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The .

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1st, 1947.

CHINESE NEW YEAR.

Chinese New Year was celebrated in customary fashion on Wednesday, January 22nd, and that day and the following day were Public Holidays. For the first time two days were thus officially devoted to this festival. In contrast to the practice on most occasions of rejoicing no flags hung out of shops in Kuching bazaar, a feature which the Sarawak Tribune explained by pointing out that the observance of "Chinese New Year" was a point of ancient custom, and was not recognised by the government of China for whom the New Year began on January 1st. This is most important and indicates both the extent to which the display of flags is now bound up with a conscious nationalism and the gap between modern Chinese law and recognised Chinese custom

Sarawak has an honourable tradition of racial unity Under the Brooke regime, and now under His Majesty's Government, peoples of many different origins, speaking different languages, and pursuing different interests, have lived together in harmony and concord. It would be too much to say however that prejudice has always been entirely absent. "Semua orang China itu

macham," said a Malay sampan man the other day when a small Chinese boy narrowly missed slipping off the steps of Pangkallan Batu into the swollen river. Rarely, however, has this feeling gone at all deep except for occasional bursts of irritation lasting over a period of weeks or months

Generally speaking Government officers have contributed a great deal to these good relations, but a few have, perhaps, tended to favour the native at the expense, and to the disadvantage of, the more self-reliant Chinese. This policy is in certain circumstances justifiable and even laudable as the indigenous tribes have often stood in need of protection from the economic enterprise of the vigorous and efficient immigrant race. On the other hand it is to be feared that sometimes this

preference has been based on the natural feeling of a weak man, that there is more good in those who accept his word as law, and follow his behests unquestioningly, than in those who are inclined to argue and even perhaps to circumvent him on the smallest pretext. Once upon a time a District Officer expressed his pleasure at being stationed in Bau, because, he said, there he had to pit his wits against his equals or his superiors, but in Kuching he could refer trouble-makers to the departments, whereas elsewhere he could put anything over the local populace and they would take it without a murmur. No doubt this view of the attractions of Bau applies equally nowadays to Sibü, and probably to one or two other Districts, while the Sea Dayaks are by no means the naive primitives, with an unshakable faith and confidence in their great white masters, that they are reputed once to have been. The administrative officer has, nevertheless, to beware of a temptation to favour the native above the Chinese because he gives him less trouble, in the same way as his contemporaries in other places have to avoid giving the impression that, for the same reason, they put Moslems before Hindus or Arabs before Jews.

It is generally accepted that during the occupation the Chinese excelled other races in their resistance to the enemy although the Sea Dayaks in some areas must have run them fairly close. It should be remembered, however, that it was their war in a sense that it was not the war of the natives.

who might perhaps be excused for seeing in it merely a struggle of conflicting imperialisms. When the Japanese arrived in Kuching in 1941 China had been fighting them for more than four long years. Accordingly, to the Chinese who recently had become more and more concerned with the vicissitudes of their motherland, they were 'enemies' from the start, and it was really not necessary for the invaders to resort to oppression and brutality in order to turn such opponents into enthusiastic supporters of the allies. This new spirit of fervent nationalism amongst the Chinese in Sarawak may be said to have begun with the invasion of Manchuria in 1932. and to have been immensely stimulated by the further aggression on China five years later. Collections for war funds, patriotic entertainments. and the boycotting of Japanese goods, henceforth played an ever increasing part in local Chinese life. The co-operation of the two main political parties in China

prevented any fissure in Sarawak, and the Chinese race as a whole supported and assisted the campaign with enthusiasm and ability.

To a certain extent this development ran counter to the policy of the Rajahs, which had been to develop amongst the Chinese a Sarawak consciousness, so that they would look upon themselves as citizens of this country first and their allegiance to the republic would take a very secondary role. There had indeed grown up in the State a number of well-known and wealthy families of 'Sarawak Chinese' who had immensely assisted the progress and welfare of the community amongst whom their ancestors in the distant past had chosen to dwell. Scions of these families have for a long time played leading parts in every walk of life in the more urban areas, and it had become a matter of course for them to regard Sarawak as having the first claim to their affections. This outlook indeed was an essential ingredient in establishing that remarkable harmony of the races previously referred to. If one of the most important sections of the population shows that it is primarily absorbed in the country of its origin, rather than in the country of its adoption, it will breed suspicion, distrust, and fear amongst the remainder. The unceasing flow of immigrants, of course, helped to strengthen the ties between Sarawak and China, but there was really never any question of a division of loyalty until the Japanese managed to arouse the spirit of belligerent nationalism.

That is one of the results of the war that has to be faced. Another is the disunity of China herself, with the result that there is always a danger of the Chinese in Sarawak forming themselves into two opposing camps in imitation of those parties in China with whom their particular sympathies lie. A man's political beliefs are his own affair, but the old tradition that any race which eats its rice in Sarawak must put this country first in its heart is not compatible with active support of either of the factions in China. The 'Sarawak Chinese' themselves would be making a big mistake if they attempted to identify their interests, or the interests of their co-racialists in the Colony, with the fortunes of a political party in a land from which their families have been absent so long. A third effect of the war on the lives of this people has been the absence of a Secretary for Chinese Affairs since the occupation. When Edric Selous died in internment in March, 1945, the Chinese in Sarawak lost a friend and a protagonist who will not easily be replaced. Selous, and the other officers who served

in that department, rendered advice and settled disputes in a way which was so generally acceptable that many matters, which now involve tedious and difficult litigation, were in those days kept out of the courts. His great services were always recognised, both by the Government and the public, but even then he still remains one of those men the value of whose work is not fully appreciated until after they have gone. The presence of such an independent, fair, and hard-working arbitrator is really indispensable amongst a people who are expected to adapt themselves to modern law but still cling tenaciously to their ancient customs

On another page in this number will be found a judgment of the Supreme Court on this thorny topic. The extent in which Chinese custom can be recognised in our courts has always been a matter of some doubt amongst magistrates and now the point is finally clarified. It is, of course, reasonable to expect an immigrant people to conform with the laws and institutions of the country in which they have come to live. Furthermore it must be remembered that in China herself customary law has been largely discarded in favour of modern legislation drawn on western models. That, at any rate, is the theory, although it may be true that, in the remoter districts of that vast land, it is still the practice to administer the former. One day the Council Negri will have to take the matter in hand in this country. There are grounds for believing, for instance, that the old principle of intestate succession whereby the entire property passes to the male heirs to the complete exclusion of the females who have only a right to maintenance from the estate, is no longer acceptable to the more progressively minded members of the race. When reform does come it will probably have to be in the same direction as that taken by reform in modern China, that is to say by a gradual adoption of western concepts. While no doubt there is plenty of room for compromise between the two opposing schools of thought, as the country advances, and commercial and personal relationships become more complex, it will not be practicable to maintain intact a society based on the family inside a society based on the individual. These remarks concerning Chinese custom apply almost equally to Chinese business methods, which are the despair of magistrates and other officials. However no doubt these spots will take much longer to change and meanwhile the chief sufferers are the merchants themselves.

It may be thought that we have got a long way from the title of this article. But Chinese New Year is symbolic. It is symbolic of the energy and vivacity of a great people of the victory of a righteous cause, of the ease and genius with which this accommodating race from far away manage to make their traditional festivals fit in naturally with the lives of the indigenous population, and finally, as the Sarawak Tribune pointed out. of their close attachment to old customs in the face of discouragement from the rulers of their motherland. The excellent relations that have always prevailed between the different races in Sarawak have in no small measure been due to the amiability and co-operative spirit evinced by generation after generation of our Chinese friends. And so, just after this last New Year, the extends to the Chinese its best wishes for their health and prosperity, coupled with a confidence that the concord which has prevailed in the State of the past will continue in the Colony of the future.

Civilisation in Sarawak.

It is always understood that the colonial civil servant of fifty years ago had one advantage over his modern colleague. He was sure of himself and of the value and importance of his mission. His successor, on the other hand, sadly lacks this self-confidence. No doubt there are a few who spend untroubled lives administering grateful peoples, but many are from time to time seized with doubts as to whether the job they are doing is really so worthwhile after all. Unfortunate is the parson who suddenly loses his faith. The magistrate who sits in court administering a law which the parties before him neither understand nor consider equitable; the head of department with his baskets full of files which, if possible, he passes on to someone else, knowing that this is the very disease, which, in his off-duty hours, he asserts afflicts the civil service at home; the administrative officer touring the ulu and explaining the latest incomprehensible edict that has emanated from the capital; all feel qualms at times. Many an official must put the question to himself : Am I really assisting in the march of civilisation, or am I merely a highly-paid instrument for foisting onto a primitive people a bureaucratic machine which has no relevance to their needs or their desires?

No doubt the appropriate solution for the moot inveterate sufferers from this complaint is resignation, because it is little indeed that a man can do, when he is continually wondering whether it is

worth doing at all. It is unlikely, however, that the public service would gain by the substitution of complacent time-servers for sincere agnostics. A purely negative "anti-imperialism" is useless. It is quite irrelevant to argue that the white man should never have come east of Suez, or that, having come, he should return to his native land with all expedition. The dependent colony, and this term for our present purposes includes protectorates, protected states and mandated territories, is the natural outcome of the imperialist phase of capitalism, and to contend that it should not exist is to ignore the historical development of society. The individual fills only a small role on this sweeping canvas. It is therefore necessary to refrain from discussing the principle of Empire in terms of morality and to consider the facts of the situation as we find them in our own particular time.

The major claim of the old pro-consul was that he brought "law and order" to turbulent regions. Others asserted that they equally assisted "progress by introducing bicycles, bibles, and European clothes, but the sceptics scorned this contention before they were prepared to criticise the former. In this connection the difficulties of the modern administrative officer are far greater than were those of his predecessor. He has got two world wars to explain away. It is not easy to induce people, whose most belligerent activities consisted of obtaining a few heads every twelve months, to believe that it is important that they should live in peace and goodwill, when they are well aware that the nations, whose culture and institutions they are invited to imitate, have on two occasions over a period of years indulged in mass massacre on an unprecedented scale. Of course it is possible to explain that aggression and self-defence are distinctive terms, and that European nations vary even as Asiatic nations do, but nevertheless a certain difficulty remains. But a far more perplexing conundrum is the question: What is the virtue of all this law and order? That to a certain extent it emasculates and enervates a people, if some alternative positive activity is not put in its place, seems to be beyond doubt, especially when we compare the Malay of to-day with his pugnacious ancestor of a century ago. It is not suggested that a belligerent instinct is a virtue, but, when it is intended to stamp it out, it is important that another outlet should be available to absorb the energies of the reformed people. Head-hunting gave the Sea Dayaks an interest in life. If we ask ourselves what, compensation we have substituted for the loss of this popular sport we may indeed search our consciences in vain.

The abolition of murder and rapine in the ulu is perhaps an extreme example. Opium-smoking, gambling, and tuba-fishing are three more fields in which Government has suppressed the lighter side of existence, and some of our missionaries have even frowned upon begawais. The first two of these are indubitably evils, and, as regards the third, a wise administration has permitted a relaxation in the letter of the law, a position which, we understand, is shortly to be regularised by legislation. Nevertheless the fact remains that official authority has been running in repressive channels And what have we offered the head-

hunters, the opium-smokers, the gamblers, the tuba-fishers, and those many others who find their natural instincts thwarted and perverted by an efficient bureaucracy, in the place of these consolations? In answering this question the peculiar circumstances of Sarawak should be remembered. Great as the Brooke regime is generally admitted to have been, it is certain that it sadly failed in providing educational and medical facilities for its subjects and in improving and developing the basic industry of the country, which is agriculture. Elsewhere in the colonial Empire these branches of government have met with no such neglect, and consequently criticism, which can properly be directed near at home, has no application in the wider sphere. But, unfortunately, even where the opportunity exists, the emancipated colonial subject, does not seem to take willingly to the more austere virtues. Progress comes, if progress it can indeed be called, more through the medium of the cinema and the dance-hall. The cheap allegation that the European advent brings dishonesty and venereal disease to innocent primitive peoples can be dismissed for the rubbish that it usually is. While acquitting ourselves of this charge, there can be no such easy refutation of the assertion that, by permitting the introduction of the less worthy instruments of western "culture," we have abolished one social sickness only to replace it by another. The staunchest defender of civil liberties must feel that there is a good deal to be said for a rigid censorship of films which purport to depict to one half of the world how the other half lives, and yet it is surprising that, in places where such censorship is exercised, it often seems to be conducted on erroneous principles. Cinemas are not the only offenders. The same remarks apply in respect of certain types of magazines and other ebullitions of the congenitally inane. It may be thought that these comments are prudish and

puritan. It is believed, however, that similar views are widely held by officers charged with the duty of administering dependent territories, and in any case it is not right that colonial peoples should be led to think that all the members of the dominant race disport themselves in the fashion depicted when relieved of the obligations of Government. It is fair to say that a new imperialism, whether it be of the Japanese or American brands, sets about its task in a self-assertive way which reveals a naive confidence in the institutions and conventions of the mother-country and their adaptability to a new environment. The British, long schooled in the art of Empire, are guilty of no such mistake, but the fact that our own recreations are now so largely borrowed from the other side of the Atlantic makes it natural that practices and behaviour, which we ridicule amongst ourselves, should predominate in the cultural influences that follow in our wake.

It is difficult to write thus of one of the most pernicious phenomena of the times without sounding as if the goal of administration should be to produce as many intellectual highbrows as possible. But it is not maintained that pleasures and entertainments are undesirable merely because they are popular. The public enthusiasm for association football, for example, is an instance of the spread of an influence which does not gratuitously put a stick into the hands of the enemies of British rule. There are also, of course, other interpreters of western life at work besides the ones that have been mentioned, but which penetrate in a less obvious but possibly more effective way. By now our more intelligent and educated Asiatic friends are probably well aware that life in Europe does not consist entirely of meandering about in the proximity of raucous dance-bands or speculating on the private affairs of persons bewitchingly under-clad.

Yet the problem remains, and its solution is the task of every colonial officer. When "independence" finally comes to these territories the question whether a special relationship shall continue to exist between the young democracies and the remainder of the commonwealth will be largely answered by the extent to which the new leaders like and respect British men and women. To plead that the present process should be sharply reversed is to confess failure. Just as whatever native political institutions were in existence a century ago have now withered away so native customs and lore have to a certain degree died in the soil in which they grew. It is interesting to speculate, for

example, how far the knowledge and skill acquired by centuries of experience in obtaining and preparing herbal remedies for the cure of tropical diseases has been lost since European medicine arrived to claim its place. At least one doctor seconded to Sarawak from Malaya during the past ten years has mentioned that it may well be that the local unqualified physicians have in certain matters achieved a success so far denied to their more learned contemporaries, but to-day the sphere of the former is undoubtedly very limited. Again whether the Land Dayaks had a more coherent and effective social organisation before the first Rajah came to Sarawak than they have at present is another question to which an intelligent guess is really the only possible reply, but it is at any rate certain that, whatever administrative structure and civic sense there was, appears now to have practically collapsed. To obtain agreement on fundamental adat between two Land Dayak chiefs is beyond the ken of most Government officers. Even their dances they forget. In the same way as the young Malay and Chinese imitates the European he sees on the films so the young Land Dayak imitates the Malays. ??Progress? is construed as discarding one?s ancient customs for those of the people on the next rung of the economic ladder. A month or two ago a wedding party took place in a Malay house in a Kuching kampong at which the guests indulged in European dances to the strains of the local ?'cabaret? band.

It is not contended that old conventions and traditions should be observed merely because they are old. A petty and irritating insistence on the wearing of songkok, for instance, appears to have few merits. Such a matter can be decided solely by the personal taste of the wearer, and objection can only properly be raised when he discards the songkok for the topi, not because he finds the latter more comfortable or a better protection, but because it is the fashionable headgear of wealthier men. From time to time it has in the past been suggested, generally somewhat indirectly, that it might be desirable to curtain off Sarawak from the rest of the world, and preserve in this restricted space an unspoilt race of noble savages. In so far as this attitude represented one of the basic principles of the Brooke regime?that European capital should not be allowed to indulge in free and unregulated enterprise to the detriment of the true interests of the natives?it could receive only the approval of modern public opinion, but in so far as it was carried to the extreme of discouraging all

contact between Sarawak and the outside world there was a danger of producing a backward and anachronistic society, stigmatised by the late Mr. Nigel Hughes, when he was editor of this journal, as "an anthropological Whipsnade.?"

The task is then not to go back to a halcyon age which probably never existed, but to shape our future course bearing in mind the pitfalls that lie on either side of the road. It is to be hoped that the activities of the British Council in this part of the world will help considerably towards supplying the urgent need for fuller information concerning western life and culture. No doubt the cinema and the dance-hall will continue to play their part, because the man who sees their vicious side and deduces therefrom that no good can come out of either is falling into an even greater error than the man who refuses to recognise that they have any vicious side at all. It is not desirable that every Dayak should be a Shakespeare scholar, or every Malay a music critic, but there is a lot to be learned from and enjoyed in western literature, western theatre, western art, western institutions, and western social intercourse, which is at present hidden from those who have too easy an access to the baser forms of sophisticated entertainment. People given the opportunity of appreciating the finer qualities of other societies are likely to be better equipped for recognising and retaining the finer qualities of their own. It is a current dogma that increased educational facilities must be primarily of a technical nature. While it may be acknowledged that it is important to teach men how to multiply the benefits received from the labour of their hands, the educationalist who concentrates on improving the efficiency of a man's working life, without attempting to help him to spend his leisure hours, only gets half-way to his goal.

Notes and Comments.

On January 30th His Excellency the Governor- General and Mrs. MacDonald arrived by plane and, accompanied by His Excellency the Governor, went on to Jesselton on the same day.

From January 21st to January 28th His Excellency the Governor paid a visit to the Second Division. His Excellency went first to Saratok and spent a night in a long-house of twenty-four doors in the Krum. Fifty-eight Tuai Rumah were present as well as three hundred other male guests. His Excellency and the other officers of his party speared eight pigs on entering, and the festival

continued all night. His Excellency went on to Betong via Pusa and Kabong. In Betong a big dinner was given in his honour by the Chinese, and from there His Excellency proceeded to Sebuyau, Lingga, and Simanggang. In the course of this last journey His Excellency spent a day and a night at the Bijat Padi Scheme and walked all the way round this interesting experimental station. At Simanggang His Excellency kicked off at the final of the Dayak football competition and afterwards presented the prizes.

The respectfully congratulates the following persons whose names appeared in the list of New Year "Honours" :?

Mr. J. B. Archer, C.M.G.

The Hon'ble Abang Haji Mustapha. Datu Bandar, O.B.E.

Penghulu Tama Weng Ajang, M.B.E

Mr. Khan Ah Chong, M.B.E. (Hon.)

Penghulu Belaja of Kanowit, B.E.M.

Penghulu Bilong of Pala Wong, B.E.M. Baleng anak Oyong Abun of Belaga, B.E.M. Mr. Dominic Sedik of Kuala Baram, B.E.M. Lasso of Belaga, B.E.M.

Penghulu Oyong Puso of Belaga, B.E.M. Saba. Tuai Rumah of Nanga Pila, B.E.M. Penghu hi Sandai of Pala Wong, B.E.M.

Limbang bin Lai of Kuala Baram, B.E.M. Lanyieng of Punan Tepilang, B.E.M

Never before in the history of Sarawak has a traveller in the ulu stood such a good chance of running into a B.E.M.

The s.s. Matang ran aground in the early morning of January 23rd at Telok Karang opposite Gunong Sabang near Santubong. One A.V. vessel and the M.v. Kaka were rushed to the scene from Kuching in the charge of Captain Matheson and all the passengers were safely taken off. Cargo had to be jettisoned before the ship could be got off the rocks, and, when this had been accomplished, she had to be beached owing to the quantity of water pouring into her. Our information is that she was "a good salvage proposition" and on the 26th a tug arrived from Singapore to commence this work. It is feared that a good deal of the jettisoned cargo has been lost owing to the enterprise of

local inhabitants who find it difficult to distinguish between the rights of a salvor and the luck of a looter. Certain traders also appear to have a touching faith in the ability of Government officials to give them a surat legalising the receipt of stolen property.

The following menu for a Christmas dinner amongst the Kelabits is suggested by Tom Harrison in an article in the New Statesman and Nation :

Grapefruit with Chopped Sugar-Cane

River Turtle and Bird's Nest Soup

Eels stewed in Green Bamboos Lime and Spring-salt sauce Golden pimentos

Monkey Sweetbreads with Chopped Eggs and Chillies

Water-Buffalo Steak

Onion sauce

Giant Beans Fresh Fern tops Roast Breadfruit

Rice Table with red, white and golden rice, sago and rice-balls, fried and fermented rice, wild tomatoes, Indian corn, pumpkin cakes, boiled marrow, sliced manioc, palm-shoots. pork slices, seasoned venison, goat chops, pheasant livers, doves' breasts, smoked brook-trout, boiled snails.

Fattened Chicken baked in Coconut

Green Peas

New Potatoes

Cucumber and Tree-cabbage salad

Pineapple and Durian Salad with Cave Honey

Mushrooms on Toasted Taro

Pawpaw. Banana, Plums, Tangerine. Ginger and Nuts

Betel

Cane Sherry

Rice Wine

Sweet Potato Port

Arak

Kelabit cigars

From January 15th to the 18th Kuching was visited by Mr. ?itu Willy? Clark and Mr. Horrocks. Mr. Clark was well known in Sarawak fifteen years ago. He said, according to the Sarawak Tribune, that he was not. representing either His Highness the Tuan Muda or Mr. Anthony Brooke. Mr. Horrocks did not say that he was not represent- ing the Kemsley Press. After their arrival these gentlemen expressed their surprise at the peace and quiet prevailing in Kuching and the absence of any disorder. This stung the local Malay anti- cessioners, who promptly attempted to show that political apathy was not so rampant as it seemed, and by Saturday, the last day of the visit, they had managed to gather together a few hundred ?demonstrators," including a large proportion of school-children. Everything was nicely arranged, even to the extent of banners, and the ?demonstration" duly took place in the grounds of the Mosque. Unfortunately, however, those for whose benefit it was staged were otherwise engaged. The ?demonstrators? stood about, getting rather tired, and at last a messenger was dispatched in search of the absentees. They were finally tracked down in a favourite resort of Europeans at mid- day on Saturdays, and. when the dilemma was explained to them, they nobly proceeded to the scene, although Mr. Clark refused to be drawn into it. Photographs were taken, the ?demonstrators? heaved a sigh of relief and went home, and the two visitors caught their plane and flew away to Singapore, haring, we trust, thoroughly enjoyed their visit to this hotbed of discontent. We under- stand that Mr. Clark has since contributed a fair and unprejudiced account of his impressions of Sarawak to a Malayan newspaper.

Ijau, Pong. Unieng and Ajun, were convicted in Kuching of the murder of Mr. G. R. H. Arundell, late acting Resident of the Second Division, his wife, mother-in-law, and two children, in the Ulu Ai in or about November, 1942. They were all sentenced to death. After the assessors had returned their verdict it was revealed that all four accused had previously been convicted of murder or ?head-hunting? and. at the time of Mr. Arundell's death, had recently been released from prison by the Japanese. On January 31st the appeal of the condemned men was dismissed by the Supreme Court.

On January 15th the technicians and artisans employed by the Sarawak Electricity Company, Ltd.,

in Kuching handed in twenty-four hours? notice. Fortunately negotiations between the Government directors and the men's representatives resulted in a settlement of the dispute before the notices expired.

The Honourable Mr. J. B. Archer, c.m.g., returned from England on January 19th. He tells us that it is his intention to spend his retirement writing books. We hope that he will produce a detailed account of his life and work in Sarawak where he arrived to take up duty for the first time in February, 1912.

In this number we recur to the old practice of publishing a Kuching Market Price List. This list will represent a daily average taken from the 20th to the 20th of the two preceding calendar months except when this is not feasible. The comparative cost of living in different places in the Colony is of particular interest now, and it is to be hoped that the list will be of some assistance, although it will inevitably lie somewhat out of date by the time it reaches the outstations. Prices of course vary from day to day and are heavily influenced by such factors as the occurrence of special festivals and so on as well as by ordinary seasonal changes. For these reasons it would be dangerous to rely on the list as a safe guide to the levels prevailing in Kuching on the day it reaches the reader.

In the November number of the there appeared a report of rumours in the Ulu Baram to the effect that the Punans were on the war-path against the Kelabits owing to two or three Punans having been shot by Major Harrison in connection with the Hudden murder case. Major Harrison writes : "No Punans were (or ever would be) shot by me. Four were kept prisoner, on B.M.A. orders, for a time (4 months). When two escaped and started to assault and terrorise the area, the Kelabits, with my sanction, shot one in self-defence. All these facts are in my reports to B.M.A. in great detail. I do not think it fair even to echo such unfounded statements." We agree and regret that the report was published. It was understood at the time that the alleged shootings were by way of judicial execution. No other implication was ever intended, and of course we completely accept Major Harrison's assurance that in fact no Punans were so dealt with by him either with or without trial.

The President of the Sarawak Dayak Association wishes it to be made known that the name of the association should not be used in any form or to any purpose without the express approval of

the President and Committee or any general meeting that may be convened.??Notice of Dayak Association published in the Sarawak Tribune of December 20th, 1946.

?The new President and Joint Hon. Secretary have also given notice that the publication which appeared in the Sarawak Tribune on 20th December, 1946, is now withdrawn.??Notice of Dayak Association published in the Sarawak Tribune of January 1st, 1947.

?An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too.??A Midsummer Night's Dream I. II.

Sarawak Law and Chinese Custom.

The following important judgment of the Supreme Court, relating to the place of Chinese custom in Sarawak law, was delivered by the Honourable the Chief Justice on January 7th.

??This case raises an important question regarding the extent to which Chinese customary law is applicable within the Colony. I will begin with a brief statement of the facts.

Ee Tiang Lok, the testator, died on 16th November, 1946. He was survived (1) by his primary wife, Chan Bee Neo, and four sons by her, all of whom are of age and married, (2) by his secondary wife, Tan Geok Huang, and a daughter and two sons by her, all of whom are of age and unmarried, and (3) by his concubine, Lalot, and two daughters by her, Ee Siok Choo, 19 years of age and unmarried, and Ee Siok Kheng, 17 years of age and unmarried. Apparently there was another secondary wife, Lim Ah .Kaw, by whom the testator had two daughters, but this wife and her two daughters left Sarawak some eighteen years ago and have not been in touch with the family since. These facts are admitted by all the parties concerned.

By a will dated 2nd June, 1944, the testator appointed Ee Siok Choo, the elder daughter by his concubine, Lalot, to be executrix. I need not deal with the provisions of the will in detail, but the general effect is that certain monthly allowances are made to various members of the family, who do not include the primary or secondary wife, but apart from these allowances one half of the estate goes to Ee Siok Choo, one quarter to Ee Siok Kheng, the second daughter by the concubine, and the remaining quarter to Ee Chim Kiat, one of the sons by the secondary wife. On 21st December, 1946, the Registrar of the Supreme Court granted probate of this will in favour of the executrix. Ee Siok Choo.

The plaintiffs in this action sought proof of the will in solemn form and a declaration that the provisions of the will are invalid, in whole or in part, being contrary to Chinese customary law.

So far as regards the form of the will, it appears on the face of it to comply with the provisions of the Wills Act and there is the usual attestation clause. From the evidence given before me at the hearing?evidence which was uncontradicted and indeed conclusive?I am bound to pronounce in favour of the validity of the will so far as the formalities of execution are concerned.

It is contended by the plaintiffs that on the death of the parent the persons entitled to the family property are all the sons and their male descend- ants, regardless of whether they are sons of the primary or secondary wives. This is an underlying principle of the Chinese customary law of intestate succession, and it is unnecessary for me to deal with the customary law in any detail. It is sufficient for me to say that it is the plaintiffs? contention that a parent may not dispose of his property by will so as to deprive his sone of their inheritance. He has no power, it is said, to depart materially from the scheme of distribution which would be appli- cable upon an intestacy, except perhaps in special cases such as where there has been unfilial conduct .

I must confess that I find this proposition some- what startling. It becomes necessary to examine the authority for the recognition of Chinese custom- ary law in Sarawak and the extent to which it is applied in the Courts.

The effect of Order No. L?4 (Law of Sarawak) 1928 is that the law of England, in so far as it is not modified by Sarawak Ordinances, and in so far as it is applicable to Sarawak ?having regard to native customs and local conditions," is the law of Sarawak. The Supreme Court has interpreted this Ordinance, if not expressly at all events by impli- cation, as meaning that native law and custom will be respected and in a proper case must be applied. But ?native custom? means the custom of natives of Sarawak, and the natives of Sarawak must belong to one of the races considered indigenous to the Colony and enumerated in the Schedule to the Interpretation Ordinance (Order No. I?1, 1933). The Chinese are not indigenous to this country and Chinese customary law is not ?native custom.? Order No. L?4 uses the words ?native customs and local conditions," but I am not prepared to believe that it is the intention of the words "and local conditions" to open the door wide

for Chinese (or for that matter Hindu) customary law.

The Court will apply Chinese customary law?

(a)

where the custom in question is expressly regulated by a Sarawak Ordinance, or by rules made under an Ordinance; or

(b)

where the custom is recognised, either expressly or by necessary implication, in a Sarawak Ordinance.

As regards (a), the custom of ancestral worship is regulated by Order No. A?3 (Ancestral Worship) 1930. And by section 12 (i) of Order No. A?9 (Adoption) 1941. the Secretary for Chinese Affairs may make rules to regulate the adoption of children according to Chinese custom by heads of Chinese families for the purpose of providing heirs or successors for the deceased members of such families.

As regards (b), two important branches of Chinese family law seem to be affected?matrimonial law and the law of inheritance.

Section 1 (iii) of Order No. M?6 (Matrimonial Causes) 1932 provides that the Order shall not apply inter alia "to marriages by Mohammedan law or custom, native law or custom, Chinese law or custom, Hindu law or custom, or other law or custom repugnant to English law.? This provision by necessary implication recognizes Chinese customary law relating to divorce and other matrimonial causes. Any other interpretation would lead to the absurd result that Chinese divorce is governed not by the Sarawak Ordinance or by Chinese customary law but by the law of England, and to the still more fantastic doctrine that divorce among Hindus (which is not recognised at all either by Hindu law or by Hindu religion) is governed by English law. For a further example in this branch of family law. reference may be made to section 2 of Order No. M?8 (Marriage (Chinese)) 1933, which expressly recognises marriages contracted according to Chinese law and custom and by implication recognises the Chinese customary law relating to betrothals.

With regard to the law of inheritance, the Chinese customary law of succession on an intestacy has long been recognised by Sarawak Courts. Section 16 of Order No. A?5 (Administration of Deceased

Persons? Estates) 1933 refers to the distribution of the estate among the heirs "in the shares to which they are entitled by recognised law or custom." and it is well established that this includes Chinese customary law.

I must now apply these principles to the case before me.

The will was duly executed according to the provisions of the Wills Act. It was argued before me that its existence was concealed and not made known to the elders of the family in accordance with Chinese custom. The formalities of execution, however, are governed, in the absence of any Sarawak Ordinance, by English law. The parties may, if they wish, follow the dictates of Chinese custom, but in addition to, and not in substitution for, the requirements of English law. It was further argued that the testator was induced by undue influence to make the will, but this point was not pressed. No evidence was called to support this contention, and Ee Ghim Yam, who represented the plaintiffs at the hearing, told me that he based his argument on the belief that it was unreasonable to suppose that the testator would have disposed of his property as he did if some undue influence had not been exercised. Clearly I must find against the plaintiffs on the question of undue influence.

There remains one question and the most important one. Are the provisions of this will, or any of them, invalid on the ground that they are contrary to Chinese customary law? On the principles which I have enunciated I must answer this question in the negative.

I refer once more to section 12 of Order No. A?5 (Administration of Deceased Persons Estates) 1933. This section provides that "on obtaining probate or letters of administration the executor or administrator, as the case may be, shall.....

distribute the residue of the estate among the beneficiaries or heirs of the deceased, according to the will of the deceased or, as the case may be, in the shares to which they are entitled by recognised law or custom." On a proper construction of this section, it is only an administrator of the estate of a person dying intestate who may distribute it according to recognised law or custom (which includes Chinese customary law) and an executor of a will must distribute the estate according to the terms of the will.

I have dealt with this matter at some length because the notion, still held by some Magistrates, that Chinese customary law is part of the law of Sarawak, must be exploded. The Courts cannot extend the field within which Chinese custom is recognized ; that is the province of the legislature.

In the case before me I do not know to what extent, if at all, the widows of the deceased are properly provided for. If no provision has been made, it may be that they have a remedy by virtue of the provisions of the Inheritance (Family Provision) Act. 193ft. This matter is not before the Court, but the parties interested should seek advice.

The Court pronounces in favour of the validity of the will of Ee Tiang Lok dated 2nd June, 1944, and the declaration sought by the plaintiffs is refused. The costs of the action are to lie borne by the estate."

N. A. Middlemas, C.M.G.

Pre-war residents in Sarawak will be interested in the following extract from the Empire Survey Review:

"N. A. Middleman, Director of Surveys, Land Officer and Commissioner of Mines, Uganda, retires from active service this year. A New Zealander by birth, he served during World War I with the famous Anzacs of Gallipoli fame, and he was wounded three times during the operations on the Peninsula. Later he served in France.

After demobilization, he returned to New Zealand and qualified at the Institute of Surveyors. From 1921 to 1925 he was with the Malayan Surveys, being transferred to Sarawak in the latter year on promotion as Superintendent of Surveys. On the amalgamation of the Land with the Survey Department in 1933, he was promoted to be head of the combined Departments. During his service in Sarawak he was a member of the Committee of Administration?the equivalent of a combined Legislative and Executive Council in the Colonies.

In 1939 Middlemas, together with several other senior officials, resigned his post in Sarawak and, on account of his wide knowledge of land registration. was immediately offered the post of Deputy in the Uganda Survey. Land and Mines Department. He succeeded to the Directorship early in 1941. Uganda was fortunate indeed; only a man of his calibre could have steered the Department so

successfully through the difficult war years while at the same time finding time for some necessary reorganization. His intimate knowledge of every minute detail of his varied jobs was a surprise to subordinates. Admired and respected by his staff and by non-members of the Department alike, "Midd" will be greatly missed in Uganda. He was Chairman of the Uganda Industrial Committee and a member of the East African Industrial Research Board. It is pleasing to note that, in the recent Birthday Honours List (June 1946), his name appeared, together with that of Colonel S. C. Seward. Director of Surveys, Gold Coast, in the list of recipients of the C.M.G.

Their many friends hope that Mr. and Mrs. Middleman will have the long and happy retirement they have so well earned."

The Kelabit Peoples of Upland Borneo.

By

TOM HARRISSON.

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

VIII. Material Culture of the Kelabits.

The material things which interest Kelabits come in this order of importance : vases, beads, clothes, pots and pans, knives, plates, spears and blowpipes, and then all the etceteras of utility? fish traps, baskets, mats, lights, blankets, spoons and much more.

They are not a materially acquisitive people in the Iban fashion of accumulating masses of objects of all descriptions. A rich Kelabit will not have his home filled with mirrors, Aladdin lamps and pictures. He will invest (if they can be obtained) in dull looking beads and uninteresting looking vases.

I say if they can be obtained. For the valuables of Kelabit life are not bought or sold except in the very rare times of food shortage. They are exchanged for equally valuable things of another type. Thus if a man, in order to keep up his social position, needs to make a death feast for his father-in-law, and has not enough buffalo, he can probably only buy this valuable in exchange for an equally valuable thing, beads or vase. One large 4 1/2 foot Chinese pottery vase, usually with dragon design, is worth approximately one kerbau, and that, as near as I can assess, is \$70 to \$80.

Buffalo, and to a lesser extent cattle and pigs, are the perishable valuables, the ambergris and caviare, of Kelabit life. Vases and beads are the gold and diamonds. Neither have any real value in either world. The vases are valued as symbols, not as effective earthenware vessels. The beads are priced according to artificial standards of shape, look, colour, age, irrespective of beauty and style, just as with our own absurd involutions of jewellery.

A full knowledge of vase value or bead value requires detailed daily attention over months. Pattern, colour, and above all texture of pottery, are decisive, along with pedigree. The really "old" vases are worth up to £250, though I doubt if they would fetch £2 in Kuching. They are the heraldic badges of autocracy. Their red-earth rarity makes them the signature of the social heights. Scarcity alone is enough, here as any- where, to insure inflated values.

The Kelabits are constantly exchanging beads of various denominations for buffalo and pigs, or swapping a vase for a cow. It is not done to pay for what you buy. Debt is inherent in their way of thinking. They cannot accept the idea of cash payment. They prefer to leave the matter a year or two. and then have all the pleasure of discussion and argument about the exact nature of the debt? a very easy thing to argue about when the size of a pig or weight of a buffalo is involved.

Owing and boasting are perhaps the two main sources of unbalance in Kelabit life. Offsetting these is a peaceability, generosity, warmheartedness and intelligent simplicity which makes life in this strange, high, cool, lonely plateau as pleasant as anywhere in our atomic-torn world.

I am returning to the Kelabit country shortly. These notes are provisional, and very incomplete. I have tried to sketch, very roughly, the outlines of a unique people. The detail, the body, I hope to fill in fully, after I have been back to my friends far away in the Ulu Baram.?(Concluded).

Ernest Denny Logie Danson.

Although news was received that he had been tilling for many months, the announcement of the death of Ernest Denny Logie Danson came as a great shock to many of us. Bishop Danson was fifth in the line of Bishops of Labuan and Sarawak. He came to Sarawak in 1918 having served as Chaplain at Seremban in the Diocese of Singapore

prior to that date. Before returning to England for Consecration he paid a short visit to Kuching with

the Reverend Basil Roberts afterwards Bishop of Singapore. On his return to the East in the following year he remained Bishop of the Diocese until 1931, when he retired on his appointment as assistant Bishop of Carlisle and one of the Canons of Carlisle Cathedral, where he remained until he was transferred to Edinburgh as Bishop of that Diocese; later he was elected Primus of Scotland. His term of office in Labuan and Sarawak was singularly blessed and was marked by considerable building activities and extension of the work of the Church, especially among the Sea Dayaks at Betong and Simanggang. During his regime the first extension to the Cathedral Church at Kuching was also carried through, and the enlargement and extension of S. Thomas School boarding houses. But his name will always be remembered for the great interest he took in the extension of the Native Ministry. It was through Bishop Danson's initiative that the College of the Holy Way saw the light of day at Kudat in North Borneo. From there four Chinese graduated and were trained for the priesthood. The first Land Dayak was ordained by him and he was also responsible for the training and ordination of one Tamil and three Sea Dayak priests. He devoted much time and thought to the production of forms of service in simplified English and was the first to institute informal talks with neighbouring Bishops on the question of the formation of a Province in this part of the world.

Amongst the European community he will be remembered for the lively interest he took in the S. Andrew's Society to which he was elected Chieftain on at least one occasion. Those of us who knew him intimately will remember him as a holy, happy and sympathetic pastor and guide with a great devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and with a charm of disposition all his own. He was a man of simple faith passionately desirous for the conversion of souls. His frank and earnest character and his unfailing courtesy are a happy memory to all who had the privilege of working under him. May he rest in peace.? (Contributed.)

Alan Lynton McLaine.

Many people in Sarawak will have been very sorry to hear of the death of ??Stiffy?? McLaine which occurred in Tasmania on December 22nd. Alan Lynton McLaine was born in India in 1904 of missionary parents. He was educated at George Watson's College in Edinburgh, in which town he

was a prominent amateur golfer. He joined the Sarawak Government Service in 1929 as an Assistant Treasurer, and he served in this post at various Divisional headquarters throughout his career. From time to time he acted as Government Auditor.

"Stiffy" was an outstanding athlete in this country. In Miri he made a name for himself as a swimmer and both there and in Kuching he excelled at golf and billiards. He was also prominent as a cricketer and in the "bowling alley" of the Sarawak Club. In December, 1935, he married Sydney Ennion in Kuching. Mrs. McLaine was a sister of "Tiny" Ennion, who was formerly a police officer in Sarawak and later a distinguished member of His Majesty's Prison Service

at home. At the time of the Japanese invasion of Sarawak "Stiffy" was on leave in Australia. In 1942 he took up war duties in Tasmania in the A.R.P. department, and continued in this work till 1943, when he transferred to the War Organisation of Industry office. He made several abortive attempts to join the Navy and Air Force, being invariably rejected on medical grounds. In 1944 he went to India and obtained a commission in the Indian Army, but in 1946 he was invalided out. His health did not permit him to return to Sarawak after the liberation. He leaves a widow and one daughter, with whom all those still in Sarawak, who remember the McLaines, will feel the deepest sympathy.

Sidelights on Internment: 6.

His Lordship the Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak is called out for questioning. "You, you're a priest?" says the Japanese officer by way of beginning the interview. "Well, no, no, not exactly" replies His Lordship with his customary diffidence, "you see I'm the bishop." "Oh! (pause) "Roman Catholic bishop?" "No, I'm not a Roman Catholic bishop." "Roman Catholic priest, then?" "No, you see I am not a Roman Catholic." This is a little too much for the military mind. "You are bishop, but you are not priest and not Roman Catholic. Then what are you?" "Well, you see, the fact is, that is to say that the fact is, that I am a bishop of the Church of England." "Church of England? Church of England? Roman Catholic Church of England?" "No, no, just Church of England. The Church of England is not Roman Catholic." Light dawns. With a smile of relief at his success in at last unravelling so tangled a mystery the officer heaves in his breath and blows it out again "Ah-ah-ab I now I understand. Henry Eight!"

This Sarawak.

(With apologies to the New Statesman and Nation.)

To

His Majesty

The King of Sarawak

Kuching (Palace) Sarawak

Borneo. ?Address on envelope.

Dr. Kumar Panchanan Sharma.

Biochemist & Archaeologist

(Knight of the order of the

Star of Anjou)

Professor of Mystic Science &

Director of the

RUPNARAYAN PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Halderpara Road, Chandernagore

French India.

Presents his best wish of New Year. ? Enclosure in above envelope.

Although he is one of America's topmost soldiers in the Army which he served for 43 years, he has always been respected as a man of singular eminence of mind and character.?Sarawak Tribune.

The world has changed and Sarawak turned to be a Colony. There seem bright prospect in the near future of Miri Town and ambitious hope for nearly every body. But, alas, your dear old chum is still dull in his daily prospect for the maintenance of his little family.

What a great joy had I, that, you are again pre- siding as a district officer in this district and may I, your old chum rely his hope of ambition on you for any future work that may be within your power to favour me, so that the maintenance of my family may be made easv.?A letter.

We have received a new shipment of "Wood- bines? and "Weights? Cigarettes from Singapore. These are all guaranteed fresh stock.

The size is smaller than that of "Pirate," etc., but that is to enable us to sell at the same price as that in force before the recent duty increases. ?Press Advertisement.

Mrs. Nicol,

(Director of Education)

Education Dept.

Sir! "I like to do any kind of work if there is a spare one which no body doing it. I'm in the 7 form, and I passed my examination at the end of the year 1946. I don't mind whether it is a good one or a bad one. as long as I get a job to earn my living in peacefully.

Will you kindly write to me if it is possible for me to ask you these questions? That?s all I want to say." ?Good-bye."

I?m Your's sencerely,?School exercise in writing a letter applying for employment.

Speak slowly and distinctly, its no use shouting on the telephone : Dan bagus chakap perlahan? tiada guna sorak atau naik saudara bila pakai tele- phone?Question and answer in recent examination .

Sir,

In connection with my own house Lot No. 114 at Kampong Dagang. Owing to the shortage of houses during the allies landing in 1945 so the said of my house have been occupied by Chinese as under accessment as for a timbing.

At present the house is occupied by myself and not for as a rent house.

So for your kind consideration and information to cease for the accessment of my house.?A letter.

Miscellaneous..... The Acting Officer-

in-Charge of Agriculture, 2nd Division, depressed at the ravages of monkeys and at the shortage of cartridges, has been experimenting with a "bolas." The first weapon, however, cunningly contrived from a plaited rattan and three daching weights, was not a success. One of the weights became detached and this dangerous missile all but brained another Government official. The Agricultural Officer, nevertheless, is convinced that he has discovered the ideal weapon for the Dayak and is continuing with his experiments.

There is an urgent need for a qualified medical man in this Division. 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 Sarawak will, however, be warmly appreciated and the most favoured will be given pride of place.)

That India.

Chandernagore, 20th December, 1946.

To

The Education Minister of Sarawak, Sarawak, Kuching, (Borneo).

Ceremony of "Silver Jubilee."

Sir,

I beg respectfully to bring to your notice that your education, learning loyalty and benefaction are to many reasons that impel me to communicate to you the following detailed information about my School :

(1)

A Summary report of my School.

(2)

A Summary of the letter.

The writings will enable you to acquire a sure knowledge of my school and they will surely give you satisfaction.

I have decided to celebrate the "Silver Jubilee" after obtaining from you your best wishes and your encouragement in the matter I trust your noble spirit will encourage me in these grand undertakings.

I have successfully directed my primary school for the last 27 years, according to an Indian custom on the completion of 25 years of existence the school hold a particular ceremony known as "Silver Jubilee." This should have taken place last year. But an account of the world war I was obliged to put it off. Now that peace has been restored that ceremony must be held.

For a start I must have the best wishes and the powerful blessings of the great patrons and bene-

factors of the School.

You are one of them I must therefore, before any- thing else make sure of your beneficial patronage. I earnestly ask of you your best wishes for and your fatherly interest in my School for the Successful Carrying out of the "Silver Jubilee" function and the prize distribution which will take place on the same day.

I shall fix the day for the ceremony after receiving from your due confirmation of the above? confirmation which shall be read at the "Silver Jubilee" gathering I hope the said confirmation will reach me in due time.

I am pleased to inform you that I have chosen to remain single (celibacy) I am advancing in age I may die suddenly any day?and it will be too late then for you to know the noble task I have undertaken. I was born in Chandernagore and that is the reason why being in my own country I wish to be useful to it by dedicating my body and my wealth to the education of the children of poor fellow citizens I have predestined my life to the service of the French and British government.

I know you are my sympathetic benefactor and even my guide that is why I want to keep you informed from time to time of my great works I have for the last 27 years consecrated my life to the service of my birth place.

I ask you Sir most earnestly to bless me with your encouragement in that line by granting me a letter which shall be carefully preserved in my School as a reminder of my noble function I trust you won't fail me in this. I am awaiting your consoling answer wishing you meanwhile?health and long life.

I am Sir, Your humble and faithfully, Kumar Panchanan Sharma, Director.

(Summary of the Letter).

Dear Sir,

I enclose herewith the gist of the letter which will I think give you a graphic idea of the aims of my life.

- (1) I have adopted the vow of celibacy and have dedicated my life for the welfare of the poor and my country. In appreciation of my noble deeds the French government have knighted me with a medal.
- (2) The "Silver Jubilee" of my School is going to be taken place during the ensuing new year. I

intimated this matter to the noble men of reputation of the world and they have acknowledged it with their best wishes and blessings.

(3) I earnestly hope you will also acknowledged it with your goodwill and blessings which will be a greatest encouragement to bring me?success for the path of great achievement and which will be a source of consolation in my last part of life.

I am waiting your goodwill and blessings I wish your good health and long life.

I am Sir, Your humble and faithfully, Kumar Panchanan Sharma, Director.

Report on the working of my free primary School.

Object of my School.

I do all I can in order that the children of ignorant and illiterate people being educated may live in comfort and peace.

Aspect of my School.

I do my best with due discretion to promote moral strength in the children of illiterate people, so that little by little they may aspire to higher education.

Success of my School.

To enable the children of poor parents after a four years course here to sit in the end of a primary Scholarship examination. I spend money freely and without hesitation.

Advantages of my School.

The students boys and girls that succeed here in their Scholarship examination receive each one of them from my School a primary pass Certificate and their names are published in the Calcutta Gazette, at my own expense I buy copies of that Gazette and distribute them to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Successful Students. I hand them besides another certificate wherein are mentioned the amount of the Scholar- ship the prizes the books awarded to them, the medals won together with their value the rank of the candidate and the subject in which he has won the Scholarship. In this way I encourage them. As for the other candidates who have secured the fourth or lower place each one is given a copy of the above Gazette and of the prizes awarded to them according to their merit .

Distribution of prizes in my School.

Prizes are distributed regularly once a year the prize distribution Committee awards to the pupils according to their 1st, 2nd and 3rd a yearly Scholarship of Rs 24, Rs 12 and Rs 6 besides two or three silver medals and a good supply of sweetmeat.

Characteristic of my School.

As the pupils of my School are generally poor I help them in their education by providing them with books, slates, pens, inkstands, paper and exercise books and even with little amounts in small cash.

My Speciality.

I am not married I have chosen the single life (celibacy) I have dedicated my life my strength, my wealth and my money to the service of the country. I am an author a Bio-Chemist and a doctor. I carefully examine poor patients and supply them with free Bio-chemical remedies.

My Prayer.

I have spoken here in brief about myself and my School. This will enable you to understand my position and that of my School. I pray that you may go on encouraging me in this great task and obliging me by your kind periodical instructions. I hope you will favourably accept and hear my prayer. I await your answer I trust you are in good health and long life.

I am Sir.

Your humble and faithfully.

Kumar Panchanan Sharma.

Director.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE . FEBRUARY 1st, 1897.

(The following letter refers to an article which appeared in the January number commenting adversely on the activities of the 'Sarawak and Singapore Steamship Company'.?Ed.)

Sir,?It is with great satisfaction that I have read your article on the monopoly enjoyed by the above Company, and I feel sure that this view is shared by everyone in Sarawak, excepting, of course, the Shareholders of this avaricious Company.

The Officials and other parasites of the Company will no doubt ascribe the correspondence,

following upon your invitation, to jealousy on the part of the authors who have not been able to enjoy anything so good as a thirty per cent investment. Personally speaking I have never yet been able to save sufficient to invest, but had I been so frugal, as a Government Officer and one of those who endeavour to encourage trade and agricultural pursuits among the natives, and to whom it is thus in some part due that such large profits have been earned by the Company, I should even now be without an interest by allotment, owing to the animus shewn to "outsiders" by the Chairman and Officials; although there are those in Singapore, the friends of friends of the Chairman, who through his patronage have been from time to time allotted shares.

Owing to this monopoly Sarawak is undoubtedly behind the times, and of course a great loss is thereby occasioned to the country. I am tired of reading in the home papers, which we so tardily receive, of the advances made by ocean going steamers, when the communication with Sarawak is in the same state as it was twenty years or so ago. When are we to have more frequent communication with the outside world viz : Singapore? The majority of the Europeans in Sarawak live at the outstations, and, besides being excluded from the benefits enjoyed by this Company, are still further inconvenienced by the infrequent mails consequent upon the Company's Israelitish greed. However, even in Kuching, this monopoly at last seems to have worn out the patience of others besides the lonely outstationers, and I am glad to think there is a possibility of a speedy change.

Yours obedient servant, "JUNIOR".

20th January, 1897.

Simanggang Monthly Report :?

In the case of Muiang, vs. Anggang, Dyaks of Tebarong, Skarang, it appears that the two heads of houses, Ikom and Ngumbang, were introducing a new custom (doubtless invented for the purpose of adding to their revenues). They made it a finable offence for any person to die inside the house. That is to say if any owners of a door had reason to suspect a person belonging thereto of committing "the offence" of dying within and did not at once take measures to prevent this catastrophe by conveying the suspect outside (nganjong ka tanah) there was a fine to pay the chief in addition to the Joss and funeral expenses. In the case above the plaintiff's grandmother, who

was in a state of impending dissolution, was hawked backwards and forwards between the house and a farm hut and these journeys doubtless hastened her demise. Plaintiff who brought this case against the head of his house got him fined twenty katies for adopting a custom so strange and so contrary to the best traditions of Sea Dyaks. The Senior Native Magistrate in the remarks he made was very severe upon the inhumanity of this "new custom.?"

News from Far and Near.

FIRST DIVISION

The Honourable the Resident reports that no less than 26 inquiries were held under the Lunacy Order during December.

The District Officer, Kuching, reports that influenza and pneumonia continue to take a heavy toll amongst Land Dayaks in the Ulu Sadong. Early cases are seldom reported to the dresser on the grounds that the distance to Serian is "jauh jeraya,?" and when deaths start a pantang is placed on the house. The District Officer says that the remedy would appear to be a travelling dresser or something on the lines of the village "Doctor Boy?" as practised in New Guinea. The present medical facilities in Serian District consist of a dresser and a dispensary assistant to care for 36,500 people in an area of some 1,500 square miles.

The District Officer, Kuching, reports that there was a certain amount of anti-cession agitation in Kuching in December. However little if any interest, he says, seems to be taken in the question away from Kuching itself, and almost certainly none in the Land Dayak areas. The Honourable the Resident adds that reports of intimidation following the issue of Circular No. 9 were frequent, but it is quite impossible to get any of the victims to come out into the open and testify against the wrong-doers.

The variety of goods for sale in Kuching is steadily increasing but there does not appear to be a corresponding increase in business. The purchasing power of the community, according to the District Officer, appears to be restricted to a small percentage of the population who are prepared to pay almost any price for their needs, while the mass of the people are unable to make any purchases other than those required to sustain life.

The price of durian in Kuching District in December ranged from two or three cents in kampongs along the Simanggang Road to fifteen cents and upwards in the town.

The District Officer, Kuching, visited Kampong Kuap in December. It will be remembered that extracts from a report on this village appeared in the October issue of the . The District Officer found the inhabitants extremely apathetic on the question of local Government. They reluctantly elected a 'committee' of persons who appear to have been equally reluctant to serve. The District Officer says that he is not particularly sanguine in his hopes that they will make a success of their duties. 'My own view is that the committee system has failed as the committee do not have the respect of the kampong, and also the people are so lacking in political consciousness that no committee will truly represent the village population.'

The District Officer, Kuching, points out that the report in the last number of the concerning an epidemic of malaria amidst insanitary conditions in a Malay kampong should have referred to Muara Tebas and not to Lundu. We are grateful for the correction.

The Christmas season brought a welcome respite as far as crime was concerned in Bau district.

The District Officer, Bau, says under the heading 'Prisons' 'An incident which may recall memories to ex-internees occurred when the prisoners split into two parties on the question of whether to consume their rations in two meals a day or three, as a result of which the cook was changed to an adherent of the three-meal party.'

The District Officer, Bau, reports that two incidents of rather rare occurrence were reported in December. Two Dayaks, one of Kampong Opar and another of Kampong Stass, who were collecting durian on the 15th and 17th respectively, were each seriously injured as a result of the fruit falling on their heads. Unfortunately both of them succumbed to their injuries before they could obtain medical attention.

Auction of birds nests took place at various times in Bau during December. At first prices did not reach those previously being paid by the Capitan China, who was in effect a monopolist in this trade until recently. Subsequently, however, after the Dayaks themselves began to take part in the bidding, prices rose far above those quoted in Kuching for the sample nests submitted to the

Department of Trade and Customs, and were well in excess of those paid just previously.

The condition of trade in Bau during December was little if any better than in November, owing chiefly to the poor price of rubber and the continued absence of large-scale mining operations. These facts have been mainly responsible for the present unemployment in the District. The District Officer says that goods are more plentiful in the shops and of wider variety than a few months ago, but the lack of purchasing power experienced by the average customer is a handicap to extensive buying.

The District Officer, Bau, reports that every kampong in his District has been visited at least once in the last six months by the District Officer, the Native Officers, or the medical staff, and nearly all kampongs have been visited, twice or more.

The Native Officer, Serian, reports that rumours of an unsettled state of affairs still continued in December, but the natives took no heed of the few who are in the habit of exciting people by spreading false reports.

The Native Officer, Serian, says : "Business in the proper bazaars become very dull as most of the trade are taken away by the illegal shops, unless suitable steps were taken it is feared these illegal shops will spread far and deep inside the kampong." The Honourable the Resident comments that the question of illegal shops along the Simanggang Road generally is the subject of discussion with the Director of Lands and Surveys, the Controller of Essential Commodities, and the police. It was decided to go very slowly on the necessary clearing up as any sudden action might have unpleasant repercussions. Appropriate steps were, however, being taken.

The Native Officer, Serian. reports that the bridges at Sungei Kuhas and Sungei Tebuit on the Serian-Tebakang road (which, alas, we remember being responsible for building some nine years ago) have broken down and that it is now necessary to cross these rivers by swimming. The Honourable the Resident recalls that formerly the journey from Serian to Tebakang took three-quarters of an hour by bicycle, and at one time it was even possible to travel in a light car. Now, he says, it takes four to five hours on foot.

The Native Officer, Simunjan. reports that there is a good deal of trouble in the ulu concerning the

breaking up of long-houses but he cannot get away to settle it owing to pressure of office work.

During the early part of January. Mr. Lim Khim Poh. accompanied by Native Officer Paneras Eddy, took a supply of cloth to Kampong Boyan near the 21st mile, Penrissen Road, for sale direct to the Dayaks of the adjacent Kampongs, in accordance with instructions from the Supply Office. It has been decided to extend this system of distribution to other Dayak Kampongs, whenever stocks of suitable cloth make it possible.

SECOND DIVISION.

The following extract is from the November report of the Honourable the Resident : "It is with great regret that I have to report the death of Penghulu Entri of Seblak, Roban, who passed away in the General Hospital, Kuching. Entri, who succeeded his father, Penghulu Chaong, in 1927 was an outstanding personality, who gained the respect and affection of all communities. The coffin containing the Penghulu's body was brought

to Saratok by m.v. Ann Chuan. A solemn procession formed and the bier, followed by Government staff, Chinese towkays. Malays and hundreds of Dayaks, marched slowly through the bazaar to the first mile, Roban Road. Funeral music was provided by the band of the "Kuching Calling" bangsawan. The coffin was carried overland to Roban and the Penghulu's remains laid to rest in his own rubber garden, a site selected by him long before his illness. The ceremony was probably unique in the history of pagan Dayaks and was a fitting tribute to a great man."

The Honourable the Resident reports that, as a result of the large number of Dayaks who came to Simanggang in November to attend the preliminary inquiry into the Arundell murder, which lasted a fortnight, all European officers incurred heavy expenditure and it was with relief that they saw the witnesses and their followers leave the station.

Further reports have now been received by the Honourable the Resident regarding the damage done to hill padi crops by several species of unidentified locusts. In the Ulu Undup, Bukit Balau, and Klingkang areas the damage is estimated at 55% of the total potential crop. 30% is a fair average of the damage in other places. The Resident comments that it is interesting to learn that only hill padi planted above 800 feet was heavily attacked. Fortunately the spread has been checked, probably

due to heavy rains.

The m.v. Ann Chuan nearly met with a serious mishap one night in November, when she grounded on the bar at Kuala Kabong and lost her rudder. Three of the passengers paddled ashore in a sampan and summoned help. The Officer-inCharge, Sara-tok, despatched two jungkat boats. but unfortunately owing to poor visibility they were unable to locate the stranded vessel. However early the next morning the Ann Chuan entered the river under her own steam, the crew having converted a passenger's trunk into a temporary rudder. The Honourable the Resident says that it is reported that the trunk was returned to the passenger in due course.

The District Officer. Simanggang, reports that the witnesses in the Arundell murder trial returned in November 30th, on the whole not displeased with their visit to Kuching, but very anxious to get home in time for the fruit season.

According to the District Officer, "indisposition from inordinate eating of fruit" seemed to be the most common complaint in Simanggang District. A hospital patient, suffering from intestinal obstruction, died on his way to Lingga, while being rushed to Kuching in an attempt to save his life.

The sale of cartridges to the Dayaks for their padi farms was started in Simanggang in November. The news spread with amazing rapidity so that the small stocks received were rapidly exhausted. The issue to a licensed gum-holder was four rounds each, two of buck-shot and two of Nos. 4, 6 or 8. As a result ladders of muzzle-loading guns were clamouring for gun-powder.

The investigation of the Spaoh murders was continued throughout November in Betong. An inspector and a detective corporal were seconded for duty in this connection. Suspicion rested on three Dayaks from the Ulu Lingga who visited the District prior to the murder. They were known to have made inquiries about the whereabouts of one of the deceased, and were believed to be the same Dayaks, or their relations, who quarrelled with and threatened to kill one of the deceased during the Japanese occupation, owing to a court case, while the latter was living in Ulu Lingga. The three Dayaks were said to have posed as "policemen on patrol from Sibul" during their stay in the Saribas, and at the end of November every effort was being made to trace them. These men were however found and cleared in December so that the mystery is still unsolved.

As is always the case with reports from the Saribas District education appears to be making further strides there. For instance on November 13th a new Iban school was opened in the Layar with 32 pupils and two teachers. An interesting report was recently written by the Acting Director of Education on the real progress that is being made in this District in this important branch of social service..

The Honourable the Resident reports that in December durian were selling at Lubok Antu for one cent each.

In his December report the Honourable the Resident says that the removal of the restriction on the planting of rubber has been enthusiastically received and applications for land for rubber cultivation are pouring in. However where applications refer to good padi land they will not be approved.

The following is an extract from the December report of the Honourable the Resident : "Probably the outstanding event of the month was the arrival of the Public Announcement Unit. A trial show was given at the Residency on the 11th, when the Chinese were privileged to hear speeches by the Consul-General, his Chancellor, and several of Dr. Wu's party. On the 14th Simanggong went on the air on the two million metre band in a two hour programme "In Simanggong To-night." There was no difficulty in finding local talent ; on the contrary the studio was thronged with budding stars competing to get at the mike. It is hoped to make "In Simanggong To-night" a regular Saturday feature, but the local demand is such that additional programmes will have to be arranged. Unfortunately at present, owing to the lack of trained technicians, a very Senior Officer of the Administrative Service is expected to twirl the various knobs on the unit, while other officials of the Senior Service have to be impressed as programme directors, continuity announcers, and even crooners.

The District Officer, Simanggong, reports that a Dayak of Rumah Mambang, San, was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment for spearing another Dayak in the back of the neck, mistaking the man for a deer. Accused admitted that he did not see what he was spearing. After spending some twenty-four days being treated by the Engkilili dresser the injured man made a complete recovery.

The District Officer, Simanggang, says that the Chinese in December reported that local trade was slack. The Dayaks have little purchasing power at the present time and this is reflected in the fact that a number of houses have not drawn their cloth ration.

The District Officer, Simanggang, reports that the visit of the Chinese Consul-General on December 10th was a great event for all the Chinese in the river. The Simanggang bazaar was most attractively decorated in his honour. His visit will long be remembered and the District Officer is sure that it helped to cement the friendship between the Chinese and other races.

The District Officer, Simanggang reports that Christmas was celebrated there "in true Simang-gang style." A sa'te party was held on Christmas Eve at the Simanggang Recreation Club which was decorated for the occasion. On Boxing Day a children's party was a great success. The Honourable the Resident adds that "the four elderly European bachelors" are to be congratulated on this and on the energetic manner with which they joined in all the round games.

Throughout December large crowds witnessed the first and second rounds of the Betong Football Competition in which sixteen teams were entered. The final was due to be played on January 1st at the conclusion of the sports arranged for that day. The majority of the matches were good and clean but unfortunately one had to be stopped, and both teams suspended, owing to dirty play, which eventually led to a free fight, in which the spectators also tried to join.

THIRD DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that December was a busy month in the Resident's Court. The Court was in session daily from the 13th of the month onwards.

The District Officer, Sibuluan, also reports that court work was particularly heavy in December. In addition to the persons prosecuted for offences a number of suspected criminals were made to give bonds for good behaviour under section 73 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The Dayak-Melano boundary dispute near Sungei Kut, Igan, has been thoroughly investigated and the boundary demarcated to the satisfaction of both parties.

The Kampong Igan Melanos have, the District Officer, Sibuluan, says, agreed to accept the Dayaks of Rumah Jebom, Sungei Kejimah, Igan, as their neighbours. These Dayaks had moved down the

Igan during the Japanese occupation and wished to settle permanently there. The Melanos being the only other interested party were approached, and, as a result of a referendum held under the auspices of the Tua Kampong, agreed by a large majority to the Dayaks remaining there, provided that the boundary' of the fanning land was clearly demarcated.

The District Officer, Sibuluan, says that it is reliably reported that Bintang, the wife of Umpi anak Kudang, Ramah Dayong, Sungei Salim, successfully produced triplets on or about December 21st, and mother and children are all thriving.

The District Officer, Sibuluan, reports that no further repercussions of the Malay anti-cession minority movement were encountered during December until the end of the month, when the Malay Youth Movement made a distinct though unsuccessful effort to withdraw Malay Government employees from their allegiance. It is clear, he says, that a mild form of blackmail was attempted by threatening any Malay who continued in Government service with exposure as an "anti-cessionist," and with consequent instant dismissal. The Young Malay Association are working hard to counteract the unbalanced attitude of the Malay Youth Movement.

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that the rise, in the price of sago at Dalat has turned the place into a hive of industry. The price at Mukah has remained stable so there is not the same feverish activity there. It is feared that, in spite of warnings as to the bad quality of the sago being produced, a quality of the lemanta is being dried without being properly washed. Some say that the trouble is that people have been drying their sago on any available space instead of passing it to factories with properly equipped drying grounds. With regard to the possibility of greater cultivation of this crop the Tua-Tua Kampong have suggested to the District Officer that the solution is to open up the swampy country and construct small ditch-like canals wide enough to float the sago to its place of working.

With regard to the sudden spurt of energy in Dalat, referred to by the District Officer, Mukah, the Native Officer, Dalat, says: "Women and children are always busy on lemanta washing and sawing and even the men are busy on the work, but of course men are much lazier than their opposite sex."

The District Officer, Kapit, reports that two Chinese employees of the Borneo Company, Ltd., were drowned in the Pelagus rapids on December 24th. Although no inquiry had been held by the end of

the month, it was understood that a party of five Chinese came down the rapids, against Dayak advice, in rather high water. The two drowned were in the boat while the other three were letting it down through Wong Lungga. The rotan broke and the boat with the two passengers was swept down river and lost.

A good deal of resentment, says the District Officer. Kapit, mixed with some trepidation, was felt by the Dayak Penghulus at the way their names had been used in the anti-cession posters put up in Sibul. However, after the circulars regarding this had been distributed and the position explained to them, they went home happy, giving assurances that they would not be mixed up in such proceedings in the future.

The Native Officer, Song, reports that a Dayak girl, aged sixteen, is said to have disappeared from her farming but, and that the Dayaks believe she has been kidnapped by devils. Nothing so far has been heard of her.

The District Officer, Kapit, reports that the supply position is satisfactory but there is a serious lack of cash on the part of the Dayaks.

An inspection of notice-boards marking rocks in the river at Tau, Ibau and Lajan, was made during December, in preparation for the visit of ships to collect engkabang. which crop, says the District Officer. Kapit, shows signs of not being quite as good as was once expected. Two of the four boards were found to have rotted away, one was in good order, and one was sound but badly over- grown.

News has been received that the Island Trading Company are shortly to re-start operations at Selalang. This, says the District Officer. Lower Rejang. should relieve the unemployment around Rejang and Jerijeh.

The District Officer. Lower Rejang, reports that it appears that the back of the "black-market" has definitely been broken. In fact some of the Government controlled goods are dearer than the same type on the public market. General merchandise is plentiful and prices are steadily dropping. It was noticed in December that quantities of Chinese owned padi were coming forward for milling, which clearly showed, says the District Officer, that the proprietors have been hoarding, and now with the approaching harvest they want to get rid of it.

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that on December 11th the hearing of an incest case began. The incest was said to have taken place between a brother and sister in the presence of the brother's wife. The Dayak penalty for this in the old days was death by impaling on a buloh aur. On his return from a trip to Oya the sister's husband heard of the matter, and, without further inquiry, made such threats that the two suspects ran for their lives. It was held by a large court of Penghulus that incest was not proved, but that rita bulak came into it to an extent that led to pemalu. Fines for this were imposed and the outraged husband was fined for assault. The latter has announced his intention of appealing, but the injured wife wishes to withdraw, feeling, the District Officer says, that perhaps she has exaggerated her story. The District Officer concludes "The potential appellant only came home to marry in 1942, after twenty years in places like Balikpapan and parts of Papua."

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that a number of young Dayaks wish to make contracts with "the Company" for engkabang. They see this as a good chance for getting capital together to start trading without having recourse to Chinese credit.

Naga of Kanowit, the District Officer says, is making trouble. On December 19th a Dayak and a Maloh were stopped at Meluan for trading without a permit. They ran after threatening the police. On the 23rd down came Naga with fourteen armed men to demand "rights."

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that the method hitherto prevailing of distributing goods through Penghulus has proved to be unsound and will not be continued. It is not possible to sell retail to individuals, however, and sales will now be to Tuai Rumah on a strict cash basis.

FOURTH DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that at the end of November the malaria epidemic in this Division still remained serious.

Dr. Rosser returned to Miri from a visit to the Ulu Baram in November. He reported that things were satisfactory amongst the Kelabits, but remained bad between Long Akar and Leo Matu. He added that it was worthy of note that the area between Marudi and Long Akar was greatly improved since his visit early in the year. The institution of travelling dressers is thought to be responsible for this.

Penghulu Barat of the Ulu Sibuti has reported that he wishes to open a Dayak school. His people are very keen and have already completed a substantial building for this purpose.

The new Miri Town Plan has been approved. This at any rate should prove to be one good thing blown by the ill-wind of the war.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that five special food control police have arrived there and were undergoing training at the end of November.

A report was received in Marudi in November that a Kenyah lad of 16 had, in September, impaled himself on his spear, while running away from some hornets, and subsequently died from his injuries.

Datu Tuanku Taha, m.b.e., left Marudi for Long Lamar on November 14th to auction birds nests and returned on the 19th. He suspected that some nests had been stolen and sold for higher prices to the Chinese. This matter was being investigated. 214 nests were gathered and their prices varied from \$45 to \$48 kati.

A man was acquitted on a murder charge in Marudi on November 22nd.

On the night of November 2nd Constable Awang Jenal, who was on beat duty in Bintulu bazaar, took shelter from the rain on the verandah of the projecting room of the Rosina Theatre, which is now a Government Supply Store. He challenged a man who was walking up and down with a flashlight and behaving suspiciously. On hearing the challenge and the constable loading his rifle the man fled, but another man shouted from inside the store, asking the constable not to shoot and begging for mercy. He was duly extracted and identified as an ex-Government mower by the name of Sirat bin Sulong. He was convicted in the District Court on the 15th and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

Nubong and Anggaw, fathers of Anggong and Entalang, who, it will be remembered, escaped from custody in Bintulu while waiting trial on a charge of murder, were brought down on November 21st. After interrogation they were allowed to return home.

Distressing poverty has come to light amongst the Penans in Sungei Jelalong, Bintulu. The Honourable the Resident comments that "these people have always been a rather poor crowd. This is

because they have so little contact with Govern- ment."

In November preparations were being made by natives in Bintulu for the purchase of the second cloth ration issued since the end of the war. The ration was two yards for an adult and one yard for a child. The District Officer says that any dispute whether one is a child or a man is swiftly settled by the question "Have you paid head-tax?"

FIFTH DIVISION.

The courts in this Division have found that the infliction of imprisonment instead of fines for breaches of the Movement Control Rules operates as a more adequate deterrent.

A 17' 4" crocodile was caught by Asin bin Hussin in the Panderuan in November. He has now caught three crocodiles, all over twelve feet, since August.

The District Officer, Limbang, reports that the agitation for guns has died down, although of course the need is still great. Those who had surrendered Japanese rifles, which were still in Limbang kubu, were allowed to use them temporarily until the padi harvest, it was noticed that, although they obeyed B.M.A. instructions to surrender these rifles to Government, they wisely retained a few rounds of ammunition.

A report was received in Lawas in November of quarrelThe following is an extract from the November report of the District Officer, Lawas: "The four main bridges on the Trusan road have been repaired including the Siang-Siang bridge. Fortunately the wires of this bridge are still holding. Much work remains to be done on this road before it can be considered good, but at least it is now passable although in certain places the traveller must be prepared to paddle up to the knees. I consider the improvement of this road important as it provides it rapid means of communication between the Trusan river and Lawas, and owing to its better kuala the latter is increasing in importance as the trading centre of the District."

Kuching Market Price List.

Average daily prices over period December 20th to January 20th.

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1947

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