

Vol. LX XIII

No. 1076.

PRICE KUCHING, Saturday, November 1st, 1947. 20 CENTS

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The .

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1st, 1947.

Bruen.?To Anne Veronica, wife of Desmond Lingard Bruen, at Kuching General Hospital on October 13th, a son?Shane Lingard..

Facts About Nuts.

"There was an exceptionally large crop of illipenuts in Sarawak during March-July which as usual was marketed in Singapore. This is a jungle product, of which there is a heavy crop only about once in four years, when the quantity depends entirely on prices obtainable as compared with other produce. Sale was permitted only to the Ministry of Food, who fixed the price at £39.5.6 per ton f.o.b. Singapore, although Continental markets were prepared to pay nearly twice this price.

This is a clear case of a Government control defeating its own object. The price offered was so unattractive that only some 15,000 tons out of a potential crop of some 50,000 tons was collected, whereas with a free market the harvest would undoubtedly have been doubled. The Ministry of Food could thereby have obtained a larger tonnage at a reasonable price. If it was not prepared to pay world values, freedom to trade would have acquired for us much-needed foreign exchange."

Thus, according to The Straits Times of September 29th. spoke the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in a recent report. The newspaper commented that the extract "shows why Singapore merchants are so exasperated with post-war Government interference." It may well do so. If the report

expresses the natural disappointment of middle-men at being deprived of a profitable deal it must be treated with respectful sympathy. In so far, however, as it purports to identify the interests of the Sarawak native with the interests of the Singapore trader, and to suggest that the former were injured by the action taken by the Ministry of Food, we believe that it is hopelessly wrong and

dangerously misleading.

It is not meet, when venturing to criticise a pronouncement of hard-headed business men, to take into consideration the genuine satisfaction that many people felt that Sarawak's crop of illipe-nuts was going to the relief of under-nourished England rather than to "Continental markets." In our sloppy, sentimental way we were very glad that the needs of the people at home for food were given priority over the needs of the merchants of Singapore for foreign exchange. This argument is, however, clearly beside the point. The question at issue is as to the effect of the decision on the people of Sarawak.

It must be said that the figures look a little queer. The total crop exported from Sarawak was in fact 7,656.35 tons and not 15,000 tons at all. This works out at 128,627.22 piculs and compares very favourably with the last large crop exported which amounted in 1935 to 83,678 piculs. The peak year appears to have been 1923 when 253,001 piculs were exported. It would be interesting to know from where the Chamber of Commerce obtained its figure of 50,000 tons for the potential crop. In actual practice it is impossible to arrive at anything like an accurate estimate. 1940 was generally regarded as a bumper year but for various reasons the crop was not then harvested. Rough guesses placed the potential crop in that year at 40,000 tons and optimists thought that the 1947 crop might possibly be as good. The more cautious estimate of the Commissioner of Trade and Customs, however, was 200,000 piculs or 11,904.06 tons.

As the Chamber of Commerce pointed out engkabang, the Sarawak name for illipe-nuts, is a curious crop which flowers and fruits irregularly. Consequently its harvesting finds no place in the ordinary routine of the life of the Dayaks and other tribes lucky enough to live within reasonable access to these jungle trees. And so, when a crop does appear, the gathering of it in represents a diversion from more ordinary pursuits. Time has to be taken off from padi-farming or hunting or rubber-tapping or damar-working or house-building and so on. Too often in the past the Dayak has taken this time off in haste and lived to repent at leisure because, having brought the nuts down to the local bazaar, he has found that the price has dropped and he has therefore been unable to obtain a reasonable return for his labour. The Dayak seldom learns by experience, hut

about this time last year it was becoming absolutely clear that if he could not be given an assurance of a market and guaranteed minimum remuneration for such engkabang as he might care to bring down there would be very little engkabang exported at all.

During the last two or three months of 1946 administrative officers were continually pressing in their reports that some action should be taken to ensure a certain market and a reasonable, steady price. The door was open but nobody came in. Then, right at the end of the year, the offer from the Ministry of Food arrived as a surprising deliver-ance and was, with all respect to the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, widely and warmly welcomed. Later on the Borneo Company, Messrs, time, Darby and Company and a few other local firms carried out considerable purchases independently of the agents of the Ministry, though it is understood that the Ministry was the ultimate buyer. The only restriction imposed in Sarawak was that engkahang could not be exported otherwise than to the United Kingdom or Singapore. . The one mistake the Ministry of Food appears to have made, if we may say so with diffidence, was in their failure to employ local Sarawak agents instead of relying on the middle-men in Singapore. If they had depended on Sarawak firms only it is clear that the producer would have got a bigger part of the price the Ministry was prepared to pay as one link in the chain would have been eliminated. A higher price would of course have been an advantage, if, that is to say, it had not been offered at the sacrifice of an assured market. In actual fact the Fifth Division crop could not be exported because it was uneconomic to ship the engkahang to Singapore via Labuan. The price of \$16.20 per picul was the price offered by Singapore merchants c.i.f. Singapore. If there had been equality of price f.o.b. all Sarawak ports the result would have been more equitable as between producers and traders in different parts of Sarawak and the total amount exported would probably have been greater.

It may be asked why the Residents and District officers were in such a hurry: why were they demanding in November marketing security for a crop which would not be ready for harvesting for another two or three months? The answer is that news travels slowly in Sarawak. An important decision taken in Kuching on Tuesday afternoon is not known in the Ulu Ai on Wednesday morning. It will probably not be heard about in the Ulu Ai for several weeks and it will be several more weeks

before it is properly digested. The announcement will reach the District Officer by telegram if it is short and by memorandum, after some days, if it is more detailed. He will broadcast it either by "calling down" his penghulus and instructing them to pass the message on or by going off himself when work permits, and delivering it by word of mouth to all who care to listen to him. The second course will be necessary in any case if it is essential that anything more than the broad principles involved should be properly understood. In explaining the sale prospects of engkabang it is not sufficient that the District Officer should merely recount the arrangements arrived at. He knows very well that if he leaves the matter there the Dayak collectors will be sadly beaten down by the Chinese traders. Accordingly he must exercise his personality and influence in persuading the local retailer to pay a price which is fair in relation to the price which

he will get in Kuching, and this is generally the hardest part of the job.

In these circumstances it is nonsense to talk as if a "free market" would have brought great benefits to the producers. Before he breaks away from his more ordinary pursuits to gather engkabang the Dayak wants the District Officer to tell him what he will get for it in the local bazaar. In order to convey this information the District Officer wants "Kuching" to tell him what price will be offered in the capital, will that price be absolutely guaranteed, and will an unlimited quantity be absorbed, and he wants to know this in plenty of time to spread the news round his large and inaccessible District. People not resident in Sarawak should remember in this connection that railways do not exist and outside Kuching and Miri motor-roads are negligible: travelling is done on foot or by boat.

The Chamber of Commerce say that with "a free market the harvest would undoubtedly have been doubled." We think it far more likely that it would have been halved. District Officers, worn and wearied on the one hand by prospective producers demanding to be told what they will be paid if they bring in the crop and on the other by a stubborn and obdurate silence from Kuching in response to their pathetic pleas for information, would have watched the engkabang ripen and begin to rot. At that point no doubt the offers would have come bounding in. Telegrams would have flown from station to station but unfortunately most long-houses are not on the telephone. A few enterprising traders would have dispatched "bandongs" to bring in as much as they could and a few

Davaks. who were not away at their padi- farms or hunting or rubber-tapping or damar- working or house-building, would at length have heard about the opportunity and saved the last remaining piculs for distribution to the world through the great free market. It can safely be added that most producers, selling without the advice and assistance of the District Officer, would have been badly cheated. It was not the offer of a high price in March that Sarawak wanted: it was the offer of a reasonable, assured price and a certain market in December and this Sarawak got.

Nevertheless when all is said and done it must be acknowledged that the final result was not so large as was at one time hoped, and this may be attributed to two main factors. In the first place the shipping situation was fraught with uncertainty. The Sarawak Steamship Company holds a virtual monopoly of shipping between Sarawak and Singapore and only suffers competition in the coastal trade from small launches. At one stage it looked as if there would not be sufficient shipping space available to convey the crop to Singapore, but the Company heroically overcame this difficulty and it can be said that they transported all the engkabang that was offered to them. The coastal shipping question was, however, more difficult and outstation traders had sometimes to refuse to purchase engkabang because they were not certain that they would be able to find shipping space for it. To this extent, in a few places, the certainty of the market failed to hold.

The second reason for the disappointment was the fact that the ripening of the crop coincided with the padi harvest. Some people may think that it is very regrettable that the natives of Sarawak should prefer to grow their own food rather than to seize every opportunity for obtaining ready cash, but this is the way they have been taught by their three Rajahs. Their land, they have been told, is their life's blood. Let them guard it, cultivate it, honour it, for it is from the soil of Sarawak that their daily sustenance comes. It may make them wealthier to work for others or to collect jungle produce but once they fail to give priority to padi growing they place themselves in undesirable dependence. Sarawak would become just one more country to surrender its ability to grow its own food to the clamour of economic ambition. That was the Brooke teaching: that was the Brooke tradition; and it is to be hoped that it will not be allowed to die.

Their Excellencies on the Coast.

Their Excellencies the Governor-General and the Governor. accompanied by the Private Secretary, left Pending by M.L. Karina for Mukah at (5 a.m. on Thursday. October 9th, travelling via the Rejang, Sibuan and the Igan in order to avoid as much open sea as possible at this time of the year.

Apart from a pause of ten minutes at Sibuan to pick up a pilot, and collect details of alternative arrangements made by the Resident in case the state of the weather rendered it impracticable to get out of Kuala Igan, the run to Mukah was made non-stop. The Karina was met off Mukah at 8 a.m. on the 10th by the Resident, 3rd Division, and the District Officer. Mukah. in the m.l. Lily. which led the way into Mukah.

Numerous vessels were anchored in line between the Kuala and the Government Wharf. These huddled ships welcomed Their Excellencies with crackers and blasts on their sirens. On landing Their Excellencies were greeted by a large crowd, and then proceeded to the District Officer's bungalow.

After Their Excellencies had inspected a Guard of Honour of Constabulary and school children drawn up in front of the Government Office, His Excellency the Governor presented to Mr. William Chua Tamby the King's Commendation for Brave Conduct. After hearing requests in Court His Excellency the Governor visited the Government and Chinese Schools and took refreshments at the latter.

The whole station was well decorated, but those in the bazaar, where the Chinese were celebrating the double event of Their Excellencies' visit and the Double Tenth, were exceptionally good. The main congratulations, however, must go to the Indian Moslem community who had erected a large arch modelled on the Taj Mahal and adorned with the Union Jack and Pakistan flags.

During the morning His Excellency the Governor-General was shown the sago working in the Tilian, and there, as indeed throughout the tour, found numerous subjects for photography. In the afternoon Their Excellencies attended a tea party to celebrate the opening of the Mukah branch of the Young Malay Association. Addresses of welcome were read by the President of the Young Malay Association. Sibuan, and representatives of the Melanau Islam, Melanau Liko. and Indian Muslim communities who were also present. Their Excellencies both replied. On leaving the Young

Malay Association Club Their Excellencies watched a football match and then visited the R.C. Mission. Their Excellencies were guests of honour at a Double Tenth dinner held at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

The following morning the party left for Oya by jeep along the beach. Their Excellencies were given an enthusiastic welcome on arrival, although many of the crackers had been wasted on the Private Secretary who had preceded them in Mukah's one and only bus which, although piled high with servants and baggage, was apparently mistaken for Their Excellencies' conveyance. Their Excellencies visited the Chinese and Government Schools, at which the children sang songs of welcome.

After lunch the party left for Dalat in the M.L. Rusa. On arrival Their Excellencies again received an enthusiastic reception. Tea was taken at the R.C. Mission School, and then the Chinese School was visited.

Their Excellencies were entertained to dinner at the Chinese School, at which representatives of the Melanau and Dayak communities were also present. His Excellency the Governor-General replied to speeches of welcome. The next day, after His Excellency the Governor had heard requests in Court, the party went in the Rusa to Kampong Kekan, where they transferred into a fleet of small prahus for the journey through the Kut. This was accomplished without disembarking, although in several shallow places the paddlers had to wade and push the boats.

On arrival at Kampong Kut the Karina was waiting, and Kampong Igan was reached at 2.30 p.m. There Their Excellencies were ferried ashore seated on chairs on a decorated platform lashed to two prahus and towed by another containing a Melanau choir. A covered platform had been erected, where addresses of welcome were read, after which Their Excellencies walked through the Kampong and received a soaking from the only untimely shower of rain on the whole tour.

After tea Their Excellencies watched a Dayak ngajat and Melanau bersilat, and then had a talk with the people on local affairs. After enjoying a curry dinner given by Tua Kampong Haji Ismail, they finished the evening by a visit to "Miss Lily's" travelling bangsawan, and spent the night in the house of the Tua Kampong. Leaving Igan at dawn, the Karina reached Kuala Matu at 8.30. There

the District Officer, Lower Rejang, came on board. Fortunately the sea was smooth, as the Karina had to anchor for an hour and a half to wait for sufficient water to cross the bar.

Their Excellencies landed at Kampong Kuala Matu for a short while, then proceeded upstream to the Main bungalow, which, together with that at Oya. is now a rather dilapidated memorial to more leisurely days. On the way up river the Karina towed several decorated prahus bearing messages of welcome from several kampongs. During the afternoon Their Excellencies made their official landing at Matu, and His Excellency the Governor heard requests, after which Their Excellencies were entertained to tea at the Matu branch of the Young Malay Association in the presence of a large and enthusiastic crowd.

A number of "No Cession" posters were in evidence at Matti and these had produced a rash of counter posters announcing "We want Cession" and "Tell His Majesty the King we are happy under British Rule." On one house occupied by two brothers noted for their inability to agree on anything both sets of posters were prominently displayed.

Next morning after a talk with a large assembly of people in the office Their Excellencies walked through the old and new bazaars and kampongs, which were attractively decorated. and visited the Government and Chinese Schools. Native Officer Abang Shari?ee entertained the party to an excellent curry lunch. In the afternoon Their Excellencies went by outboard to Kampong Bawang and Kampong Tian. At the latter kampong. a place of extremely rickety plank-walks over the water. Their Excellencies were shown a demonstration of sago working.

After an excellent dinner at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Their Excellencies walked through the bazaar and kampongs which were illuminated by numerous pressure lamps. To achieve this nearly every house must have lent a lamp. Their Excellencies then attended a most amusing and enjoyable bangsawan organised by local talent. Some of the most popular turns had a strong political flavour: three of the principal characters being the man who wanted to be Rajah, the man who wanted independence. and the man who collected 50 cents a month from each of them with a promise to deliver the goods.

The return journey to Kuching necessitated a start at 4.30 a.m.. the Karimi arriving at the Astana at

9 p.m.?(Contributed.)

Notes and Comments.

His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald arrived in Kuching by plane from Singapore on October 8th. The former, together with His Excellency the Governor, proceeded to Mukah and Oya on the following morning. Their Excellencies returned to Kuching on the 16th. His Excellency the Governor-General proceeding to Singapore on the following day. It is understood that Their Excellencies will be visiting the Fifth Division in November.

The new Sarawak Colony flag, which has been approved by His Majesty the King, arrived in October and was flown at the Astana from October 23rd. It is based on the Union Jack, having in the centre the Sarawak crest consisting of the yellow shield with the black and red cross and the crown, surrounded by a wreath of laurel leaves in green tinged with yellow. It is officially reported that this flag is for His Excellency's personal use and the Union Jack will continue to fly from Government buildings.

The Mohammedans of Kuching celebrated Hari Raya Haji on Saturday, October 25th, although the official public holiday was kept on Monday, October 27th, following the Almanac, which placed the date as Sunday, October 26th, and in accordance with the Holidays Ordinance, which provides that, when a holiday falls on a Sunday, it shall be observed on the Monday. We understand from the Secretary for Native Affairs that a meeting of the leading Malays, under the chairmanship of the Honourable the Datu Hakim, decided that the date of Hari Raya Puasa, and therefore of Hari Raya Haji, had been wrongly calculated. The duly dons sack- cloth and ashes. It is some comfort that, according to the Sarawak Tribune of October 24th, the same error appears to have been made in Singapore.

The Chinese celebrated the "Double Tenth" with their customary fervour and vivacity, but this year in Kuching it appeared to be largely the monopoly of the local "youth movements," the more prominent towkays taking little part.

The long-awaited Bomb Disposal Squad arrived in Kuching in October. It consists of four officers and fifty other ranks under the command of Major Bourne. These bombs have caused a

considerable amount of anxiety for a somewhat lengthy period and they have produced some fatal accidents. It is gratifying to learn that this dangerous condition of affairs is at last about to be liquidated. The heartily welcomes the Squad and wishes them the best of fortune in their arduous and risky work. It is to be hoped that they will receive the utmost co-operation from the public.

Mail-starved Kuching awaited hopefully the arrival of the Pangkor on Saturday, October 25th, only to find that the mails had been put on the wrong boat and over-carried to Labuan. There have been too many incidents of this kind during the last eighteen months but no doubt the future will witness some improvement.

As many of our readers will know Mr. Dickson of the Education Department recently represented Sarawak at a conference in Nanking. His daily messing bill was \$135,685 which worked out for seven days at a total of \$949,795. It is understood that the Treasury are very pleased that the visit was accomplished so cheaply. We are informed that the rate of exchange is sixty Sarawak cents to ten thousand Chinese dollars.

Early in the month we were told that a certain local resident had had the misfortune to swallow; a lighted cigarette. It appears that he was sitting outside his house in the evening, puffing happily away, when he was seized with a violent fit of coughing. He held the cigarette between his fingers and near his lips, intending to be in a convenient position to resume his fumigation immediately he had quelled the tempest. It is said that a sudden inrush of air between coughs snatched the cigarette away from his fingers and carried it off on a headlong journey. Astonished and alarmed he rose to his feet and ran round coughing on purpose but with no effect. Our informant points out that the only sensible thing to do in the circumstances was to extinguish the flames, and so large quantities of gin and ginger were immediately sent chasing after the cigarette. Meanwhile the poor man's wife, almost beside herself with anxiety, had hastily concocted an emetic, the only effect of which was to remove the beneficent gin and ginger, leaving the cigarette where it was. We are told that the good lady then had the brilliant idea of ringing up the Chairman of the Kuching Municipal Board and requesting the attendance of the Kuching Fire Brigade at her residence before breakfast on the following morn- ing. She immediately put this brain-wave into effect, but the Chairman

greeted her representations somewhat frigidly, contriving to give the impression that he always expected people to do things like swallowing lighted cigarettes at that time of night. Having slept on the report he appears to have woken wondering whether he had not erred on the side of flippancy, for he telephoned to the swallower's house, saying that, for certain technical reasons, he could not send the fire engine but he

was prepared to dispatch a man with a hose, an offer which was properly rejected with disdain. The end of the tale, says our informant, is that the cigarette wandered round on a sight-seeing tour for six days and seven nights and was then suddenly expelled through the same channel as it had entered, but it was not still alight. Lancet please copy.

"When Mr. Brooke, bent on vindicating his good name, invokes the law, he is denied the exercise of his legal rights by the man he is suing." Thus saith somebody using the pseudonym of "Candidus" in a London picture paper called the Daily Graphic. We are informed on excellent authority that this gratuitous scurrility emanates from a person who was, paradoxically enough, once the editor of a paper designating itself "Truth." Another typical comment which he makes—that certain articles, which appeared in the Sarawak Tribune, were "journalistically considered.....not worth much"—we had thought of ascribing to professional jealousy, but, having once again perused his excellent, "journalistically considered." contribution to the Daily Graphic, we refrain from doing so.

Turtles in Tribulation.

The following is an extract from a recent report by Mr. Tom Harrisson, Curator of the Sarawak Museum and Government Ethnologist. Although emphasis is laid on the decline of the industry it must not be thought that Mr. Harrisson has confined himself to lamentation. He has made various proposals for reforms in the organisation and administration of this famous Sarawak asset, which for obvious reasons cannot yet be published.

"For at least a century the eggs of the Green Turtle (*Chelone mydas*) have been regularly and systematically collected from the three islands. Talang Talang Besar, Talang Talang Kechil and Satang. In the 1840's the first Rajah paid several visits to the islands which were then the haunt of

pirates and inhabited by a number of Malays living in fortified dwellings.

On each island there is one small beach of fine white sand used by the turtles. The total area, in which sometimes more than three million eggs a year have been laid, is less than three acres of sand. The largest beach, in the form of a small cape, is on Besar, and in the past over 50% of eggs have come from here, just under 40% from Kechil, and the balance (7% to 8%) from Satang.

Although a few turtles lay in every month of the year, there is a marked seasonality. July and August are the heaviest laying months, and there is a general breeding intensity beginning slowly in March, amounting to a peak in July, and falling away with increasing rapidity to a low level again in November. The total laying from November to February inclusive is well under 10% of the total annual lay.

This Sarawak seasonality is in striking contrast to the breeding habits of the same species in the Seychelles, where breeding is concentrated in February-May. though some breed in all other months.

The number of eggs laid per turtle averages 109. and there appears to be a tendency for a slightly higher laying average at Satang (over 110); the largest number of eggs recorded in one lay is 176. There is a wide range of individual variation—for instance at Besar on August 22nd. 1947. it varied from 68 to 130. It is conceivable that there is at present a slight decline in the average lay, though this requires further investigation. Certainly in 1947. if the figures are being kept correctly, lays are averaging well below pre-war, at about 105 on Besar and Kechil.

Much more definite is the decrease in turtles since the war. In the eleven pre-war years for which there are reasonably accurate figures, only once were less than 1,400,000 eggs collected. In nine years there were more than 1,900,000. and in two years (1934 and 36) there were more than 2,900,000.

Compare this with post-war yields

1945 1,112,380

1946 929,123

1947 (to August 23rd) ... 375,000 (approx.)

This probably means about half a million eggs for 1947. far and away the lowest total ever known.

There is no reliable information by which we can measure long term trends, but some indication is provided by export figures. In 1901 just under a million eggs were exported and in 1905 well over a million. It is known that a large proportion of eggs were always consumed within the country, and one is inclined to think that such large export figures indicate a higher total egg lay in the early part of the century. (Compare 1927 when over 2 million eggs were collected and about 1/4 million were exported).

It is vitally important to the industry to attempt to assess how far the present decline is temporary, accidental, or reflects a really serious trend, and, if the latter, what steps can and should be taken to prevent further decline in the future. Experience in many lands has shown that reptiles are particularly susceptible to reduction in numbers, or even extermination. To quote the 1933 report of the Imperial Institutes Advisory Committee :

"Where a species of reptile has been personally hunted by man for commercial purposes, its numbers have almost always been reduced, or it has been completely exterminated."

In the case of the Green Turtle, the Imperial Institute report states

"This reptile is everywhere rapidly being reduced in numbers."

In Jamaica, where this turtle is killed for the meat, the catch was reduced by more than two-thirds between 1901 and 1931. In the Seychelles, Hornell found that "the Green Turtle is decreasing rapidly in numbers. Already it has become so scarce in the Northern Islands as to be of negligible value there..... Alone in the Aldabras are there

still considerable numbers, but these are nothing to what they were at the beginning of this century or even fifteen years ago.?

In Sarawak there has never been any attempt at conservation and so far as has been humanly possible every egg laid has been collected. It is therefore only logical to believe that the trend here is in line with that elsewhere, although taking longer to show clearly because the turtles themselves are not killed, and, as they are very long-lived animals, still continue to lay for many years without any replacement from young.

Lay has always been subject to marked fluctuations in Sarawak, and of itself a "bad" year is not necessarily anything to worry about. It is even possible that this year's exceptionally poor returns are merely an accentuation of the erratic tendency. This seems somewhat unlikely, however, in view of the general low trend already discussed above.

The reason for the erratic year to year variations in laying is not clear. Banks has suggested that a rough and stormy landas with high rainfall from November to March is followed by a poor breeding season on the islands. And he has correlated rainfall and egg statistics. His correlations, however, are open to a certain amount of criticism from a technical and statistical point of view. And since his valuable paper was written (Sarawak Museum Journal 1937) the landas of 1939-40 was exceptionally severe (117 inches) without any effect on the lay for 1940, which was just under two million eggs.

The landas of 1946-47 was exceptionally mild, with 59.45 inches of rain at Kuching—the second lowest record in forty years. Yet, as we have seen, the consequent breeding season has been much the poorest ever known.

Without further research, which I hope to initiate in consultation with Banks during 1948, the erratic tendency remains a considerable puzzle. My own suggestion, for what it is worth, is the weather effect on the beach formations is also of much importance and that we have to consider factors operating over a much wider area than the vicinity of the islands. As far as the present problem is concerned, it would seem from the above that annual variation alone is not sufficient to account for everything, and that, even if there was a very good year—next year, the general trend over a period of years is unsatisfactory.

A number of theories have been put forward in recent months to explain the present alarming drop in egg supplies. In all I have recorded six of these, put forward by responsible and informed persons. I propose to discuss each briefly.

It is certain that the Japanese killed a number of turtles from the islands and ate them. This is widely held to have been responsible for the present reduction. Estimates of numbers killed range from 300 to 500. and no-one from the islands or associated with them has put it higher than the latter figure.

Certainly this must have had a powerful effect on the total returns. Turtles lay at least three times in the year, normally, and this might represent a loss of approximately 150,000 eggs maximum, assuming all turtles laying in a "good" year. But it is difficult to see how this in itself can be responsible for the decline, for the following reasons :?

(i)

This killing could not have continued after August, 1945. But there was no very drop in laying in 1946. The sharp drop was only visible in 1947. Only if the Japanese had killed turtles in 1946 would this be a satisfactory explanation.

(ii)

Banks has estimated the turtle population of the three islands at "a minimum of 4-10,000 turtles." If his estimate is correct, then the number killed by the Japanese, would be only about 10%. not of itself anything like sufficient to cover the decline.

(iii)

Banks himself apparently did not think that the killing of turtles was necessarily a bad thing for in a tile-letter of June 7th, 1941, he suggests selling 500 turtles for the Singapore Meat Market, It is also widely reported that Chinese are killing turtles in Dutch territory, while there are reports that two Chinese boats were catching and killing turtles at Pulo Mide in July, 1947. I discussed this with the Dutch Resident from Pontianak, who says that there has always been a certain amount of this going on. but he has no reason to believe that it is particularly serious now. In fact the Sarawak version seemed rather highly coloured as long-distance hearsay, while it is very uncertain if turtles far away in Dutch territory are those which lay on our three islands. (At present we lack any scientific information about local migration, though it is known that turtles return very regularly to the same islands and it is very unlikely that turtles found round Natunas. for instance, ever visit the Sarawak Turtle Islands). Periodic netting and shooting of turtles seems always to have gone on and is referred to in pre-war correspondence from the Datu Patinggi (11th November, 1941).

Motorboats are said to be a disturbing influence and this may well be so. But as an explanation of what is going on at the moment this hardly seems adequate. There are probably less motor boats

about at the moment than pre-war. And the careful log kept on boats calling at Besar show few and far between. In a visit paid by a party of Europeans on the night of 12th July, 1947. in a large motorboat, an exceptional number of turtles came ashore, subsequent to their arriving with engine running. Motorboats certainly can be a disturbing factor, like any noise, especially in the early evening or at night, but this is not a new factor or sufficient explanation to explain recent developments.

Use of the area on a bombing range by the Japanese is also frequently mentioned. This too no doubt has been a contributing factor in disturbing turtles and reducing laying. But again it would not of itself explain the immense drop between 1946 and 1947.

Other breeding sites are frequently mentioned in explanation of the decrease on the islands. But I cannot find that any significant number of turtles are breeding in any new place that could possibly be relevant. There have always been a small number laying on Tanjong Datu and along the coast from Sematan. These are quite often the Hawksbill Turtle which lays a smaller egg and rarely comes ashore on the islands. Research evidence from the West Indies indicates that the Green Turtle has a very strongly developed habit of returning to the same place year after year, and there have been cases where captured marked turtles liberated up to 500 miles away returned with great promptitude to the islands from where they were taken. It is very unlikely that this habit can be broken, and there is no indication that the turtle is capable of calculating thought stronger than these deep migratory instincts and habits. If there is a consistent decline in laying on Sarawak's three turtle islands, the inferences which can fairly be drawn (on our present limited knowledge of these reptiles' habits) is that either there are less turtles left alive in the area or that less of them are coming ashore to lay.

Having examined these six current theories we are left as high and dry as the best of turtles. For none of them will bear close analysis and even all six put together would not account for all the phenomena we are considering. It is certainly an undoubted fact that several of these things, such as Japanese killing and bombing, have likely contributed to the present situation and handicapped the turtle industry as a whole. But in my considered opinion they have only accelerated an existing trend and we would be closing our eyes to reality if we were to try and explain things away so

simply.

Apart from that, it is at once clear that the effects of the Japanese and other activities, in reducing the actual number of turtles, present an immediate problem of replacements. The turtle probably goes on laying for several decades, and looked at from this point of view the loss of 500 turtles may represent the loss of 10 million or more eggs, in the long run. But under past arrangements, and up till now, turtles have had no opportunity whatever to replace themselves. Nothing so far has been done even to remedy this obvious gap, apart from any general conservation needed due to a steady drain on the land population from old age, stray Chinese and others netting or shooting, and so on.

One other point is worth mention. The decrease on Besar appears to have been more severe in 1947 than on any other island. For both 1945 and 1946 Besar continued to maintain its regular proportion of about 55% of the total lay. In general in a bad year all the islands have gone down together. But in the period from August 22nd, 1947. 191,000 eggs were collected on Besar, 150,000 on Kechil. and 36,000 on Satang. This is only a small change but conceivably significant. Further observation will show.?

Simanggang Agricultural Show.

The show, held in Fort Alice Simanggang, was opened at 9 a.m. on September 26th by the Datu who made a short speech of welcome to our visitors to Simanggang.

Although there was some rain during the day and heavy rain during the night, which played havoc with the paper decorations put up the previous afternoon and evening, this did not prove sufficient to deter people from inspecting the exhibits and 1,105 people paid for admission. The number of visitors was extremely gratifying considering the fact that the show was put on at only a month's notice and came right in the middle of the hill padi planting which explained the lack of visitors and exhibits from the Ulu.

A total of 53 prizes were awarded and out of some 420 exhibits 313 were in the Arts and Crafts section, and a very fine show they made. Especially attractive were the exhibits of Dayak cloth, about 53 pieces. Several people were anxious to purchase some of these but their owners were most definite in their refusal to sell, except some of the poorer pieces, and then wanted outrageous

prices.

Chinese and Malay Schools put up clever and attractive exhibits and special praise must go to the Chung Hua School. Simanggang, who were awarded a Diploma for their excellent, show of Arts and Crafts. Many thanks are due to the Chinese School girls who entered heart and soul into the selling of rosettes?beautifully made by Duyaug Haji Madina and party. Few people can have escaped from their clutches and over \$200 was raised in this way.

The flower section was conspicuous by its size there being only 3 exhibits. The fruit section did a little better with some 6 exhibits, the first prize going to some excellent tomatoes. The vegetable section produced some 22 exhibits and most were of excellent quality?brinjals and cucumbers of incredible size and straightness. The "tuak? class produced some 13 bottles which were well and truly judged just before the influx of visitors descended upon us at 9.30 a.m. I am glad to say that there was no kerosene in any of the bottles on this occasion.

A shelter had been constructed outside the Kubu to take the livestock exhibits consisting of poultry and one ancient goat, there being no exhibit of pigs. Also most apparent was the absence of exhibits of rubber or jelutong.

Outside the Kubu also had been set up four side- shows run by Mr. Lim Ah Bee and party, which proved a great attraction; also a coffee stall to provide refreshment for the weary. A varied assortment of records was played over the public address system which had been installed in the Kubu.

The financial aide of the show proved a greater success than was expected and a profit of over \$153 was made which will, it is hoped, go towards a bigger and better show next year.

Owen F. Wright.

Agricultural Officer,

Simanggang.

Mr. Poggy and the Slow Thinker.

Half-a-dozen ?cross-river? denizens meandered down Pangkallan Sapi and took their places in the sanpan perentah. The last-comer, Mr. Cousens, lurched into the boat and deposited himself heavily

on the starboard side before Mr. Miller, lolling comfortably in the stern, had time to size up the situation and throw himself to port. The boat tilted tipsily but a leap in the air by Mr. Miller, combined with much leaning back of port bodies, and much leaning forward of starboard bodies, contrived to avert disaster. "There?" said Mr. Poggy, wiggling a stem forefinger at Mr. Miller, "nearly had us capsized that time, you did. That's what comes of slow thinking."

"Slow thinking?" continued Mr. Poggy as the paddlers pushed off, "produces more evils than women. Many a man has been killed by a bus because he didn't think quick enough to stretch out properly. All you've got to do is to stretch out properly and the bus goes over you as if you were a bit of India rubber. And as far as I know the same thing goes for railway trains, but I wouldn't like to say about steam-rollers. Who is it that gets to the top? Not the clever man, not the dishonest man, not the rich man, but the man who's got all the answers. You wouldn't catch Winston Churchill on the Standard Time Scale. You may be a good plaintiff but you won't win your case if you are a bad witness. If you leave the egg on the boil after it's begun to squeak your breakfast is ruined, and, while your remark may be a lie if they believe you, you must make it clear it's a joke if they don't.

That's the trouble with this country, too many slow thinkers. Whether it's the whisky or whether it's the climate. I'm sure I can't say, but I've seen a crocodile run round a man laughing at him while he was wondering whether to stand on its neck or put poison in its soup. And it's getting worse. Look at all these marriages. Now I myself I'm different. I've kept out of matrimony and I've kept in the service. Many a time the old Rajah said to me Poggy, it's the next boat for you?, but I always fixed it that the next boat was an aeroplane and then he didn't know where he was at all. Modelled myself on Lloyd George I have. He was a quick thinker if you like. I've seen forked flames dart out of his mouth and scorch up a heckler on the spot. If any of you gentlemen interrupt me I will crush you under the weight of my tongue like what I would a scorpion.

Strangely enough I've known slower thinkers than you gentlemen. I remember some fellows capsizing this boat one day and only finding out they were in the water when they began to wonder why they were taking so long getting across to the other side. Many years ago, when I was looking after the Brooke Dockyard. I met the slowest thinker I've ever known. He was an Asiatic and his

name was Mr. Pong. He really ran the whole show but he couldn't think as fast as a cheechak swallows a rabbit. Mind you he could do a lot of things I couldn't do. He could write short-hand and talk Chinese and he had fifteen children. But his brain moved like a cockle in irons. Well one day in comes the Shipping Master. I sometimes wonder what that fellow had wrong with his eyes. He saw a lot of things which he would have been better to ignore at his age but whenever he came to the Dockyard he never saw me. Up he goes to Pong as usual and says Is that Simanggang launch ready yet?? Well we'd promised to have it ready on Thursday and now it was Friday and yet old sluggish-brain Pong answers : 'No, sir, not ready yet.' And then somehow or other the Shipping Master suddenly caught sight of me and very rude he was too. nautical if you know what I mean. I come back with one of my lightning flashes. Now Lord High Admiral.? I say, I've just rung up Southampton and asked them to send the Queen Mary for you? but I don't think he quite heard me. I was using the drunkard's whisper, you know speaking a bit sotty voshy.

He goes out and I turn on Pong. 'Pong, Pong' I remark, drowning my anger in my cup of sorrow, Pong, Pong, Pong, Pong. If we say a launch is going to be ready on Thursday it is ready on Thursday. The tide may be too low to get her out. or the crew may be drunk, or she may be suffering from a female ill, or she may have told us that she wants the Shipping Master changed, but she's ready. my good Pong. Your trouble is that you are much too slow a thinker.' Then Pong says something which takes me all aback. 'That reminds me of your English proverb' he says. 'English proverb. English proverb.' I say. 'English proverbs are all Solomon Shakespeare. Nothing practical about them?like a mule courting.' 'You know. sir. your English proverb,' says Pong. 'Better a slow thinker than a half-witted beggar.' Of course,' added Mr. Ponggy. as the sampan men scrambled out to hold the boat by the steps of Pangkallan Batu while the passengers prepared to disembark, 'he wasn't getting at me. He wouldn't have dared.??

Balas.

As a civil servant, and both a constant reader of. and occasional contributor to. this semi-official journal, I am continually horrified and distressed at the regularity with which the daily and weekly press indulge in fierce and unprovoked attacks on His Majesty's Colonial Governments, not so much

in Sarawak as in our great and sophisticated neighbours, Singapore and the Malayan Union. Liberty, I say to myself, wondering if somebody else could possibly have said it before, has now degenerated into licence. The intrepidity of these journalistic Jehovahs is commendable, and it must be acknowledged that they are principally animated by one of the most useful of nineteenth century inventions, "public spirit." There appears to be an alliance between the press and the commercial class. A member of the latter makes a speech criticising the Government and a newspaper prints an editorial to say what a good fellow he is. Then, after a suitable interval, the commercial gentleman writes a letter to the newspaper explaining how loudly he is buzzing in sympathy with the particular bee which is inhabiting the editorial bonnet at the time.

Now the question arises : Should Governments take this situation lying down? Unfortunately they can seldom do very much else. Considerations of policy and dignity alike prevent them from indulging in public wrangles. Abuse is accented with a smile or a sneer, and genuine criticism, let it be added, with gratitude. I am not oblivious of the great services newspapers render to Governments, and, when official actions meet with their approval, no one is readier than they to praise. On the whole, however, official actions do not meet with their approval and censure is more common than applause. They are inclined to assume to themselves the prerogatives of the maiden aunt without always possessing the qualifications for the position. As it appears inevitable that one day the same great force of liberal criticism will rage in Sarawak, it occurred to me that possibly two can play at that game, and so, with the editor's permission. I suggested to our special staff reporter that he might try to find something to criticise in the Kuching commercial community, and this is what he produced :

Whitehall Bans Whisky

Only Twenty Bottles In Two Years Club Secretaries To Petition King.

The great thirst prevailing over large areas of Sarawak is reaching serious proportions. It is time that the commercial community realised its responsibilities. It is an open secret that Club Secretaries are thoroughly dissatisfied with the present situation and are considering petitioning His Majesty. It is true that the Secretaries of the Sarawak Club and the Teochew Association have publicly

announced that they are fully convinced that the whisky merchants are doing everything in their power to supply the needs of their customers, but it should be noted that these statements were made shortly after a party in B.M.K. at which the two Secretaries were present. I have personally chatted with two or three members of those societies who take a very different view from their officials.

It is incredible but true that not more than twenty bottles of whisky have been available to any one individual at a reasonable price during the last two years. And yet we are reliably informed that the average European in Kuching, to take one small cross-section of the community, has applied for six hundred. It may be argued that the local merchants are doing their best to meet the crying demand and that it is the dead hand of Whitehall which dries up the supply . It is not entirely clear whether Whitehall is the headquarters of the trade or a useful term of abuse, hut in any case it is no doubt the root of this evil, as, I gather, from a casual perusal of our contemporaries, it is of all others. Nevertheless it is the manifest duty of the Sarawak whisky merchants to insist on the immediate delivery of bigger and better supplies and to persevere in this course until the great thirst which is at present afflicting this land is entirely rooted out. It is in the highest degree ridiculous that citizens of the United States of America should be able to obtain unlimited quantities of this beverage, while our local merchants, through sheer inertia and lack of will-power, are unable to provide the population with their daily stengah.

It is satisfactory to be able to discern, amidst the gloom generated by infirmity of purpose. one small gleam of light. A local resident is to be executed for sitting on a bottle of whisky and thereby causing it to break. The prosecuting solicitor has issued the following statement: "A warrant has been obtained against John William Smith, who wilfully, dishonestly. fraudulently and with bott intent to do damage to the public and malice aforethought caused the contents of a bottle of whisky to escape from their confines. He has a long record of con- victions and is generally known as a dastardly character. The case is to be tried on Tuesday."

That however is the only ray of light in the murk. We urge members of the public to bring every possible pressure to bear on those in authority , and we demand that Club Secretaries should drop

their futile, white-washing tactics and adapt their public statements to fit our preconceived opinions. Above all we insist that the commercial community should abandon its feeble, namby-pamby, sentimental attitude and realise that it is here to deliver the mods. It must either get whisky or get out.

G.

Paper 1950?

It was at a Board Meeting of the Directors of the New Era Paper Manufacturing Co. The faces were glum, reflecting the serious expression on the countenance of the Chairman as he rose to address the meeting.

"Brother conspirators," he commenced, "the bottom is dropping out of the paper market. Ever since that unfortunate occurrence, the end of the war. reports reaching our office from every quarter of the globe indicate the dwindling consumption of our product. We have actually heard that in Governments in some countries the number of Forms has been reduced and that some Heads of Departments are spending one day a week out of their offices. Of course we have called the attention of the Chiefs of the Governments concerned to this neglect of their duties, but the replies we have received, where we have received any, are in most

cases unintelligible. In one instance the reply took the form of N/A scribbled in red pencil over the sheet on which we had written to them and returned in the same used envelope! Another actually drew a crude picture on our letter and wrote underneath 'Wot no dividends' and returned it to us again in a used envelope but on this occasion unstamped. Can any of you explain to me the meaning of N/A?" "Yes" replied one of the company dressed in uniform, having just returned from an official luncheon, "it means 'Non- Applicable,' obviously comes from an ex-Service- man. keen type, probably ex-H.Q. It means that that Government is taking steps to keep up the consumption of paper. The matters of the reply on the same piece of paper and of the used envelope are to be regretted but this is obviously a slip and a personal note to the man's senior officer will prevent similar happenings in the future.?"

"Thank you,?" from the Chairman who continued : "The second instance I have quoted to you obviously comes from a person with no idea of his responsibilities. The most we can say of this is

that we did receive a reply, which is more than we can say in most cases.

Passing for the moment from Governments who during the war, and particularly in the Services, were fully alive to the absolute necessity for the maximum use of the pen, pencil, and typewriter (I was serving in a Supply Department) we come to Commerce. Here there is a regrettable tendency for firms to amalgamate. Thus many time-honoured names are being lost at the head of writing paper and one sheet is being used where many were before. They are also using a thinner and much lower quality of paper. More abbreviations are creeping into use, an abuse of the language.

Next we come to newspapers and the so called '6d Dreadfuls,' previously most profitable lines of business. The falls in the sales of these are really-shocking. One story told by our agents seems typical of many. When talking over a Coca Cola in the local ice cream bar with some friends he asked them what they thought was the reason for the public refraining from buying newspapers to such a large extent, and they were all in agreement with the reply of one of them : 'Oroscopes, gertcha, we use radar.' As to '6d Dreadfuls' it appears the public prefer television.

Gentlemen, we are not taking this lying down? (a gulp out of his glass of brandy) 'but I need your advice too before we meet those speculators, our shareholders, in order that we may suitably gloss over the probable passing of the next dividend, not, gentlemen, of our fees. Of course our accountants always arrange that. Let me tell you first what I advise we do. We must concentrate on Governments; Commerce knows too much. The public follow the fashion; we must guide it by subtle propaganda. We are even trying flavouring paper and advertising its sugar content in the hope that in some of the starving countries the people may start to eat it. But as I said Governments are our main hope. We must undermine the authority of the recalcitrants or meet their guile with greater cunning. We have suggested as propaganda, gentlemen, that it is vital for humanity to know how many prefer it with water and without. Think, gentlemen, of the number of forms and the amount of correspondence, reference, prying into personal affairs and so on which will arise over this. We have our experts working on the forms

which must be specially attractive. One of our staff raised the query as to what 'It' meant. He has been relieved of his position. ?

Gentlemen (incidentally I should have informed you before, that since our last meeting I have taken legal advice and it is in order for me to address you as gentlemen) have you any suggestions to make??

A conscientious looking little man, so obviously stupid, suggested it seemed more important to him that they should know how many fish there are in the sea?he was shouted down.

Another proposal to the effect that the firm's experts should do some research work in regard to the number of queries requiring to be answered in experts' forms was unanimously accepted as these had shown a marked reduction recently, following protests of some saboteurs of the movement.

The Meeting closed abruptly with the sudden appearance of the Controller of Non-Essential Commodities.?(Contributed.)

Buying Oxtail.

When I arrived in Kuching more than a year ago we had our meals largely out of tins. Coming as I did from England, where all food is rationed or in short supply, plenty of tins with no points to be given up seemed like a dream come true. We opened corned beef for lunch and herrings in tomato sauce for dinner, and knew that the next day we could have sardines and pork and beans by way of a change. There was also M & V in the store cupboard : apricots, peas, rabbit, parsnips and a few choice tins of brains. It was wonderful? but not for long. By the end of the second week the first fine careless rapture of opening tins had somewhat abated, and I began to understand why my friends were willing to pay high prices for poultry and shell-fish.

Suddenly I thought of oxtail, simmered slowly for hours with carrots and onions. Surely. I thought, oxtail can't be so very expensive with all these bullock carts about, and next day I said to Cookie, "For lunch we will have herrings, and to-night, oxtail.? As he did not seem to understand I said carefully. "Ini malam minta satu ekor lembu.? Cookie looked at me in astonishment. "Well can you get it?? I asked him. He said he thought perhaps he could, but it would be very expensive. "About how much?" I enquired. After much thought he said, "Five hundred dollars.? "Five hundred dollars for an oxtail!? I said in horror. "I didn't ask you to buy the whole ox! Little did I know that this was exactly what I had asked him to do. "Never mind Cookie.? I said airily, "I will go and buy it myself.?

In those days the Cold Storage did not rejoice in the handsome selection you find there to-day.

"I want to buy an oxtail and some carrots and onions," I said with a bright smile.

"Very sorry we don't have it," said the shop man with an even brighter smile.

Somewhat daunted, I said. "Well what meat have you?"

"Very sorry, you see we don't have it," came the reply.

"No meat at all!" I said, very surprised.

Perhaps I have made a mistake. Are you the Cold Storage?"

"Yes we are, but you see just at present not so many goods in Storage."

I stared at him in amazement. "Have you nothing at all in stock?" I asked.

"Yes we have nothing just at this moment but some tins of margarine," he told me, and added hurriedly for fear I might be wanting to purchase his one commodity, "But those tins we send to the ice factory to keep for us."

"Well if you have no meat for sale, where can I buy some?" I enquired next.

"Please to seek for it at the market where they sometimes have such things," he said hopefully, and was kind enough to direct me on my way.

In due course I arrived there, and following his instructions I passed the fruit and vegetables, very alluring to eyes and nose, and then the fish, which was alluring to neither. Finally I reached the meat market and in I went.

Unfortunately I did not understand that here they sell pork meat only, and I went from stall to stall searching in vain for my oxtail and being offered fat pork, lean pork, pork innards and pork outers and growing more and more fretful and upset because it wasn't pork that I wanted to buy.

The meat sellers are Chinese and not one word of my hesitating Malay did they understand. What would have become of me I don't know, had not one of these men, larger and more understanding than the others, come to my aid. First he grunted like a pig and pointed to the stalls round him. Then putting both his first fingers to his forehead to simulate horns he bellowed in the most life-like and bovine manner; pointed to me, pointed to himself and then indicated the door. At last I understood. If I wanted beef I had to search elsewhere. I now made horns myself and let out quite a creditable

bellow. Then I put one hand to my behind and waved it to and fro to show that it was the tail of the ox I wanted to buy. This proved popular with the pork sellers who slapped each other on the back and came crowding to the door to bellow a friendly farewell.

When finally I found the stall where 'other meat' is sold?and I had to return to the vegetables to reach it?there was only one oxtail in stock. No doubt it had served to keep the flies off its late owner, but he must have been one of the lean kine and as a possible future dinner it was no use at all. So I put my pride in my pocket and back I trudged to the pork market where my horned helper Served me with two succulent chops.

Cookie was most relieved to see me come home with such a modest purchase. He does his best to give satisfaction however strange his orders, but so far no mem has asked him to roast a forty stone ox. and he sincerely hopes that none will.

K. S.

This Sarawak.

(With apologies to the New Statesman and Nation.)

The delegates were accommodated in Govern- ment's swank hotel, run by the Foreign Ministry, which is similar to the Sarawak Government Rest House at Rock Road, Kuching.?Sarawak Tribune.

I am now about 30 years of age and am double.

?A letter.

If this charge is sustained I am safe to say that the era of nips are with us again.?Petition of Appeal.

Q. What do you want?

A. I want to go back to England.

Q. Were you there before?

A. Yes. 30 years ago.

Q. Can you speak English?

A. I know the alphabet.

Q. Why do you want to go to England?

A. I heard in th? cinema last night that I was required.

Q. What for?

A. To bring back \$5,000,000.

Q. Have you any money to pay your fare?

A. No. I want to go on that ship now at the wharf. ?Interview between a District Officer and a Chinese youth, aged about 17.

(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.)

Stories of Old Sarawak: 5.

Once upon a time the officer-in-charge of Oya desired to dispatch a considerable quantity of Government cash to the headquarters of the District at Mukah. Consequently, in accordance with established precedent, two prisoners were detailed to carry a heavy box on their shoulders and a staunch and reliable young constable was selected to act as escort. In the early hours of the morning the little procession set off along the beach, the high road between Mukah and Oya. The prisoners walked firmly, bearing the box between them, while the watchful policeman followed closely on their heels with loaded rifle and fixed bayonet.

Somewhat later on that same morning a well-known priest set out, rested and replete, from the Roman Catholic Mission at Mukah to visit his flock at Oya. He rode a bicycle leisurely along the rapidly warming sand. After he had completed a substantial proportion of his journey he spied in the distance a little group of three men. The two in front appeared to be struggling along under the weight of a heavy box while the third followed them at ease. As the distance between the travellers diminished the good Father began to think that something looked a little odd. Was not that man staggering under the far end of the box

clad in the familiar uniform of the Sarawak Constabulary? And was not that man lagging nonchalantly behind clad in the familiar uniform of Sarawak convicts, and, horror upon horror, was he not armed with a rifle, which might well be loaded, and a fixed bayonet? The Mission bicycle accelerated. the Father's dreadful suspicions revolving rapidly in his mind with every turn of the wheels.

And, as the pedals whizzed around, the truth of his first impressions became clearer and clearer. He jammed on full speed and, having ridden up to the group, hastily dismounted, his bicycle falling on the sands as he prepared to suppress this dangerous mutiny. "Is everything alright, constable?" he gasped. The constable cocked up an aggrieved eye from under the box. "Of course it is" he said. "But," queried the missionary, "why are you carrying that box and why has that prisoner fellow got your rifle?" "Oh," replied the constable, light at last dawning, "he got tired so I had to take my turn." The well-known priest paused, turned on his heel and retrieved his bicycle. He rode silently off to Oya while the little precession wobbled on to Mukah, wondering dimly what, all the fuss had been about.

Fifty Years Ago,

THE , NOVEMBER 1st, 1897.

Leading Article :

The peaceful invasion of the Colonies and dependencies of Great Britain by the Chinese is one of the most curious features of our Eastern life; a sort of double colonization by two of the greatest branches of the family of mankind, only that the white man is merely a bird of passage and the Chinaman a true colonist.

The characteristics of this extraordinary people must at once strike the mind of the most superficial of European residents in the East : their wonderful energy and capacity for work; their power of accumulating wealth; their peculiar physical powers which render them equally fertile and their children equally vivacious at the equator as in the more temperate regions of China, and which enable them to rear a new race of natives under climatic conditions entirely different from those under which their forefathers were born; these are facts with which we are all acquainted. Their mental endowments, too, are by no means to be despised as nearly every year shows us. when the results of the examination for the Queen's Scholarship of the Straits Settlements are published and some young Chinese boy departs for England to enter into educational competition with his European fellows.

Their numbers are continually increasing both from immigration and from the excess of births over

deaths. By the 1891 census out of a total population in the Straits Settlements of 512,000, there were 228,000 Chinese; in Perak out of 214,000, there were 94,000; and in Selangor out of 81,000, there were 51,000 and, from the causes mentioned above, the ratio must have increased enormously in favour of the Chinese.

These considerations would appear to point to some curious complications in the future. In the near future the Straits Chinese will be sure to enter the Government Service: already one is on the Legislative Council and the Municipal Boards

have Chinese representatives upon them: men of education and experience and who appreciate the conditions under which they live thoroughly. But in spite of all this mass of education both in Europe and the East, of his constantly mixing with Europeans, speaking the language of the West and the East with almost equal fluency, the Chinaman is always a Chinaman and never appears to be able or to wish to become Europeanised. It will be interesting to watch the development of Chinese political power in these countries of the Far East.

Military Department.

The whole force of Rangers in presence of His Highness The Rajah was assembled on October 16th when a Malay translation of the Order passed in the year 1865 was read out to them to the effect that officers were not allowed to employ public servants as boys or menials in their houses, nor were they in any way to be separated from their duties. His Highness The Rajah explained to the Force that they were paid for carrying arms and for the defence of the country as soldiers and were not to act as boys in European's houses, or in any other menial capacity.

News from Far and Near.

FIRST DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that the European Housing Committee met in September to discuss the present housing situation in Kuching. It was decided to recommend that funds be provided immediately for the construction of five new bungalows, and that the provisions of General Order 105 should be modified and bachelors be asked to share houses as a temporary measure.

Forty-three criminal cases and twelve civil cases were heard in Kuching District Court in September.

The District Officer reports that a small Filipino boy admitted to six separate thefts and was sentenced to one year under the supervision of the Director of Agriculture. The District Officer adds that in connection with these thefts a number of convictions were also recorded, with heavy penalties, for receiving the various articles stolen by this small boy.

The District Officer, Kuching, says that no serious crime was reported during September. The Honourable the Resident comments : "Efficient investigation by the Police followed by sharp sentences in the Courts has undoubtedly frightened the criminals in Kuching and I hope that the present healthy conditions will continue."

The District Officer, Kuching, reports that legal action was taken in September against local Malays for non-payment of Exemption Tax Forty summonses were issued in the first place and this had the effect of producing over \$1.450 of tax before the end of the month.

The Malays of Kampong Bako, having refused to accept the school-master sent down by Government to re-open the village school there, were visited by the District Office and Datu Tuanku Taha on September 24th. The position regarding the scarcity of teachers was explained and the foolishness of identifying education with politics was pointed out. A further offer of the same teacher was made if the Tua Kampong should report before the end of the month that the people wanted him. After a week, however, the Tua Kampong again reported that his people refused to accept this teacher. The Honourable the Resident comments that they are a number of ex-schoolmasters living in this neighbourhood who are keeping the question of Cession alive.

The District Officer, Bau, reports that Court work proved most strenuous during September. At one time, in an endeavour to keep pace with the increasing number of cases occurring, the District or Police Court sat morning and afternoon on twelve out of thirteen consecutive days. The thirteenth day was the intervening Sunday. Even so all cases were not cleared off, but time had perforce to be given to other duties. The District Officer understands that of late figures for offences in Bau District have surpassed those of Kuching. He adds that the number of cases shows that the police continue to enjoy a fair measure of success in the apprehension of culprits. The Honourable the

Resident comments that many of the Kuching criminals appear to have gone to Bau.

The District Officer, Bau, regrets to report the death of Orang Kaya Singow of Kampong Gumbang who seems to have been in Government service for nearly 37 years.

One prisoner in Bau was found to be suffering from chicken-pox on September 20th. He was isolated.

The District Officer, Bau, reports that the Krokong Gold Mining Syndicate produced 7.034 ounces of gold for August in comparison with 38.2443 ounces for the previous month. The decrease was apparently due to a much smaller tonnage of ore being treated in August. The Tai Ton Gold Mining Syndicate produced 26.275 ounces of gold for August, which was their first out-put since the liberation. A report was received from the Seburan Gold Mining Syndicate that they had commenced treatment of ore as from September 1st. Mining leases were issued during the month to the Nam Loong Gold Mining Syndicate and the Lian Hap Gold Mining Company Limited. Seven panning licences, three fossicking licences, and one General Prospecting Licence were also issued.

The District Officer, Serian, reports that smuggling of cigarettes undoubtedly continues. He thinks that the trouble is that so many traders live within four miles of the border.

A prisoner escaped from Simunjan gaol in September and was still at large at the end of the month.

SECOND DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident says that the Agricultural Officer reports that the local Dayaks are showing great interest in the possible cultivation of citronella and lemon grass since they expect to get the planting material free, and little work is required. They do not like the idea of pepper growing as it needs a lot of money and too much work. Many are requesting seeds of citrons, the reluctance to plant pepper is quite understandable since this is a Full-time job, and, if they were to plant pepper successfully. there would not be sufficient time to attend to the normal farming and their rubber gardens.

The District Officer, Bimanggang. reports that some sixty Ulu Ai Dayaks engaged on building bunds at Tanjong Bijat have accepted small contracts. The rate of progress has been astonishing, a man averaging four cubic yards per day, which compares favourably with Chinese coolie labour, who are

usually supplied with good tools. The District Officer adds that it is hoped to obtain some local rubber shoes for this labour force, since using spades, without any foot-wear, is tough even on Dayak feet.

The District Officer, Simanggang. reports that all the condemned buildings at Lingga have been demolished and reminds prospective visitors that there is no Government accommodation there while the station is being rebuilt.

The contractor, charged with the task of re- building Lubok Antu station, has, says the District Officer, Simanggang. transported most of the timber to the scene of operations. The sites have been levelled and the contractor thinks he may finish the job before the end of the year.

The Engkilili Dayak team gained a well-deserved victory against Saratok in the Divisional knock-out competition in Simanggang. Next year, says the District Officer, Simanggang. it is proposed that the Divisional teams meet at Engkilili, as the cup, one of the late H. E. Cutfield's racing trophies, will be competed for annually.

At the end of September a Resident's Court case of particular interest stood adjourned at Betong. It was a. claim for maintenance by a Chinese woman whose husband had deserted her and gone through the Mohammedan form of marriage with a Malay.

The District Officer, Saribas. reports that sago production is proceeding satisfactorily. There are three engines at Debak and two at Pusa.

The District Officer. Saribas. reports that a public ration of rice (12 lbs. per head) was sold to 1,400 persons in the 'Betong Sub-District' during September. Many people did not take their full ration owing to shortage of money.

THIRD DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that, during a recent tour of the Lower Rejang District, he was impressed by the amount of land which has been brought under padi cultivation this season.

The Honourable the Resident reports that, between Rejang and Selalang during the above-mentioned trip, he succeeded in taking a wrong turning in the Rejang delta for the fourth time during his career.

The District Officer, Sibu, reports that there were four gang-robberies in Sibu in August. At the end of the month they were still under investigation by the police.

The District Officer, Lower Rejang, reports that in Binatang Municipal Area in particular, the introduction of 12-hour street lighting has had a very salutary effect on would-be petty criminals.

The Malays in Lower Rejang celebrated Hari Raya on August 18th, as the moon had been seen on the previous evening. They were thus in line with Miri. Our readers will remember the letters from two angry correspondents from the latter place which were published in our last issue.

The District Officer, lower Rejang, reports that on August 18th the s.s. Hindustan arrived at Rejang from Australia. Seven hundred tons of logs, which had been rafted down-river, were loaded. The District Officer adds that "the rafting was attended by early misfortune which rendered the operation somewhat hazardous."

The District Officer, Kanowit, says that from all reports it would appear that the Kanowit Dayaks are going to be very short of rice this year. Some have already been seeking Government rations and the Native Officer at Julau remarks that some of the Julau Dayaks are living on tapioca. The position is complicated by the slump in rubber on which a large number of local Dayaks mainly depend, adds the District Officer. At the end of August the possibility of establishing a "padi bank," similar to those stalled before the occupation, was being investigated. The Honourable the Resident comments that he has "not got a great deal of sympathy for these people as they are most improvident when they have rice and when they have not they squeal to Government for help." The Resident points out that enormous feasts and bedara ceremonies eat into rice stocks to no real purpose.

The Assistant District Officer, Kapit, says that there is a report from Song that the death of a Dayak of Rumah Jos, Nanga Katibas, was found to be due to excessive drinking of tuak while celebrating ngabang in the new house. The report continues that the heirs of the deceased asserted that no punishment should be imposed on the one who gave the drinks, but in fact in the end he was required to pay a selabat of fifteen mungkols.

The Assistant District Officer, Kapit, says that in August four Dayaks purchased tawaks in Song for 35 piculs a tawak, or perhaps this was the price, of the most expensive one. (The report is not

wholly clear).

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that measles has been troubling Igan, Oya, Dalat. Mukah and Balingian. The outbreak was worst at Dalat where there were five deaths. The people of Kampong Kekam near Dalat also suffered but it is said that death were averted by the drinking of coconut milk.

In Oya and Dalat as well as in Miri and the Lower Rejang the moon was seen on August 17th and the Mohammedan population of those places began their festival on the following day. It seems to have been a very extraordinary moon this year; a confusing, mischievous and, in that it was apparently unable to read the almanac, illiterate moon. The District Officer, Mukah, says that he understands that the moon played the same tricks in 1939.

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that for about four or five days after August 25th the deeper draft launches were unable to leave Mukah, not because of the weather but because even the highest tide was dangerously low for them. One Chinese junk did try to get out but paid dearly for the experiment. In the early hours of August 30th she crept out of the Mukah river and just at the critical moment the wind dropped and the current drove her off the channel and on to the bar. The bottom of the junk was stove in and she settled down nicely in the sand and became a complete loss. The greater part of the sago flour, which she was currying, was, however, salvaged.

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that the Melanaus are industriously working sago as the price still remains good. He understands that the trees being worked are those in the flowering and fruiting stage, known as "Angau Muda" and "Angau Tua." These trees are approximately 10 1/2 -11 1/2 years old and still produce the largest amount of good quality sago. It is said, adds the District Officer, that there are still many such trees to be worked and that when these have been finished the younger trees will have reached their present stage. The District Officer also remarks that the high price of sago in the Oya river has resulted in even less padi being grown by the Oya and Dalat communities.

The District Officer, Mukah, says that most Government cloth is practically unsaleable, but there is still a demand for the "Chawat Grey" variety, principally for making mosquito nets. The District

Officer. Kanowit. comments on the same theme that sarongs are by far the most saleable item of Government supplies.

FOURTH DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that the 1947 rice harvest in the Fourth Division can now be established as good. He thinks that he could go so far as to say that this Division has proved that it can be self-supporting in rice so long as competition from foreign countries does not reduce the price to such extent that it would be uneconomical to grow it locally. The Resident adds that the difficulty at present is to get the padi milled quick enough for distribution to the public. A mill twice the capacity of the present one is required.

The District Officer. Miri. reports that on August 26th a Chinese from Krokop. who. some time ago, attempted to commit suicide by cutting his throat, again began behaving queerly and attempted to cause trouble with a parang in each hand. He was pursued and badly knocked about by a mob of Chinese, and at the end of August was in hospital with severe injuries.

On August 29th two Dayaks in a prahu were picked up in a very weak condition by a Chinese launch off Miri. They were taken to hospital. The District Officer, Miri. says that they stated that they were from Simanggang, but while off the mouth of the river they had been caught in a storm and blown up to Miri. They claimed to have been adrift for 27 days but the District Officer comments that this may be the usual tall story.

The District Officer. Miri. reports that several of the Sarawak Oilfields Limited specially recruited Dayak jagas have been dismissed for leaving their posts to play cards in their lines. The District Officer adds that the Company say that the experiment of having hand-picked Dayak jagas has, with a few exceptions, been a failure. Most of them show little realisation of responsibility and valuable property like batteries and engine parts continue to be stolen even when Dayak jagas are on duty.

The District Officer. Miri, reports that the sea-going sailors of the Marine Department of Sarawak Oilfields Limited went on strike in August in connection with an overtime allowance. The Company refused to negotiate until the men went back to work, although, according to the District Officer, they

were sympathetic to the men's claims. The District Officer had a long talk with the men and eventually they returned to work while their representatives negotiated with the Company. These negotiations were brought to a satisfactory conclusion and some of the men have since informed the District Officer that they were perfectly contented with the result. The District Officer adds that if the strike had continued the Company would have been in a very awkward position as at the time seven tankers were off Miri for loading. The District Officer is of the opinion that the situation should have been dealt with before a stoppage of work eventuated.

Sarawak Oilfields Limited reported on August 13th that one of their L.C.T. had collided at night with a fishing boat off Bakam. No lives were lost, and both the crew and the catch were saved. The boat, with damaged bows, was brought back to Miri on the L.C.T. Apparently the fishing boat carried no light of any sort and, says the District Officer, the owner, a Miri Chinese, has made no claim against the Company.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that on August 25th the tanker Solarium arrived in Miri with the crew of fifteen, engine, running gear and cargo of a motor tongkang, which signalled her for assistance off Subi Kechil. The tongkang had apparently left Singapore for Singkawang but the engine broke down. Sails were hoisted but a fierce storm blew them away and the tongkang started to break up. The cargo, valued at \$10,000, was at the end of August in Government custody pending the settlement of salvage claims. The crew had been repatriated to Singapore.

Bintulu is another place where the Mohammedans celebrated Hari Raya on August 18th. The District Officer, Miri, says that in that District "the 17th, Hari Raya, and the following day were observed as Government holidays." In spite of the letters which appeared in our last number we think he must have got his dates wrong. The official holidays in Bintulu took place on the appropriate days and probably they did in Miri too.

The District Officer, Bintulu, reports that on August 8th a constable was dismissed from the force for persistently refusing to proceed to either Kuching or Mui hospital for medical treatment. He died in the kampong on August 25th.

Some of the Dayaks in Bintulu District, under the leadership of Tuai Rumah Casing and Tuai Rumab

Gema. appear to be proving recalcitrant with regard to their farming land. According to the District Officer they have persistently refused to appear in Court to answer charges of fanning outside the received areas. The Honourable the Resident, however, reports that this matter "has, for the time being, been settled."

The Honourable the Resident visited Long Akar in August. He interviewed all Kayan and Kenyah Penghulus and Tuai Rumah with regard to the recent application received from the Lawas Evangelical Mission to be allowed to work in the Ulu Baram. As the Roman Catholic Mission was already established at Long Akar, all persons agreed that it would be best to zone these Missions. The Resident says that he was very disappointed to find that Long Akar Bazaar was in as bad a condition as it was two years ago. This, he points out, is due to the difficulty of getting materials to Long Akar. Outboard motors are the only means of over- coming this and he has suggested that, when Government outboards are available, a courier service, once in every two months, should be instituted. This will enable the traders to get their merchandise to Long Akar and at the same time the Dresser. Native Officer, etc., will be able to pay regular visits.

The District Officer. Baram, reports that Mr. and Mrs. Padgett, their three daughters and Mr. Edwards, all of the Borneo Australian Timber Company, arrived in the District on August 2nd.

FIFTH DIVISION.

An interesting comparison with the sentences being passed in some Districts is afforded in the report of the District Officer, Limbang, who says that in September a woman named Sung Mia Bee was charged with selling rationed cloth above the controlled price and with failing to display a price notice (an omission which is, we believe, unfortunately still not an offence over the greater part of Sarawak). She was fined \$200 on the first charge and \$50 on the second, but she has appealed against these sentences.

The District Officer. Limbang, regrets to report the death of T.R. Nayan of Kampong Pundut from tuberculosis. Nayan was awarded the King's Commendation for Brave Conduct for his assistance to the escaping crew of the "Liberator" which crashed in the District. He was taken to Brunei by the Japanese where he suffered the water treatment and various other tortures. The District Officer

says that his death is attributed directly" to this, but we think he must mean "indirectly.?"

The District Officer, Limbang, reports that the contractors for the new police barracks and clerk's quarters are now progressing rapidly after a slow start. This, he says, is due to their working on a system rather similar to prefabricated houses. They make the materials ready for fitting and then piece it all together.

The Malay School at Limbang is very short of desks and benches and the District Officer says that about 30 pupils out of an average attendance of 114 have to sit on the floor.

The Native Officer, Sundar, reports that the coastal Malays in that sub-District continue to produce sago in large quantities.

The Native Officer, Lawas, reports that Probationary Native Officer Jonathan Saban and Clerk Chi Choon Leong went to Brunei in September to meet the Salaries Commission.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HELP THE MUSEUM.

The Editor,

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Sir,

In the [last month the Museum staff has been making investigations into certain ancient (some prehistoric) sites at Lawas, Merapok, Niah and elsewhere. These include caves and ancient burial grounds (Malay, Kedayan, Murut and Melanau).

In a number of cases it appears that persons digging or clearing such sites?e.g. the Forestry Nursery and the Kooboo at Lawas?have come across quantities of beads, coins, pieces of pottery, etc., and have dumped them or destroyed them as worthless.

From a monetary point of view these things are indeed worthless. But they are of great interest and value scientifically. The Museum is anxious to obtain any and every item of this sort. Anyone anywhere who comes across any such relics, whether broken or complete, should forward them to the Museum with information on place where found, nature of soil, depth and any local traditions or legends which may seem relevant. Even the dullest fragments of pottery, shaped stones, or pieces

of metal, may be really important in extending our knowledge of earlier times.

Our archaeological and historical knowledge of Sarawak is lamentably weak. Only at Santubong and Limbang have remains been systematically preserved and forwarded in the past. Please let many people and places now help in this easy, harmless way.

Yours, etc.,

Tom Harrisson, Curator, Sarawak Museum, and

Government Ethnologist.

HARI RAYA.

Miri,

17th October, 1947.

The Editor,

,

Kuching.

Sir,

I still cannot agree to your explanations in the last issue of the Gazette. You said that August 19th was given as the date of Hari Raya in the Almanac on the authority of the Honourable the Dato Hakim who is still prepared to defend his calculations. If the Honourable the Dato still maintains that his calculations were right may I ask the Honourable the Dato to explain why Hari Raya was officially observed on August 18th in the Malayan Union, Singapore, Brunei and other neighbouring States?

You also said that leading Malays in Kuching searched for the new moon with the aid of a telescope on Sunday but were unable to discern it. If this was so their work was of no help to solve this problem. It would be much better I think if these gentlemen could be good enough to volunteer to search for the new moon before the commencement of Bulan Puasa.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Abang Marzuki.

From 'Adversity': Internment Quarterly.

(The following verse was published in "Adversity" on July 1st, 1943)

CATASTROPHE IN UTOPIA.

A circular informed us that the philanthropic nip Was sending all the women home at once by neutral ship.

And siren toots established that our sweethearts and our wives

Hud broken down the prison doors and stricken off the gyves.

Rejoicing was unlimited, until the grave le Gros Explained with solemn countenance, in accents sad and slow.

Our gallant benefactors had forgotten all the brats.

And thus enfranchised many mice by kidnapping the cats.

The little beasts arrived in force; the Camp Com- mittee met.

And published rules and notices and tried to find a vet;

The money barons, maddened by the pandemonic scene,

Bought comforters and rattles at the communal canteen.

While stormy general meetings, after fierce and wild harangues.

Rejected a proposal for conscripting amah gangs.

A harassed labour master⁴ was producing floods of tears

Indenting on the barracks for maternal volunteers.

The foundry was kept busy with the building of a shrine

To child-disliking Herod, the most noble of his line.

And every member of the ramp, who could afford the price.

Laid two bananas al its foot by way of sacrifice. Internees writhed in agony until an ancient sage.

With good grey head and toothless gums, saliver- ing with age.

Protested "Salus populi is the suprema lex:

Just catch the little blighters and I'll ring their ruddy necks."

'Mr. C. D. le Gros Clark, late Chief Secretary of Sarawak, who was subsequently mtirdi red by the Japanese.

The internee on whom was thrust the task of allotting necessary work to individuals.?Ed.

Kuching Market Price List.

Average monthly Market Prices (September 21 st to October 20th).