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Contents.

The .

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1st, 1947.

Birth.

Reeves. To Margaret Glennis, wife of Bruce Aubrey Reeves, at the Kuching General Hospital on October 16th, a daughter. Marion Rosslyn.

Crime in Sarawak.

In our last number we recorded the District Officer, Kuching, as saying that no serious crime was reported in his District during September. This may well have given some of our readers, particularly those living outside this country, cause to wonder. In the midst of the extortions and murders and gang robberies, which fill the columns of the Malayan, and indeed of the world's, press, the capital of Sarawak proclaims peace and order. And what is true of Kuching is substantially true of the rest of the Colony. Nowhere is the crime situation very much worse than it was in the years Before the war and in some places it is a good deal better. The principal difference between Kuching and the out-stations at the moment is not in the number of reports but in the number of arrests and convictions. The reason for this is that the police, in their efficient and energetic drive against the criminal elements, have naturally started their campaign in the heart of the Colony. Before very long we may confidently expect to see them achieve the same success elsewhere.

Gratitude is due to the police force for this happy condition of affairs, Twelve months ago the situation was very different. On the surface crime never reached very serious dimensions but disquieting rumours of robberies and blackmails, which, the victims were alleged to be afraid to report, were very prevalent. It is not the intention, nor is it within the province, of the to single out any particular officers for praise. The credit should be shared by all ranks of the service in all parts of the Colony but there is no room for complacency. Serious crimes have occurred during 1947 which are

still undetected, notably the murder of a Chinese hawker in the Samarahan early in the year, and, as the current police offensive in Malaya gradually gains ground, it is to be expected that gangster elements will be driven out into the untilled fields. The maintenance of a strict and watchful immigration control is essential if the victories of the police are to be properly consolidated. We are well aware that in congratulating ourselves on the present peaceful condition of the Colony as far as crime is concerned we are very likely offering on a salver irresistible temptations to the fates, but we are prepared to risk what little reputation we have in asserting our confidence that the traditions of Sarawak, combined with the skill and zeal of the police, the prudence of the immigration authorities, and the co-operation of the public, will continue to preserve this Colony as a haven in the midst of an atrocity-torn world.

Nor must the contribution of the country's much-abused Courts be forgotten. Passing sentences as a general rule considerably lighter than those being passed in Malaya, but not being reluctant to come down heavily on offenders when such a course seems necessary. our lay magistrates have succeeded in supporting the police without becoming the dutiful subjects of the force which some lay magistrates, and even stipendiaries, in the United Kingdom sometimes tend to be. And here is a fact which might be shouted from the house-tops by all penal reformers. After the report of the Home Office Departmental Committee on Corporal Punishment, which sat shortly before the war, was received in Sarawak in 1939 the law of the State was immediately amended to conform substantially with the Committee's recommendations. In retaining the punishment for very serious offences the changes did not go quite so far as the Committee had proposed, but in this reform Sarawak, we believe, stood alone amongst the countries of the Empire. All sentences of flogging, for criminal offences or breaches of prison discipline, now, in the former case, require the confirmation of, and. in the latter, must be passed by. the Supreme Court and in actual fact not a single such sentence has been pronounced by a British Court, either on adults or on juvenile offenders, since the law was amended in 1939.

Nevertheless, while it conduces to self-respect to indulge in a little judicious pharasaism from time to time, it must be admitted that it is possible to paint too rosy a picture. While enjoying relative

freedom from crimes of violence Sarawak is having her share of crimes of cupidity. Two classes of thoroughly mean and contemptible offences are occurring too often, but it is very satisfactory that the Police, Customs and Supply Departments are all co-operating successfully towards their suppression and that the Courts, after a somewhat shaky start, are now passing severe sentences, though it is important to remember that, as Mr. C. H. Rolph says in the New Statemen and Nation of September 27th, "severe penalties, of course, have never yet stopped the crimes at which they were directed.? We refer to the trade in opium and the operations of the black-market. There is no excuse for these who practise either. We are not concerned with the opium addict nor with the old woman who sits on the side of the road and sells a packet of cigarettes for a few cents above the controlled price, thereby proving an easy and attractive victim for ambitious young constables. These people are not criminals in anything but the technical sense of the word. The man whom it is desirable to bring to book is the towkay behind them.

Since the liberation there has been a noticeable determination amongst some traders to recoup in the shortest possible time all the losses which they suffered during the occupation. A similar tendency . it is reported, is manifested amongst some other people, not belonging to this section of the population, who are said to identify property, which they allege has been looted from their houses, with remarkable facility and precision. In other words there are certain persons, both in Sarawak and elsewhere, who are absolutely resolved that no matter what happened to anybody else in the war, no matter who lost their lives or their eyes or their health or their hopes or their families, they themselves, having escaped with their skins, are not going to be a cent the worse off in their pockets. A few even go so far as to make the extraordinary demand that the people of the United Kingdom should gratuitously bear responsibility for war damage in the Far East. A handful, no doubt, having already fully recovered their losses from their helpless customers, will attempt to kill one bird with two stones by filing a claim with the War Damage Commission. There are others who contend in all good faith that, if the reparations which can be extracted from Japan are not sufficient to compensate for their alleged disasters, the burden should be borne, not by an equalising levy spread over the propertied class, but out of local general revenue, and thus paid for in part by those

who endured much suffering during the occupation but had little wealth to lose.

Naturally every man is entitled to see how much he can get away with so long as he does not actually transgress the law. In modern society most cheats and frauds are safe enough but at any rate the black-marketeer can still be dealt with. It is much to be regretted that control of the cost of living in British territories in the Far East has been so much weaker and more ineffective than it has been at home. There is no doubt that if it had been possible to tighten up in this respect the bulk of recent industrial trouble would have, been avoided. Those who say that no control at all would be better than the sort of control that exists have a good deal of substance

in their arguments although we believe them to be wrong. In Sarawak the basic handicaps have been lack of adequate legislation and lack of trained personnel. Undoubtedly there is truth in the contention that the absence of co-operation from the public has also played its part in all these territories, as it always must so long as the public do not regard the administrations as "their" governments. The solution of this particular question lies in the establishment and development of representative institutions, a course upon which the feet of the Colonial Empire are firmly set. It is, however, the duty of the Government, rather than of the public, to enforce the law, and even in the most advanced "democracies" difficulty has been encountered in persuading private persons to make reports. It is not easy to hand your butcher over to the police when you have traded on friendly terms with him for twenty years, and the objections are much magnified by the fact that the bare report does not finish matters but must be followed up by the trouble and inconvenience of attending in Court and giving evidence. The only real answer is a fully-trained and energetic inspectorate accompanied by utter disregard of the complaints of profiteers that this is an outrageous interference with their civil liberty to exploit the public.

It is possible that we have exaggerated the extent of this evil in Sarawak. A seething indignation at the anti-social behaviour of those who think nothing of holding the community up to ransom is perhaps inclined to magnify the issue, and naturally it is not intended to condemn in any way those merchants who are public-spirited enough to refrain from taking advantage of existing shortages or, for that matter, the bona fide identifiers of property. Stringent control by the police and the

Supply Department, which it must be said has done a first-class job with an untrained staff in very difficult circumstances, coupled with exemplary sentences in the Courts, not so much on impoverished hawkers of cigarettes as on those who sneak down the rivers in the dead of night with rice-laden bandongs, and again not so much on those as on those who send them, will have to continue for some time to come, and if existing legislation does not give adequate powers to deal with these menaces then Sarawak will just have to legislate again. It is time that the prosecution of members of the public who pay illegal prices for controlled goods was also taken in hand, regardless, needless to add, of their race or their status.

There is perhaps a danger of the campaign against crime getting side-tracked. The aftermath of war has produced a wave of abominable offences against society on the one hand, and political and industrial movements, in some of which the real hope of the future lies, on the other. There is an immense temptation for those who are temperamentally or traditionally opposed to the latter, or injured economically thereby, to connect them with the former, a temptation which some people seem to make no effort whatever to resist. The theory is in complete contradiction to the experience of the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century, where a steady increase in the power of political and industrial organisations was accompanied by a growing social consciousness, and, for that matter, we believe of every other country in the world. It is the job of political organisations to educate the public in political responsibility, and of industrial organisations to provide representatives

for bargaining with the employers with regard to terms of service thereby maintaining as far as possible adequate conditions of living for the workers and avoiding local and capricious dislocations. This concept is now firmly noted not only in the United Kingdom but in British Imperial policy, and, while it is open to anyone to attack the leadership or tendencies of any such organisation on a particular occasion, it is vain to attack their existence in principle either by defamation or otherwise.

Sympathy and understanding are necessary on both sides. For instance too many parsons identify "dialectical materialism" with Voltairean philosophy, and attempt to criticise it, although they would

be completely at a loss if asked to explain the theory of the change of quantity into quality, to define the nodal line of measurements, or to analyse the dialectic of the leap. And in this respect many laymen are not much better informed than the parsons. Naturally crooks worm their way into political and industrial organisations as they do into every other association of mankind, and no-body would attempt to defend the employment of thugs either in furtherance of a strike or for the protection of blacklegs. But is it any more evidence against one organisation to say that a robber has been found with a party emblem in his possession than it would be against another to say that a forger has been found with a copy of Winston Churchill's speeches? Those of us who are interested in criminology should be particularly conscious of the fact that, for the most part, we have not been trained in political thought, and particularly wary that, when we are concerning ourselves with murderers, extortioners and gangsters, we do not get led away after the will-o-the-wisp of unconventional political doctrines.

Nevertheless these new movements have one thing in common with the criminals. They both find many of their adherents amongst the poor whose poverty is rooted in the high cost of living. It is true that increases of wages to meet increases of prices merely complete the vicious circle, but too often attempts are made to break the circle at the point of wages instead of at the point of prices. Possibly the principal reason for Sarawak's comparative immunity from crime is Sarawak's immunity from extreme impoverishment. Kuching has her slums, which will have to be taken in hand immediately opportunity affords, but on the whole this country has been very fortunate in avoiding this particular evil chiefly because there has been so little industrialisation. Yet this basic cause of crime should never be lost sight of. No man will watch his family starve while there is anything he can do to save them. It is easy to eschew criminal tendencies on a thousand dollars a month.

Wealthy rogues, sex maniacs, and misfits abound in the world and crime will exist as long as mankind, but, while urging on the police, who in fact, require no urging, to greater and greater efforts, while invoking the assistance of the public, while calling for every effort to be made in the suppression of murder and gangsterism, it is good that we should remember that the principal weapons in the battle against crime are civilised and sensible treatment of both juvenile and adult

offenders, the inculcation of elementary principles of social living at an early age, and above all the maintenance of an adequate minimum standard of living for everyone.

H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth.

We have been requested to publish the following message from Her Royal Highness the Princess Elizabeth.

"The Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh have received a large number, of telegrams and letters from organisations and private individuals in the Colonial territories wishing them happiness and good fortune. Their Royal Highnesses would like the senders to know that these kind thoughts have added a great deal to their happiness, at this time. They have been deeply touched by the number of people who have written to them and by the warmth of affection which their messages reflect. Their Royal Highnesses cannot hope to answer all the letters and telegrams personally but ask that this general acknowledgment may be accepted as expressing the gratitude which they most sincerely feel."

Their Excellencies at Miri Y.M.A.

On 13th November, 1947, His Excellency the Governor of Sarawak, accompanied by his Private Secretary, Mr. A. R. Meikle and Mr. G. S. Carter, arrived at the entrance of the Young Malay Association. Miri, at 4.00 p.m. and was met by the officials of the Association. His Excellency pronounced the opening of the Association and cut the ribbon. His Excellency and the guests entered the Association's building and waited for the arrival of His Excellency the Governor-General of the Malayan Union.

His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald accompanied by the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Resident, Fourth Division, Mr. J. O. Gilbert, arrived at 4.15 p.m. and were met by His Excellency the Governor of Sarawak. His Excellency the Governor-General inspected the smart Constabulary Guard of Honour drawn up in front of the Association and after this the officials of the Association were introduced to His Excellency and Mrs. MacDonald who were then led to the Association's building.

Abang Marzuki, Chairman of the Association's Committee delivered an Address of Welcome in

English on behalf of the officials and members of the Association. The following is the text of the speech :?

"Your Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Malay Community, we officials and members of our Association beg to approach Your Excellencies today to render Your Excellencies our hearty welcome to this place and also express our hearty thanks to Your Excellencies. Ladies and Gentlemen for your presence on this occasion.

Our Association is very fortunate today to have its official opening ceremony graciously performed by His Excellency the Governor of Sarawak for which we are highly honoured and we are most grateful to His Excellency.

The Young Malay Association, Miri Branch, is born today and is still in its infancy which does nothing, knows nothing but only depending on the people around it till it is strong enough to look after itself and then to serve its community and the Government.

There are many Associations existing at present in the Colony which have their different aims and objects, but our Association's aims and objects are only to encourage our boys and girls in education, religion and sports. It is fully loyal and unsullied.

We have already started a night class to teach English and over 30 boys are now attending the class.

Looking at the political movements everywhere all around, we are unable to keep quiet without forming up this Association. We have over 200 members and we anticipate more and more will pour into membership as soon as we have a building of our own.

Our Association will serve the Government and the Community it represents. We are eager to extend our helping hands to the Government whenever demanded. But it is pitiful that our Association is the poorest of the poor and naturally is in need of great deal of support from the Government and the generous and sympathetic public. Therefore, we humbly and earnestly appeal to Your Excellencies. Ladies and Gentlemen to render us every assistance to enable us to achieve our desired aims.



In conclusion, we again thank Your Excellencies for granting us this great privilege of meeting Your Excellencies and we pray God spare Your Excellencies many more years to enable Your Excellencies to complete the noble tasks entrusted to Your Excellencies. ?

His Excellency the Governor of Sarawak replied to the speech on behalf of His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald. In the speech His Excellency said he was greatly honoured to have been given the opportunity to open the Association and was very glad of the establishment of the Association. His Excellency pointed out that since the aims and objects are similar to the policy of the Government towards the development of the Colony and that the Association promised to assist the Government whenever demanded. His Excellency promised in return that the Government would help the Association to the best of its ability. In the conclusion of his speech, His Excellency wished the Association every success and prosperity and to serve its community and the Government towards the development of the Colony. And with the existence of the Young Malay Association throughout Sarawak. His Excellency and His Excellency the Governor-General wish and hope to see all Malays are united.

The tea was served at the appointed hour of 4.30 p.m. and the party dispersed at 5.15 p.m. His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald and His Excellency the Governor of Sarawak entered their cars just when a torrent of heavy rain was pouring. His Excellency the Governor-General bought a Concert ticket from the stall on his way to the car.

Among the guests the following distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen were present at the Tea Party: The Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mr. J. O. Gilbert. Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Hall. Mr. and Mrs. R. N. Bell. Mr. G. S. Carter, Mr. and Mrs. D. Andrews, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Birdsall. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, Dr. J. W. L. Kemp. Mr. and Mrs. Pitcher. Mr. and Mrs. A. L. McKendrick. Mr. and Mrs. R. N. Ferner, Mr. and Mrs. Astill, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Johnson. Mr. and Mrs. Springfellow. Messrs. Meyer. C. E. Luxmoore, A. M. Fraser, Ditchburn,

Mrs. D. R. Lascelles, Mr. and Mrs. W. Phillips Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Morris, Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Weigall, Miss M. Kincaid-Smith, Mr. Chung Swee Khin, Mr. Y. Soon Siew, Mr. Yong Low. Mr. Chia Tze Chin, Mr. Cham Shau Nung, Mr. and Mrs. Leong Nai Kong, Rev. Father Van de Laar. Messrs. Edward

Brandah, Yap Fui Kong. Ek Giok, Eng Thiam. K. K. Chakravaty, Miss Shirley Yeo, Datu Tuanku Mohamed, Tama Weng Ajang, M.B.E., Limbang bin Lai, Mandor Ambak, Abdul Ghanie, Mr. Yassin Khan. Mr. Abdul Hassan, Sahari bin Osman, Mohd. Bolhassan, Mohd. Sebet, Awang Binjai, Muhd. Zen Galau, T.K. Osman, T.K. Awang Bakar, T.K. Serudin, T.K. Abdul Salam. T.K. Mohd. Usop, T.K. Sandor and T.K. Salleh.

The very successful Concert was staged on the following evening in honour of Their Excellencies' visit to this Division. Their Excellencies attended the concert and which they enjoyed to the end despite of the unpleasant weather. Their Excellencies' presence at the concert attracted an unusually big crowd of people who also came to see the concert and everyone enjoyed a gay and lively evening bad weather notwithstanding.?(Contributed.)

Their Excellencies in the North.

Their Excellencies the Governor-General and the Governor, accompanied by Mrs. MacDonald and the Private Secretary, arrived at Lawas by m.l. Karina from Labuan shortly after dark on Thursday, 6th November. The Kubu and roads in the Government area were outlined by torches which provided a most delightful spectacle as the Karina came up the reach to the Government Wharf. On landing Their Excellencies were greeted by the Resident, Fifth Division, Mr. J. G. Anderson, and the Native Officer-in-Charge. Bigar anak Deboi, b.e.m.. and proceeded to the Kubu for dinner.

The following morning a crowded day of engagements began with a ceremonial presentation of awards by His Excellency the Governor, who wore uniform. The presentation took place on the padang, which had been decorated with flags and a stand for spectators erected, in the presence of a large gathering of all communities. The Datu Pengiran Haji Matusin from Kuala Lawas attended in full Council Negri uniform. In all 10 awards were presented, including the B.E.M. to Native Officer Bigar, Awak Pengiran. Murut. and Penghulu Lawai. Kelabit, the k.m.c. to 8 Muruts, 1 Kelabits, and 2 Chinese and the Kings Commendation to 1 Murut. An interesting feature of the ceremony was the presence of a flute band of Muruts under Guru Pantalusang from the Long Semado School which gave a most impressive rendering of the National Anthem. All their instruments had been locally made of bamboo.

Next, after Their Excellencies had been introduced to members of the Lawas District Advisory Council, His Excellency the Governor heard requests in Court. The remainder of the morning was occupied with visits to the hospital, bazaar, and Chinese School where Their Excellencies and party were entertained to refreshments.

In the afternoon the party went by outboard to Rumah Itai Lakai at Lawas Damit. There a ceremonial Murut victory dance took place, a file

of women singing and circulating round an ornamental pole at the base of which a huge 20 ft. crocodile had been modelled in clay. To compromise this pagan dance with their Christian religion they had thoughtfully surmounted the pole with a Cross, and it is interesting to note that the "leading lady" was an elderly Murut woman married to a Chinese and called in for the afternoon.

After taking tea with Penghulu Itai Lakai in the house, the party set off back in heavy rain, calling in en route at the Borneo Evangelical Mission, where Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Southwell and members of the Mission also entertained the party to tea.

In the evening a sateh party was held in the Kubu for the recipients of medals and local notables at which Their Excellencies and Mrs. MacDonald circulated amongst the guests. This was followed by a concert on the padang, in which the Malay, Chinese and Long Semado Murut schools performed, as well as members of the Government Staff and Lawas Estate. Native Officer Bigar and P.N.O. Johnathan Saban are to be congratulated on the excellence of their arrangements and decorations, and thanks are due to Mr. Maclaren of Lawas Estate for his assistance with regard to the entertainment.

Leaving Lawas early on Saturday morning, the Karina reached Limbang soon after noon. On landing Their Excellencies inspected the Guard of Honour and were introduced to local notables. Their Excellencies and party then proceeded to the Residency for lunch with the Resident and Mrs. Anderson. During the afternoon His Excellency the Governor addressed members of the District Advisory Council in Court. This was followed by a discussion on local Government matters.

After tea His Excellency the Governor and the Private Secretary enjoyed a game of badminton with Native Officer Tuanku Mahdzar and members of his badminton club at his house. Following a

reception at the Residency for recipients of awards, members of the District Advisory Council, and other notables, Their Excellencies attended a display of Dayak dancing on the padang in front of the Court House. As at Lawas, the Residency and the Government area at Limbang were decorated after dark with torches.

On Sunday morning His Excellency the Governor held a ceremonial presentation of awards on the padang in front of the Court House. On this occasion 2 B.e.ms., 2 King's Medals for Courage, and 5 King's Commendations were presented. Following the presentations Their Excellencies visited the bazaar, Chinese and Malay schools.

The afternoon was occupied by two tea parties, the first at the Chinese Club, and the second at the Persatuan Melayu. On both occasions His Excellency the Governor-General replied to speeches of welcome. A very replete party returned to the Residency after these entertainments. In the evening Their Excellencies attended a most enjoyable concert in which all communities took part.

Their Excellencies and party left Limbang on Monday morning, November 10th, for Brunei, where they were entertained by the Resident, Mr. W. Peel. On Tuesday His Excellency the Governor and the Private Secretary proceeded overland to Miri, lunching en route at Seria with Mr. G. O. Higgins, General Manager of the British Malayan Petroleum Co. Ltd., and being met at Kuala Baram by the Resident, Fourth Division.

Transport from Seria to Miri and for all other movements by road for the period of the tour was very kindly provided by the British Malayan Petroleum Co. Ltd. and Sarawak Oilfields Ltd.

His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald remained at Brunei. On the morning of Wednesday, November 12th, His Excellency the Governor held a ceremonial presentation of awards at the Government offices, Miri. On this occasion there were 15 recipients from the Baram, Miri, and Bintulu districts, including Penghulu Tama. Weng Ajang of Long Akah, who received the m.b.e., and Native Officer Mohamad Zin Galau who received the King's Medal for Courage. The Penghulu came up to receive his Honour in full panoply of skin cloak, feathered head-dress, parang, etc., and was supported by Major Carter. D.s.o., and Major Weigall, with whom he had served during the war. in military uniform.

During the afternoon His Excellency was present at a well attended sports meeting on the padang, followed by a tea party at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. A most convivial atmosphere prevailed at an evening reception at the Residency for the recipients of awards and local notables.

The following morning His Excellency the Governor was conducted by Messrs. Hall and Carter of Sarawak Oilfields, Ltd., on a most interesting tour of the Miri oilfield, visiting the pumping station by No. 1 Well on Canada Hill with its maze of "jerk lines" which would have delighted Heath Robinson, and being initiated into the mysteries of "fishing," in this case a technical term for recovering broken pipes and other obstructions, including in one case an unexploded bomb, from bore-holes sabotaged by the Japanese. His Excellency the Governor also toured the overcrowded areas of Miri and then was shown round the Sarawak Oilfields, Ltd., hospital.

At 4 p.m. His Excellency the Governor by cutting a ribbon at the entrance formally opened the Miri branch of the Young Malay Association. Shortly afterwards His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald arrived from Brunei in time to attend the tea party to celebrate the opening. Later the same evening Their Excellencies and party returned to the Young Malay Association Club to attend an excellent open-air concert. Intermittent showers of rain caused some discomfort but failed to drive away or damp the enthusiasm of the spectators.

On Friday Their Excellencies and party boarded the M.L. Karina at Kuala Baram and in steady rain had a most uncomfortable journey to Marudi. Luckily there was a short break in the rain when the Karina reached Marudi, where a salute was fired by cannon from the Kubu.

That night Dayaks, Kayans and Kenyahs danced before Their Excellencies at the District Officer's bungalow. Unfortunately a most proficient Dayak ngajat by the District Officer, Baram, was reserved for a smaller audience.

The next morning Their Excellencies visited the Malay, Chinese and R.C. Mission schools; then His Excellency the Governor took requests in Court. The rest of the day was a round of concentrated hospitality, consisting of a two-hour lunch with the Marudi Chinese Chamber of Commerce in the precincts of the Chinese temple, followed by a half-hour run in the launch to Lubang Nibong, where tea was taken with the Chinese.

followed by a curry with Tua Kampong Haji Mohamad. Their Excellencies then watched dancing outside Haji Mohamad's house, were pressed to drinks, and finally took tea and cakes with Haji Mohamad before returning to Marudi at 7.15. On return dinner was cancelled.

On Sunday, November 16th, the party split. His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by the District Officer, Baram. went by out-board to the Bakong. where they stayed for the night at Penghulu Arin's house near Beluru.

His Excellency the Governor-General, accompanied by the Resident and the Private Secretary. set off for Long Laput, which they reached in the early afternoon after making a short stop at Long Lama. Penghulu Kebeng of Long Pila met His Excellency the Governor-General and party, and conducted them into the house, where Lalang was waiting, looking remarkably well despite her age. She and other ladies of the house posed with dignity for His Excellency the Governor-General to take photographs, but attempts to distract their attention so that they could be photographed off their guard were a complete failure. The evening's entertainment consisted of borak and dancing. At the conclusion His Excellency the Governor-General and members of the party, including Father Jansen of the R.C. Mission, who was on his way to Long Akah. were also called upon to don the ceremonial trappings and dance.

Leaving Long Laput next morning a short stop was made at Rumah Gan, Long Ekang, and Marudi was reached by tea time. His Excellency the Governor arrived back from the Bakong a couple of hours earlier.

On Tuesday Their Excellencies and party returned to Miri, and that evening were entertained at the Shell Sarawak Club. Miri. On Wednesday morning Their Excellencies left Kuala Baram by air. thus concluding an interesting and strenuous tour. (Contributed.)

Notes and Comments.

His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald arrived by plane on Wednesday, November 5th, and, accompanied by His Excellency the Governor, continued on to Jesselton on the same day. After visiting Jesselton Their Excellencies toured parts of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions returning to Kuching on November 19th. His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald

continued on to Singapore.

Thursday, November 20th, was observed as a public holiday on the occasion of the wedding of Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth. Dances were held in the evening at the Sarawak Club and the Sarawak Union Club. His Excellency the Governor proposing the health of the royal couple at both. Another feature of the day was the provision of free cinema shows for school children.

His Lordship the Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak left Kuching on the s.s. Pangkor on November 27th. He has gone home on medical advice on account of eye trouble. Bishop Hollis has had a long and distinguished career in Sarawak and his loss, whether temporary or permanent, will be widely regretted. If our worst fears should prove well-founded, and it is finally decreed that the Bishop should not return again to dwell amongst us, the hopes to publish some account of a working life which has been of great service to the country and for which many people, as well as his old pupils, have cause to be thankful.

His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to approve that the new fort at Lubok Antu should be known as Fort Arundell. This decision will gratify those who remember Gilbert Roger Harris Arundell. He was acting as Resident, Second Division, when the Japanese arrived, and late in 1942 he was murdered far up in the Ulu Ai by four convicted Dayak assassins released from Simanggang gaol. Mr. Arundell was a curious mixture of ancient English squirearchy and synthetic Sea Dayak. His knowledge of the latter race was unsurpassed in Sarawak. He lived not merely with them but amongst them and rivalled them at their own pursuits. His love and understanding for this people was of enormous assistance both to his Dayak friends and to the Government. There could be no more fitting memorial than the naming after him. at the request of the Lubok Antu Dayaks, of the new headquarters in that remote station in which he spent such a large part of his career.

It would be interesting to know how many readers noticed that in our last number the words 'The editor is not responsible for the opinions of correspondents,' usually printed at the top of the Correspondence Column, were omitted. The reasons for the abolition of this long-established practice are, firstly, that nobody but a jackass would suppose that he was, and, secondly, that the phrase conveyed the implication that he was responsible for the opinions of contributors, which,

needless to say, is by no means the case.

The night of November 26th-27th was census night. We understand from the Superintendent that the census proceeded smoothly and satisfactorily. The one hitch in Kuching appears to have been a failure to remember until the last minute that the Astana was inhabited, with the result that His Excellency's residence suffered the indignity of having an "A" added to its number, thus tending to give to the uninitiated the impression that it was a mere annex to the house occupied by the Director of Forestry.

The following story may be of interest to connoisseurs of folk-lore. One day in November a corpse was found floating in the Kuching river. It was dragged to the steps of Pangkallan Batu and a European police officer, of impeccable observation and indubitable integrity, took charge of the case. After a little delay a Chinese arrived who thought that he could recognise the corpse as that of his brother who, he understood, had been missing from his home for two days. He would fetch his sister to make sure. When the sister came she had no difficulty in identifying the deceased. Then the police officer noticed a curious thing. Blood began to trickle out of the corpse's nose, and the dresser informed him that it is an ancient Chinese superstition that blood flows from the nose of a corpse when it is recognised by a member of the family. We would be very glad to hear from any of our Chinese readers on this subject, and from any other readers who can assist in the investigation. The following post-card, emanating from the United States of America, was received in Kuching in November addressed to "Bishop's House, Kuching, Sarawak."

"I depend on correct, honest supplementation of this card by telepathy as a thing which will make clear the meaning of this card. There exists a Playing of The Great Things, the correct, the constructive, world or universe politics, out-in-the-open telepathy, etc. According to The Great Things this playing is the most feasible thing of all; but it is held from newspaper advertising and correct, honest public world recognition, its next step, by telepathic forces (it seems), physical dangers, and lack of money. Over 15,000 cards and letters on this subject have been sent to prominent groups and persons all over the world. Correct, honest contact with the honest, out-in-the-open part of them and of young persons is desirable. Important: A public literature on this playing. Copying the known,



out-in-the-open world. The line of thought, talk, etc., rule. The plain and frank. Strangers. The Great Things and opposites idea. References: In the telepathic world the correct playings. Please save this card for a history record since it is rare and important for history."

A correspondent has sent us the following extract, "without comment," from the Straits Times for "This Sarawak" although it is not entirely clear what it has to do with this Colony :

"LONDON, Friday."Mr. Victor Cavendish" Bentinck, former British Ambassador to Poland, was granted a decree nisi on the grounds of his wife's adultery in the Court of Appeal yesterday."

The Muruts.

Between September 8th and September 24th the Honourable the Resident, Fifth Division, toured the Murut country. The following extracts are from his report interspersed with a few comments by Mr. Tom Harrison who is in substantial agreement with the Resident's views.

"Ample warning having been given in advance of this tour, the method employed in examining local conditions consisted of meetings at each village after sundown shortly after arrival. Talks were given under all heads on Government policy and development plans in detail.

The people were then invited to criticize these policies and plans, ask questions and make any suggestions based on their local knowledge. Thus much useful information was gathered for incorporation in this report.

It was possible to contact the greatest number of people within the minimum time available owing to the excellent work done by N.O. Bigar in pre-war days, in grouping all the villages along the track.

On my last visit to these people exactly 20 years ago, they were scattered all over the mountains in dark dingy hovels. They were drinking themselves to death and contact with all of them would have involved a few months tour, instead of two weeks.

I have been deeply impressed by the work of the Borneo Evangelical Mission. Mr. Southwell and, pre-war, the late Mr. H. E. Davidson especially have literally pulled the Muruts out of the "Slough of Despond." Instead of a degenerating drunken race of diseased unfortunates, they are cheerful, cleaner, and imbued with a great desire to improve themselves.

Many years ago, they numbered tens of thousands, (now there are something under 3,000) and

they are probably the real and original ?owners? of the whole of the territories of Brunei State and the Fifth Division of Sarawak. Under Government policy there is no reason why they should not rise again to an even greater prosperity.

This revival should be the easier of accomplish- ment, with close co-operation between Government, the Borneo Evangelical Mission and the people themselves, in view of their entire conversion to Christianity in the last few years, through the efforts of the Mission. It is too often the case, with native converts, that they carry their religion in a pharasaical demonstrative manner, with smug intolerance of non-believers. These people take their newly found faith seriously yet decently and unobtrusively. Although they now abstain from alcohol and tobacco, yet they are cheerful and happy, on the whole.

They have preserved certain of their old adat and customs where this does not conflict with Christ- ianity. In certain cases many less desirable super- stitions remain but this is only the case under heavy strain, and in rare cases.

But the situation cannot rest here. They must have pursuits, arts, culture and pastimes to replace the old orgies. As yet they have little but religion to replace them. Their cultural development is just as important as the improvements which I propose herein under other more practical headings.

Their ancient crafts, arts and dances (excepting ?head? dances) should be revived and nurtured with ever increasing attention through the medium of the schools and missions.

There is a great danger of forgetting this aspect of development, without which they cannot take their proper place alongside their neighbours the Kelabits, Malays, Tagals, etc., in that unified society of educated citizens at which our policy is aimed.

(Mr. Harrisson comments : I fully agree about the need to ?revive? their ancient arts, crafts, etc. But I do not think it will be simple. These arts and crafts are part of a whole way of life. You cannot readily separate their singing and dancing from their mythology and custom. Their crafts are learned very slowly in the communal give and take of long-house life, which the missions have not encouraged. When they ?become Christian? they throw out the dance with the borak, and the process is logical enough. It will require more than an hour a week to remedy that! Indeed it is the

one thing that the Missions must be censured for. They have not sufficiently studied and understood the custom and culture they seek (with sincere fervour) to alter for the best. Much that is good has been lost along with the bad, in consequence. It looks as if the same MAY HAPPEN ON THE AKAH. In my observation, qualities of culture and generosity, the dynamics of the old way of life, which centred on the home group (the long-house) and the better side of old adat. are in grave danger of being lost. Smart-looking men in shorts and smiles need not necessarily be more honest or intelligent or able than their brothers, longhaired, in chawats, and superficially less willing to please.

In brief?and this is a subject on which I propose to elaborate in a report when I return from a further six months research?it is deplorable that a situation should arise where people have to have good things in their culture 'revived and nurtured'. So, while I wholly agree with your views on the need for such steps. I must enter two caveats :

(a) That this will now be difficult, if possible at all.

(b) That this sort of thing should not happen again?e.g. when other groups are "converted".

(As you know, I consider that the Borneo Evangelical Mission has done wonderful work, and "saved the Trusan?. That cannot prevent me from offering criticism where I feel it is due).)

It will be seen that malaria is the chief danger. Pulmonary T.B. was fairly prevalent and the treatment figures give no idea of the real numbers, as treatment of this disease by a Hospital Assistant must obviously be confined to panacea, e.g. cough mixtures, etc. Cessation of communal jar drinking has lessened the spread of this disease which killed off so many of them in the past.

A number of epidemic cases of measles among children resulted in very sore eyes. Treatment was given and advice to keep away from strong light for ten days. All cases reacted favourably except one, a small boy of nervous temperament who refused treatment.

Advice was given in the matter of spitting, keeping flies from food and eating utensils, using mosquito nets, abstention from bathing in cold water if fevered and of cleanliness of drinking water.

Note :?Mr. Meikle was mystified by malaria occurring without seeing mosquitoes. The cause may be the leucosphyrus, which emerges in the small hours.

All were urged to come to Brunei Hospital (via Lawas or Limbang Hospitals after diagnosis) which is free of charge.

On the whole, and considering the inadequate facilities, health was apparently not at all bad and numerous children were seen everywhere. A great deal better than the conditions of filth and disease prevalent in 1927, but much help and advice and treatment are necessary .

A malarial survey is most important, especially at Long Semado (school centre, shortly to be a boarding school ) as soon as possible.

Pre-war, 75% of the Muruts were said to have had malaria, many of those examined having enlarged spleens. (Mr. Harrisson comments : This cannot be sufficiently emphasised. There is evidence that malaria was unknown in the Bah areas before white Government opened up the interior to coastal contact.)

There is a small day school at Long Semado (the biggest village and the most suitable centre) with over 40 boys and some dozen girls attending. They are taught by Guru Pantalusang (a Mindanese) and Pagag Boya (a Lawas Murut).

The majority are in the very elementary class and some 5 or 6 boys are roughly Standard I or II and one approaching Standard III. The school building is temporary only. There is a small vegetable garden.

The boys play basketball on the village square. Guru Pantalusung has taught them to make and play bamboo flutes (sulin). The effect is most pleasing and they play together in the school band, from ear.

They are mostly children from Long Semado itself with a small proportion of pupils from other villages who stay with relations. A photo of the school can be supplied on request. All are most enthusiastic but their lack of material is pathetic. The children come from as far as Brayong (north) and the Bah Kelalan (south) some 20/30 miles away.

Most of the farming is shifting cultivation (hill) but taking an example from the Bah Kelalan there is a movement a foot to start irrigated swamp padi. which must be encouraged and guided.

The Kelalan Bah people (as is well known) have practised irrigated padi from time immemorial, as

have their more numerous "Dutch?" relations over the border. They have also very sound and solid banks, ditches and fences to control cattle grazing.

The soil, however, appears to be very sandy and even stony, though water lies well: (I think they may be leaving it in too long). But the soil must be rich, as they usually get excellent results. The padi (which was a good foot high in September) was very yellow for the most part, indicating need of fertilisers or rotational crops. Expert advice is needed here. Perhaps if they rotated cattle (first year) sugar cane (2nd year) padi (3rd year) the land might be reconditioned.

It appears probable that the Trusan Valley (from Punang Trusan (Marong's village) though Long Semado and Long Tanid, to Long Beluyu) might well be adapted (on a slightly smaller scale) to irrigated padi also. (It has certain similar features with the Bah and consists of a chain of swamps, broken by low hills.) Already T.K. Genang Liaw (L. Tanid) has engaged some Dutch Murut relations to build a large earth dam in the hills above a big swamp, with a large cutting through a hill for the "tali ayer." (This is costing him 5 buffalos). But the dam appeared very insecure and the cutting too steep. This can be remedied and advice was given by Agricultural Inspector Mat Dris and myself. Penghulu Ating Mugang (Long Semado) is going to engage some Dutch Muruts to do a similar job next year.

Labo Upai (R. Marong) has already made a small dam and "tali ayer" at Punang Trusan for his swamp for 1948. It requires strengthening, but is otherwise sound. The Brayong people (still further down) are also thinking of doing the same, and I think the Punang Tengoa village could and would follow suit when they group together on their new site, with a little encouragement. Thus, the irrigated padi idea should spread all the way down from the Bah to the Tengoa and involve the whole hinterland. But they need guidance.

All the villages have plenty of poultry (including some Australian ducks ex-S.R.D.), pigs, goats and cattle (though they do not milk them, they use them for currency and occasional slaughter). They have also plenty of fruit, chiefly citrus and bananas, the usual odd vegetables among the padi. But my impression was all were semi-wild and uncared for.

(Mr. Harrison comments that S.R.D. must dis- claim all credit for the ducks which he says have

never, so far as he knows, been successfully para- trained.)

The poultry roam all over the place, so do the pigs and goats?no houses, or badly designed houses. The cattle stray about and damage the track and have no sheds. The citrus fruit is un- pruned and often too closely planted.

But the soil is rich and the climate cool. The Tengoa and Trusan\* Valleys have infinite possi- bilities. There is no rubber or any cash crop except rice. By the time a man takes twelve gantangs (usual load) to Lawas, he has had to eat 1/4 to 1/2 of it on the way. Nett result for say 10 to 20 days very hard walking, \$12 to \$16. (Jungle produce, having poor price, is seldom worked, but there is, apparently, a wealth of rotans. damar. etc., etc.).

\*NOTE:~The main 'Trusan' river is called Ruab (flood) up to Tang Sangor (Long Tengoa) after that it becomes 'Fa Trusan' up to the junction with the Kelalan at Fa Kebrangan (near Long Beluyu). Then the Trusan branch bears from the eastward, rising near the Fa Matang (B.N.B.)

Instead of the old, dark, dirty long-houses (many of which remain) there is a tendency to build smaller single or double houses more on the Malay pattern (some are embodying novel and good ideas of their own). These are usually grouped round a central padang in each village, with church. Many have been white-washed, the wash being obtained from the Dutch side from a natural 'white earth'.

The people are using serungan attaps made and sold by Dutch Muruts. Their chief lack is nails and zinc for ridging and skill in carpentry. Every village asked me to send up a carpenter whom they are prepared to pay. I shall do my best to find one.

I intend, at Long Semado to try and develop a model centre, with permanent single or double houses grouped around the central padang, kubu, school, church and Murat meeting hall with a perimeter cattle fence round the outside of the village. Outside this will be the Government and communal cattle and pig sheds, agricultural station, etc.

.....Although the Kelabits live in the Fourth Division, two, three or more days from the Bah Kelalan, (one has to traverse N.E.I. territory to reach them from the Kelalan) their easiest route to the nearest Government station is down the Murut track to Lawas. Prewar Kelabits never

used the track and always went to a Baram station to pay tax and trade (a very much longer journey). With the advent of S.R.D. operations, however, in 1945 they started to do so. on duty, and Kelabits and Muruts and others were constantly moving to and from Bah Areo. Belawit (N.E.I.) and Lawas. Since then Kelabits have got into the habit of selling salt in exchange for Murut rice and bringing it down to Lawas.

But the Muruts have no occasion to, and seldom if ever do, go to the Kelabit country (I am told they never do). They may be of similar stock and language, but they appear to have little in common at present. They may be as closely related as say British and Germans but no more, and they have not even the common ground of religion, in the majority. (Mr. Harrison comments : This is not a question of argument, but of fact. Even Hose and McDougall, writing when the Kelabits were only known by a few who visited Marudi, classified them as Muruts. Since then, two men have made some study of these people?Pollard and Banks. Both have unequivocally declared them to be Muruts.? So do I. There are, of course, differences. So there are between Adang, Limbang and Trusan Muruts, Potok and Padas Muruts, Milau and Saban Muruts. But they are essentially, socially, culturally and linguistically one people, and any attempt to separate them cannot serve the best interests of the whole. It is not a question of "German and English." but of Somerset and Devon.)

One argument (pro-travel to Lawas) is that the Kelabits bring salt and other useful goods to the Muruts. In point of fact the Muruts have their own salt holes. Government salt is cheaper than Kelabit salt, and their view is that there is nothing they want from the Kelabits, so the problem is one purely of the convenience of the Kelabits themselves.

The Kelabits do not see why they should not use the Trusan track but are apparently quite oblivious of the fact that each time they use it and are fed by the Muruts, they are eating and taking food and hospitality which they have no hope of returning and which the Muruts can ill afford. (They say the Kayans etc. have entertained them, on that route, for years. I cannot help asking, are some of the Kayan "pantang" directed against this?)

It is a fact that there is no adat which obliges even Muruts to feed other Muruts on the way down the track, except in the case of relations and friends by invitation. Their laws of hospitality are like ours.

That is, in the rare event of a traveller being weather bound or a victim of some misfortune, he would be fed and assisted. But no one could expect Muruts, or any other race, to cater for a continuous chain of stranger traders on a single track route ad infinitum, free of charge, and without hope of reciprocal visits.

The obvious policy (eventually) is to incorporate Kelabits in the Fifth Division and encourage co-operation between and development of the Muruts and Kelabits as a whole (once this affair is settled) as although there are but few Kelabits in the Bah Areo itself, it appears that all of them are much nearer Lawas than Maradi. The few Kelabits in the Medit (Limbang) could be encouraged to join the main body.

But, wherever the fault lies, (Murut or Kelabit) a bad start has been made and it will be a matter of years before its effects can be eradicated. One alternative, possibly as a short term measure and pending say conversion of the Kelabits to Christianity, and a better understanding between the two peoples, is to develop Long Akah as a trading and Government centre for Kelabits, with an improved track down there.

I mention this rather undesirable alternative as quite frankly I am disturbed about the chances of a rapprochement within the next few years. But I repeat, finally, my conviction that ultimate co-operation between Kelabits and Muruts within the Fifth Division can and must be accomplished.

A mountain visible from the Tengoa Valley is said to emit flames, visible at night, once or twice a year. Any geological survey might like this rather uncertain information."

Niah Caves.

The following extracts are from a recent report by Tom Harrisson, Curator of the Sarawak Museum and Government Ethnologist, on the Niah Caves and their products.

".....The nest industry was, by the

1880s, fourth or fifth largest source of Sarawak revenue. Other items overtook and eclipsed it, but even in the 1930s it still yielded several not insignificant thousands a year in 10% ad valorem. and tens of thousands to our annual internal wealth. Niah has far the largest bird caves in the country. coveting perhaps 16 acres (explored) of honey. combed limestone table-outcrops, the Subi Hills. In



my view Niah caves rank with the wonderful twin pinnacles of Mt. Batu Lawi at the head of the Limbang, and the view from the Tamabo Range pass at Pungga Pawan overlooking the Kelabit Plain, as the three most impressive spectacles in Sarawak. Of the three, only these caves are reasonably accessible.

As always with such dramatic spots, native mythology is rich in legends. The discovery of the caves (and nests) is variously claimed, according to the particular informant. The most elaborate tale tells of three brothers from Bintulu, of whom the eldest, Jangis, was a mighty warrior?he actually killed one of the principal swash-bucklers of Alak her Tata (the fairy figure in north Sarawak stories, who became the first Sultan Wang Alak of Brunei about A.D. 1400). In that period it was so low that the nests could be collected by hand, without poles or ladders! Other versions attribute the discovery to Punan, Kayan, Melanau and Dayak, one specifying the discovery as six generations ago.

Official Niah records go back to 1882, when less than 60 piculs of nests were extracted. (The Baram Caves are mentioned in an 1819 European account. They produce the superior "white nests" of *Collocalia francica vcstita*: the "black nests," mixed saliva, feathers, etc., of Niah are those of the closely related but slightly smaller bird. *Collocalia lowi lowi*.)

The industry rapidly increased, and maintained a high level at Niah. e.g. :

1928 ... 259.17 piculs

1929 ... 288.82

1930 ... 291.91 ..

1931 ... 305.10 ..

This represents about three-quarters of the Sarawak yield from all caves. During the late war, the collection of nests was considerably and cumul- atively neglected, largely owing to unsettled conditions, uncertain prices, and latterly inadequate export shipping (the bulk goes to China, where bird?s nest soup is considered aphrodisiac).

Throughout the history of the industry, each section of the cave roof?pocket, funnel, patch or subcave?has been separately owned. There are 532 recognised "pintu," all locally owned.

The guano industry at Niah is of much later origin. It appears to have been initiated about 1930, and

organised in 1932. when Chop Kim Guan was granted a monopoly. Pre-war statistics are unfortunately not now available. In a 1932 letter (No. 34 in 68/1 of 4/10/32) from Resident, IV Division, to Chief Secretary, it is stated that "only 645 bags of guano have been removed since the granting of the monopoly in June." In 1935 Banks wrote (Sarawak Museum Journal, 1935, P. 312) that guano "is sporadically exported (from the caves) in small quantities as manure, but is only at its best when fresh." These remarks seem to indicate a somewhat lethargic start. But it is generally stated that the rate of extraction increased before the war. It was sporadic, with one violent spurt of about six months, under the Jap occupation.

There is thus a certain natural basis of conflict as between the long-standing, local native (Malay, Melanau, Punan) "cave owners" (recognised as such in law), working on a very smallholder basis (a "pintu" may only hold a few katties of nests), and the single Chinese in Miri operating the cave floor in accordance with no particular "adat" or local control. The nest collectors recognise definite seasons, and perform an annual ceremony of propitiation and worship to the spirits of the cave and for its fertility; they dislike disturbing the caves at other times. The guano collectors are not concerned with such affairs.

Thus as early as 1933 the cave-owners petitioned His Highness the Rajah, claiming the birds were being affected and paths damaged. This resulted in a minute (16/3/34) that guano was to be collected only on the surface, and not in the "closed seasons" for nest-collecting. Previously, Mr. Swayne, when District Officer (in 1931 or early 1932). ordered that guano should only be taken while nests were being collected, and with police supervising. This was soon ignored, however, and guano-collecting has since continued indiscriminate and unsupervised.

The "cave-owners" have continued to be dissatisfied ever since, but, finding the expression of this rather ineffective and being Mohammedan, have adopted a suitably fatalistic attitude. Lately, however, as guano-collecting has extended and accelerated, their latent dissatisfaction has been once more expressed in specific terms, relating to the way random guano-collecting :

(i)

disturbs the caves in all months;

(ii) interferes with access by making pits and craters in passages and on paths;

(iii) undermines the elaborate structure of poles and ladders to the cave ceiling.

Even so, there is a conflict within a conflict of interest, since in many families it is the elders who are the "cave-owners" and profit from nests, and their own youngsters who are the guano collectors and earn up to \$2.50 a day by that means.

Any satisfactory resolution of such conflicting interests must deal both with the immediate and the long-term recurrent problems, working from established and up-to-date factual evidence. This evidence, and fair deductions drawn from it, is presented below.

Since the war, which caused a general (though not complete) neglect of the nest industry, and only sporadic working of guano, there has been a steady demand for both commodities, often in excess of available supplies. The persistence of shipping difficulties and world economic uncertainties has, however, in conjunction with a more energetic internal policy of agricultural education, favoured the more rapid rehabilitation of the relatively easier guano-collecting, which requires virtually no apparatus and extremely little organisation?even the pathway from the caves to the river was so well made in the old days, with bilian, that it survives, and only the sections replaced by the Chinese guano contractor since 1930 are of inferior wood and workmanship.

Since 1932, when scientific methods were first applied by the Curator, Sarawak Museum, to the problems of nest collecting (at first not without some local opposition, which soon disappeared as the favourable results were felt) nests have normally been collected twice a year, in January?March and August?September, each time with a fairly intensive sweep over a relatively short period. The basis of this system is that periodic inspections should be made from the start of each season :

(i)

In the first season, until 85% of nests no longer contain eggs or young?i.e. they have hatched and flown.

(ii)

In the second season, as soon as there is an optimum of nests made, but before there is a high

proportion with eggs or young.

Thus the first collection is made after a large section have reared broods (two eggs) with very high infant mortality, the second before this, when the birds, their breeding instincts frustrated, will make new nests and thus bring off a second brood. The essence of the second collection is a concerted drive. The birds are left alone in other months.

This system has not so far been fully enforced, as full legal control was only vested in the Curator in 1940. and the necessary rules, etc., were not completed before the Japanese occupation. Nevertheless, the basic ideas have been more or less voluntarily continued by a local committee, in co operation with the Native Officer?the present Native Officer has shown particularly intelligent interest in the subject. The second 1947 season was extra late this year, and collecting had not commenced by mid-September (my visit). The first 1947 collection was of 70.17 piculs, as compared with a pre-war average of well over 150 piculs.

During the period February?May, 1947, total Sarawak export of ?black nests? was 166.39 piculs, indicating the drop in Niah?s share of the total output, which pre-war was two-thirds of the total in any such period. The second 1947 collection will also be low, since little has been done to reconstruct the complex system of scaffolding, and more of it has lately been undermined by guano collectors. These structures were built up over decades, reaching up to 150 feet into funnels and corridors of the ceiling. It is frightening even to watch a man ascend these slender poles. Every now and then, someone falls and is killed.

If nests are NOT collected, up to a point the birds are assisted to increase. (Incidentally, there are not less than one million nesting swifts in these caves.) But the places suitable for nesting are limited, and the whole roof area is shared with various species of bats with their own well-defined ?native? and ?mixed? zones. Beyond the conservation point, failure to collect may actually reduce the number of edible nests. For a nest becomes unfit to eat (at Niah) after a few months. But it may stay in position much longer, congesting rock faces with old nests. There are strong indications that this is happening at the present time.

Thus a regular system of collecting is in itself beneficial to the nest industry. Each year each pair of

swifts can in effect give two economic crops and still replace itself adequately. But if not allowed to yield at this optimum, the total will be reduced. In this respect, the nest industry is exactly opposite to the guano industry.

It therefore follows that even if the maximum number of accessible nests is not 'collected' each time, at least once a year all uncollected old nests on collection sites (some birds nest in funnels, etc., that cannot be reached) should be scraped off.

It also follows that, properly controlled, the nest industry is a constant, ever-recurring, inexhaustible one and that the CLOSER IT RUNS TO CAPACITY the better. The encouragement of Niah nest-collecting, and its rapid rehabilitation, is therefore desirable. Such rehabilitation does not effect the almost static factors of the guano industry.

There is no record of guano extraction before 1930, after which it was known, on any significant scale, only from Niah and in a small way from one or two of the Bau caves (Gunong Staat, Bidi). A little was also taken from the Merapok Hills by the Japs. Some caves near Serian may also be suitable. but in most access, is too difficult or faeces drain away rapidly owing to the floor formation. In brief, the only significant supplies of guano in Sarawak at present come from Niah.

As well as the Chinese contractor and the local porters, in general Sarawak benefits by a good supply of guano. The outstanding questions that therefore arise are:

(i)

How long will Sarawak and the other interested parties continue so to benefit? Is the guano, as has been suggested, practically "inexhaustible" ?

(ii)

How can any conflict of interests between guano and nest industries be best resolved ?

The answers to these two main questions must now be attempted. Much hinges on the amount of guano available. Is it a persistent, permanent asset, or not?

Even a cursory inspection of the caves indicates that the rate of guano deposition is exceedingly slow. It cannot be more than a fraction of an inch a year as can be seen in places where several feet have been dug out down to the 'white' deposits. Indeed, it is clear that if the rate of deposit

was rapid, the cave would have been filled up! Clearly, the affair has been going on for centuries. There is even reason to believe, from a preliminary test on the spot, (stimulated by local legends) that the cave was inhabited in prehistoric times; this I hope to examine by excavation in 1948.

We can therefore put out of mind the possibility of guano renewal at anything even faintly approaching the present rate of extraction.

The existing guano in the caves can be divided into three types, according to quality :

(i)

Tai tikus : Great mounds and slopes in the cave mouths. where it is too light and shelfless for the swifts, and only bats hang (nearly all of one small species). This guano is considered almost useless by the present collectors, and has not been touched.

(ii)

Tai burong : The deposits well inside the cave, of mixed bat and bird faeces. This is the rich, dark guano which is exclusively collected at present.

(iii)

Tana : The deposits under the bird guano, often hard and white, but friable, which the collectors and Chinese regard as quite worthless. They dig down to this, and then stop.

The present collecting is exclusively of bird guano: the other two types are said locally to have been tried and found of no value. First then, to consider the extent of bird guano still available. It is on this that all statements have hitherto been based. and the existence of other types (particularly (iii)) has not hitherto been officially recognised.

Owing to the labyrinthine complexity, unevenness and darkness of these eaves (there are quite steep hills inside), it is impossible accurately to estimate the volume of deposits within, without the most careful survey observations. It is tempting to make facile cubic calculations. But the following figures are strictly tentative and crude, open to wide error.

In parts of the cave the bird guano is 2 feet deep c.g. centre of largest cavern; in others it reaches to maximum of 20 feet. The deeper deposits are almost entirely in side caves or connecting tunnels which are narrow and high. The average over-all depth is very approximately 4 (3-5) feet. The total

floor area appears to be not more than 10 acres, and the accessible floor space (excluding small, remote and tortuous side-shows) which has bird guano deposits probably not much above 8 acres.

The total original quantity of available bird guano (including places where it has been dug out) would thus be very roughly something like 50,000 cubic yards. It might easily be as much as 25% more or less, but it would hardly be less than a third of or more than three times this amount. A ton of Niah bird guano, as collected from the cave, occupies approximately 2 cubic yards. This would give something up to 25,000 tons in the total initial deposit.

The present rate of collection is about 300 tons a year, which would suggest there was bird guano for some 80 years at the present rate of collection. (The extreme crudeness of this calculation must again be emphasised).

These calculations have not so far allowed for the bird guano already removed since 1930 (17 years). This has been taken out in such an irregular way, in pockets, tunnels and pits, that it has been impossible to calculate the total deposit, existing without including these gaps and holes in it. The amount already removed is immediately obvious to the visitor. In the largest cave shaft, about half way in, an area 100 by 20 yards has been stepped down to the "white" deposit, here up to 6 feet below the previous surface?which can be measured on rock faces and on the base of nest-collectors? climbing poles. Further on, over an irregular area. 2 feet of the deposit have been taken. In two connecting caves, pits of deep deposit 15x20 x 5-10 yards have been dug out. Again, there is a hole 10 x 5 x 5 yards in a side cave. There are other pockets and holes elsewhere.

On emerging from the cave, and before working out my paced surface (and depth) calculations as above, I made a rough visual estimate of the proportion of reasonably accessible bird guano already extracted. I made it about one quarter. The above figures give somewhere around 7,000 cubic yards collected?or one seventh of the bird deposit. If we accept the evidence that collection was only vigorous from 1935?41, and again 1946?47, as seems likely, and that in other years it was less energetic, somewhere near the latter figure seems reasonable. And the dug-out sections are so impressive and obstructive to the visitor that they may well make a disproportionate impression on the eye. Perhaps it would be fair to guess that

nearly a fifth of the deposit has been taken?for the figure calculations probably under-estimate minor holes and pits all over the place.

All in all, then, I am inclined to the view that there is guano remaining in the caves sufficient for not less than 40 and not more than 100 years in these caves, assuming roughly the present rate and method of extraction. These assumptions are, however, of doubtful validity, because :

(i)

Increasing education and development in Sarawak agriculture (previously so backward) can greatly increase the demand.

(ii)

The present system of collecting is primitive in the extreme.

Clearly, accelerated exploitation of the caves would greatly reduce the time-potential.

Thus, the bird guano deposits in these caves cannot by any manner of means be regarded as ?inexhaustible."

Moreover, the present collecting system, by which each individual coolie digs wherever he thinks he can get guano most easily and quickly to fill his bag, naturally means :

(i) that the remaining guano is that which is less and less accessible;

(ii) that these unco-ordinated digging operations themselves obstruct later access to the remaining deposits?for instance, a man will find a deep pocket and go at it until there is a great, irregular crater right across an already far from easy cave route, making, transit difficult and even dangerous.

So much for bird guano. But if the bat guano is in fact useful, as would seem possible, this would probably increase the total potential by perhaps a sixth again. This deposit is, of course, not separable over most of the cave, where it is mixed with swifts? faeces as "tai burong.?? But there are the accessible mouth deposits which have spilled over for centuries to form imposing hillocks.

Potentially more important, however, is the "white" deposit, which underlies the bird guano, and in many places must extend down to a much greater depth. If, as seems quite conceivable, this was originally ordinary bird guano which has been effected by the amount of overlying material, it may or may not have lost (or gained?) certain properties which caused it to show up poorly on crude



Chinese or Malay tests comparing it with "tai burong." Should this prove of value as a fertiliser it is certainly safe to double, the cave potential of work- able deposits.....?

Mr. Poggy and the Miri Marriage.

"Would you believe it,? asked Mr. Poggy rhetorically, settling himself down into the cross- river sampan at 12.02 p.m., or, as military persons would no doubt say in their clarifying way, 00.02, ?that poor blister of a District Officer, though I don?t hold any brief for him mind you, is still sitting in Court? I saw him as I passed just now. My motto is office hours finish twelve noon and twelve noon we goes home. But don?t think I haven?t been a District Officer in my time. I have. I remember the day the old Rajah said to me. 'Poggy,' he said. I'm short of a man at Miri. They're only oil people up there so you?ll do.

Hand over your present job looking after the wel- fare side of the Sarawak Constabulary to the P.W.D. carpenter and get up to Miri on the next boat and try to mimic a District Officer.'

Well you know in those days His Highness' word was law. At least some of his words were law but if all his words had been law I?m sure I don't know what would have happened. So I donned the outward verisimilitude of a District Officer and up to Miri I went. I must admit that there was a lot to do which I didn't know much about. Up to that time I had thought that District Officers were living in the lap of luxury and diverting them- selves with her out-standing features. But I soon saw different. Amongst other things I had to sit in Court. Now you know they say that Justice is blindfold. Well when I sat in Court she just managed to get one eye open. It was essential to preserve the equilibrium of the state. My old Resident used to tell a story of a Tamil who said, 'Apa rnaoham ini negri? Ada justice tetapi tiada law.' but, and I don?t mind telling you gentlemen this at mid-day, I think he invented it to preserve his self-respect. Bit of impropaganda if you see what I mean. But one must look at Justice objectively. There she sits, the eternal woman, with a sword in one hand to preserve her honour, and in the other a pair of scales in which to weigh the consequences of losing it.

But Justice was not my only liability, not by a long chalk. I had to do other things too. strange though it may seem to you gentlemen ground down as you are into the ruts of your particular departments.

For instance I had to do marriages. Now I always knew that marriages were a tricky business. You've only got to go to church and watch the parson keeping a sharp look-out that the wrong chap doesn't get away with the right girl. But I never knew how tricky they were before I met the people in Miri.

It was like this. In those days there were two little Miris, Kuala Belait and Seria, undutiful children who handed the dibs over to third parties and forgot their aged mother. They are both in Brunei territory, and, as a loyal servant of His Highness the Rajah, I was naturally not acquainted with foreign parts. For me the world was divided into two halves. In Miri you extracted oil and in Kuching you applied it. So when I was told by my old Resident to tie up Mr. Ramasamy Patel, a Company clerk, to the lady of his choice I didn't take much notice of where he came from. Believe me or believe me not that was the first wedding I ever attended. And don't any of you gentlemen say, 'What about your father's?', because that sort of joke doesn't go down with me at all.

Well if any of you second class gentlemen, as your kind used to be called in Sarawak, ever have the luck to be promoted to be District Officers you just pray that the first marriage you perform is in English. Mine was I'm glad to say, but I've done one since in Sea Dayak and the bride couldn't get out her responses because she was so busy giggling at my pronunciation. That ceremony would have been going on still if a fire hadn't broken out in the bazaar so that we had to short cut things, which was satisfactory, when you come to look at it properly, because it means they were married by a higher hand than mine.

However I must get back to this Miri business. I went into Court and sat behind the desk on the platform and I must admit I always felt a bit of

an ass perched right up there though there are a lot who don't for some reason or other. The blushing pair came forward and off I went. Now you gentlemen may not know the correct procedure. You have a greet book in front of you out of which you read the set words, just like a parson, and then you have a large form supposed to contain the parties' particulars if you see what I mean. If you look at this form hard you will see the names in one column and then if you move your eyes rapidly from left to right you will find out where they have been living, though I'm sure I don't know

why that should be what lawyers call material to the issue. Now I didn't know this trick at the time, and I'm not aware how it is with you gentlemen but my eyes always move easier from side to side than up and down.

So I asked Mr. Ramasamy Patel a few questions and the man answered up smartly and I asked Miss Seria a few questions and the girl answered up smartly so how was I to know that what I was doing was wrong? It was only when I got outside the Court that they told me that I had married the man to his address but I pointed out with one of my lightning flashes that Seria was a much nicer name for a girl than Gomawommy which I had thought was her future home. Anyhow they got their bit of paper and I hope still have it. But you know" added Mr. Poggy thoughtfully, as the party walked up the slope to the waiting car, "it was just like saying. 'I declare you, John William Snobglobbery, and you Westminster, London, S.W.I., man and wife together,' and what the legal position, let alone conjugal rights, would be then I'm sure I don't know.?"

Aeroplanes.

I happened to be crossing from the Treasury the other morning when the weekly Sunderland was passing over the Town, and I bumped into the Ancient on the steps of the Chartered Bank. He was gazing upwards regarding it with a watery eye. "People don't take any notice much of them these days?" he said, "I remember the first ever to fly over Kuching." The Ancient had his story-telling look on and I realised if I returned to my office he would only follow me and unburden, so I took the line of least resistance and guided him down Carpenter Street in the direction of a cold beer. "No?" he continued, after the libation had been poured and he was nicely settled, "they don't pay much attention to 'em nowadays, except when they look like falling down or dropping things. But I remember the first one that ever came over, little bit of thing it was too with snow-shoes on, not like these big B's, they fly around nowadays. It was in October '24, on the very day Rajah Vyner unveiled the memorial to his Father in front of the Government Offices.

I had just come out of the Pavilion Building with K., District Officer, Bintulu. It was the P.M.O.'s Office and Dispensary then and we had been in for the usual morning 'tonic' it being Race Week. I stopped dead, "Hear that?" I said 'that's an aeroplane!' K. said something very rude in reply, and

then, as I pointed out the plane, K? pulled me back with a yell just as a lorry tore by almost out of control. The driver was coming down Rock Road full-belt with his eyes gazing upwards and sticking out like chapel hat-pegs. He had seen it too ! Well, it

circled the town a couple of times and then pushed off. But you couldn't spit for people in the streets You would not have got ?em out of the bazaar into the streets quicker, if you'd shouted, ?Fire!? It was the same in the kampongs, so I was told, women and girls out without their selaya. or tudong of any kind, almost unheard of in those days. Well, that wasn't the end of it.? (I was now resigned to missing the first boat across river for tiffin, so I filled up the Ancient and let him carry on.) ??This seaplane had come from a carrier out at sea,? he continued, ??Rajah Vyner sent 'em a wireless message thanking ?em for sending over a plane especially on this auspicious occasion. Well, back came a reply, the Commander had no idea it was a big day and he was sending a couple more to fly around and land in the river and then fly back to the ship again.

They arrived over in the afternoon in the middle of the races. The crowd streamed off the course down the straight heading for the river, Padungan Bazaar wasn't built then. Luckily there was no race actually in progress at the time or the jockeys would have had a surprise and had to do some quick thinking coming round Padungan comer into the home stretch! Well, they both landed and one touched the sand bank opposite Pangkalian Batu and stove in a float. That one had to stay and wait for a new float and was moored just below the Fish Market all next day. T?other one went home with the news. I hadn't been in the service very long and was doing dutv up at Lawas.

Most of the important native celebrities were in Kuching for the unveiling ceremony and amongst them an old Murut called Sakai Libat, that?s not his proper name but it will do. He is no longer with us now. He was a man of some substance in the Lawas district and in his youth had been a man of war raiding the Tagals at the instigation of the Brunei Pengirans in the bad old days. He used to drop in of an evening and have a chat pretty frequently. My Malay wasn't very good, but apparently my gin was. He usually had seven or eight hangers-on to see him home and they used to sit in the background and gaze at the gin bottle like arctic explorers at a barmaid. One evening previously the question of aeroplanes had cropped up and with the aid of pencil, paper and chalk on my verandah

floor I had expounded aeronautics, but all the time I had a feeling that the impression was I had had too much of my own gin, although all I had to say was politely and credulously accepted. Sakai had apparently spent the whole morning in the Fish Market studying the moored seaplane, missing no detail.

About a fortnight after our return to Lawas. I found Sakai on my verandah which was crowded with nearly every able-bodied male from his house and a sprinkling of older women as well. The old boy was bristling and when he refused a drink I realised something must be very much wrong. Sakai started in without waiting. 'Tuan.? he said, 'when we were in Fuelling did we or did we not see one of those flyships both flying and sitting on the water of the Sarawak river even as you once described?' I replied in the affirmative and backed it up with a snap which by chance showed the Astana as a background, and with which some of the audience were familiar. Sakai thanked me in Malay saying that all his followers had accused him of being drunk the whole time he was in Kuching and he had dreamt it. He then turned on them and blistered them in Murut. One by one his followers rose and descended my verandah steps into the garden. I

understood not one word but I still live to hear a better ticking off in any language. In admiration I passed Sakai the bottle and this time it was accepted?.(Contributed.)

Believe It Or Not.

The following extracts from a triangular correspondence which has recently passed between the Sarawak Treasury, the Sarawak Government Agent in an external territory and the officials of the Government Printing Office of another Colony (not in the Ear East) provide a resounding reply to those who, from the depths of their ignorance, assert that the civil service is entangled in red tape. Government Agent to the Treasury.

3rd October, 1946.

Dear Sir,

Government Printing Office-----

We enclose copy of a self-explanatory letter dated 5/7/46 from the above and have to advise that the records of the-----Agency of the

Government do not contain any reference to the matter.

Enclosure.

Government Printer to Government Agent.

5th July. 1946. Sir,

I have to remind you that the balance of 1/8d outstanding against your account since January 1914 and represented by the difference of supplies on Invoice B 232 dated 25/5/43 and a payment on 21/1/44 is long overdue.

I am sure this balance must have escaped your notice, but that you will now be good enough and send me your draft to cover with the least possible delay.

Treasury to the Government Agent.

21 st November, 1946. Sir,

With reference to your letter No. S/A dated 3rd October, 1946, will you please pay the sum of 1/8 (one shilling and eightpence) to the Govern- ment Printing Office-----and debit Sarawak Government account.

Government Agent to the Treasury.

2nd July, 1947.

Dear Sir,

Government Printer, ----- Form of

receipt for one shilling was received from the Government Printer for the sum of £ Stg. 1/8d. forwarded by us on 6/12/46. Due to some internal exchange arrangement in -----, the Govern- ment Printer explains that the proceeds of this remittance only amounted to one shilling.

An additional remittance of eightpence, sent at his request by British Money Order, has been forwarded to the Government Printer and in this respect we have charged costs amounting to 1/5d. to your account.

Government Agent to the Treasury.

2nd October, 1947. Dear Sir,

Government Printer, ----- Referring

to Monthly Report dated 2/7/47 we have now received from the Government Printer a receipt for 4d. and also refund of 4d. which we have credited to Sarawak Government Agent's current account. It is impossible to understand the Government Printer's book-keeping methods but, as the matter now seems to have been finalised, we presume you will not wish us to enquire what the refund of 4d. represents.

Government Agent to the Treasury.

5th November, 1947.

Dear Sir,

Government Printer,-----Unfortunately

this matter is not closed as suggested in our last report. The Government Printer has now written stating that our Money Order for eightpence was unpaid by the Post Office in ----- and they had therefore forwarded a refund of fourpence in error. The sum of eightpence now remains outstanding in their books. We have requested our London Office to obtain and forward to the Government Printer a British Money Order for the amount due and will endeavour to obtain a refund of the unpaid Money Order from the Postmaster here.

[And there, for the moment, the matter rests. We await with interest further developments in this exciting melodrama. It is hoped that the British public will agree to bear the costs of stamps and stationery, the wear and tear on financial brains, and the replacement value of Government printers.?Ed.] Miscellany.

A Kuching resident has been doing some painstaking research into the back numbers of the , and has kindly provided us with the following extracts. It is hoped that he will repeat the performance.

No. 228. January 3rd, 1885.

Sarawak Hymn.

I.

Sarawak arise ! and boldly wave Thy flag of golden hue !

Thou was given thee by a trusty friend

As brave and just as true!

Chorus.

The Rajah loved his people !

Their cause he ne'er forsook !

Ten tens of thousands yet unborn Shall bless the name of Brooke!

II.

He succoured thee, and bound thy wounds He poured in wine and oil !

He drove the pirates from thy shores He freed thy fertile soil!

Chorus.

The Rajah.....

III.

Living, he health and fortune gave Thy weal alone he sought !

Dying it was Sarawak's good Enjoyed his latest thought.

Chorus.

The Rajah.....

IV.

Sarawak ever will revere The glory of his name !

Her prosperous future will enhance

The brightness of his fame.

Chorus.

The Rajah.....

No. 229. February 2nd, 1885.

Errata. In the Sarawak Hymn in verse 2 in line 3 for "pirates" read "pirate", and in verse 3 in line 4 for "enjoyed" read "engaged".

And lastly the following from an equestrian public servant :

Whereas for the safety of all those who keep horses. I hereby give notice that the Chinese are forbidden to use crackers or guns in the district and around Kuching between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. and between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.



Any Chinaman or others or children setting off crackers or guns within the aforesaid district and hours will be liable to a fine of \$20.00.

J. H. NELSON,

Ag. Resident of Sarawak Proper. 25 June, 1877.

This Sarawak.

(With apologies to the New Statesman and Nation.)

The Hon. Secretary then asked the Kev. Oakley to speak on behalf of the Committee. Fr. Oakley did more than this. He practically made the gathering roar with laughter when he dressed his report on the progress and result of the work of the Committee with spices of good clean jokes.? Sarawak Tribune.

Ten persons were summoned for non-payment of 1947 assessment. One was proved to have been dead for some years and his house had disappeared. ?A monthly report.

Christian members of the Church of England .....?Sarawak Tribune.

The position of cloth in the food control still remains as my last report.?A monthly report.

(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: 6.

Father Staal, who died in internment in Kuching, was perhaps the greatest authority on the Land Dayaks, particularly the Sadong Land Dayaks. who has ever been in Sarawak. For many years he lived in the Roman Catholic Mission at Tebakang, in the heart of the Land Dayak country, and then, about the same time as the headquarters of the Sadong District were moved up-river from Simunjan to Serian, Father Staal and his school moved down-river to the new station. Government officers, once they had got to know him which was not an easy job, eagerly sought his guidance and assistance in dealing with the people with whom he was so well acquainted, in planning their travels and learning local history, and he was unfailingly ready to render advice from the depths of his wisdom and experience.

The lighter side of life was, however, not entirely neglected, and one evening a young officer was sitting in the Father's house at Serian discussing the perplexing conundrums which had been put to him by his sundry hosts on a recent tour, conundrums which stretched from the reasons for the movements of the sun to the military situation in China and from the average distance between "pangkallans" in England to what makes a motor car go. "Ah, I remember," said Father Staal, reminiscently, "Vot time our school vos at Tebakang I vos visiting ze Dayaks at Rasau. Zey asked me, 'Vater? zey said, 'how many children haf you got at Tebakang?' 'Vy, vorty?', I said and zev velled 'Vot! all vrom vun vooman'?"

Kuching Agricultural Show, 1947.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT.

EXPENDITURE.

REVENUE.

Kuching, 16th July, 1947.

TAN KUI CHOON, Hon. Treasurer, Kuching Agricultural Show.

Auditor's Report.

I certify that I have audited the above Accounts of the KUCHING AGRICULTURAL SHOW. 1947. and have obtained all the information and explanations which I have required. In my opinion the said Accounts are properly drawn up as to exhibit a true and correct view of the state of affairs of the KUCHING AGRICULTURAL SHOW, 1917, according to the best of my information and the explanations given to me and as shown by the books of the KUCHING AGRICULTURAL SHOW, 1947.

Kuching, 23rd September, 1947.

A. D. DANT, Hon. Auditor.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE , DECEMBER 1st, 1897.

ORDER.

No. XXII, 1897.

It being expedient to amend and alter the regulations under which salaries, furloughs, and pensions are at present granted, I hereby enact that on and after the 1st day of January 1898 all officers joining the permanent service will be entitled to salaries, furloughs, and pensions, as hereinafter mentioned :?

(1) Maximum Salaries :?

Divisional Residents... \$450 per mensem, and allowance from \$100 to \$200.

Treasurer ... \$100 and allowances

according to circum- stances and extra work.

2nd Class Residents ... \$300 and allowances according to circumstances.

Medical Officer in Charge ... \$350 with certain allowances.

Assistant Resident and 1st Class Assistants ... \$200.

\*Cadets on joining ... \$100.

Passed Cadets (after one year if found efficient) \$120.

Post, Shipping, and Harbour Master \$300.

Police Inspector ... \$300.

2nd Class Assistants viz.

Treasury clerks, etc. Storekeepers, etc.

\$80 to \$120.

Military Commandant, 1st Class Commanders, Instructors, Sergeants, Navy Engineers, and Officers of the Public Works and Surveys Department to receive salaries, furloughs and pensions, if any, in accordance with their respective agreements.

(2) Furlough :?

The same as at present in force, excepting that whilst on furlough the dollar shall be computed at 4s. instead of 4s.2d. as at present, with respect to the salary drawn by any officer whilst on furlough.

(3)

Pensions :?

(a)

After 30 years actual service of good character inclusive of vacation leave in the tropics, but exclusive of furlough taken in Europe, half pay for life at the rate of salary, exclusive of allowances of whatsoever nature, on retirement.

(b) Should any Officer become permanently incapable of further service owing to illness from the effect of the climate or from any casualty whilst in the execution of his duties, provided that he shall have served 10 years or upwards, he shall receive a pension at the rate of one sixtieth of his actual salary on retirement for every year he shall have served, and should such Officer not have completed 10 years actual service he shall receive a gratuity as may be deemed fair.

(c)

No Officer shall be entitled to a pension in respect to any service under 20 years of age.

(d)

Pensions shall be paid in sterling, the rate to be computed at 4s. the dollar for each dollar of the retiring pay of any Officer, instead of the present rate, 4s.2d.

(4) Any Officer who may resign before completion of 3 years service unless owing to ill health shall be liable to have to refund one half of the salary he shall have received from the date of his entry into the service.

Given under my hand

and Seal this 27th day of November, 1807.

C. BROOKE,

Rajah.

\*Receive £40 passage money on joining the service, if in Europe, which must be refunded by any Officer leaving the Service of his own accord within two years of his entry into the Service, if not on account of ill health.

News from Far and Near.

FIRST DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that the coal-mining experts visited Bau and Simunjun during October. They found nothing of interest at Bau and the Resident believes they were disappointed

with the quality of the coal at Simunjan.

The District Officer, Kuching, reports that there were several opium cases during October, and two flagrant ones in particular. In the first of the latter Sia Ah Heng, a Kuching towkay, was convicted of being in possession of six bundles of raw opium valued by the Customs at \$5,300 and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of \$400. In the second case Chai Kuet Foong, a Kheh arriving from China by the s.s. Pangkor, had been found in possession of 425 boons, valued at \$12,750, ingeniously hidden in umbrellas. He was sentenced to nine months and a fine of \$500. In both cases the opium was of course confiscated and in both cases the appeals to the Resident's Court were dismissed. The Honourable the Resident comments that the appeals were based largely on a reluctance to go to gaol. If fines only had been inflicted he doubts if there would have been any appeals.

The District Officer, Kuching, reports that "the Bomb Disposal Squad has arrived at last and has been removing bombs with uncanny sang-froid." The Honourable the Resident adds that, since the departure of the Squad to Sibul, he has received further reports of bombs in Kuching District and he fears that such reports will continue to come in as and when fresh areas are cleared for farming or planting.

The District Officer, Bau, reports that a police lance-corporal, who threw a stone at a vegetable-seller in the bazaar, thereby causing a hostile crowd to collect which resulted in the police discharging rifle-shots into the air, was fined \$25 for voluntarily causing hurt and \$7 for assault.

The District Officer, Bau, mentions that in October he made two short trips to surrounding kampongs in order to accompany certain visitors who had work to do there. Sad to relate most kampongs were deserted, the inhabitants being away on their farms. The Honourable the Resident comments :

??Last minute decisions to visit Dayak

Kampongs and last minute changes of plan when such visits have been arranged are doomed to failure. It is unfortunate that many of our visitors do not remember the words of Kipling who said, "There ain't no buses running from Rangoon to Mandalay" (The takes the Resident's word for it.)

The District Officer, Bau, reports that a strike of certain of the census enumerators took place on

October 26th, the strikers alleging that Kuching enumerators were receiving \$12 a month bicycle allowance as well as larger salaries than the Bau employees. These allegations were denied by the Superintendent and the resignations of the seven-teen enumerators were accepted. Of these men thirteen were taken on again on application.

Shaik Mutu, a very well-known trader in the Sadong river who came to Sarawak from India more than forty years ago, died at Gedong on October 28th.

The District Officer, Serian, is gratified that the popular election of two Malay Tua Kampong, one Melikin Penghulu and one Land Dayak Orang Kaya, has resulted in the public choice being the same as his own, and "this in spite of the fact, that extreme care was taken to indicate no preferences and no Government servant was present at the election."

The District Officer, Serian, reports that now that the rains have started river travel upstream is very difficult. His last trip from Gedong to Berian took 18 hours actual paddling time, equivalent to a day and a half travelling time or two and a half days from Simunjan to Serian.

## SECOND DIVISION.

The District Officer, Simanggang, reports that in October a Malay who was caught damaging one of the sluice gates at Bijat was convicted under section 430 of the Penal Code and fined ten dollars. This, he says, is the first conviction that has been obtained although several locks have been damaged.

The District Officer, Simanggang, reports that towards the end of November large numbers of Dayaks from the Lubok Antu and Engkilili districts were coming down to Simanggang asking for relief work having finished planting their new padi crop. The most distressed areas are the Ulu Ai, Engkari, Delok, and Lemanak rivers. The District Officer says the Dayaks have been engaged on building the main Bund at Tawang Bijat in relays. There is, he adds, "no other large scale relief work to offer these hunger marchers." Some have recently found work tapping rubber consequent upon the rise in price, while others have been able to earn some money supplying gravel and sand to the Contractor at Lubok Antu who is rebuilding that station. At the time of writing his report the District Officer says that 800 Dayaks had registered their names for relief work and more were expected.

Twelve head of cattle arrived in October from Kabong to start the Simanggang herd.

The District Officer, Saribas, reports that a letter posted in Simanggang on June 4th, 1947, addressed to "The District Officer, Belong" reached him on October 17th. The envelope bore the postal stamp of Alexandria dated August 14th and had "Sarawak, Malaya?" added to the address.

The District Officer, Kalaka, reports that Awang Kadir bin Awang Bakar, a 36 year old Malay, was in October convicted on charges of impersonating a Government servant and cheating. A note book with an eight cent stamp, a machine for repairing cartridges, and a tape measure sufficed to induce his gullible victims to pay a fictitious new tax. He was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment.

The District Officer, Kalaka, says that, "A system of passing on the rubber prices, received from Simanggang, to the Ulu, is slowly expanding and is widely approved." It appears that prices and newspaper cuttings are sent to literate houses and a recent order for two thousand clonal seeds from the first two long-houses to get circulars, is, says the District Officer, sufficiently encouraging reward for the time and paper expended, especially as the buyers offered to pay cash down. The. hopes that they will remember that rubber bubbles have a regrettable tendency to burst.

The District Officer, Kalaka, says that a large part of the river bank near the old commercial wharf collapsed during the high tides in October. The old commercial wharf fell away during the war. The District Officer adds that the new 1940 Government godown is now on the brink and will join the commercial wharf at the bottom of the. river in due course. The Honourable the Resident comments that the Public Works Department Overseer has been sent to Saratok to investigate this matter.

A Malay boatman on census duty in the Kalaka District disappeared in the Ulu Kabo in October. He was found forty-eight hours later suffering from loss of memory.

### THIRD DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that two Chinese convicted of criminal intimidation in September in Sibul were each sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment. It turned out afterwards that both the accused had before the occupation been convicted of murder.

The District Officer, Sibul, reports that there was a drop in attendance figures at the Hospital in

September, "the daily average of in and out patients being 59.3 and 135.6 respectively.? He adds :  
?There were only a very few admissions of typhoid cases during the month and there were no other epidemics of any kind.?

The following is an extract from the September report of the District Officer, Sibuluan : ?All the Penghulus were in Sibuluan during the month. They reported that planting has started but only 50% of the padi fields have been completed. This was partly due to delay caused by the rain of the previous month and a hope that a dry spell might allow better crops. Another cause is that they have to spend some time searching for food. Their rice stocks, generally speaking, are exhausted. They have been requesting Government to lend them padi, saying that they would not have been short had the Supply Department not bought up their padi earlier in the year. It was pointed out to them that these purchases by the Supply Department were their surplus stocks. If they were foolish enough to sell more than this it was their own fault. Further it was pointed out to them that last year Government bought sago for them and they only accepted the first shipment, refusing the rest, thereby causing Government financial loss. Though one can sympathise with them if they are indeed starving one should also remember that for years a succession of District and Native Officers have continually drummed into them the urgent need to plant more padi and to supplement this with their own fruit and vegetable gardens. They must learn to stand on their own feet and not turn to Government for food relief each year."

The District Officer, Sibuluan, reports that "the District Council for Native Treasuries" was convened on the afternoon of September 23rd and the District Officer explained the provisional estimates. All councillors, says the District Officer, demanded state-assisted schools, but it was pointed out to them that the Treasury revenue could not possibly cover the expenditure unless further assisted by contributions from themselves.

Rubber dealers in Sibuluan were, according to information supplied to the District Officer, holding back stocks in anticipation of a reduction in export duty. It is to be hoped that they were not disappointed.

The District Officer, Sibuluan, reports that during September many letters were received from individuals



who stated that their names were on the membership lists of the P.P.M., which the understands is the "anti-cession" society in Sibuluan, and wished them to be withdrawn.

The District Officer, Lower Rejang, reports that the police at Sarikei arrested five Dayaks in connection with twelve reports of theft of clothing and house equipment made by Chinese recently.

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that Mrs. Brooke's visit to Kanowit had the usual repercussions in Dayak Penghulus coming in to complain of some of her followers getting Dayaks to sign a petition without telling them the contents until after they have signed. The District Officer goes on to report Penghulu Belaja as accurately specifying the categories from which "the leading lights of the anti-cession movement" are said to hail. Ex-Penghulu Naga arrived in Kanowit from Meluan on September 5th to meet Mrs. Brooke who had left on September 2nd.

Those of our readers who perused the leading article in last month's may be interested in the following extracts from September reports. The District Officer, Kanowit, says : "Reports are being received that the illipe trees are flowering again this year, even more profusely than last year. It will not be known until November whether the fruit will form or not. It is to be hoped that arrangements for purchase can be made in good time if the trees do fruit." The Honour-

able the Resident comments : "Should the illipe flowers weather the usual hazards before forming then the crop will probably be a large one. Perhaps tentative enquiries could be made in regard to the export of the nuts?"

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that the pro-cession people have apparently taken a leaf out of the anti-cession book and have now started spreading rumours. One is to the effect that all loyal subjects of His Majesty will be entitled to loans of padi to help them over the lean period until next harvest while those supporting the other side will not be granted such loans.

The Assistant District Officer, Kapit, reports that the Senior Native Officer proceeded to Sungei Mujong in September to settle a dispute between ex-Penghulu Ugak and Penghulu Rabong concerning the division of property. He returned, however, without having arrived at a decision as ex-Penghulu Ugak absented himself in order to entertain Mrs. Brooke.

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that in September 3,249 tons of water were supplied to

Government quarters and barracks.

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that the first floor of the Mukah Office was altered during September. This included the dismantling of partition walls and the construction of railings to provide space for the public. The change has made the building into a much more convenient and airy office and has lessened congestion.

#### FOURTH DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that in September the Curator of the Sarawak Museum visited the Niah caves in order to investigate the birds-nest industry and also the possibility of developing the guano industry. The Resident comments that it is hoped that the latter may prove a valuable asset to the Colony's agricultural development scheme.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that a Chinese sentenced to three months' imprisonment for lurking house-trespass by night in the Roman Catholic Mission claimed to be looking for the Government Rest House.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that crimes of being in possession of stolen property are still frequent. The articles concerned are generally of an industrial and mechanical nature such as valves, motor car parts, and engine parts. Most of the property is stolen from Sarawak Oilfields Limited and it is fairly obvious that in many cases it is "inside work."

The District Officer, Miri, says that having visited the capital for court work he left Kuching by air for Labuan at 11 a.m. on September 25th. He caught a Company LCT the same evening from Labuan and reached Kuala Belait at 9 a.m. on the following morning. A Chinese bus brought him to Miri at 2 p.m. on the same day. This, he adds,

is in striking contrast to the time he would have taken if he had gone on the Kaka, which left Kuching on September 26th for Miri via Sibu and Bintulu and broke down at the latter place. The Ingleburn, sent up to relieve the Kaka of her census stores, eventually arrived in Miri on October 5th.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that an amazing quantity of goods of American and Canadian manufacture are being imported into and sold in Miri District. Practically every shop has some goods from the hard currency areas. The following were displayed in shops in Miri bazaar in September :

Cloth, U.S. manufacture, imported from Singapore.

Plastic wares, U.S. manufacture, imported from Singapore.

Beer, U.S. manufacture, imported from Sandakan.

Ink. Canadian manufacture, imported from Singapore.

Milk, Canadian manufacture, imported from Singapore.

Prunes, Canadian manufacture, imported from Singapore.

Matches, U.S. manufacture, imported from Singapore.

Tinned foods, U.S. manufacture, imported from Singapore.

Other goods of U.S. manufacture which are or have been available include cigarettes, cocoa, pencils, and batteries. (The points out that all these goods come from other British territories and so it is not Sarawak that has been spending the dollars). The District Officer adds that there has been no great trade recession, as has been reported from other parts of the Colony, as the bulk of the purchasing power is derived from wages paid by the Company.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that in September census work was proceeding smoothly. The only lack of co-operation noted had been from a very occasional Chinese squatter but even in these cases an explanation had eliminated all mis- understanding.

The District Officer, Bintulu, reports that Gasing anak Bada, to whose contumacious conduct we referred last month, and six of his followers were sentenced to one month's rigorous imprisonment for having failed to appear in a Court of Justice.

In connection with the affair mentioned in the last preceding paragraph ninety-one Dayaks were fined in Bintulu in September for farming outside Dayak farming areas in contravention of the Dayak Farming Areas (Bintulu) Rules made under Order No. L?2 (Land) 1931.

One police constable escorted \$15,000 from Miri to Marudi in September.

The District Officer, Baram, reports that during September an auction of edible birds' nests was held at Long Lama. The prices varied from \$20.00 to \$30.00 per kati and output was 192 katis 10 tahils.

FIFTH DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that a good deal of time was spent in October in discussing the initial stages of the soil survey with the Agricultural Assistant and in plotting on the maps likely areas for padi cultivation. The Resident says that there are apparently infinite possibilities in the Fifth Division, notably in the lower reaches of the Limbang, Panderuan, Lawas and Trusan rivers and in the rather remote Trusan hinterland. He adds that it is probable that, when the final stages of this survey are concluded it will be found that this Division could become the granary of Sarawak. Mechanised cultivation, he says, might overcome the sole difficulty which is low population.

The Honourable the Resident reports that instructions have been issued to all Native Officers to start District Publicity Offices in order to systematise and record the issue of photographs, posters, books etc. among schools, hospitals, clubs etc.

The District Officer, Limbang, reports that it has been difficult to find sufficient people to maintain the padi demonstration plot at Bengkita "and on one occasion it was necessary to use the pupils from the Malay School." The Honourable the Resident thinks that it would be a good idea if a certain amount of work on Government padi plots was made a regular item for "Government school children," as it is an excellent way of introducing improved methods among the young.

Those of our readers who remember the horrifying reports in the about a year ago concerning the Panderuan road will be interested to hear that the District Officer, Limbang, was hoping that by the end of November it would be possible to reach the 10th mile by jeep.

The Native Officer, Lawas, reports that in October ten Malays of Kampong Datu, Trusan. were convicted on charges of rioting, being members of an unlawful assembly, and causing hurt. They were sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from one year for the leaders down to six months for the others. These people, says the Native Officer, took the law into their own hands and formed a gang. Without waiting for the verdict of the Malay Court they beat up a Government employee who, they considered, had given some of them shame on account of a woman relative.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HELP THE MUSEUM.

Miri, Sarawak, 11th November, 1947

The Editor,

, Kuching.

Sir,

In the last issue of the , I was interested to note that the Curator of Sarawak Museum was anxious to know of any locality in Sarawak where curios, relics or other matters of historical value could be discovered.

Last year, when I was stationed at Rejang, I was informed by the inhabitants there that in the vicinity of Kampong Barong which is situated about 1/4 of an hour from Rejang village by an out-board motor, could be found heaps of fragments of ancient china, an ancient princess' swimming pool, a mole-hill wherein treasures are believed to have been buried, an embankment built to uphold the assault of sword-fish, a keel of an old ship from Celebes, a stone image of human head embedded in Sg. Barong and many other strange things which might enrapture the desire of an archeologist to examine. The particulars of this spot had been recorded by Mr. Andreini in 1925 or so.

The inhabitants living in the environment believed the place to be haunted ; thunderstorm would occur if any of the articles there is removed or disturbed. To confirm this, however, I have my own experience to relate to you. At one time, on returning from Jerijeh, our outboard engine broke down off Sg. Barong. As the driver was adjusting the engine, we hung to an old post, believed to be a post of an old bouse, notwithstanding the warning not to do so given by an old Tua Kampong who was with us. Unexpectedly the engine caught fire; it was thrown overboard together with other paraphernalia in order to prevent the fire from spreading to the wood-works of the boat. The driver had his face and hands burnt. The engine was later recovered by diving. Had the fire occurred due to the driver's carelessness or had it occurred as the vengeance of the troubled spirit of the old post, is still a mystery to me. The latter, however, obsessed me.

The inhabitants further informed me that they had collected many gold ornaments of the nearby beaches.

I have written an essay on this place not long ago and if you care to read it in order to amplify this statement, you may borrow it through the courtesy of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Kuching.

Yours faithfully,

YAN A. KIPRAWI.

SARAWAK MUSIC SOCIETY.

Kuching,

28th November, 1947. The Editor,

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Kuching.

Sir,

One reads in newspapers and hears, on the Radio, a great deal about kindness and good spirit between all members of various communities these days, but rarely have these highly praised traits been met in such concrete form as in the recent provision of a new piano for the Sarawak Music Society by Mrs. L. D. Kennedy.

No figures will be quoted, as it is certain that the donor would be embarrassed.

The Society has, since its inauguration been handicapped by the lack of a piano.

Several good friends have given their assistance in this direction, including the Hon?ble Mr. J. B Archer, the Rev. Mother Bernardine, and Mr. Ong Eng Hin, but the ownership of a piano is, to the Society, a very wonderful asset and will greatly enhance the training of bands, choirs and children.

It is difficult to find words adequate to express gratitude in this case.

We can only raise our hats and say, "Thank you Phyllis."

Yours sincerely,

F. Harding,

Director of Music, S.M.S.

CLAIMS AGAINST PUNJABIS.

The Borneo Company, Limited,

Kuching, Sarawak,

19th November, 1947.

The Editor,

Kuching.

Dear Sir,

I have recently received a letter from Major Milligan, of the 2/15th Punjabis, and think some of your readers may be interested in it.

Major Milligan writes from Kohut Cantonment, of the North West Frontier Police, in the Dominion of Pakistan. He says, inter alia: ?

?Unfortunately I went on leave and sick leave until August this year, so matters were held up as there was no one here who was in the picture.

Most of the claims from Sarawak caught up with me in London only four days before I came back?I took them with me to Dublin (my home) by air, checked them, and flew back to London where I rechecked with Col. Lane. They are now on their way back. All very slow but probably will be even further slowed up due to a partial unofficial ban on all U.K. mail by this place!!

So as to have something on record I presided over a Board to go into the whole claims question and a copy of the proceedings is enclosed for you herewith. I did this as I am retiring any day now, far British Columbia.

Davis is at the moment commanding the Brigade here and I am O.C. the Battalion, so am very busy especially with riots and disturbances: tribal raids, etc.

Please give my regards to all old Sarawakians and wish them the best from the 2/15th.

I do hope the long outstanding business of claims gets cleared up soon and satisfactorily, as in a month or two no British Officers will be left in the Battalion at all.?

You may care to publish the above.

Yours faithfully.

R. S. Sagar.

DOG CENSUS.

Kuching,

29th November, 1917 The Editor.

Kuching.

Dear Sir,

May I suggest that before the Census organisation is disbanded, it expends its efficient self a little further by taking a Census of Sarawak's dogs?

Although on first thoughts this may seem a formidable task, it becomes much less so when one realises that a large percentage (if not all) of the colony's curs are domiciled in Kuching within the immediate precincts of Tabuan Road. Here they foregather nightly at sundown, and remain till sun-up, a carousing, canine conclave of cacophany. Thus it would be a simple matter for the Government Census Enumerator to make no bones about it?decide that every dog should have his day and act accordingly.

First however, I would suggest that helpful pamphlets (similar to those used in the recent human Census) be distributed to each mongrel menage, setting out straightforward instructions for the filling in of various columns of forms. Said instructions could be set out as follows, and the answers would doubtless produce a mine of information on a dog's life :

1.

If you have a breed, an owner, a collar or a registration disc, record these facts faithfully, remembering that inaccuracy in replies may incur the displeasure of the Municipal Protector of Pooches.

2.

If you have a mate, five friendly females, fondly fawning, fifteen pups and forty-four ticks, you are classified under the heading "Gay Dog."

3.

If your bark is worse than your bite (and numberless mems and tuans will testify that it must be), state fully how long it has been in your possession, and whether you obtained it from the Custodian of Enemy Property, the P.W.D., or the Supply Office. N.B.?Under this heading you must also give the origin of your bad name, should you happen to have one (as some dogs do).



4. If you are an unregistered hound, un- honoured, un-owned and unwashed, you must state whether or no you are prepared to make an assignation with the Municipal dogcatcher, at a spot at least 200 yards away from civilisation.

5. Lastly, remember to greet the Govern inent Enumerator with wags of welcome and answer his questions with loving licks. He is (as you will see in the helpful pamphlet) highly trained, and fully fitted for close co-operation with Man?s greatest friend. He will collect your forms, tie them neatly in red tape, and pass them on to the Proper Person.

Should this Canine Census be carried out along the above lines, our community might well look forward (in the last quarter of 1949) to a comprehensive collection of canine cognisance, equalled only in informative interest by the habits of Mr. Harrisson?s Kelabits.

Sincerely,

OUTSTATION PUNYA ORANG.

From ?Adversity?: Internment Quarterly.

(The following story was published in "Adversity" on October 1st, 1943.)

The six old men looked anxiously at me from the other side of my office table. Their shabby and oddly assorted dress was typical of Malays who have passed the age of courtship and youthful dandyism. As required by custom, all wore the brimless hats without which it would be disrespectful to pay a formal visit. The white headgear of one old man indicated that he had made the pilgrimage to Mecca and was entitled to be addressed as "Haji." All wore cotton ?sarongs? over their crumpled dark trousers; two had drill jackets of European cut over open-necked shirts, but the others were wearing the collarless wide- sleeved cotton shirts of their race, known as "baju." Two were bare-footed; two wore old leather shoes without socks and two wore sandals. Their clothes were in keeping with the Malay characteristic of blending Western habits and traditional customs without regard to the incon- gruity of the combination.

Their spokesman, the venerable Haji, had told me a long story of the events which had prompted this deputation to visit me. All were elders of social authority from outlying villages on the West coast of the island. They were recognised as such by the villagers. European and other officers of

governmental departments used them as the channels through whom instructions, advice or exhortation could be conveyed to the rural Malays. They were not paid servants of the government, nor did the government appoint them as 'ketuas,' or elders with authority, in their respective localities. Only in the rare case of a dispute regarding the successor to a deceased 'ketua' would the government intervene and settle the matter, after the necessary cautious inquiries, by selecting one of the rivals and openly recognising him as the leader through whom the villagers should be approached.

The six old men were worried because their authority had been flaunted by a young Malay, not yet thirty years of age. Such conduct was without precedent. In the regulation of their own communities. Malay conservatism combined with an extremely docile racial temperament requires that changes be effected so slowly as not to be noticeable. Innovations are gradually absorbed, not suddenly embraced, and individual behaviour which differs widely from the accepted canons is unheard of. The pressure of social disapproval will relentlessly curb any person who endeavours too hastily to import ideas of conduct conflicting with the curious mixture of Mohammedan and earlier tribal notions which constitute established Malay custom or, as they call it, "adat."

There was, of course, a woman in the story, an attractive lady who, both her parents being dead, lived with relatives in the village of Layang-layangan. Dollah, the young Malay who was causing so much trouble to the custodians of tradition, lived in a village five miles away with his wife and an infant son.

The Public Works Department was collecting coral rock from the coastal reef at Layang-layangan to be used as road metal, for the island lacked good stone which could be quarried for this purpose.

Dollah was one of the many men who came to live for periods of four or five days at the village and at low tide went out in a small boat to collect coral stones from the shallow water on the reef.

His day's work done, it seems that, instead of having his evening meal of rice and vegetables with fish or curried meat, followed by an hour or two of conversation and a temporary bachelor bed, Dollah succumbed to the charms of the attractive lady. This, at least, was the contention of the six old men. In itself, it was a not very uncommon state of affairs, notwithstanding the wife and baby son

who had been left behind in Dollah's own village. The attractive lady, however, conceived and was due to deliver a child. She naturally expected Dollah to marry her, for the Islamic Malays countenance wives up to four in number at any one time. It is true that plurality of wives is, owing to economic necessity, the usual prerogative only of men in sounder financial circumstances than was Dollah, men who own a few acres of rubber, rice-land, or coconuts, with a house or two on their smallholdings. Nevertheless the lady was expecting a baby; the baby must have a legitimate father; so Dollah must marry her. The wedding need not be ostentatious or costly; the usual bride-price payable by the bridegroom—which would be the same amount, about twenty-five dollars, as was paid in respect of the lady's mother when she married—could be deferred. As usual, it could hang like a millstone round the man's neck and would not be claimed unless, later, he might wish to divorce her. For a man may divorce his wife for no reason other than caprice, but an important aspect of the bride-price is that the woman's position is strengthened so long as it remains due to her.

Thus there were no social barriers to Dollah's second union. But, to the lady's vexation, Dollah refused to have her as a second wife

She tried the usual stratagems of her sex, letting it be known to all the world on the West coast of the island that she was pregnant and that the man responsible for this was not prepared to carry out the obligations entailed by her condition. The lady's relatives murmured ugly things about Dollah. The neighbours questioned the lady's conduct. But Dollah was adamant.

Weeks passed by. The lady was big with the child in her womb, though that, as usual with her race, did not prevent her doing domestic tasks, such as rice-pounding, or appearing with other women in the paths and streets about the scattered houses. But the urgency of making Dollah marry her increased and still he refused.

In despair, she laid her case before the village elder, the Haji, a man of years and understanding, broad-minded within the limitations of accepted custom. He, of course, was surprised at nothing except Dollah's refusal to marry the lady. So he took into his confidence the "ketua" of Dollah's own village, five miles away. Dollah was approached by this "ketua" but denied having done anything which could have caused the lady's present condition. Worse still, Dollah alleged that

any of a dozen men might be the father of the expected child. He asserted, in fact, that the lady had for some years lived a loose life and that one whose favours had been so wantonly dispensed among the young bloods of her own and neighbouring villages had no right to claim marriage with himself. Let her make a selection from any of those who might with reason have begotten the child ; but the choice should not fall on him, who was already in possession of a satisfactory wife and neither desired nor merited another.

On receiving this reply, the Haji convened an inquiry, for he and his kind are empowered to settle minor issues touching Malay custom. The evidence of witnesses was duly recorded with a scratchy pen in Arabic letters, for the old Haji was not educated at a modern vernacular school where Malay writing is taught in both the Arabic and Roman alphabets. It was testified that Dollah had been seen entering and leaving the lady's home at dusk, though no one claimed to have seen him thereabouts at an hour of the night that might suggest impropriety. Evidence as to the girl's character was almost non-existent. No one said she was a harlot; no one said that, prior to this misfortune, she was regarded as a virgin. Like a number of her race and kind, she had possibly had clandestine affairs with young men, possibly even slept with one or two. For a Malay girl of twenty-two who is still unmarried is unlikely to have a quite unblemished past.

However, after weighing the evidence and realising that the birth of the prospective infant would have to be registered and that the registration forms required the names of both parents, the Haji decided in favour of the girl and instructed Dollah to marry her as soon as possible. In this decision, based as much on expediency as on other considerations, he was upheld by the opinions of the "ketua" in Dollah's village and of the elders in other nearby settlements.

Dollah's rebellious nature then became clear. He refused to comply with the order. This unprecedented disregard of authority had shaken the whole structure of a world in which these old men were the trusted guardians of all that is right and proper.

After many unsuccessful attempts to make the young man change his mind, they came to me with the request that I should endorse their view and make the young man take the lady for his wife.

Never before had they been obliged to appeal to an European authority in this way, but, as they

urgently pressed upon me, the child must be the son or daughter of some man. Malay usage requires that a person be referred to as So-and-so, son, or daughter, of Somebody else, the father. Nor could the father's name, they thought, be entered as a question mark in the official register of births. They could see no solution to their quandary other than an order and, if necessary, coercion by the government.

When they had told their story, I glanced through the Haji's record of evidence. The ceiling-fan revolved slowly above us. A peon came in and added more papers to the tray on my left, which was already overloaded with the correspondence files constituting my morning's office work.

I had, of course, no power to enforce such a sentence as the old men had delivered. The only way in which I could act would be in response to an appeal by Dollah against a conviction and sentence for adultery, which is punishable under Mohammedan law. The sentence could be only a small fine.

Moreover, it was unusual for the court of a magistrate in the Colony to deal with offences of this trivial nature, though there have been cases in the Malay States where the magistrates have imposed nominal fines for such offences (against Mohammedan law) as eating in public during daylight hours in the fasting month of Ramadhan. I remembered, too, a celebrated case in Johore where a Malay girl was charged with adultery and a Mr. X, an European, was summonsed to give embarrassing evidence. In the Malay States the secular courts are more frequently required to support Mohammedan law (in respect of the Islamic population) than in the contiguous Colony of the Straits Settlements, where Mohammedans are a minority.

Apart from the legal aspects of the matter, I was concerned with broader issues. My sympathies were with Dollah, the rebel against society. Social customs change slowly, and the imitator of change has always to fight an uphill battle against the inertia of tradition. In the eyes of an Englishman, adultery, though it may be grounds for divorce, is not a criminal offence, and one is reluctant to punish for acts which, if committed by oneself, would not be an offence. Whether Dollah was a scapegoat or whether he was responsible for the lady's pregnancy was not an easy matter to decide. The conviction, as well as the sentence, might well be quashed by a higher Court.

But the six old men were pathetically worried. If Dollah were to have his way they foresaw the

collapse of all moral standards among their people. Fornication would be unbridled. Social anarchy would prevail. They sensed, as I did, that the younger generation needed only slight encouragement to break away from customs which, to their fathers, were the keystones of the social structure. Quite rightly, too, the old men felt that, though adultery might be winked at, he who commits it must be prepared to accept the usual censure of society if his deed have disastrous consequences. Previous cases of this nature had, they averred, always been settled with propriety by a marriage of the parties concerned, and, when the ease of Mohammedan divorce is borne in mind, marriage could, in fact, amount to little more than a fine equal to the girl's bride-price.

The danger of undermining the social authority of the elders had to be weighed against the undesirable alternative of allowing custom to freeze into a rigid barrier against change.

But a third course suggested itself. Customs should die when they no longer represent the wishes of most of the people. I wondered whether, in fact, the elders enjoyed the support of the villagers in their verdict. If they did, Dollah was ahead of time in his rebellious conduct. If they did not, Dollah was justified in not complying with their demands.

Dollah was waiting outside the office and I talked with him in front of the 'ketuas'. He would not budge from his attitude and stoutly reaffirmed his innocence. He was probably lying when he denied misconduct with the girl, but he was probably telling the truth when he alleged that the girl had many lovers.

So I told the old men that I could not enforce their sentence and that, if Dollah appealed, the sentence would not be upheld. As regards the conviction I was not prepared to give an opinion. I told them, however, that, if their view represented the feeling of their villages, Dollah could surely be compelled to obey by the pressure of social ostracism. He would need help with the preparation of his rice-fields; he would from time to time require the company and even the assistance of his neighbours in the daily routine of existence. As an outcast, he could not hope to live. By organising public opinion, the old men should be able to win the day.

They were not satisfied, but they left.

I doubted their success and I questioned my own attitude. I could have supported them much more

strongly and there is little doubt that Dollah would not have defied a hint from me that he should do as he was told.

Three weeks later the old men were back. They brought with them a young man whose spirit had been broken. Dollah had married the girl. And the old men were grateful that I had not intervened. Their prestige was higher than before.

The rebel was ahead of public opinion. So was I, perhaps.

Kuching Market Price List.

Average monthly Market Prices (October 21st to November 19th).

iii

ADVERTISEMENTS.

[December 1, 1947.]

GLASSWARE

Large consignment of American glass tumblers just arrived in three attractive designs :?

Less 5% per gross, Postage extra.

Well packed for posting to outstations.

"A Type" and "Plain" are suitable for Clubs, etc.

Sole Distributors

CHAN BROTHERS & CO., 50, Carpenter Street, Kuching.