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ROSES.

In February there appeared in the Sarawak Tribune and the Straits Times a letter signed ?Il Penseroso,? which bitterly criticised the recent change of certain Government officers' titles. It is not for the to presume to defend His Excellency the Governor and the Supreme Council against the vicious attack of an anonymous correspondent, but there is one aspect of the matter which, for the better information of posterity, requires comment. The Cession of Sarawak is rapidly taking rank with liquor, ?the Government,? Soviet Russia, the emancipation of women, and failure to go to church, as one of the roots of all evils. It would not be surprising to hear that it is held responsible for world famine or a Pacific typhoon, but no person who has lived in Sarawak for any substantial period can seriously believe that the change of officers' titles is a startling innovation, a phenomenon entirely unknown during the conservative days of the Brooke regime.

Nevertheless the melancholic scribe has apparently convinced himself that this was the case. It seems harsh to remind him that for two years, 1937 to 1939, Sarawak even sunk so low as to have a Financial

Secretary. It is true that, apart from this short period, the senior financial official was sometimes called ?Treasurer.? and sometimes, apparently for reasons of euphony, ?Treasurer of Sarawak,? but unfortunately the sad tale does not entirely end there. The following are some examples of sudden and capricious changes that occurred in the fifteen years immediately preceding the occupation. The principal executive officer of the State was ?Chief Secretary.? then ?Resident, First Division,? then ?Government Secretary? and lastly, the wheel taking less than eight years to

negotiate the whole circle, "Chief Secretary" again. When the Legal Department was first constituted in 1928 the head of the judiciary was called "Judicial Commissioner." Later he became "Chief Justice," but in

1939. on a new appointment being made and it being thought desirable to bring the Department down a peg or two. he reverted to "Judicial Commissioner." (only, however, to become "Chief Justice" again after the liberation). The title of the principal agricultural officer sunk suddenly from "Director of Agriculture" to "Coconut Field Officer." rose slightly to "Senior Agricultural Officer," and then became "Director of Agriculture" once more, while the head of the Forest Department hovered uncertainly between "Conservator, of Forests" and "Senior Forest Officer." In 1941 sweeping changes were made in the Department of Lands and Surveys, the effect of which was to transform the chief officer from "Superintendent" to "Director" while his more important subordinates became "Superintendents" instead of "Assistant Superintendents.

The alterations described were little more than a mere playing with names. They were accomplished in a very informal way and by far more obscure notifications than that which received the abuse of "Il Penseroso." The frequency and rapidity with which the decisions were taken and put into operation led to great confusion in cases in which the officers concerned wielded statutory powers, as there was little attempt to make the requisite amendments in all the volumes of laws in use in the State. This, however, is merely a technical objection. The only really silly change was the supplanting of "village constables" by "court peons." This move was undoubtedly a hit aimed at the administrative service, it being felt by those in power at the time that Residents and District Officers should not have under their control a police force independent of the ordinary constabulary. This was sacrificing practical needs to empty theory with a vengeance. The village constables were an ancient and well-trying body of men. generally acknowledged to be seriously underpaid in comparison with the work they were expected to do. In remote places they were often the sole representatives of law and order for many miles around their headquarters, and they had all the powers of an ordinary police officer. They were local men with indispensable local knowledge, which was one of the reasons why they were more suitable for the work than members of the constabulary

drafted indiscriminately from Kuching depot. The Commissioner of Sarawak Constabulary made it quite clear that he would not station his men by themselves in any place. A village requiring policing must take at least two constables or go without altogether. This was no doubt sound policy from the Commissioner's point of view, but the fact remained that places where village constables were stationed did not provide sufficient work for more than one man. It was therefore found impossible to abolish the traditional system. Village constables were retained but were called instead "court peons" although shorn of none of their powers. They were thus reduced to the status of summons-servers, but were still expected to exercise the responsibilities of police officers.

The fact that even under the new dispensation the title "Chief Secretary" is retained is sufficient refutation of the allegation that poor little Sarawak is being forced into the strait-jacket of Colonial dogma, but the point is really not worth arguing. It is possible to take these things too seriously. When Juliet announced her famous theory concerning the effect on the nasal organs of the change of nomenclature of the rose she was naturally bearing in mind this very question. What a man is called does not matter so much as what he is expected and empowered to do. There is always room for at least two opinions on the appropriate designation, and in any case most public functionaries are doubtless endowed in private with many titles which the Government Gazette has so far failed to disclose. The purist might find it hard to explain why the minister responsible for the administration of the British zone in Germany is the "Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster" or why the "Lord Privy Seal" is entrusted with the duty of co-ordinating "planning." It would not be so difficult to defend the transformation, in 1919, of the "President of the Local Government Board" into the "Minister of Health," because changing circumstances and conditions made the new title more suitable than the old.

Most officers no doubt are quite prepared to?

".....answer to Hi ! or to any old cry,

Such as Fry me! or Fritter-my-wig !"

The earnest member of the public, however, complete with statutes in one hand and Government Gazette in the other, is not much assisted by this accommodating spirit when he wants to ascertain

precisely to what person his application should be made or his remonstrance addressed. In accordance with the directions of the relevant Ordinance he sets out to find a Snark, but. when he comes across a Boojum instead, he must, in the manner of his pre decessors, "softly and silently vanish away." confused and bewildered by the abrupt disappearance of his quarry. Sympathy must also be extended to the officials who find it difficult to recognise themselves in their new apparel. A man who. for instance, after years of practice, has got used to picking up his telephone and saying "Sanitary Inspector here" is embarrassed and confused if he suddenly has to add "Sorry. I mean Health Officer." While sticking rigorously to the proprieties he is naturally fearful that his correspondent will consider that he is giving himself airs. However time will rid him of this dilemma, if. that is to say, he is allowed to grow old gracefully in his new guise. If, on the other hand, directly he gets used to it he finds it has got to be changed again, so that he is for ever hopping from one rut into another, his despair may well match the perplexity of a puzzled public. Such a man must regard a new title much in the same way as the author of the old verse, which, as far as we can remember, was published many years ago in Punch, regarded his new bride :

"Her face is fairer far than that Of any other.

The only thing that worries me Is whether she May one day lie

As ugly as her mother."

The Governor's Tour of the Third Division.

His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by the Private Secretary, left Kuching in M.L. Karina at 6 a.m. on 13th February, 1947. The night was spent at Sibu and the following morning His Excellency, now also accompanied by the Hon'ble the Resident, Third Division, sailed for Mukah which was reached at 4.30 p.m.

Two nights were spent at Mukah. Thereafter His Excellency and party visited Oya, Daiat, (Sibu en route), Matu, Daro, Binatang, Sarikei. Belawai and Rejang, spending a night at each place except Belawai and returning to Kuching again on the 24th.

His Excellency was welcomed most cordially at each station he visited. Large crowds, including the leading representatives of all races and lines of Malay, Melanau and Chinese school children, were

present to receive him everywhere; arches of welcome and decorations of every description had been put up along the roads and kampong paths? also in the Bazaars where flags were gaily flying. If any place can be singled out- for special mention it must be Oya which accorded His Excellency a most enthusiastic welcome and was very prettily decorated, while the Chinese school children led by a band and the Melanau school children carrying home-made Union Jacks paraded past His Excellency and then around the station. Native Officer Michael Toyad and clerk Heng Yeo Koon are to be congratulated on their excellent arrangements. But from the point of view of decorations Kampong Ska'an at Matu and Sarikei Bazaar ran Oya very close.

At each station His Excellency first heard requests in Court and then visited Government offices, dispensaries, schools, Bazaars and kampongs. Penghulus and Tuai-Tuai Rumah in Dayak districts were received by His Excellency in the early evening and on no less than eight occasions His Excellency and party were later entertained to dinner by the Chinese communities. Admirable displays of native dancing were given at garden parties in His Excellency's honour at Mukah and Dalat.

In conclusion it should be recorded that His Excellency travelled through the Kut from Dalat to the Igan at probably lower water than it had ever previously been traversed : boats had to be abandoned on the Dalat side and "barang" humped on foot for a distance of about four miles before the boats waiting at the Igan end of the Kut were finally reached. A most interesting and instructive experience and the highlight of a successful tour. ? (Contributed.)

Notes and Comments.

His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacDonald returned to Singapore by plane on February 2nd, having accompanied His Excellency the Governor back from Jesselton on the preceding day.

His Excellency the Governor left Kuching for the Third Division on February 13th. His Excellency returned to Kuching on February 24th. An account of the tour appears elsewhere in this issue.

We have received from the Kuching manager of Messrs. Sime, Darby and Co. a memorandum on the whisky position, apparently compiled by some Scotch producers of that excellent commodity.

Although the manager thinks that "it is a subject of profound interest to many of your readers," it occurs to us that if we once started publishing manufacturers' explanations to their harassed customers it would be difficult to know where to stop. The memorandum, however, certainly contains some informative matter, and we are

indebted to the manager for the opportunity of making this more widely known. The basic reason for the whisky famine appears to be a shortage of cereals but there are other contributory causes. For instance while "during the six years of war whisky output did not total more than one normal year's production" nevertheless, and this brings the horrors of war home to us, "five million gallons were lost through enemy action." In addition the British and United States forces took their share. "This demand started in a modest way, but by the end of 1945 was in excess of a million cases per annum." An interesting piece of news is that "the leading brands are blends of as many as forty to fifty single whiskies." The industry is now in a serious position because the Ministry of Food has refused to issue supplies of cereals to it. "The reserve at the present rate of distribution to the home and export markets will last six years, but if we receive no further barley supplies and continue to distribute at the present rate there will be no whisky left in six years. The entire industry will cease." No doubt it was highly reprehensible of the Minister to place the under-nourished people of England, and the starving people of Europe, before the imbibers of this indispensable commodity, particularly since "as far as popularity of the product is concerned Exporters have never before been faced with such a brisk active demand from all corners of the earth." It looks as if we shall just have to be brisk and active enough to grow our own rice and drink tuak.

The welcomes the establishment of the Sarawak Music Society. If a success is made of this experiment great credit will be due to the organisers who have ventured out on such a strange and uncharted ocean. Many of us write about the future development of the Colony but the people who really matter are those who are zealous enough to translate words into deeds. It is earnestly hoped that "Gilbert and Sullivan" will be neither too far above, nor too far below, the new Society's repertoire.

Gratitude is due to many contributors to this issue, who have come forward in greater numbers than

experience has taught us to expect. We are particularly indebted to the ubiquitous Tom Harrisson, "ubiquitous" because he seems to appear in such leading organs of opinion as the New Statesman and Nation, the Listener, the Scotsman, the Daily Express, the Sarawak Tribune and the at one and the same time. The Editor has been ill and there is no staff ready to step into his shoes. Not only does sickness delay composition, but as one lies on a hospital bed in the last stages of recovery, attempting to make up for lost time and, in the search for inspiration, gazing out over the open spaces at the female lunatics, some friendly and well-meaning doctor or nurse or "boy" or fellow-patient is almost certain to come in with a pile of books or magazines to while away one's obvious boredom. Truly the road to the contemplative life is strewn with stones.

The Editor has come into possession of two volumes of "Adversity," one of which contains three issues. "Adversity" was the quarterly magazine published in the male civilian camp at Lintang from July 1st, 1943, to July 1st, 1944, inclusive. Most of the contributions were hand-written in pen or, more frequently, pencil, but a few are typed. Any odd scraps of paper, mostly tobacco wrappings, were used, and it was due to the shortage of this commodity that the project had finally to be abandoned. The paper was "published" by being circulated from hand to hand. If anyone in Kuching is interested in this attempt to keep the mental processes alive in difficult circumstances, he or she should apply to the Editor. but it is regretted that the volumes cannot be sent through the post. It is intended to publish one poem, story or article from "Adversity" in every number of the . but any suggestions concerning other methods of disposal would be welcomed. It seems a pity that these papers, which, although their quality may not be very high, at least represented an interesting experiment, should be left merely to rot to pieces or to fatten ants.

A sad story of disappointment came to light during the month. A certain Kuching Indian pursues the hobby of collecting stamps, and from time to time he has received small sums for his trophies from Messrs. Harmer, the famous dealers of Roud Street, London. In November, 1911, the Sarawak Times published a story that one of the collector's stamps had been sold for £2,500. The Japanese then interrupted the course of fortune, but after the liberation a letter was sent to Messrs. Harmer asking for payment. The dealers were very astonished as they were not aware of the transaction.

referred to and indeed had never received the stamp in question. The collector holds a receipt for a registered letter addressed to "H. R. Harmer. London.? which never reached its intended destination. The Post Office records are lost; the Postmaster-General, whose pre-war broad-casting unit was alleged to be responsible for the rumour in the first place, denies that any such news items were ever put on the air and the collector laments in vain. To hear that you have made £2.500. to wait four years in expectation. and then to have the cup dashed from your lips, is hard indeed.

Pre-war residents in Sarawak will be interested to hear that J. W. Pim has joined the Malayan P.W.D. and is stationed at Johore Bahru.

A Postscript: Two Views of Kelabits.

By

TOM HARRISSON

(This article refers to the report of the District Officer, Baram, published in the December issue of the .)

I read with interest the patrol report of the District Officer, Baram, on his lightening visit to Bareo?he had no time to tour the Kelabit Plateau as a whole. It was good to hear excellent news of my upland friends. I write only to correct the District Officer's report on points of some general importance, since so few people in Sarawak have first-hand knowledge of these people and can read reports on them critically. I think the District Officer would be the first to agree that his visit for a matter of days gave a fairly superficial view; willy-nilly, I spent most of eighteen months among the Kelabits. The following points therefore need clarification :

1. The District Officer refers to the Kelabits feeling themselves "vastly superior" to Kayans and Kenyas. If so, this is something new and to be regretted. But he describes the attitude from the village of Long Lellang. in the Ulu Akah. This is on the edge of the Kelabit country and is not a Kelabit village. The main population is a peculiar one-village tribe originally living in the Ulu Libbun. whence Adams moved them to form a link between the Akah Kayans and the Tutoh Kelabits. They have now become strongly intermingled with the Kayans, and the second most important family is Kayan?which makes the District Officer?s report even more odd. I think he must have been misled

by someone's outburst of ritual boasting, borak-influenced in the way I have previously described.

2. The District Officer says the Kelabits have "become Christians and this is commented on editorially. It all depends what you call Christian. Some adats were given up when Douglas first penetrated the Kelabit country in 1913; others were abandoned in 1944-5, partly because the Sarawak people saw the agricultural advantages accruing to the tribes over the Dutch border. who have been under mission influence for a decade or more; and partly because of encouragement and advice from my humble self. But 90% of their old adat is unchanged. All the things which the Trusan (Borneo Evangelical and Dutch (World Alliance) Missions consider essential signs of conversion—teetotalism, non-smoking, no divorce, sexual morality, women covering their breasts, pants, Sabbath rest, end of ancient funeral rites, no pigs under the house, Christian names, etc.—are ignored by the Kelabits. No missionary would class them as acceptable. I fear. The Kelabits know we whites are Christians and like to pay us the courtesy of companionship in this! Moreover, they find the title a useful defence mechanism against further propaganda from mission teachers, "Oh, but we are orang cerityen already."

Let the District Officer, Baram, go into the "true Christian country of the Mentarang (Dutch or mid-Trusan (Fifth Division) and he will find the difference. It is very great.

3.

The District Officer stresses hymn and psalm singing at Long Lellang. This was the outcome of a stay there by a Christian Potok from the Sesajap River area (Dutch). He was an N.C.O. of mine, placed there to collect intelligence reports on possible Jap movements (which materialised in September, 1945) up the Tutoh. Potok is closely allied to Murut, and this is probably the language the District Officer heard them sing in. All the mountain tribes are closely related. Pollard was the first to point out that the Kelabits are a branch of the Muruts. The accidents of war took me all over the interior uplands of all three countries, and I found these Murutish tribes cover a vast area—the Muruts, Kelabits, Tabuns, Sabans in Sarawak. Muruts and some of the Tagals in B.N.B., Potoks, Milaus, Belawits, Berans and Malinaus in Dutch Borneo.

4.

So the District Officer is wrong in thinking these people were "converted" by a Timorese catechist or in thinking this man is the same as the teacher Paul at Pa Mein. Paul was an ace SRI agent, who after August, 1945, started, at my request, the non-sectarian Kelabit school at Pa Mein. That is the limit of his "conversion?"

of Kelabits. The band which I am delighted to hear entertained the District Officer was trained by Tomesi, a Minado Malay previously associated with SRD and now a teacher on the Kerayan River (Dutch). I had a letter from him simultaneously with receiving my copy of the Gazette.

5.

Lawai was always mad on an airfield at Bareo, and when we had to build one. for tactical reasons, in May, 1945, I naturally wanted it there. But the experts thought it too dangerous, owing to the steep climb required from take off in this mountain bowl. So we had to make our strip?the only all bamboo one in the world? on the wider plains just over the Dutch border, two days east of Bareo. Even then it was a major undertaking.

6.

The "well-fenced extensive vegetable gardens" are not, as the District Officer supposes, natural to the Kelabits, but were initiated by me, with the aid of Javanese gardeners rescued from the Japs in early 1945 and with seeds I had brought from Australia. As well as the potatoes and tomatoes the District Officer enjoyed, I successfully introduced cabbage, lettuce, shallots, spring onions, cucumbers, marrows, radishes, green peas, French and runner beans, silver-beet and egg fruit, etc. I had hoped to make Bareo a seeding depot for the whole interior, and it is depressing to hear the work has faded since I left.

In conclusion, may I emphasise two things. First, that I am second to none in my admiration of missions, and particularly the work of the Borneo Evangelical Mission on the Trusan. I believe that in that area?where the Government were passively negligent of their responsibilities to the remoter and less vociferous tribes?the mission's medical, hygienic, educational and moral reforms saved the previously "degenerate" Trusan Muruts from extinction. But other groups are not degenerate, or have different problems. And it is also possible that there are alternative solutions to the old adat

attitude, to which the Kayans are so especially wedded although its spiritual basis went with the abolition of head-hunting. The case for unlimited spread of mission influence is a matter requiring further study and consideration. The Kelabits may have, in fact, found²and this I pointed out in my articles³a compromise between adat and mission, old and new. Whether it is an effective compromise remains to be seen. It is possible only Methodism can replace Paganism, hut that remains to be examined. Meanwhile, it would be well if comment were well-informed and based on considered facts carefully collected, since we are talking not of our own interests but of thousands of native peoples. And this brings me to ray second point. May I stress that I do not wish to belittle the observations and activities of the District Officer, Baram, who is, in fact, a close and respected personal friend, and a man of intergrity and under- standing. I only correct him in the interests I have mentioned, and because I have the not-altogether advantage of having made a pretty full study of Kelabit culture. I venture to believe that so far I am the only person to have gone fully into their mentality and way of life. They are among the most interesting peoples in the world, with a unique culture almost uniquely unaffected by outsiders. That makes it all the more worth our disinterested and intelligent consideration.

Friendship.

There are few countries to-day where mixed populations live in more friendly fashion together than in British Borneo. Be it in Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan or North Borneo the story is the same⁴as it was for many years before the war. There can be none of goodwill who do not wish for this happy state of affairs to continue. Let us therefore examine this matter with the care which is its due. No one can say that all was well before the war and all is not well now. Friendship is here, yes, but the personal friendships which only can per- petuate the friendly feelings are lacking, by no means altogether, but still sadly lacking.

The simple reason for this is that the races do not mix enough⁵how can we get to know each other unless we do mix? It can surely be taken for granted that men and women of goodwill of all races would like to know more of other races than their own. They can appreciate that personal friendships can do as much if not more than any- thing else to avoid the risk of most foul war. They can learn

much from each other. Friendships just grow, may be, over a glass of beer, a cup of coffee, a casual meeting on the tennis court or dance floor. That no lead has come from whence it should to form an International Club with all the facilities, such as a swimming bath and dance floor, is a serious omission of the past. It can be remedied now. even if costs are tremendously increased, if there are enough people who will it so. From such a (hub. where men and women of all races may go for amusement and recreation, can flow the good- will which will spread until more and more people are bound together by the ties of personal friend- ship which is the antidote to the vicious racialism which we see in many places to-day, and which no thinking person can wish to see come to Borneo. Whatever race we belong to we in Borneo at any rate must hate war?we want to see that hate perpetuated for our children's sake. We are, thank heaven, at peace now. Will we lay some foundation on which to help to hear this peace in the future? Wash out the mistakes of the past, be it snobbery or adherence to old customs?only goodwill can do this but it can be done?and let us have Clubs in Borneo where the young of all races can enjoy themselves together and the older ones do likewise after their fashion.

The British have come back again. They failed to protect this country from the Japs, being hopelessly unprepared for war. but for a long period the British Commonwealth of Nations fought alone against Germany and Italy. What have they brought back? Above all peace and the earnest intention to rehabilitate this country. Britain herself is having a terrible struggle to recover. She has had to borrow money heavily from America and other sources but nevertheless she is finding money to help the Colonies. More we know is needed to help the Colonies develop their own resources. What recovery has been made so far in Borneo is in good measure due to the peoples of Borneo themselves, to the Chinese in particular. Britain has brought back a stable administration, and the rule of justice. The peaceful state of Borneo and Malaya over many years is an unquestioned credit to British adminis- tration. The Chinese would not have flocked to live and trade under British protection had it been

otherwise. But there is another side to the picture. Where is the British lead on the social side of life? This has failed in the past. As the rulers of the country it was surely their responsibility to set a better

example than they have done. All the races have their own habits and their own customs but all have much in common. It is probably true to say that many British have not yet learnt the art of living. Western sports the British have brought, another inestimable boon to all people, but, here is where the art of living comes in, they have not reaped all the benefits these sports can bring. Sports do so much to bring people together but what has happened here" Broadly speaking after the game of football or cricket is over players and spectators wander off to their separate Clubs or their homes and hardly see each other again except in the office or in course of business until the next organised game!

It is not known to the writer if there is any movement to form an International Club such as he advocates, but he does submit that if a Club is to flourish it must be well within the precincts of a town. With the transport position what it is it would be hopeless otherwise but apart from transport no Clubs flourish unless they are really easy of access.

Any difficulties can be overcome if there are enough people of all races with sufficient goodwill to make such a Club a success. The more informal and the less "organisation" the better. If the amenities of a good Club are there people will see the benefits and use them. Progress will come naturally which is the only way.

There is nothing splendid about isolation, it is purely selfishness and it leads to stupid misunderstandings. We all melt over a few beers, for heaven's sake let's melt together. I know not the name of the god (or goddess) of ginger beer and coffee but he (or she) must not be despised A child of Bacchus, even from the wrong side of the blanket, must be honoured if it serves the happy purpose of bringing people together. (Contributed.)

Inaugural Meeting of Music Society.

The following address was delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Music Society by Mr. N. Mace, the convenor:

"A few months ago, I put a notice in the Sarawak Tribune asking those who were interested in forming an orchestra to play Western Music to inform me. Since then I have received several written communications and at least four verbal ones. The number of instrumentalists is now 21. This

encouragement has led me to widen the scope of my suggestion, and I now put before you for discussion the proposal that we should form a Music Society.

The objects of such a society would be to raise the standard of musical appreciation throughout the country, to help instrumentalists to improve themselves, to bring music to a wider public and to take a part in increasing the cultural amenities of the inhabitants of Sarawak. The activities of the Society would take many forms, for instance, formation of bands and orchestras, listening together to recorded music, bringing together teachers and pupils, and hearing lectures on music and associated arts. The activities might even include an Operatic Society, a Choral Society, a Madrigal group and a Chamber Music group, or even research into native music and instruments.. If the Society ever becomes affluent, it might be able to support musical scholarships at the future Singapore University.

One of the main problems will be finance, for even if players provide their own instruments, the cost of music for an adequate repertoire would need to be borne by the Society. We can hardly expect help from outside interests until we have firmly established ourselves. This means regular subscriptions from members, and as many members as possible, whether they can play an instrument or not. I see no other means of starting even a small band.

Once we have got a good band going, which may take time, we may be able to raise some money from concerts. When we are standing on our own feet, we can probably get help from the British Council which will at least provide gramophone records which we may be able to borrow. To use these, we should need a gramophone and possibly an amplifier, another reason why we must have funds. To form any band or orchestra, we shall have to practise regularly. I have been given to understand that we shall be able to obtain free use of a suitable room. Halls for giving concerts to raise funds can probably be obtained?for instance the Sarawak Club, the Jubilee Hall, the Maderasah Melayu. Chinese schools and possibly the cinemas.

Finally, I emphasize that we want as members everyone who is interested in music, whether as a player or as a listener, and offer my opinion that, if a number of us have the courage to make a definite start, we shall find a good measure of support."

Tides in the Sarawak River.

Many people noticed the abnormally low tides in the Sarawak River at Kuching in December last, and remarked that they had never seen it so low before. To understand this it is necessary to know that the ocean tides, the effects of which cause a rise and fall at Kuching exceeding 16 feet, are caused by a number of influences, the chief of which are the sun and the moon, attracting the moveable waters of the earth towards them. The most noticeable of the effects of these influences are two in number, a tide which has one High Water and one Low Water each day and a tide which has two High Waters and two Low Waters each day.

Each of these two types of tides varies in size in different parts of the world, but often, as at Kuching, the combination of the two types results in two High Waters and two Low Waters each day, though one High Water is much higher than the other and one Low Water is much lower than the other. The height of High Water and Low Water varies throughout the month and the highest High Water and Lowest Low Water in each month occur at Springs whilst the Lowest High Water and Highest Low Water occur at Neaps. Thus at Springs there is a big difference in the height of High Water and Low Water whilst at Neaps the difference is considerably less. There are two Springs in each month and two Neaps

Moreover the height of High Water and Low Water at Springs varies throughout the year. In fact the lowest of Low Waters takes place in June and December. In June however it occurs about midnight and is not seen by the general public, whilst in December its effect is generally covered by floods from upriver due to the landas rains.

In the last three months of 1946. however, the rains were little more than half the average amount, and no particularly heavy fall occurred at any time in the first week of December during which rainfall totalled 2.03 inches compared with an average expectation of 5.5 inches, Springs being on December 10th. In a similar period before the second Springs rainfall was only 0.96 inches.

Thus in December, 1946, practically the full effect of pure tide was visible and the edge of the river at Low Water was several yards out from the end of Pangkalan Batu. That it was noticed and remarked upon is due to the fact that the lowest Low Water in December occurs about midday.

Finally many people will remember that river bank areas of Kuching are as a rule flooded at High Water in December and January Springs. That is because the highest High Waters of the year occur in those months (as well as in June) and are augmented in normal years by flood water from landas rains.

N. Mace.

London Letter.

January 28. Dear Editor,

You have honoured me by asking for a letter of news from London. Sitting down to write it, some finely powdered snow blows through a widened crack in the windowsill of my nearly- blitzed home in Holland Park?prefabs have blossomed in the crater across the road. It is difficult to think of anything except the cold. Last night it was 14° below freezing. What one would give for just 5% of Kuching climate now ' The cold, the shortage of fuel and the frequent cuts in fuel supply (to-day our gas-pressure is cut 25%) are our principal worry at present. It would choose to be an exceptionally bitter winter when we least wanted it. Even the children in the roads seem to snowball half-heartedly.

But cold as we are, we are probably the warmest and best-off country in Europe. I just spent a week in Paris. No more gay Paree about that Bitter cold, feeble heating, everything black- market, everyone jaded. In all our difficulties here, people have kept their sense of self-discipline and self-respect. The feeling that the hardship is equally shared, and that everybody has enough for their minimum needs, makes the whole difference.

Londoners' troubles have been accentuated lately by several unofficial strikes. The Smithfield meat porters are becoming almost chronic strikers, or so it seems to the housewife. Last week we were meatless some of the time. Responsible opinion principally blames the lop-sided and out-dated machinery of some of the very big trade unions, like Bevin's Transport and General Workers. The feeling is that they are now too big to keep in touch with their men's grievances, and the machinery of arbitration has become too slow to satisfy disputing parties.

Britain is so wrapped up in its home and domestic troubles and difficulties that there is little energy

to spare for caring about the outside world. The amount of apathy and ignorance about the Far East is quite terrifying. I have found it even among friends in Fleet Street and the House of Commons. Nevertheless, Sarawak is always good for a paragraph or two. There has been quite a bit lately about Anthony Brooke. Most people are now rather bored by the whole affair. The feeling is that no useful purpose can be served by carrying on the argument in public.

But nothing can be more depressing than the British Press. Wherever there is trouble, they emphasise it. Good news is no news at all now- adays. I think they over-do it. In a few weeks, the newly set up Government inquiry into the Press should be at work. Their findings may explain some of the mysteries of newspaper cynicism.

Through all these affairs, normal life flows on. The average Briton can adjust himself or herself to almost anything. Despite queues and strikes, shortages and the high cost of living?it seems to cost about twice as much to live as it did before the war?there is remarkably little complaining. If there was a General Election to-morrow, the Labour Party would probably be returned with another clear majority. They have not lost a single by-election since the General Election?a record for any Government. Nevertheless, there is a lot of unrest and uneasiness among M.P.s inside the Labour Party, and inside the Conservative Party too. There might quite well be a new line-up of political allegiances, on entirely novel lines, before the next General Election.

One seems to have to work harder than ever these days. But there is plenty to do in leisure moments, if any. Gambling has reached a new high record. and so has the demand for alcohol. Fantastic profits are being made by Greyhound Tracks. Football Pools (one man won £45,000 the other day) and brewers. The beer is weaker than ever, but there is a reasonable quantity of it about. Scotch whisky is supposed to cost 30/-, but you are lucky if you can get it at .£3.10 a bottle. There is quite a lot of mediocre Algerian w'ine: and curiously enough the market is flooded with cheap, but quite drinkable, champagne, some of it at 23/- a bottle.

If you like films, it is not so good just now. Hollywood seems to have lost the common touch. A series of unbelievably lousy films, headed by once-banned ?The Outlaw,? infest the West End. On the other hand the interest and prestige of British pictures is going up the whole time, though there

are not yet enough of them to till the cinemas. I have seen several superb British pictures lately, particularly David Lean's version of Dickens' "Great Expectations" with John Mills and Valerie Hobson; the spookey "A Matter of Life and Death" with David Niven in technicolour: Celia Johnson in "Brief Encounter," the perfect Coward picture, which has been revived. And a marvellous semi-documentary of cattle and drovers in Northern Australia--"The Overlanders." I met Ralph Smart, who made this picture. He is on his way back to Australia to start a special unit there, and he hopes to operate all over the S.W. Pacific as well. He was interested in some stuff I had written on the Sarawak natives. What a wonderful picture could be made around the Kelabit, for instance! I am sure Lawai of Bareo would make a lovely leading man !

There have also been several excellent French films. How charming and sensitive they are, and how much we missed them during the war years! I have not been much to the theatre, partly because it is such a business getting seats, getting there and getting home these days. I have been to a couple of music halls, including the classic little "Queens" in Limehouse, as old-fashioned and vulgar as when I first went there twenty years ago. I was taken somewhat unwillingly to the new Coward show "Pacific 1860"--Coward at his most facile; mediocre stuff. There is some appalling English-style opera at Covent Garden; a certain amount of good ballet floating around. and an enormous increase in the amount of first-class music available to the public. And my younger son (6) adored Bertram Mills Circus at Olympia and "Red Riding Hood" at the Adelphi, though personally I found them both below pre-war par

The great "Britain Can Make It" exhibition over. alas. More than one million went to the Victoria & Albert Museum in South Kensington to see it, and queues sometimes reached half-a-mile. Unkind critics say that the people went for the queues. It is true that queueing has become rather an obsession: practical jokers start a queue about nothing, and when it has reached 50 yards down Oxford Street, they walk away. The very whisper "Nylon" starts one.

We have the Atomic Exhibition, put on by the Daily Express--which loves to horrify--at Dorland Hall, complete with Hiroshima reconstructions. But people are getting allergic to the atom by now--it is all too horrible to think about. And recent opinion polls have shown that a large section of the

population are now expecting another war within 25 years. Oh dear!

There is a big boom in dancing, including a new dance by Annette Mills, who invented Boomp-a-daisy. It is called Hopscotch simple, silly but successful. Dance-tunes seem to be exactly the same as when I left England years ago. The same insipid slush and brainless wonder.

But however hard the works or however much the fun, it is impossible this winter to get away from the cold. It's not just because I'm fresh from Borneo. Every one complains. It is the last link in the chain of strain, war, post-war, rationing and frustration. Everyone is perfectly dear that we will pull through as we always do. Not just pull through the winter, but through the whole post-war mess. No sane Briton wants to be an American or a Russian, a Brazilian or a Greek. The British spirit is intact, even if it is tired and rather dormant just now. But though I don't myself want to be a Kayan, I certainly wouldn't mind being sun-fried in one of Tama Wing Ajeng's canoes, fishing at Long Akah, with a big bowl of rice and a glass of borak to look forward to at the day's end. You can get most things in Britain at a price. But I have only found one place, the Akropolis off Tottenham Court Road, where you can get rice in a pilaff. Unfortunately, having made this discovery, I went there so much that I now appear to have eaten it all.

Yours ever, freezingly.

Tom Harrison.

82, Ladbroke Road.

Holland Park.

Sidelights on Internment: 7.

The Japanese method of extracting work from their prisoners is to inform the various camps how many men are required for a specified job, and then to leave it to the authorities in those camps to select particular individuals in sufficient quantities to bring the numbers up to the required total. A curious new language has been developed between the guards and their military charges. It consists of a few words of Japanese, a smattering of Malay, and a large measure of corrupt English, but, while orders given in staccato Japanese are for the most part understood, that portion of the mixture is usually omitted in reply. A small group of soldiers is working on the road under an English

sergeant and one of the more affable Formosans. The long day is drawing to its close and the two bosses are engaged in earnest conversation, both being fluent in the synthetic tongue. The guard says that he likes and appreciates the men who have been under his care for the last eight hours and he trusts that the same persons will be allotted to the work to-morrow morning. "Wal." drawls the sergeant, "Ah can?t reetly say You see its changey-changey. Zumtimes seenee and zumtimes ----- sarna."

This Sarawak.

(With apologies to the New Statesman and Nation.)

Their being evangelised has undoubtedly improved their well-being, though Native Officer-----is

also troubled with worries faith on their behalf and his own from a spiritual point of view, which I think he would be well to leave alone, being out- side his sphere of work.-- A monthly report.

The new Secretary also deplored the wide use of propaganda in the world to-day, and said that as an anecdote the United States must blanket the world with truth.?Sarawak Tribune.

Matu will turn to be "Venice of Sarawak" in December to February nearly every year when flood arrived. The only mean of tranport is boat. When moonlit night you will hear the sound of dayong (not young girls as the Ulu Sadong Dayaks say) of the boat where the merrygoers go rowing with one man to turn the gramophone.?A letter.

Almost all if not everybody is a musical lover.? Sarawak Tribune.

On the 16th Capitan China put forth a question concerning school grant which prewar the grant was 50% and since after the war the grant had been reduced to \$15 per month. He was told that at the moment no suggestion has been made and since the community is quite well up there is no likely chance to earn coal into the castle.?A monthly report.

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

Fifty Years Ago.

THE , MARCH 1st, 1897.

We have received a further letter on the subject of the Sarawak and Singapore Steamship Company. Limited. It runs to five closely written pages of foolscap and is followed by twelve signatures of which five are chops of Chinese firms. As how- ever it is couched in somewhat intemperate language and the suggestions made in it are unbusiness like and impracticable we refrain from publishing it.

Simanggang Monthly Report :

I intend to bring before Your Highness at an early date, if possible at Simanggang, a grave case of disobedience to Your Highness's well-known order by certain Sabuyow Dyaks.

These people (eight or nine doors) have secretly cut down a fine tract of old jungle on Bukit Brangan and have thereby destroyed, I am informed, many very valuable timber trees such as Bilian, Penyau, Engkabang pinang. Mang best. Garu enkaras, Medang Skarang and other hard woods. E. pinang and Mang best are most valu- able for boats and the bark of the latter is said to be quite equal to bilian shingles when used for roofs. Some twelve pikul of Garu. was exported from here a little while ago and this should have given the chief an inkling that old jungle was being felled but he knew nothing of it until I visited the river. Of course these Sabuyows state that they intend to plant coffee.

Beliang, a Saribas Dyak who with some others followed Blabut to Samarahan several years ago? these people were all turned out of that river as they made themselves objectionable by trying to annex people?s farm lands) settled down at ulu Tebelu about ten years ago and is the first coffee planter in the river. He has exported over \$100 worth during 1896 and his garden, though quite recently made, is said to be looking well. Tawi. a Skarang from Nihong and Kadir, a Lemanak, have settled here some thirty years ago and have small followings. None of these people give any trouble and all are planting coffee upon old farm lands.

News from Far and Near.

FIRST DIVISION.

The District Officer, Kuching, reports that another member of the Kampong Kuap Committee has

resigned. He fears that there may be further resignations to come and replacement will be a difficult problem. The Honourable the Resident comments that the Committee appears to be a 'wash-out'. Heavy fines were inflicted in the District Court, Kuching, in January for breaches of the Movement Control Rules.

On January 28th the Native Officer-in-Charge, Kuching, went down-river to Buntal, where s.s. Matang was beached, in order to arrange with the Tua Kampong to discharge the remaining cargo. The Sarawak Steamship Co. agreed to pay 15% salvage.

The Honourable the Resident reports that the movement of cigarettes over the border from Bau appears to be reaching alarming proportions. Two men were sentenced to terms of imprisonment for offences in connection with the illegal movement of 90,000 cigarettes in January.

An inquest was held into the death of a Land Dayak named Kadir anak Lukis who died of throat wounds at the Nam Loong Gold Mine on January 3rd. A verdict of suicide was returned. This man's wife sat and watched her husband bleed to death for fourteen hours, while a neighbour, who, hearing cries, came to deceased's house, walked straight back again, pointing out that he too had had his throat cut. by bandits in China.

On January 27th the Corporal in charge of Muara Tuang reported to Serian that a Chinese boat-hawker, plying his trade in the Samarahan, had disappeared and was suspected murdered. The matter was being investigated by the Kuching police.

The Native Officer, Serian, says: "Some Dayak youngsters are working for the local shopkeepers as row-men from Tebakang to Serian and their pay is \$3 per day."

The Native Officer, Serian, points out that the rationed cloth recently received was 'very thin and colourful or white varieties'. This, he says, is not suitable for the natives, who 'males or females are mostly requiring thick and dark colour cloths for working in farms and other manual works'.

The District Officer, Bau, reports that the recently installed street-lamp at the junction of Krokong Road was found missing on January 14th. It was obviously stolen the night before and has not yet been recovered.

What was believed to be an attempt by some unknown person to burn the back portion of shop-

house No. 8 of Bau Bazaar about 10 p.m. on January 31st was averted by a neighbour, who, seeing fire burning on the roof, raised an alarm. The fire was fortunately put down before it could spread. A bundle of rags attached to a string and apparently soaked in solar oil was found in the roof. The attempt was supposed to have been due to the alleged unjust distribution of Government controlled commodities by certain shopkeepers.

The District Officer, Bau. reports that the chief event during January was the visit of His Excellency the Governor and Lady Arden Clarke. The party arrived at Bau at about 9 a.m., and on reaching the outskirts of the municipal area, where an arch was erected, they were greeted by representatives of the Chinese community and by the children of the Chung Hua School. After breakfast His Excellency gave an audience in the District Office, during which a number of requests were made, and His Excellency then delivered an address on various subjects, principally concerning the food situation. Later His Excellency visited the bazaar, the Chung Hua School, and the works of the Krokong Gold Mining Syndicate Limited. Before returning to Kuching His Excellency visited Siniawan. The District Officer says : "Enthusiasm for the visit was high everywhere here and regret was expressed that His Excellency could not spend longer in the District on this occasion."

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Engkabang was fetching \$8-9 per picul in Serian in January. The Native Officer suggests that this crop might be purchased through Government agents. The Honourable the Resident comments that this idea has already been put forward by other officers, who have apparently given it little thought, since, when one asks how they propose to provide the staff, storage and transport, they withdraw

the suggestion.

His Excellency the Governor visited Serian on January 15th. His Excellency inspected the various schools and dealt with requests in open court, returning to Kuching on the same day.

The Honourable the Resident reports that Serian can now be reached from Kuching in three hours. This compares with two hours from Kuching to Bau.

The Native Officer, Lundu, reports that the Land Dayaks are very eager for a school there. In Lundu there are three distinct Land Dayak races, the Lara, the Jagoi, and the Selako. They talk different languages and are almost all illiterate.

During January wild boar and monkeys penetrated into the Sungei Pasir Tadi Scheme, more damage being done by the latter than by the former.

FOURTH DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that during December a considerable drop in the price of rice was noted throughout the Division, but the prices of other articles appeared to be increasing and there was no fall in the cost of labour.

The malaria epidemic, says the Honourable the Resident, was on the wane in December. The District Officer, Miri, reports that "several of the Government staff, including the Honourable the Resident, were down with malaria during the month." He also takes the view that the epidemic was decreasing, although there was still a large demand for atabrin.

The Sarawak Oilfields Limited are slowly moving back to Miri, and a considerable amount of clearing up work in preparation for drilling was carried out during December.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that several more cases of lunacy occurred in December. One Chinese youth of 17 was extremely violent. The incidence of such cases now is many times greater than before the occupation, and amongst the causes suggested are malnutrition and malaria.

In December theft was prevalent in Miri and on the increase; food and clothing appearing to be the usual objectives. The District Officer says that several cases occurred of burglaries from European bungalows, which are kajang built with open verandahs and therefore "easy nuts to crack."

Tua Kampong Muip of Kampong Dagong, Miri, was arranging to open a shop in Miri, to be run by a

kongsi of Tua Kampong. The District Officer intimates that by far the greater proportion of the Miri trade is in the hands of the Chinese and such enterprise on the part of the Malays is to be encouraged.

The inhabitants of Kanpong Braya, who, during the occupation, retreated about five hours' walk from the beach to the Ulu Braya, have reported that after this harvest they are all returning to their former homes on the coast. About sixty houses are involved.

On December 22nd Government launch Doreen fouled a rope while entering the kuala. As a result she drifted out of the channel and lost her rudder before she could be pulled off.

A number of displaced persons, formerly domiciled in Singapore, were shipped home from Miri during December.

The Sarawak Oilfields Limited have generously given forty-five bags of cement for the construction of the memorial in St. Columba's Cemetery to the thirty-two victims of the Riam Road massacre.

In December a bomb exploded at Lutong, wounding two men and slightly injuring others. These people were riding in a truck when the bomb exploded about twenty yards away, having been burnt over by a grass fire. The District Officer says that there are many unexploded bombs in this area. Some have been marked but in places near the landing ground, for instance, where there are vast expanses of long grass, there must lie many more as people are continually coming across them. The Honourable the Resident comments that this latest incident has caused considerable alarm.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that in December eleven inches of rain fell in twenty-four hours at Seria, in Brunei territory.

A Dayak was gaoled in December at Tatau for Mealing belian posts belonging to a Chinese. He stated that he was under the impression that any timber left lying around for more than six months was "free."

Most of the Dayaks in the Tatau area have been eating sago as a substitute for rice. They would perhaps not have been so badly off, says the District Officer, Bintulu, if they had not sold what they actually needed for their own consumption in the black-market through the Chinese in the period prior to the enforcement of the Movement Control Rules.

The District Officer, Bintulu, reports that Dayaks who choose to work jungle produce as a means of earning their livelihood seem better off than others, since damar and jangkar have been fetching a good price in the local market, though the price of jelutong has dropped considerably. Large quantities of damar have been shipped to Kuching and, since the Lucille started to run regularly, there has always been cargo left on the wharf owing to lack of shipping space.

A discussion with the leading traders in Bintulu concerning a reasonable price to be offered to the collectors for engkabang took place on December 5th. It seemed that the local collectors must suffer a good deal owing to the absence of direct shipping to Singapore, and the consequent necessity for the transshipment in Kuching of all the Bintulu cargo. The discussion was postponed for further inquiries to be made about the shipping possibilities.

Seven hundred and eleven out-patients were treated at Baram dispensary during December.

FIFTH DIVISION.

Native Officer Awang Bunyok was, in December, put on trial at Lawas for the second time on a charge of criminal breach of trust, his previous conviction having been quashed by the Supreme Court and a re-trial ordered. He was found guilty and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment, but this conviction was also quashed by the Supreme Court on revision.

It seems that it is considered in this Division that the Murat adat concerning brian ope rates unfairly. At present brian is not only payable to the woman's parents but to any of her relations, The amount at present works on a sliding scale according to social position but it can be claimed over and over again by different relations. It is, the District Officer, Lawas, says, a lucrative racket.

The sago industry in Sundar continues to flourish, about 380 piculs being produced in December.

The District Officer, Lawas, reports that as a result of the transfer of the teacher to Ulu Baram, the school at Long Beluyu has had to close. It is most important, he says, that this school should be re-opened at the earliest opportunity, but no substitute teacher could be found in the District, the stumbling block being the Murat language. Unfortunately the Borneo Evangelical Mission is unable to help, as their Murut "teachers" capabilities are in effect limited to expounding their religion. On the

last day of January a local Mnrut with sufficient ability to read and write Romanised Malay and to do elementary arithmetic was found to be willing to take on the job.

It is reported that Native Officer Tuanku Suror shot a crocodile fourteen feet long at Kuala Lintang, between Sundar and Trusan, in December.

The District Officer, Lawas. reports that all urgent repairs to Government buildings were completed in December " including the rebuilding of the Lawas police barrack jamban which fell backward into the river. Fortunately it was unoccupied at the time."

The Honourable the Resident reports that in January inquiries were started to ascertain the names of those who helped the crew of the Liberator, which crashed at Kampong Talahak in January or February, 1945, to escape. The result, he says, is a story of exceptional loyalty and courage which has been the subject of separate reports and recommendations.

The maximum attendance at the Limbang Malay School in January was 116. Only two masters are available. Also the building is much too small for such a number, and when additional staff arrive the people will be exhorted to increase its size. In the meantime a verandah is being removed to make a little more room.

The District Officer, Lawas. reports that on January 28th the Dresser was sent to Merapok in response to a call for medical assistance from Penghulu Pangon. Eleven deaths had taken place amongst the Tagals, but the outbreak had ceased by the time the Dresser arrived. The deaths are believed to have been caused by pneumonia following upon bathing when running a fever, the latter probably caused by eating too much fruit.

Large numbers of Murats visited Lawas from the ulu during January with rice for sale. Over seven hundred gantang of beras were sold, the price dropping to \$2 a gantang. An interesting feature of this trade was that occasionally Murats visited kampong houses and tried to sell direct at a higher price. Their commercial instinct having been awakened it is Murats rather than the towkays who keep the price up. The District Officer was even approached by a Penghulu and requested to order that towkays should pay his people \$2.50 a gantang for beras.

The District Officer, Lawas. reports that engkabang is likely to be largely wasted as towkays in the

District refuse to show interest in it. They claim that they are not in a big enough way of business to take advantage of the offers made by Singapore buyers. The Honourable the Resident, however, comments that the Limbang towkay who has undertaken the shipment of engkabang from there has also agreed to be responsible for exports from Lawas, but apparently this arrangement was made after the District Officer had reported.

Local bazaars in Lawas District have been flooded with Australian gin and brandy, as well as a small amount of Tuborg Lager.

The appointment of a new prison mandor in Lawas has been followed by a serious decline in the prison population. The staffs of Sarawak gaols have a great reputation for hospitality, which, it is to be hoped, they are not in danger of losing.

Owing to drought the fresh-water situation has been bad in all down-river areas of Lawas District. At Lawas itself only two wells were available for drinking water by the end of January, and those too fastidious to bathe in saltish river water had

to go some distance to find streams. From Awat- Awat, where fresh water is always a problem, carriers had to paddle an hour's journey above Sundar to fill their jars.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

3rd February, 1947.

To

The Editor,

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Sir,

In the interests of accuracy I feel that I should point out that the statement on page 19 of the of 2nd January, 1947, to the effect that 'this is probably the only station where a District Officer is now posted and has to live in the fort' is not strictly accurate.

The Officers quarters in Fort Sylvia. Kapit, were demolished by the Japanese and the District Officer has, hitherto, been living in a Clerk's quarters. Hence the erection of a bungalow there.

R. G. Aikman, Resident. Third Division.

Kuching.

13th February. 1947. The Editor,

.

Sir.

The old order changeth but is that any excuse for displaying ill manners and lack of consideration for others?

Before the war when one was asked to Tiffin or Dinner ones boy automatically attended and assisted at table. To-day the unfortunate host may find himself faced with five or six guests and only his own boy to serve at table.

Another unfortunate departure from the old code is the habit of giving orders to other peoples' boys. In the past no one even thought of addressing an order to anyone else's boy without the permission of the master.

Finally, one's boy has a name, why not use it and avoid the depressing habit of shouting "Boy? in one's own house?

I am.

You:s faithfully.

KACHANG PANJANG

Resident's Office.

First Division. Sarawak.

Kuching.

13th February, 1947. The Editor,

.

Sir,

On behalf of the Hon?ble the Chief Justice and the Magistrates may I appeal to jeep drivers for a little more consideration during the normal office hours when one or other of the Courts is almost certain to be sitting.

It is difficult enough to hear evidence in the existing Court buildings at any time, but when jeeps are driven past with roaring engines, manoeuvred on Pangkalan Batu, or just left standing with the throttle open, the situation becomes impossible.

I am aware of the fact that most of the trouble is due to faulty silencers, but much can be done by avoiding unnecessary "revving up."

I am,

Sir.

Yours faithfully,

L. K. Morse,

Resident, First Division.

From "Adversity": Internment Quarterly.

(The following was published as a leading article in the fifth and last number of "Adversity" on July 1st, 1944. Ed.)

Our Birthday.

"In him the savage virtue of the Race.

Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead : Nor did he change : hut kept in lofty place The wisdom which adversity had bred."

This is the last verse of Wordsworth's "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," and, although it has been suggested, probably incorrectly and unjustly, that the utmost adversity the poet ever experienced was a bad egg for his breakfast, there can be little doubt that he had in mind the fate of prisoners on the north coast of Borneo, who were to be among the victims of a world conflagration more than a hundred years later. To-day we celebrate our Birthday. For the past twelve months we have, in our humble and clumsy way, endeavoured to instil wisdom into the hearts of our readers, and, while our success may appear questionable to the superficial observer, we are confident that our great public will not lightly forget the lessons we have taught. "Adversity" was founded on July 1st. 1943. with a threefold object. In the first place it was intended to entertain our readers, and to shed a ray of sunlight on an otherwise drab and monotonous existence. In the second place it was hoped

that it would provide an outlet for the creative urge so unhappily stultified in other directions: and in the third place there was a possibility that it might prove a lasting, though perhaps shabby. memorial of our journey through the valley of humiliation.

One of the most notable features of the last two and a half years has been the amount and variety of manual skill and mechanical genius that hard times have evoked. Adversity" doffs its hat with respect, gratitude, and astonishment to the men who make stoves and ovens; who erect pumps and repair taps: who induce watches that expired with freedom to rise and resume the march: who restore sight to the blind by performing miracles with broken spectacles: who produce models from mud- holes. and musical instruments from refuse dumps; who both know how to grow vegetables and actually grow them; who concoct tasty dishes from materials that were never equalled in any night- mare of Mrs. Beaton's, and skin goats as if they were born to be window-dressers in a ladies' emporium; who, in short, realise that their hands were given them for other purposes besides blowing their noses and picking their teeth. They are the men of the hour, the men who make incarceration tolerable for their fellows, and without whom it is difficult to see how life could survive. But what of the others? What of that great, flabby. amorphous mass of creatures, who find much difficulty in making a stool with four legs of equal length all of which come out on the same side, who put the blades of their changkols on upside down, and stick latex patches on their trousers with such energy that they have to be extricated from their garments with a hammer and chisel before retiring to bed. They cannot now point with paternal pride to the children of their inventive brain and mechanical dexterity, nor will they be able, in after years, to donate acceptable exhibits to the war prisoners? museum. To this useless, helpless, but somehow pitiable class of men ?Adversity" offers a solution. If they cannot manipulate a saw or wield a saucepan, they can at any rate use a pen or pencil and thus find a vent for their fertile imaginations and fervent memories; and perhaps one day a stranger will turn the pages of their articles and stories, and conclude that they too were men, who refused to allow prolonged misfortune and recurring disappointment to blunt their energies or stagnate their brains.

We do not, however, wish to convey the impression that we are merely offering a kind of consolation

prize to the manually inept. On the contrary many of our most valued contributors are members of that superior class whose abilities we applaud. There is ample room between our covers for all sorts and conditions of authors. It has been represented to the Editorial Board that 'Adversity' should have a more topical flavour. The point is arguable. On the one hand there is the natural desire of everyone to turn their minds away from our present trials and seek refreshment in more congenial pastures, while, on the other, it does seem reasonable that a camp magazine should contain some allusion to camp conditions, and the people enduring them, particularly if, in the future, it is to present any picture at all of our life and times. The Board has decided, therefore, that, while it in no way wishes to discourage the authors of short stories or articles on subjects more directly connected with the great world outside the bars, it would particularly welcome contributions dealing with the daily round. At present the magazine lacks a correspondence column and a gossip column, as well as a series of contentious articles raising the various points, which are so perpetually subjected to oral discussion and debate. So long as the law of defamation, the conventions of society, and the susceptibilities of the gods are properly observed there would appear to be a wide and untilled field for potential writers to experiment in.

This Birthday Number is unfortunately particularly scanty owing, we believe, partly to the paper shortage, and partly to the general dissatisfaction and disillusionment that are consequent on the periodical raids and removal of material on which much time and trouble has been spent. We ourselves suffered in the holocaust and our readers will have noticed that this time we appear in brand new apparel. Conscious of our rectitude, and confident both of the nobility of our principles and of the innocence of our performances, we feel a proper indignation, amounting almost to choler, at being classed with language learners, playwrights, accountants, and such-like scribblers, as persons whose works are liable to peremptory seizure and pertinacious scrutiny. However we have survived that particular storm, and, whatever may have happened to the savage virtue and ferocious thoughts of the Race, we are able, for the present at any rate, to continue the breeding of wisdom, but, if the paper famine does not abate, this Birthday Number may prove our swan song. We can scarcely expect our readers to wish us 'many happy returns,' but we are sure that, if we manage to

prolong our existence, ?Adversity? will still receive the same assistance and support as have lightened our labours hitherto.

Kuching Market Price List.

Average monthly Market List (January 20th to February 20th, 1947).