternately funny and silly, as well as provoking in between. Not for the high blood-pressured

"The End of an Age? by W. R. Inge.

This book of essays on a wide range of subjects, from "The Sickness of Christendom? to ?The Population Problem,? is as light, informative, in- dividual and lively as we may expect from the Gloomy Dean who, thank heaven, is getting slightly less pessimistic as he gets older.

?Story of the Arab Legion? by Glubb Pasha.

A handsomely produced book by a little man who can properly claim to be ?the most famous English- man living in the Arab world today.? Brigadier Glubb, has a unique knowledge of the Arabs as warriors. No Lawrence he, but the straight-sold- ier, writing detailed history old and new, with adventures innumerable. He cannot see with that clear eye of the artist, nor yet the other and

confused one. It is one-track, 100% Arab advocacy, but so full of information, and so relevant to the middle- east chaos of today, that it is invaluable.

?Males and Females? by Robert Pilkington.

Not for neurotics An unusual, clever, analysis of sex problems by a biologist. He combines wit, wisdom and fact. The index indicates the style :

Pancreas

Peer, advantage of marrying Pekinese.

Short Stories.

?Bog Blossom Stories? by Jim Phelan.

These are short stories of sweet Tipperary, by a good light story writer.

?The Barber's Trade Union" by Mulk Raj Anand.

Stories of India for those who can stand hard, barbed writing of a high order?and mostly barbed against the ignorances of his own people.

?The Chinese Earth? by Shen Tseng-Wen.

Fascinating, and often fierce stories of China, written from much the same dissatisfied view point as Anand in India. Obviously authentic, and well- written.

Poetry and Letters.

?Lyrics from the Chinese? by Helen Waddell.

Translations of some Chinese poems, mostly of the 8th Century B.C.

"Seventeenth Century Poetry? chosen by John

Hayward.

A wholly delightful pocket anthology of this vivid age, by an expert in this sort of editing.

O foolishness of men! that lend their ears

To those bridge doctors of the Stoic fur.

And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub, Praising the lean and sallow abstinence.

"Minos of Crete" by Sidney Keyes.

A rather moving little book of poems, stories, essays, letters and a play by a young and talented

English artist who was killed in Tunisia, 1942. Immature, of course.

?The Crack-up? by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Friend of Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, dos Pasos, Edmund Wilson and many other literary Americans.

Fitzgerald filled no clear niche, yet showed, before his early death, something a bit more than a good creative talent. This memorial volume contains extracts from various of his writings, letters to and from him.

There is a lot of vivid brilliance mixed with a fair bit of muck in ?The Crack-up,? and especially in the title essay of that name, the story of the author?s own nervous breakdown. I didn?t think I could bear to hear about another one of those, but his sneaked by for one phrase: ??the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.?

I also like : ?A great social success is a pretty girl who plays her cards as carefully as if she were plain.?

?Selected Poems? by T. S. Eliot.

A selection of this poets best known work.

?Three Plays? by John Galsworthy.

?Escape.? ?The Skin Game?? and ?The Eldest Son,? in one volume.

People.

"President Roosevelt? by R. H. Kiernan.

A British view of F.D.R., not based on inside information or anything else special, but a sound common-sense account, interesting.

?If You Ask Me? by Eleanor Roosevelt.

A selection from Mrs. Roosevelt?s question and answer newspaper column. Quite improving and fun.

?When the Cathedrals Were White" by le Cor- busier.

A queer, chaotic, everything book blasting Ameri- can city life, by one who is often regarded as the greatest of living architects.

?George Bernard Shaw? by Winifred Clarke.

An essay of appreciation by a fan, to be read on the backwash of a Sunday?s p.m., casually.

?Marlborough? by Maurice Ashley.

A competent and lively short biography in the Duckworth ?Great Lives? series.

?I bought a Mountain? by Thomas Firbank.

A very personal sort of book by a young man who did just what the title says (in Wales), and who gives us all the rich feel and comfort and harshness of the land and its unnumbered occasions. Do not miss this because it looks a little dull; it isn?t.

?Petticoat Surgeon? by Bertha Van Hoosen.

An American lady, now 84, tells the interesting, unaffected story of her life doctoring. She touches on many matters of everyday interest and argument, though I could not get as excited as the publishers seem to be about what they call (on the blurb) ?a minute-by-minute account of child birth as seen through a doctor?s eyes.?

?White Coolie? by Ronald Hastain.

A first-rate account, by a British Sergeant-Major, of the fall of Singapore and of subsequent life (and death) on the Burma-Siam Railway and in Japan. Such a relief from the egocentric, sufferer P.O.W. tales one mostly reads. Here incredible courage speaks for itself, almost in a whisper?and forty times more effective for that ! Compare it with John Coast?s Railroad of Death? (also in the Library). Both had parallel experience, but Coast writes in heroic-we terms which seem overstretched, unenglish beside the quite W-O.

?Great Morning? by Osbert Sitwell.

More of Sir Osbert?s super-ornate snobography, which intoxicates them as like that sort of thing.

?The English People? by George Orwell.

A nice slim volume, beautifully written and illustrated, in the ?Britain in Pictures? series.

?Debrett?s Peerage?

New edition. Not to be taken away, but available for reference.

Books have been generously donated by Dr. E. Le Sueur, Mr. T. Attenborough. Mr. W. Witt, and

A.N. Other, totalling seven in all. The remainder have been purchased. A further purchased consignment is due shortly.

Tom Harrison.

Bowlers? Alley.

After numerous setbacks which caused the relaying of the Island Club bowling alley to be delayed nearly twelve months, the completion of the left hand side alley on the 25th September made it possible to commence bowling once again after a lapse of approximately seven years.

The alley was officially opened on Monday 27th September at G.30 p.m. by the Honourable the Resident (Mr. J. C. H. Barcroft) who, with expert pre-war skill broke the ribbon with a beautiful ball which finished by knocking down all pins for a "double." Teams of five players each, captained by Messrs. C. B. Murray and G. T. Myles then took over, and the honours of the evening went to G. T. Myles who scored 124 out of a possible 150.

The various styles adopted by the players caused considerable amusement, and in one particular case a certain amount of anxiety was felt for the personal safety of the bowler, not to mention the "bowling boys" who had to be very nimble footed at the receiving end.

Requests for refreshments during the game from perspiring players were most definitely disallowed by Gladys,* who insisted that one round of drinks for every five rolls of three bowls?losers to pay?was the custom, and as it was impossible to convince him that he had made a mistake, the players had to be satisfied with what turned out to be three drinks in two hours.

In spite of the firm stand taken by Gladys, and the fact that the majority of players were extremely stiff next day, it was unanimously decided that the game was well worth it, it has been decided therefore to have two club bowling nights each week, Tuesday and Saturday.

The new alley is constructed of two thirds tekam and one third kapor bukit, the latter forming the centre portion of the alley. It is intended to lay the second alley early in 1949.?(Contributed).

[Gladys, son of the late Sergeant Assim bin Suit, is the Club Head Boy; he was named after the Government launch of that name which arrived at Sibuan on the day he was born.?(Ed)].

Below the Knee.

[This is the first of a series of interviews in which workers employed on Government schemes describe their jobs for the interest and benefit of the public.]

I seem to have been sitting here a long lime now, old man that I am?old man, you might say, in a drain. Not that it's bad to be in a drain. In fact, I prefer it. Prefer it, that is, to that place they call a home, way out along whatever the name of the road is. No, no! When I die it?ll be in my drain, on the job. Then some wit, if there was one who knew of me, might write on my stone :

X

R.I.P.

"Down the Drain?.

It'd be X, of course, because no one now knows my name. My world has grown too within for names. But don't you, because of that, go away with the idea I have no responsibility. I have. Quite enough for me?or most at my age. My work makes a pretty complete life; as much so as ever I knew before. Its not a very long run of drain?as drains go. A clever young man with a match could light it at one end and walk to the other before it went out. It lies on each side of that drive up to the big building on the very steep bill in the middle of Kuching. I don?t do it all. of course. I don't know who the fellow is who does the top end?I?ve never been up there. I've too much on my hands as it is, actually.

Sitting with one leg folded under me, and one out to the side, my little hoe in my hand, I scrape away in minute scratches, careful, deep down at the pink flat brick bottom of my drain. It feels comfortable, that short stretch down, and with my head bent over I can be at peace, while I scrape and scrape until that inch is absolutely mossless, grasslees, earth less, clean and clear. Then I run my long fingers lightly over the place to make sure. If there is anything left, I scrape on. And when it is perfect, I gather up the little handful of dust and smashed grasses and put it beside the drive. Then I inch on again.

On the other side of my drain it would be lower and easier to get my hand and little hoe down. But I feel so cut off over the other side, somehow, although it?s only a handwidth across. There one?s just on the grass, and anybody anywhere. But on the higher side I sit on the flakes of rough

hard road flint, and life passes very close behind. When cars rush past up the hill, I even get a little afraid, they make such a roaring. To look at me, sitting there, tall, withered, silent and bent, you might think I was barely alive. Really I'm something much more than that?I'm living. That's why I won't stop working. I'm in touch, you see. I move. They move.

But to go back to my drain. You'd hardly believe what gets into it. It's only four narrow crumbled old bricks wide?and that's part of the trouble. Grass will root in between the bricks, in the cracks, maddeningly.

I reckon it takes me about a week to work up one side and start down the other. By the time I'm back at the first place, it's all started again. What must anyone looking into the drain think. Not that they do though, do they?

In one way the tune I like best is the very early morning. I expect I go to work earlier than anyone in Kuching. I like to start long before it's hot, crouched there in my only khaki shirt. But it is rather lifeless then. I know when the living part of my day is starting, by the man with black shorts and hairy black legs who walks past me very close up the hill as if all hell was burning behind him. Not very much hotter after that, cars start coming and other people too, and there are noises in the two buildings near my drain. I don't know what hairy-leg looks like. I don't normally have time to look up; and my only good eye isn't too good now, either. In fact I only see the cars that pass me because the noise sometimes makes me jump and then I can't help seeing, of course.

Then the sun gets high and sometimes it is too hot. I just like to sit under that thin hedge there, sometimes scraping along a bit. Or go away for a while. But I don't like to leave my drain for too long. If that grass once took real root, what on earth might happen to Kuching.

One day I stayed out too late and got really hot, so hot I came over all queezy. I went and sat down on some stone against the wall of that building close by. I thought then that I would die that day, with the nice curved slice of wall arched into my aching back. But just then a young fellow with long khaki trousers came and told me to go away, no one could sit here. I started to try and get up and go?as I should. Before I could, though, someone shouted in bad Malay just over my head?out of a window I suppose??Tidapa Bujang. Dudok dia sampai mati?. I suppose it was hairy-legs? Anyway, I stayed

there nearly all day, and no one upset me. I go back there quite often now. For that matter, there's a little bit of a drain there, too. But I wouldn't like to interfere with that. I suppose it's supposed to be full of snail shells and bottles and rubbish.

Usually everything is quite straightforward on this job, you know. There are just two things that do upset me, a lot.

One is people who will walk along the little hedge beside the drain. They do that to pick the big red flowers without much smell. What they do up there is none of my business, of course. What I do object to is the way they kick dirt and gravel and grass down into my drain, especially into the parts I've just done. I can't go back, of course, to clear up. If I did that I'd never be able to keep my round going, would I? But all

the time till I get back to there it's a worry, as you can imagine. It seems that even hairy-legs doesn't like them doing this either, because one day—the same day there were an extra lot of crackers and bangs—he comes up the hill as usual with all hell behind him just before it gets hot (the day, I mean) and he suddenly speaks over my head to a hedger : "Apa macham kita orang? Malm ambil bunga semua sampai habis, ka? Barangkali kita orang belum tahu ada kabar ada orang lain juga dia mahu edop dalam Kuching ini?. The other fellow, who by now was kicking the whole place into my drain, mutters : "Minta ma'af, tuan?saya punya anak ada sakit?.

The other and worse thing is the fault of that fellow who's supposed to look after the upper part of the drain. What a lazy cow he must be. Do you know what happens? Every time it rains a whole mess of earth and muck comes down from his part into mine. That's too much. Not only do I move and they move, but IT moves too. I just don't know how I'm going to get through these wet months unless they put a better man up there. Do you know, sometimes I wonder if there is anyone up there at all? Or surprise I'm supposed to do that part too? But that's silly. I couldn't handle two lots. I do wonder though. I wonderone day I'll find out: Is there anyone up there, at the top of my drain?

(The next in this series will be the views of a Tamil lady working on the Secretariat verandah).
(Contributed.)

Fifty Years Ago.

THE , NOVEMBER 1, 1898.

COMMITTEE OF ADMINISTRATION.

The Resident's Office.

Kuching, 18th October, 1898.

Present.

The President, The Hon^{ble} the Officer Adminis- tering the Government, (C. A. Bampfylde).

The Acting Treasurer. (H. C. Brooke Johnson). The Datu Bandar, Hadji Bua Hassan.

Abang Mahomed Kassim.

Absent.

The Hon'ble The Resident of the 3rd Division, (H. F. Deshon).

The Datu Emaum. Hadji Metaim.

A MEETING of the Committee was convened this day.

The President informed the members that his Honour the Officer Administering the Government of the Straits Settlements had forwarded him a copy of an ordinance prohibiting the importation of Japanese dollars or Yens into the Straits Settle- ments, the objects and reasons, as laid down in this ordinance, being that the Japanese Government having demonetised the Yen, holders of such coins worn below the proper standard of weight, and thus becoming impossible to circulate, would have no remedy for their loss. Large quantities of these Yens are available for purchase in Japan at cheap

rates and they are again being brought into circulation in the Straits, and the danger of a larger importation is an imminent one. These reasons hold equally good with respect to Sarawak, and the importation of Yens into the Straits Settlements having been put a stop to, the effect will be to force holders to find other places in which to circulate them.

The members were of opinion that an order be issued prohibiting the importation of Yens into Sarawak under a penalty of \$500 and the confiscat- ion of such Yens hereafter imported or attempted to be imported and that this order should come into force at once.

The Acting Treasurer proposed that an Export Duty be imposed upon sugar manufactured from the Nipa Palm. A considerable quantity of this sugar is now being exported and be considered that it should be liable to a duty of 10 per cent ad valorem, which was the same as that imposed upon other products manufactured out of the Nipa palm and exported, and this was agreed to unanimously.

H. C. BROOKE JOHNSON,

Clerk of Supreme Council.

This Sarawak.

(With apologies to the New Statesman and Nation.)

We agreed to live together as man and wife for the purpose of rearing pigs.?From the Courts.

Suddenly the wind was blowing in a leeward direction.?A letter.

The Conservative Conference in London has ended in Wales with a stirring speech by Mr. Winston Churchill who, in his capacity as a non- official member of the Government was in a better privilege to be more outspoken in his address.?In tribune veritas.

Important Instructions.

When preparing invoices you must show ITEM NUMBERS, the NUMBER OF PACKAGES also the NET, TARE AND GROSS WEIGHTS of each package in KILOGRAMS AND POUNDS. Packages are to be NUMBERED I AND UP, and contents of each package listed separately on the packing list.

NINE COPIES OF INVOICES MUST BE DELIVERED TO OUR OFFICE BEFORE SHIPMENT.....

Country of origin must lie shown on all invoices or packing lists.

Failure to comply with the above instructions and instructions on back of purchase order will result in our refusing payment until goods have been examined at destination.?Instructions accompany- ing an order for an annual subscription to the ??

We assure that this vessel.....will not sink

as it runs parallel to water.?A letter.

Two teachers were found during the month and are being tried at Kampong.....and KampongA third.....was refused. ?A report.

They have persistently resisted the attempts by missionaries to land on that island, and as a result they have been described as probably the lowest form of humanity.....?Sarawak Tribune.were sentenced to seven years imprisonment in the Resident's Court.?A report.

Coffee is grown but only on a small scale for internal use.?A report.

Dynamic Energy?

.....and only by application of heavy cow manure.....has some improvement been made.?Sarawak Tribune.

(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.)

News from Far and Near.

FIRST DIVISION.

August, 1948.

The District Officer, Kuching. (Mr. Outram) reports that on the 30th August a Malay of Tabuan requested permission to transfer 1 1/2 acres of empty land near the Pending Road to a Chinese Company for \$350. Tire District Officer made enquires at the Land Office regarding the current land values in that area, as a result of which permission was refused to transfer at the sum arranged. Next day the Malay returned and informed the District Officer that he had since been offered \$2,500 for the land. The Honourable the Resident (Mr. White) comments that the price of land in this area has risen sharply.

Commenting upon the mining industry of the Bau District, the District Officer, (Mr. Richards) writes : ?Very few mines are getting out gold and they plead the absence of machinery. The Onn Tung Mine received permission to mine antimony of which there appears to be plenty. Arsenic is plentiful but dangerous. It is possible that mines could shew a profit if they had the guidance of a qualified chemist and could think of something other than gold."

The following is an extract from the monthly report of the District Officer, Bau : "The water in Pegong Bekajang lowered a foot to about six feet below normal between 8th and 20th. In the absence of the screw parts for the valve, attention was paid to the intake at the lake and a grill and an iron plate were found by diving. The latter fitted the grooves and was eventually tied by wires to a lever beam with which to raise and lower the "door." Since the 21st the water has been shut off during the night with the result that the water level has remained almost constant."

The following is extracted from the August Report of the District Officer, Serian, (Mr. Roberts) : "It is gratifying to record that several Dayak Kampongs are registering their own private schools. The Tua Kampong becomes the school manager, the village "komiti" becomes the school management committee. All are enthusiastic about the Non-denominational schools, i.e. secular instruction only Monday to Friday, religious instruction permitted at the week end for those who wish to attend." September, 1948.

The District Officer, Kuching, (Mr. Outram) writes that a double murder was reported to have been committed at Muara Tuang on the 12th September by a Chinese boy aged seventeen who shot his father and his uncle.

On the five day tour of the Samarahan and Bayor areas, the outboard dispensary attended to an average of 435 cases. On its one day journey along the Simanggang Road, the jeep dispensary served an average of 200 persons.

The District Officer, Kuching, following upon a visit to the Lundu area, comments that it may be possible to start a combined Malay, Land-Dayak, Sebuyau Authority shortly.

In the Kuching District, trade improved during September because of the stability of the price offered for rubber.

The District Officer, Bau, (Mr. Richards) reports a civil case in the courts which was brought on breach of contract of sale. Of five brothers having equal shares in a shophouse, three signed a memorandum of agreement to sell, saying the other two were willing. The other two then transferred the shop to another party for the same price with the concurrence of the former three. The original prospective buyer claimed his money back (three-fifths payment) with damages. The claim was

allowed, but not in full for the damage.

The rainfall recorded at Dahan Estate was seventeen inches during September. The highest rainfall was recorded on the 18th when 3.25 inches fell.

Mention of the Bau water supply system has been made in earlier reports in the . The District Officer reports that, on the 17th September, seven large holes re-opened but the fine displayed was not appreciated by water carriers who had been hard at work the previous day. Some pipes were cleaned and a few fish were caught.

The following is extracted from the monthly report of the District Officer. Serian. (Mr. Roberts) : "Several land disputes have been satisfactorily- settled by the Pemanchas. In one case the two kampongs concerned were under Kuching and Serian respectively ; however the Sarawak Pemancha Batek and the Sadong Pemancha Mapuk met on the spot and adjudicated jointly. It would be hard to speak too highly of the way in which the Pemanchas are carrying out their duties.?

The District Officer, Serian, stresses the acute need of Pagan teachers for kampong schools.

The following is extracted from the monthly report of the Native Officer-in-Charge. Ltindu, (Abang Haji Adenan) : ?Pada 30 hari bulan sa-orang Melayu dari Kampong Setunggang bernama Karia bin Busri ber-umur lebih kurang 28 tahun sedang berpindah dari Kampong ka uma nya Batang Embang dengan perahu bermuat barang2 dan bini nya, kutika sampai nya ayer lagi kering, terpaksa menunggu si bentar. apa bila ayer besar ia pon menyuroh bini nya naik dan ia sandiri ma nurun kaki nya ka ayer kerana mem-betol kan perahu, kutika itu lah buaya lain ma-nangkap kaki nya. bini pon ber-teriak 'tangkap mata,' Karia terus menangkap mata tapi kena ka jungor, di tangkap nya sekali lagi bahru dapat, buaya itu pon melapas Karia. Karia terus naik ka darat dengan luka parah di kaki lalu di bawa orang ka rumah sakit, pada masa ini Karia akan di kirim dresser ka Kuching kerana her obat.?

The Honourable the Resident (Mr. White) comments that it cannot be easy to remain sufficiently cool and collected to do so (i.e. gouge out the eyes of a crocodile) even with one?s wife shouting advice from the bank.

SECOND DIVISION.

August, 1948.

The following is extracted from the August report of the District Officer, Simanggang, (Mr. Morgan) :
?Approximately thirty Dayaks have applied for land near the Sebu river with a view to planting catch crops and sugar cane, bananas, etc. They each have been granted four acres of land, each piece adjoining the next and they intend to work in co- operation in felling and planting. This is a very worthy effort and to be encouraged as the tendency is to attach the Dayak to his piece of land with a regular system of cultivation and discourage his roving habits of cultivation.?

The following extract is taken from the August report of the District Officer, Saribas, (Mr. Bruen): ?At the beginning of the month the land across the river from the Fort (Tanjong Pasa) was divided out into forty-one lots, each of one acre, amongst various Government personnel. Work has begun on these lots and all padi nurseries were planted by the end of the month. This land (Tanjong Pasa) is good land, but all of it cannot be used owing to several "Kayu Ara" trees which take up much valuable space. It is hoped to get these trees cut down shortly.

All drains in the Lampaong farming area have now been constructed and the irrigation of this area has improved immensely. The people farming in this area are to be given various fertilizers free of charge. The land will be dug up shortly and the fertilizers will then be spread over it. The Lampaong Dayaks have worked very hard on their land and have been given every assistance.?

The Public Lavatory in Betong bazaar was ready at the end of the month. Illustrated notice boards are to be fixed to save inconvenience.

A very successful school sports day was held at the Native Authority school at Samu (Paku) on the 25th August. Swithun Chundie, a school boy aged about twelve and whose height is only 4 ft. 6 inches, is reported to have jumped 9 ft. 2 inches in the Pole Vault?a remarkable performance.

The following is an extract from the monthly report of the District Officer, Saribas, "The Mission school has started a water taxi service between Gansurai and Betong. This taxi (an inboard motor) brings people from upriver houses to Betong on one tide and takes them back on the next tide?for a small consideration. This service has only just started and appears to be a great success.?

September, 1948.

The following is extracted from the monthly report of the District Officer, Simanggang, (Mr. Morgan) :

"The preliminary enquiry and trial of the persons responsible for an attempted gang robbery took place during the month. All six of the accused were found guilty and sentenced to seven years imprisonment. The most interesting part of the case centred round the story of the apprehension of the robbers. It appears that the victim gave the alarm and the Tua Kampong gathered together a party of Malay volunteers; these he despatched down river in pursuit of the robbers who had made off in a perahu; it was pitch dark and when the fugitive perahu was hailed the answer came in a blast of buckshot; this was replied to spiritedly by the Malays who wounded four of the opposition, closed with the boat, boarded and captured all within it in the best Elizabethan traditions. This was a brave act considering the darkness of the night, the swiftness of the river and the fact that the Malays had no knowledge as to the numbers of the criminals or their aims (the Malays had one single barrelled shot gun). All have been recommended for suitable rewards by the Honourable the Resident and the Tua Kampong has been recommended for official recognition in view of his prompt and determined action which resulted in the arrest and conviction of these criminals. Such public spirited acts in the face of danger to life and limb are an example to us all and no doubt will have a suitable effect on those members of the public who would seek to emulate our not so peaceful neighbours across the China Sea.?"

The following is an extract from the report of the District Officer, Simanggang : "Tuba fishing has been popular during the month particularly in the Batang Ai, and the Native Officer, Engkilili. (Abang Haji Hussein) reports that on the 8th approximately seventy piculs of fish were caught between Nanga Seremat and Selindong and that over four hundred boats of varying sizes were present.?"

The District Officer, Simanggang, reports that "on the 23rd September, after a lapse of some time. Radio Simanggang was again on the air. In the evening at 6 p.m. a programme of modern and classical music in Malay, Chinese and English was broadcast from Fort Alice. The station closed down at 8 p.m. and the following morning many expressions of appreciation were received from the public.

On the 26th, His Highness the Rajah's Birthday was celebrated at the Simanggang Recreation Club when a sandwich party was given, to which the leading members of all communities were invited. The evening was a success and Radio Simanggang went on the air for the second time featuring in its broadcast songs from the Chinese and Malay.

classics by the local school children. Many Government servants took part in the broadcast but they were both outnumbered and outmatched in enthusiasm by members of the public.

The District Officer, Saribas, (Mr. Bruen) reports that eight or nine acres of coffee have recently been planted in the ulu Paku.

The District Officer, Saribas, reports that the Mission water-taxi (which has been commented on previously in these columns) has ceased functioning after only one week's experiment although it was working well and profitably. It has now been hired out to a Chinese fish merchant.

The following is extracted from the monthly report of the District Officer, Kalaka, (Mr. Wilson) : "On the night of 10th September, Rampieng anak Jabat who felled a tree upon himself was admitted to Saratok dispensary with a compound fracture and severe haemorrhage. A Chinese launch agreed to sail at once without a cargo, though not without compensation, and the patient reached Kuching the following morning and is now reported to be recovering. ?

The District Officer, Kalaka, reports that the Divisional Agricultural Officer, (Mr. Wright) visited the station during September and supervised the construction of an inexpensive small-holders smoke house in Saratok, which it is hoped that local farmers will use and those more distant copy. The Divisional Agricultural Officer later went upriver to Nanga Drau where he inspected the Dayak smoke house there and found it was not possible to smoke rubber in it without burning down the smoke house.

THIRD DIVISION.

July, 1948.

The following is extracted from the July report of the District Officer, Sibul, (Mr. Dilks) : "On the 19th, the marriage of the Tuai Rumah's eldest daughter was being celebrated in Rumah Bunsu at Upper Sungei Sengan, Menyan. During the ceremony, the Tuai Rumah fired a house-made cannon which

exploded, injuring him in the face. The ceremony ceased immediately and the prospective bride and groom forbidden to marry after such an ill omen. Tuai Rumah Bunsu was discharged from hospital at the end of the month, none the worse for his injuries.?

The District Officer, Lower Rejang. (Mr. Snellus) reports that well over one hundred acres of pepper are now under cultivation.

The following is extracted from the monthly report of the District Officer, Kapit, (Mr. Rennick) : ?The Dayaks are realising the wisdom of establishing paks (boundary pegs) in the Ulu areas. Two penghulus have applied for measures to conserve their forests by creation of Communal Forests in these areas. It seems likely that more will follow. The arguments now being used to convince the Dayaks that the paks should be rigidly observed are firstly that in the coming year with the establishment of a Native Treasury in Kapit, efforts to improve the well being of the Natives depend largely on their living in fairly close communities and secondly that visits of Government staff, especially the dresser, are more easily and quickly made if the houses are near the entrance to the rivers.?

The District Officer, Mukah, (Mr. Morris) reports that by the end of the first week in July it was estimated that ninety per cent of the poultry in the vicinity of Mukah had died. The sad blow is attributed locally to chicken cholera.

It is reported that the M.v. "Hai Sing" foundered off Oya on the 12th July. Apparently the vessel bumped on the bar and the bottom was completely stove in.

The following is extracted from the monthly report of the District Officer, Mukah : ?On Thursday 15th July at 12.45 there was a series of explosions S. W. of this station ; there were three separate explosions followed by a number of almost simultaneous ones, over a period of some six seconds, these explosions sounded very similar to a stick of bombs Considerable excitement was caused in Mukah and Oya and a number of people in Kampong Tillian took to the jungle. These explosions were also heard in Oya and Dalat and from reports received it would appear that they occurred in the swamp area approximately half way between Dalat and Mukah. To date no further information has been obtained. Thunder is discounted as at the time the sky was almost completely cloudless."

August, 1948.

The following is an extract from the August report of the District Officer, Sibul, (Mr. Dilks) : "During a tour of the Batang Lassa by the Acting District Officer and Native Officer, William Nais, the following story was related at almost every house visited :

"One evening about a month ago, a Julau man was returning from his padi farm to his house when he heard the sound of wood being chopped in the jungle a short distance from the path.

He turned from the path, and on reaching a clearing found a man, a stranger, shaping wood for a coffin. "Who are you, and what are you doing?" he demanded of the stranger.

"I am the grandson of Antu Pulang Gana" replied the stranger. "My grandfather is dead and I am shaping his coffin. Go and spread the news throughout the land and tell everyone that when they receive the news they must stop work for one day and hold a mourning feast for Pulang Gana. Whoever fails to stop work for one day will reap no padi for five years, and whoever fails to hold a mourning feast will reap no padi for ten years." Upon hearing this the man hurried home and did as Pulang Gana's grandson had told him.

At the time of the visit, all houses had stopped work for one day and all had held a mourning feast.

It was reported that this had been done in Kano- wit, Sarikei, Binatang and Sibul Districts. It was also reported that Antu Menyawai had taken the place of Pulang Gana.

Versions of the same tale were spread in different areas and the District Officer, Kapit, (Mr. Rennick) reports : "The Dayaks of the district have been in mourning for three days. The reason for the mourning is the death of Pulangana, the spirit of the padi crops. The news of his death was brought to the

Dayaks by an Iban touring Kanyau (Dutch Borneo) who while travelling in the forest met some spirits preparing a coffin. They told him that the coffin was for Pulangana who had recently died, and instructed him to convey the news to the Ibans. If he failed to do so he would suffer three years starvation and if the Ibans did not believe him the Ibans would suffer from ten years bad crops and famine. Any individual who failed to observe the mourning rites strictly and wore silver adornments would suffer eight years hunger."

The District Officer, Sibul, reports that, during a tour of the Batang Lassa it was found that all the

fertile padi land bordering the main river and its tributaries had been rented to the Chinese. The Dayaks themselves were farming land further inland on the edge of the jungle where pests are a constant menace.

Commenting on the same tour, the District Officer, Sibuluan, writes : "This tour saw the inauguration of the first Police Patrol in the District; m.l. "Rusa" was used, and the tour almost ended in disaster before it had really begun. A sailor drawing water at the stern of the launch was pulled into the river after his bucket. No one on the launch saw the accident and it was pure luck that his cries were heard and the launch put about to pick him up. However the sailor was none the worse for his misadventure and soon regained his normal cheerfulness."

The District Officer. Lower Rejang, (Mr. Snelus) reports that the district was practically free from crime during the month. There was one case of cattle stealing near isolated Paloh; but apart from some mild gambling at Sarikei few reports made to police stations concerned criminal offences. There was, however, a report of attempted arson at the Kai Wen School. Binatang. Investigation has not yet disclosed the culprit.

The following is taken from the August Report of the District Officer. Lower Rejang : Liko customs and superstitions die hard amongst Mohammedan Melanaus. At Matu this month I saw a magnificent specimen of a tebedok (small boat holding offerings for spirits) floating up and down the river with its offerings of eggs and cakes to the spirits and thereby cleansing the river of all disease. Eight feet long and 2 1/2 feet broad, and painted sky blue, it made a brave and unusual sight with gaily coloured flags flying from it at every angle."

The District Officer later comments that this contrasts with the rather pathetic reason given by the Matu Melanaus for the rapid destruction of their sago palms : they are now Moslems and so are no longer interested in killing the pigs that cause such ravages to the growing sago.

Examples of terraced padi fanning by Chinese can again be seen along the Bulat Road this year. The District Officer. Lower Rejang, comments that exactly how the irrigation system works and why the terraces on the higher levels do not dry out is a mystery to him.

The District Officer. Mukah, (Mr. Morris) writes that, although no serious crime has been reported

during August, the theft of sago trees is increasing. The majority of these cases are never reported as they are frequently not detected until some time after the trees have been felled and removed. It is extremely difficult to assess the total value of trees stolen in any one month, but it is possible that not less than 200 trees are stolen in the Oya river area alone each month; at \$7.00 per tree this gives a value of \$1.400.

FOURTH DIVISION.

July, 1948.

The Honourable the Resident (Mr. Gilbert) comments in his July report that Rumah Jimbun is the first response to Government's call for Dayaks to take up padi land in the Pujut settlement scheme. There is plenty of room in the Pujut settlement area which can easily accommodate more than one hundred doors. With Government's help and supervision afforded to these settlers, it is hoped that the settlers will have a good harvest next year as this will encourage other Dayaks to follow their lead.

Two suicides by hanging are reported by the District Officer, Miri, (Mr. Lascelles).

A School Committee has been formed at Miri to help with the affairs of the Government School. It is proposed to try to institute a system whereby pupils will only be admitted once a year, and also to weed out the pupils who only intend to stay at school, say, for one or two years. Many of the present type of standard I children are only sent to school by their parents to prevent their getting into mischief at home, and they have no intention of staying until they reach standard IV.

The following is extracted from the July report of the District Officer. Miri : "Malay professional crocodile hunters from Simanggang have been working in the district. They caught a large number of crocodiles between Miri and Lutong, but none of a size to compare with the three eighteen-footers caught at Suai. On 18th another party of Malay professional catchers arrived from British North Borneo via Limbang.

The dog catching expedition led by the District Officer, after a promising start with one dog within 200 yards of the office, had to retire rather ignominiously, as the next two dogs caught wrecked the the jerats and escaped. An improved jerat has now been perfected, and it is hoped shortly to have a

blitz on unlicensed dogs in the Municipal area.?

The District Officer. Bintulu. (Mr. Jacks) reports ?On the 31st July, the Resident?s Court, holden at Sebauh. heard an application made by Antas, a Dayak, to annul an adoption certificate issued at Bintulu on 30th October, 1940. His adopted parents. Usik anak Meramat and Daya (f) anak Nyipa. had agreed to the proceedings instituted.?

An accident is reported from Bintulu in which a Dayak of Pendam accidentally shot himself with his shotgun loaded with a home made cartridge.

The District Officer, Bintulu, reports that during the month most of the natives were busy in the preparation for the next planting season. The price of sago remained sufficiently attractive, thus provid- ing a satisfactory livelihood to the local Melanaus and Malays.

On the 15th July, Penghulu Ovat Mereng came down from Tubau with thirty-two Kenyahs from Long Newang. Most of the Kenyahs had never seen the sea before.

From Baram is reported the death of Lalang Batang Tina Tijan (Kayan) of Long Laput. It will be recalled that on two occasions she entertain- ed His Excellency the Commissioner-General on his visits to Long Laput and. on one occasion. His Excellency the Governor of Sarawak.

August, 1948.

The following is extracted from the August report of the District Officer, Miri, (Mr. Shaw) : ?About twelve families of Dayak Kampars from Sibuti were settled in the Pujut swamp padi area during the month. They elected to come here rather than return to their houses in the Second Division. Their venture had a disastrous start when the leader of the party, while travelling alone on the platform of a P.W.D. lorry, lost his hat in the wind. Regardless of the speed of the vehicle and without a word to the driver, he jumped after it. He died later from his injuries.? The Honourable the Resident (Mr. Gilbert) comments that this might have had an adverse effect on the scheme of settling Dayaks at Pujut hut happily this was not the case.

It is reported from Miri that the M.v. ?Kim Leung? sank off Kudat on the 15th August with a loss of six lives together with a consignment of pigs and cattle destined for Miri.

The District Officer. Miri. writes that a local contractor drew two bundles of \$1,000 in notes from the

Treasury. He dropped one in the bazaar in the morning and it was returned to him in the evening.

Government quarters at Tanjong Lobang now have a regular supply of electric current. This is supplied by the Sarawak Oilfields Limited at a rate of twenty cents a unit.

It is reported from Bintulu that on the 15th August, the 'Simah' ceremony was held at Kuala Bintulu and was attended by a fairly large crowd of people. The ceremony is held once a year when the sea is blessed and prayers are said for abundant catches of fish.

September, 1948.

The District Officer, Miri, (Mr. Shaw) reports that about seventy temporary shophouses in Miri have been demolished to make way for the first instalments of the programme of reconstruction. A similar number of temporary shophouses have been erected in a more convenient area.

The Dayak settlers in the Pujut area are doing well: they are now planting and, in most cases, have asked for a second allotment of three acres of land for each man.

The following is extracted from the September report of the District Officer, Miri: 'Several professional crocodile hunters from British North Borneo left on 21st September after killing 304. None of these it appears is as large as the one which got away, according to one of the hunters, who stated that they came one night on a huge reptile at the mouth of the Bakong River. It looked like an enormous log, however, they set upon it with their spears. To their consternation their spears were blunted and bent on the beast's hide. They decided that the place was bewitched and hurriedly made away. That night the leader of the hunters dreamt of an old man who came to him and told him that the crocodile they had tried to kill was the 'Raja Buaya' of the Bakong, and that they could never kill him. The hunters were quite convinced that it was the Raja Buaya they had encountered, and it was eventually described as being 100 inches wide, 5 fathoms long and the head as level to a size of one table.'

The District Officer, Baram. (Mr. Griffin) reports that two Kenyahs of Uma Akeh were convicted of stealing birds' nests from the caves at Long Temala, Baram. Both were sentenced to six weeks imprisonment. This kampong has a bad reputation for theft of birds' nests.

The Sarawak Museum.

For some time past the Sarawak Museum has been concerned about the rapid disappearance of old Manuscripts (selislah) and historical material for Sarawak and Brunei. In the important collection of Brunei Manuscripts made by Mr. MacBryan and Mr. Banks just before the war, there were serious gaps. Several of these have been filled in since, but one major one remained until just now. The key story of Awang Alak Betatar, first Sultan, in all copies lacked the opening part of the story. In September 1947 the present Curator heard this part of the story verbally from a man near Limbang, who had, however, mislaid the Manuscript. Now, after long and patient enquiry, the Manuscript has been found and despatched to the Museum, thanks to the District Officer and Native Officer, Limbang. It may prove of particular interest and importance. Work has begun on the translation of it. Even this copy is incomplete, and the Museum urgently asks all others possessing this or other written material to send it in for study and safe-keeping. Where necessary, genuine Manuscripts may be purchased. If owners wish them returned, they can be photographed and returned in a short period.

The Sarawak Museum gratefully acknowledges gifts in October including an old Jawi Manuscript through the courtesy of Native Officer Tuanku Mahdzar of Limbang; Long Service Medal (for the Civil Service Showcase) from Abang Nona; (the Museum is anxious to acquire other medals, of all types and periods). A portrait photo from Penghulu Tama Weng Ajang, m.b.E. : snake skins before and after tanning from Messrs. Taymen Ltd.; rodent in spirit, Mr. L. Minchin: a fine Baram canoe paddle from Mr. and Mrs. Chong Ah

Onn; a giant Sponge by Mr. R. I. Hughes. Photographs have been kindly given by Miss P. Auld, Mrs. B. Bettison. Mr. Alan Dant, Mr. K. E. H. Kay, Mr. R. I. Hughes and Mr. W. Wyatt. The Museum is eager to obtain photos of all phases of Sarawak Life, past and present, and can develop and print films on the premises.

A magnificent photograph of His Excellency the Governor and Native Chiefs at the Sibu Regatta has been generously presented by Anna Studios. The original negative is two inches long and three quarters of an inch broad. The enlargement presented, which is clear and beautiful, is six feet and six inches long and twenty inches broad?a remarkable feat of photography, and a delightful asset

to the Museum.

The Anna Studios have also generously offered to present other photographs, in a special screen, now in preparation.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BINATANG.

District Office,

Binatang,

15th September, 1948.

The Editor,

,

Kuching.

Sir,

In this office I can find very little information about the history of Binatang, though it should be fairly easy to obtain as the area only started being developed within living memory. Each year sees more of the old hands of all races fading away without recording their knowledge, and I should like to take this opportunity (before it is too late) of recording what facts and lore local people have provided for me in the hope that it will induce others to put pen to paper and either confirm or deny these facts and also perhaps elicit others so that the obvious discrepancies can be cleared up. Such a compendium should be very useful to future administrative officers here, who can keep it up to date. It is unfortunate that I have had to rely on verbal information as the written records of the Malays and Chinese have disappeared, as have those of Government. This fact makes it all the more urgent that the history should lie recorded now.

I realise this history may not be of great interest to all your readers, but I excuse myself with the thought that it may add interest to those of them that have occasion to sail up the Rejang past Binatang and may even have to idle away an hour here.

Yours. etc.,

I. A. N. Urquhart,

Asst. District Officer.

[Mr. Urquhart's article appears elsewhere in this issue.?Ed.]

LIFE IN SARAWAK.

c/o The Borneo Co. Ltd., 9, First Cross Street.

Malacca.

October 8th, 1948. The Editor,

,

Kuching, Sarawak.

Dear Sir,

The October edition of the has arrived, and I am much amused by the tirade from Messrs. Morse and Kay. I can only suggest that these gentlemen cannot have had very much contact with the outside world; if they had. they would have realised that speeches that are delivered extempore are very often (a) reported incorrectly and (b) phrases are quoted away from their full context.

2. I did not know that my talk to the local Rotarians had even been printed in the Malay Mail, and though I have now tried to get a copy, in order to see exactly what was reported, I have not been able to locate one. I am therefore unable to ascertain what other remarks were possibly incorrectly quoted, but as your correspondents evidently feel rather strongly on the points raised by them, I should appreciate it if you would do me the courtesy of publishing this reply.

3.

Medical.?The phrase quoted, as it stands, quite definitely bears no relationship whatsoever to what I said. I stated that apart from the Government Medical Services, there were very few doctors in private practice in Sarawak, and apart perhaps from the Oilfields (with whose current internal medical arrangements I am not familiar) there is even no really well-qualified dentist in the country. I should perhaps point out here that in my opening remarks I referred to the fact that I was talking of the country as at six months ago; what has occurred since is of course unknown to me.

4.

On this subject Messrs. Morse and Kay state, apparently with some pride, that apart from the few

Government doctors, and the Oilfield's staff (whose main headquarters these days anyway are in Brunei and not Sarawak), there is ?a grand total of thirteen doctors in private practice.? Really, gentlemen, are you so very proud of this figure of thirteen doctors, out of a total population of the best part of half-a-million persons?

5.

The Penal Code.?There appears to be some error here, and it looks to me solely as though I have been misquoted?though I certainly did not realize that the I.P.C. had been in force as far back as 1922. I was trying to explain that generally speaking the country was run in accordance with the I.P.C. modified (in some cases, I believe, considerably) to accord with local native tradition in so far as various tribes and/or areas have adat of their own. Also I have always understood that there are certain tribal laws and customs which are absolutely peculiar to a particular district; that transgression against these laws and customs carries certain punishments; and that the Sarawak Government takes official cognizance of them. If I am wrong, I shall be pleased to be corrected.

6.

Recreation.?Having been (and still being), a member of quite a few of the clubs, etc., mentioned, I am naturally aware of their existence. Also, the quotation given in the fifth paragraph of the letter to which I am replying, would convey my original sentiment rather more accurately if a comma were inserted after the words ?and the club.? The gist of my remarks was to the effect that for the Europeans generally in Sarawak, recreational facilities were extremely limited. I still stand by this remark.

7.

Regarding the Turf Club, brief mention was made of it in my talk, but no enlargement of details was given. As Clerk-of-the-Course of the Sarawak Turf Club for quite a few years, and also often acting on behalf of the Secretaries, may I say that I appreciate the delicate compliment contained in the reference to the ?pre-war brilliance? of the Club's meetings, and also that, in conjunction with Mr. Norman Mace, I was partly responsible for the details of the proposed alterations to, and reconstruction of, the Race Course?

8.

I have answered my critics at some length, as I feel that their criticisms were inspired not by a wish to pour scorn on me personally, but from a desire to eliminate any wrong impressions that may have been given by the published report of my talk. Naturally in a short address I was able only to skim across the surface of the various subjects, and equally naturally as I was given no opportunity to check on the written report (of whose very existence I was unaware until yesterday), it is hardly surprising that errors appeared. I do not profess to have the background of the magisterial ministrations of Mr. Morse nor the agricultural accomplishments of Mr. Kay. In order to give a really detailed account of some of the many facets of life in Sarawak, but such information as I was able to give my fellow Rotarians was substantially correct, and did at least result in my audience having a somewhat broader view of Sarawak than they had ever had previously.

Yours faithfully.

R. S. Sagar.

News to London.

Kuching,

31st October, 1948.

My Dear.....,

I noticed in the columns of the last month an inconsequential letter purporting to convey current news from London to Sarawak. Since the writing of that letter, with its one passing and completely ingenuous allusion to politics (which I can tell you in confidence has rendered one well-informed gentleman in Kuching literally incoherent), I have been conveyed myself over the same journey. Remembering affectionately our exchanges of news and views over the mellow, hop-drenched counter of the 'Prince Albert' I thought you might be interested in what the returned wanderer sees and feels upon return after a short absence.

What do I find of consequence before even sight-

ing Sarawak? The first thing was without doubt the 'Rajah Brooke,' a delightful ship, and surely the most luxurious for its size in Eastern waters. Let there be no misapprehension for the newcomer

on his first voyage out about stepping from an ocean greyhound to a coastal pekinese for the last lap of the journey. I came by the greyhound and the "Rajah" wins hands down. (No, my friend, this is not advertising, unhappily enough I am not a shareholder !)

I find that some food prices have eased somewhat while we have been away, but not nearly so much as in Singapore, where according to a Cold Storage catalogue just reached me, one can buy almost any type of imported beef for less than a dollar a pound, and lamb for around eighty cents, compared with the Kuching figures which are nearly double. The first plate of nasi goreng had me lingering nearly as long as did the first rice-less dish upon release from camp, while birds' nest and sharks' fin soups are as delicious as ever. I am not at all certain though that there has been improvement in the general cost of living, and it seems to me (I daren't enquire too closely) that trying to balance the budget at the end of each month brings just as much fun with just as little hope of success as it did in the palmy BMA days.

I find that mercifully the New Look has not reached Kuching. Probably it is biologically impracticable for the tropics, certainly it is aesthetically unnecessary. Whether it will ever come, and whether the ladies will adopt it if it does, is not within my province to prognosticate, maybe their judgment would be influenced by the knowledge that not above five women in a hundred were wearing it in London in August. No doubt however, one of our leaders in fashion will one day return from leave having made personal contact with Mr. Dior, and indignantly deny my claims.

I find that supplies of whisky are shorter than they were, and that this unfortunate subject still holds a place out of all relation to its own importance in the lives of us all. Before you express sympathy with us in our abysmal plight, let me tell you, my friend, that we are far better off than you in this respect, have you yet succeeded in getting another bottle since last Christmas?

Private cars must surely be on Kuching roads in greater numbers than ever before, and with a low record for accidents which can lie paralleled by few countries in the world. (To my unofficial knowledge there have been two road deaths in three years). Crossing the Main Bazaar however, necessitates as much care as negotiating Piccadilly Circus, with one's chances of safely achieving one's goal slightly in favour of the latter !

Numbers of new faces are apparent wherever one turns and a very good show, too. Whilst many of them may be 'round-trippers,' there are markedly noticeable expressions of relief on the faces of certain heads of departments who are evidently no longer kept quite so late at their offices as once was their wont. No longer is there any fear of not reaching the first tee by five o'clock on weekdays, or the Club by a quarter past noon on Saturdays.

I find considerable commercial expansion with new importers, new shipping lines, and an 'invasion' of timber kings. Let them all come, 'the public will get better and keener service from all parties, and, tell it not in Gath (or was it Askelon?), who. knows but that new brands of scotch may appear?

I find that the post office still gives the finest postal and telegraph service of any town in which I have been, and I find too that one has an excellent chance of a first-time connection even though one does not give a number but only a name over the telephone!

It is with the keenest pleasure that I have to inform you that England has won a Test Match! Cricket is enjoying no little favour amongst a body of twenty-two (or sometimes only eighteen!) stalwarts who brave the perils of the sun and the police square across river on two or three Sundays in the month. Tiring of the government overwhelming or being overwhelmed by the commercials, and the bachelors dealing effectively or not with the married men, we blossomed forth last week into England versus the Rest, and 'do please give it the greatest prominence at home' England were the winners by a convincing margin. Time will tell whether this is a flash in the pan, 'it is darkly rumoured that one Ben Barnett is on his way to Sarawak,' I wonder how many years' residence are necessary to enable him to qualify for the Pommies. There is no little enthusiasm for cricket amongst some of our local residents, and I feel that it may not be long before the expatriates will have to look to their laurels on a field on which they have had far greater opportunities to be supreme. With the wet season coming, few games will be possible until the spring, when it is to be hoped there will still remain sufficient eagerness and desire for a good morning's fun.

There is a delightful little hamadryad in the Curator's office at the Museum, facing a somewhat doubtful future, and it can be aroused to quite a display of temper on occasion. Very recently, at Batu Lintang, whence the hamadryad came, there was caught a nine-foot rat snake, and it was felt

by its captors that it would make a rather superior mid- morning snack for its more dangerous cousin at the Museum. It was carefully packed into a case, and a police jeep happening to be in the vicinity at the time, under the watchful eyes of an officer and a couple of worthy constables, the case was placed in a jeep, and borne in state to Kuching. When it reached its destination, two miles away, at the Museum, the guards proudly reported to the con- signee (that is the gentleman to whom it was sent) that everything was in order. Whereupon the Curator donned gauntlets, or whatever one does don or doff to deal with noxious snakes, and very warily, but none the less efficiently, supervised the opening of the box. Alas, despite the careful surveillance of our guardians of the law. like Mother Hubbard's cupboard, it was bare! Well, he was only a little fellow, after all.

I find that in my absence a real live trade union, belonging to the wharf labourers, has sprung up, I wonder;?influenced if not guided by exotic ele- ments, they are testing the first fruits of success,? they have found that practically nothing can be done, for the moment at any rate, to meet their demands for higher wages, except for those people whose merchandise is affected to put the increase into their selling price which the wharf labourers and all the public will have to pay. I wonder if they really know what they are doing, or what is being done to them?I wonder if they are really happier now than two years ago, or ten years ago?

One of the, to my mind, most delightful features of Sarawak is shortly, I fear, doomed to extinction. Admittedly I have a warped sense of humour, but ever since I first came to Kuching, I have taken the keenest pleasure in writing a cheque, and know- ing that no one but myself is to derive direct bene- fit from such a simple action. Whether it is a primeval or atavistic instinct I cannot say, but I really do derive pleasure in the purchase of some- thing (a cheque book) for nothing, and the know- ledge that neither government nor bank is charging me for that pleasure. Alas, the new Stamp Act has made provision for stamp duty on cheques, and I am plunged into the depths of despair. Whereas in Singapore they must pay four cents, in Kuala Lumpur six cents, and you in tax-ridden England a shade over seven cents for this doubtful privilege, provision has been made for us to start off at ten cents, and I fear the worst. I am faced with no alternative but to close my puny account,?but 'tis an ill wind as the saying goes.?my bankers won't be sorry! But will they if a

hundred others like me follow suit? Time marches on.

I find Tabuan Road still manfully fighting a losing battle to have its scarred face lifted.

I find that ladies, in Kuching, on occasions, wear stockings!

That, my friend, is Kuching as I find it, at least in part, and I like what I find. Run not away with the idea that I shall be writing you again, it is your turn now. and if I know you, I shall have many months' peace. But take warning that if you write and tell anyone at this end my correct address or where they might be able to run into me. I shall cast off our beautiful friendship like an old boot!

Yours ebulliently.

Alan Dant.

*[The original provisions of the Bill have been amended and the Stamp Duty on cheques will be six cents. Ed.]

Adversity?: Epilogue.

Everybody won the war in their own way. The contribution of the Lintang internees to the victory of Stalingrad, the triumph of the Normandy landings, and the manufacture of the atom bomb, may be a little difficult to discern but it is not this that has tended to irritate their neighbours. It is hoped that they are no more prone than others to dwell upon memories of the days that are gone, but the fact that in Sarawak they form a substantial and homogenous group has perhaps occasionally given their uninterested and uninterested listeners cause to feel that somewhat undue emphasis is laid on the importance of their achievements. Unfortunately very often the ex-internee also possesses what is, in a European, the unlovable quality of having lived for some years in this country, and when one itch is laid on the other it is difficult to refrain from a desire to scratch. These facts were fully appreciated when first it was decided to publish an extract from "Adversity" monthly in the . Recent correspondence in the columns of this journal has indicated the existence of a general feeling that it is time all sides abandoned their swaddling clothes and that the silly but very superficial animosities were forgotten. An epilogue on "Adversity," the journal of the Lintang civilian camp, may therefore not be entirely out of place before the two tattered and dusty volumes of that irregular venture are finally consigned to the pigeon-hole.

Looking back on it now, it was an unfortunate name to choose. It conveys a revolting suggestion of stiff-upper-lipishness. I think that nothing was further from the minds of its sponsors. but it may be that it was felt that a slogan such as, "Look what courageous fellows we are," was considered a desirable antidote to the all-pervading cry of a small minority, "Every day and in every way everyone is getting sicker and sicker." The whole inspiration for and drive behind the enterprise came from Stanley Hill, a North Borneo administrative officer, to whose energy, efficiency, ability, cheerfulness, and resource all ex-internees are enormously and permanently indebted. Hill was arrested with Le Gros Clark, MacDonald of Sungei Tengah. and others. He was Secretary to the General Committee of the camp and his part in the illicit newspaper incident was to read out translations of the Japanese-inspired news daily in all the huts. For this he received a sentence of six months imprisonment and is understood to have died of dysentery before his sentence expired. His wife and child were also interned at Lintang. Mr. E. T. Meredith of Cable and Wireless Limited was the editor of the first four numbers of the journal. The late Mr. J. B. Archer, c.m.g., was a member of the editorial board throughout the journal's existence and was a constant contributor.

The story of "Adversity" must have had its counterpart in hundreds of prison camps throughout the world. It was published quarterly . from July, 1943, to July, 1944, inclusive. A few contributions in the first number were typed, but soon after that all type-writers were confiscated and all contributions had to be written in pencil or ink. Publication was secured by passing the journal, clothed in its magnificent wooden cover, designed and constructed by Mr. Beatty of the North Borneo Railway, from hand to hand. Each of the seven huts was entitled to have "Adversity" within its walls for a specified number of days. The more fortunate contributors possessed their own supplies of writing paper but the majority had to use the wrappings in which tobacco was imported into the camp. When tobacco began to run short the General Committee ruled that all wrappings had to be handed back to the "Purchasing Committee" for distribution by the editorial board. This decision caused a storm as a large number of the members of the camp required the wrappings for such purposes as manufacturing their own cigarettes, taking notes at the numerous classes and lectures, and so on. Fortunately good sense prevailed and a suitable compromise was

reached between the rival leaders of the two deserving causes.

The most consistent, and only brilliant, contributor to 'Adversity' was Mr. A. H. P. Humphrey of the Malayan Civil Service who had been British Resident at Labuan on the outbreak of the Japanese war. He maintained throughout a very high level of literary skill and at no time descended to that type of contribution which, though popular enough amongst the inhabitants of Lintang, has had regrettably to be excluded from the pages of the . The Japanese, during one of their periodic raids on the camp, the same raid, I think, as that which accompanied the arrest of Le Gros Clark, Hill, MacDonald, and

others seized the fourth number, and for all I know still have it, but it is probable that they did not read it because 'Adversity,' while perfectly respectful to the occupying power, its officers and allies, could easily give occasion for suspecting the presence of those 'double meanings' which our hosts were so fond of ferreting out. The journal finally perished in the autumn of 1944, not because of any lack of willing contributors, but because the paper famine had by that time attained such horrifying dimensions that further publication was entirely impracticable quite apart from the protests of the cigarette-rollers.

The decision to publish extracts from 'Adversity' in the was made principally for two reasons. In the first place it provided a regular and reliable source of 'copy,' and only an editor or ex-editor of the 'Gazette' knows what a monthly headache the prospect of having to fill up the next number is liable to give. . In the second place it did help to capture and retain some of those fast fading impressions of the days of war as experienced by a very small section of the community in a very insignificant part of the world. If apologies are necessary they will doubtless be freely forthcoming. It is hoped and believed that they are not necessary, because those who led a far more active war-time life than the internees, in far more important places than Sarawak, will make allowances for editorial dilemmas and will readily forgive the escaped canary's nostalgia for the cage. Perhaps, however, Sarawak, North Borneo, and Malayan readers, who were interned at Lintang, will agree that the crumbling pages of 'Adversity' are primarily a crude but in the circumstances not wholly futile memorial to the vigorous personality of Stanley Hill, who came with the Sandakan internees to share

our tribulations, and lost his life as the result of doing, as he always did, his best to cheer our own.

K.H.D.

Notice.

Sarawak Volunteers and Passive Defence Services 1941?Back Pay.

Arrangements have now been completed for the payment of Back Pay to members of the above Services. Rates of pay will be those laid down in Order No. V?2 (Volunteer Force) 1941 and Order No. E?6 (Emergency Powers (Defence)) 1941 Passive Defence Services Pay and Allowances.

The period for which Back Pay will be made is from the Date of Mobilisation (i.e., 8th December, 1941) to Date of Demobilisation as follows :?

Kuching ... 24th December 1941 (17 days).

Simanggang ... 29th January 1942 (53 days).

Sibu/Sarikei ... 26th December 1941 (19 days).

Miri ... 12th December 1941 (5 days).

Further details of the method of payment will be published shortly.

SARAWAK TURF CLUB.

LIST OF DRAWING ON THE CESAREWITCH STAKES

Drawn at the Borneo Company Office, Kuching, on 12th October, 1948.

D. C. WHITE, W. J. CHATER, ONG HAP LEONG, A. CHONG, WILLIAM TAN, A. P. MERRELLS,
Scrutineers.

Limbang Annual Agricultural Show.

Statement of Agricultural Show Fund, 1948.

Donations :?

1.

From the Honourable, the Resident, 5th Division for the purpose of a challenge cup-\$100.00

2.

Government staff. Lim-

bang, and Chinese community ... \$191.05

3.

Department of Agriculture ... 150.00

4.

Malay community,
Limbang ... 383.10

5.

Iban community,
Limbang ... 38.10

6.

Bisaya community,
Limbang ... 53.25

7.

Lawas District ... 269.41

8.

From Sundar and
Trusan ... 173.25

Total donations ... \$1,258.16

Expenditure :?

1.

Decoration charges :?

Cost of planks, coolie hire ... \$136.65

2. Stationery 12.50

3. Telegram charges 6.60

4. Prizes to winners of exhibits :?

(a)

Section I?Vegetables; etc. 169.00

(b) Section II?Poultry ... 68.00

(c) Section III?Flowers ... 55.00

(d)

Section IV?Arts, Crafts ... 116.00

5. Land Sports including buffalo race prizes ... 56.00

Total Expenditure ... \$619.75

Summary.

Total Contributions ... \$1,258.16

Total Expenditure ... 619.75

Balance* ... \$ 638.41

Kong Tshun Sang, Honorary Treasurer.

William Crocker, Honorary Secretary.

*The balance in hand, as shown, will be deposited in a Post Office Savings Bank account in the name of the Honorary Treasurer on behalf of the Committee.

Kuching Market Price List.

Monthly Average Market Price from 20th September, 1948, to 20th October, 1948.

Notice.

Defence Medal and Campaign Stars.

It has been decided that members of the following organisations in Sarawak are eligible for the award of the Defence Medal:?

Air Raid Wardens Service.

Medical Auxiliary Service (see footnote).

Auxiliary Fire Service.

Despatch Riders Service.

Coast Guards.

Staffs of Lighthouses.

Sarawak Constabulary, Armed Constabulary and Special Police.

Sarawak Rangers.

Sarawak Volunteer Force.

Footnote : -All who served in regular Governmental Medical Service or approved Civilian Auxiliary Service whether in a unit under military or civil control. In this context ?Governmental Medical Service? includes qualified medical officers and nurses and auxiliary staff not so qualified, and ?Approved Civilian Auxiliary Service? means approved service auxiliary to medical service proper. including, e.g., service of qualified auxiliary medical officers, nurses, stretcher bearers and ambulance and first- aid personnel.

2.

Part-time as well as whole-time service will be a qualification, and essential conditions of eligibility are that an applicant : ?

(a)

performed one day?s service during the operational period 8.12.1941 to 3.4.1942. or twelve months? service during the non-operat- ional period 3.9.1939 to 7.12.1941;

(b)

was duly enrolled as a member of one of the above organisations;

(c)

performed duties to the required standard as and when required.

3. Guerilla Forces organised by Officers of Force 136 or the Services Reconnaissance Depart- ment are eligible for the award of Campaign Stars as follows :?

1939-1945 Star, subject to one day?s service during the operational period 8.12.1941 to 3.4.1942, or six months? service during the operational period 8.12.1941 to 2.9.1945.

Pacific Star, subject to one day?s service during the operational period 8.12.1941 to 2.9.1945.

It will be a condition of eligibility that an applicant shall have been duly enrolled as a member of the above services. The Governor has been authorized to certify, after investigation, that individuals rendered guerilla service qualifying them for Campaign Stars even though written records of formal enrolment or subsequent service may not be available, provided that, where written records are not

forthcoming, claims will not be certified until corroboration has been obtained from ex-officers of the Services Reconnaissance Department.

4. Application forms for Defence Medals and for Campaign Stars may be obtained from District Officers' Headquarters, and in other stations from Police Stations or Post Offices.

Notice.

The Belgian Government have now formally agreed to grant to British subjects, Corporations and Associations, whose property in Belgium has been lost or damaged as a result of the war, treatment as regards compensation equal to that extended by Belgian legislation to Belgian nationals in respect of similar loss or damage. Having regard to the provisions of Belgian legislation, compensation will not be payable in respect of loss or damage to British ships or vessels in Belgian territory or in Belgian territorial waters.

The text of the agreement having been published in the "Moniteur Beige" of the 2nd September, 1948, British subjects, Corporations and Associations, who have not already made application for compensation in accordance with the instructions previously issued should submit their claims before 2nd December, 1948, on forms which will be supplied on application to the "Directeur du Ministère de la Reconstruction (Damages de Guerre)" of the province in which the chief damage was sustained. The addresses are as already notified. Claims which are not so submitted will be time barred.

The registration of property or claims in respect of war damage in Belgium with the Foreign Office, Trading with the Enemy Department, or any other Government agency, or with any British Chamber of Commerce. His Majesty's Embassy at Brussels, or any of His Majesty's consular officers in Belgium, does not constitute the lodgment of a claim with the competent Belgian Authorities nor can His Majesty's Embassy at Brussels or any of His Majesty's consular officers in Belgium act as agents in presenting and pursuing individual claims. The lodgment of claims must be made, and any necessary correspondence conducted, by individual claimants with the competent Belgian Authorities in French.

Notice.

Information has been received regarding the possibility of negotiations being opened by His Majesty's Government with the Czechoslovak Government for the payment of compensation for nationalised property. It is requested that details of claims, showing name of claimant, full particulars of property (including estimated value and date when it was nationalised, if known) and date when claimant obtained British nationality, be forwarded to the Secretariat at a very early date. Further information is available in the Secretariat.

For Sale.

M L. ?LALUTE?

The above launch is offered for sale by the Manager, Lawas Estate.

Principal Particulars :

Length 44 feet

Beam 10 ft. 4"

Depth Moulded 5 ft. 6"

Draft?Empty?Aft ... 3 ft. 7"

Forward 1 ft. 11"

?Loaded 4 ft. 6"

Engine?General Motors 133 B.H.P. Installed in 1948.

Registered Tonnage?19 Tons

Speed?8.9 knots at 1,700 RPM

Hull?2 1/2" Oregon Pine with copper sheathing

Cargo Capacity?10 Tons

Further particulars from The Manager, Lawas Estate, Lawas via Labuan.

Notice.

November Rice Ration.

The basic Rice Ration for November is 20 lbs. of either Siam Grade I. Whole White Rice or Rangoon Whole White Rice.

Heavy and Special Workers get an additional 10 lbs. of either of the above qualities.

Glutinous Rice (?Bras Pulut?) will not be included in the November Ration.