

# Sarawak Gazette

PRICE

KUCHING, Thursday, May 1st, 1947.

20 CENTS.

## Contents.

	Page.
Birth:—	
Dant ...	71
Perintah Peripatetic ...	71
H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth's Birthday	73
Their Excellencies in the Ulu Rejang	73
The Governor in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions	73
Notes and Comments	77
Land and Custom	78
The Labourer And His Hire	80
London Letter	82
Sidelights on Internment: 9	83
This Sarawak	84
Fifty Years Ago	84
News from Far and Near	85
Correspondence:	
What's in a Name?	88
From "Adversity": Internment Quarterly ...	89
Kuching Market Price List	90

## The Sarawak Gazette.

THURSDAY, MAY 1st, 1947.

### Birth.

DANT.—At the General Hospital, Kuching, on 14th April, 1947, to Elizabeth, wife of Alan D. Dant, a son—Kenneth, Patrick.

## PERENTAH PERIPATETIC.

Gubernatorial peregrinations, as the Americans would no doubt say if they were given half a chance, have thrown into the limelight one of the most important aspects of a Government officer's and, in particular, a District Officer's work. When we speak of "travelling" in Sarawak we do not refer to the joys of the leave boat or to excursions on a tourist liner. We do not even include in the phrase such rare experiences of a few favoured individuals as duty trips to Singapore. There may or may not be a suitable designation for these sort of jaunts, but by

"travelling" we in Sarawak mean one or all of three things. There is in the first place "Head of Department" travelling from headquarters to headquarters; in the second place routine travelling from sub-station to sub-station with an occasional frolic in a District Officer's bungalow thrown in; and in the third place the straight, honest, back-to-nature travelling indulged in in the main by administrative officers in their periodical tours of the large areas under their control. His Excellency has shown by personal example that he attributes great importance to all three, which is worthy of note as they are all part of the ancient tradition of Sarawak, the value of which should be no more ignored than it should be exaggerated.

The "Head of Department" journeys in comparative comfort, and indeed the embittered District Officer is inclined to murmur that such luxurious gallivanting is not real "travelling" at all. In the old days such an important person could always be sure of his own Government launch, but no doubt he now occasionally has to make use of an over-crowded Chinese substitute. He may be visiting Simanggang, the home of pre-prandial administration, where "it's not so much what you do in the office as what you do elsewhere that counts;" or Sibü, the second city of Sarawak, nestling like a kidney in the pudding, in the heart of the unspoilt wild; or Miri, where the oil meanders muddily through the derrick-covered hills into the placid sea; or Limbang, the country town which enables Sarawak to claim like Katisha that she has a picturesque but little known extremity. At all these Divisional Headquarters the traveller will be royally entertained. The "Head of Department" will find rebukes and reproofs, which he has been saving up for months, washed away from his lips, and the disputes and misunderstandings, over which he considered himself locked in struggle with the Resident, will miraculously disappear. He will draw his travelling allowance and send it to his host because General Orders tell him that this is what makes a gentleman. He will add two bottles of whisky, or he would have done so in wetter and better days, because he thinks he might possibly have drunk almost as much as one, and his host

will receive them gladly although he knows his guest demolished four. But what does it matter? Much sound and solid work will have been done and sooner or later, when the backwoodsmen invade the capital, the laugh will be on the other face.

The second form of "travelling" has little to commend it. It is the sort of thing the auditor has to do. Boring days and disconsolate nights in a sub-station *kubu* have to be experienced to be understood. If one is lucky there will be a native officer in the station, and probably an affable "court-writer." One or two "court peons" also help to cheer the weary hours, but, generous and hospitable as these denizens invariably are, there is a limit to the extent to which one can intrude on their kindness. Meanwhile the days drag past in the bare and unlovely private quarters of the fort, relieved by attention to duties in office hours and possibly by an occasional visit from a wandering Dayak. The trouble is that this sort of travelling is a gap between two worlds. While one has left the comparative comfort of the District Officer's house one has not yet reached the hearty warmth and convivial welcome of more primitive society. The writer's experience is very limited but if this article could start a correspondence on "What is the most depressing sub-station in Sarawak?" it would have served its turn. While it is impossible to say what might be brought out of the bag it is difficult to imagine a more unpleasant experience than being stranded for several days at Lingga, Niah, Sibuti, and Engkilili are on a different plane altogether and Tebakang can be really beautiful. We have however omitted to mention those places with the worst reputation in the fond hope that these omissions may be supplied by correspondents.

Lastly we come to the real "travelling;" the "travelling" which is all part of the day's work to the administrative officer, which he is sometimes inclined to regard as setting himself in a class apart from his departmental colleague, and which has been and is the salt in the government of this country. Sometimes by *prau* and sometimes on foot, sometimes for short distances by launch, the District Officer wends his way through the area under his jurisdiction. Stopping at long-houses, sleeping on the *ruai*, learning the *adat* and administering it in almost the same breath, stepping gingerly across the swinging bamboo suspension bridges, and more gingerly often, because of the lack of handholds, along the *batang* over gulfs or swamps, changing his coolies at every stopping-place, and distributing tobacco and soap to the followers now discharged, so the District Officer faithfully adheres to-day to the tradition of personal administration formulated and insisted on by the Rajahs Brooke. Not for him the roads and motor-cars of more developed

territories, not for him the tents and conveniences of the official who goes to the people but does not go amongst them.

It should not of course be thought that it is by any means all hardship. The bathe in the cool and clear stream, the cheerful gossip in the evening after the day's cases are done, the freshly killed deer or pig, the pleasant feeling that one is a welcome guest, all tend to make many an administrative officer feel sometimes that he is doing the finest job in the world and to fix in his memory scenes and moments that will never be erased. No doubt during one's first spell in the country one is particularly impressionable. No doubt the experienced officer finds that the *begawai* loses its flavour, the daily fight with the pigs its thrill, the hospitality of one's hosts its novelty, and the friendly words "Tuan ka ngayap?" their attraction. Even in one's early years the end of the trip is viewed with relief, and when, after a fortnight of long-houses and jungle-paths, one returns to the remotest out-station, containing no other European but amply compensating for this by holding the prospect of a cold beer, it appears as if one has arrived at a metropolis indeed.

It is not intended to suggest that this kind of travelling is a monopoly of administrative officers of the Senior Service. It is probably indulged in most by the native officers, and many "technical officers" have their moments as well. To *padi* inspectors, constables, dressers, and such-like it is all mere routine. The time may come when wives can accompany their husbands on these trips but there is no doubt that that time is not yet. His Excellency the Governor-General and His Excellency the Governor have clearly indicated the significance which they attach to this work, and this fact must rejoice the heart of every old Sarawak officer because it is a resounding reply to the allegation that the traditions and individuality of this country are likely to be extinguished. It is inevitable of course that they should be told by people, who have never been nearer Sarawak than the Natuna Islands, that their impressions require correction, but we, whose lot it is to be idle amongst the flesh-pots of Kuching, know better. We know that "the real Sarawak" lies outside our immediate vicinity, we know that the man who travels "from house to house" is the man who understands what the people of Sarawak are thinking, what they want, what they need, and the goals to which they aspire; we are even prepared to be bludgeoned into acquiescence by the invocation of local knowledge; and we respect, though not without a touch of envy, the public servants of all ranks and branches of the service, who, by translating the principle of personal administration into action, are still bearing the burden and the heat of the day.

## H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth's Birthday.

The following telegrams were passed between His Excellency the Governor of Sarawak and Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth on the occasion of the latter's birthday:

Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth,  
Buckingham Palace, London.

On the occasion of Your Royal Highness's twenty-first birthday Sarawak sends affectionate and respectful greetings.

GOVERNOR.

From: Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth,  
Capetown.

To: H.E. the Governor of Sarawak, Borneo.

I thank you and all the people of Sarawak most sincerely for your kind greeting which I have received with much pleasure.

## Their Excellencies in the Ulu Rejang.

### GREAT WELCOME FROM THE THIRD DIVISION.

Their Excellencies the Governor-General and the Governor, accompanied by Lady Arden Clarke and Mr. A. R. Snelus, left Kuching in a Sunderland flying boat at midday on March 20th, for a tour of the Upper Rejang. At the Governor's request Squadron Leader Ruston kindly flew his plane at a low altitude up the Rejang River as far as Kanowit before coming down to land at Sibu. Magnificent views of Sarikei and Binatang were obtained as the plane passed directly over these stations, and the people waiting at Kanowit to welcome Their Excellencies on the morrow waved delightedly as Squadron Leader Ruston circled low three times over their heads. A perfect landing was then made in the Rejang at Sibu, where the flying boat came to rest directly opposite the crowds of inhabitants lining the waterfront all the way from the Government wharf to the Borneo Company offices.

The Honourable the Resident came out to meet Their Excellencies while the District Officer waited to greet them as they stepped ashore. A full Guard of Honour from the Sibu contingent, attended by the band of the Sarawak Constabulary, was drawn up for inspection, after which Their Excellencies were introduced to European and chief Asiatic officials and the leading representatives of all communities. They then walked past lines of school children and others who had assembled to welcome them.

After lunch Their Excellencies granted a long interview to the leaders of the Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu (Young Malay Association) in the Government offices, and were later entertained to a tea party and reception at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, at which Lady Arden Clarke and many other ladies were also present. Their Excellencies and party then drove out by jeep to Kampong

Nangka where all the Melano inhabitants turned out to welcome them; the party returned via Telephone Road. In the evening Their Excellencies and Lady Arden Clarke attended a concert at the Rex Cinema given by the Sibu contingent and band of the Sarawak Constabulary.

Early the next morning Their Excellencies and party, which from now on also included the Honourable the Resident, Third Division, left in the "Mermaid" for Kanowit which was reached at 11.30 a.m. Their Excellencies were received by the District Officer, Native Officer, the Rector of Kanowit and Rev. Fathers Bruggerman and Muhren, also by Dayak chiefs and headmen, leading Chinese representatives and lines of school children. After addresses of welcome from the Chinese and Dayak communities had been read to Their Excellencies in Court, to which the Governor-General graciously replied, the Governor granted audience to all who had requests to make and addressed the assembled company on Government policy in general.

An excellent lunch to which Their Excellencies and Lady Arden Clarke were entertained at the Chinese School was followed by a walk through the Bazaar to the R.C. Mission, where the Governor addressed the assembled children from three schools in a brief speech. The Mission hospital and convent were then inspected and afternoon tea taken with the nuns.

Early in the evening Their Excellencies had an informal talk with all the Dayak Penghulus and many Tuai-Tuai Rumah in the District Officer's bungalow at Panto Mali and later a large number of Government servants and Penghulus sat down with Their Excellencies to a splendid curry. This was followed, and a hectic day brought to a close, by a "berdara" (miring) ceremony, the singing of "pantuns" and Dayak dancing on the compound outside Fort Emma.

Before leaving the next morning the Governor granted a long interview to the Malay anti-session representative of the Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu in Kanowit.

Kapit was reached shortly after 5 p.m. on the 22nd. After being greeted by the District Officer and Native Officer, and meeting all the Penghulus and leading Chinese, Their Excellencies were led to the compound outside Fort Sylvia where a magnificent array of loaded "piriang" (plates) was laid out on mats and "pua kumbu" (blankets) on the grass, and Their Excellencies then proceeded to perform the rites of the "berdara" ceremony before a large crowd of enthusiastic Dayaks. It was a great welcome. This was followed by "pantuns" sung by Dayak girls in honour of Their Excellencies, at which the lovely Bulan, daughter of Penghulu Grinang, distinguished herself, and a display of Dayak dancing.

The next morning Their Excellencies sat in Court, the Governor hearing requests, while the Private Secretary took Lady Arden Clarke by outboard up to Pelagus to view the rapids. In the afternoon the Governor visited the Bazaar and later Their Excellencies received all the Penghulus and leading Tuai-Tuai Rumah at an "aum" in the District Officer's bungalow. This lasted two hours, the Dayak chiefs displaying great resentment at the political activities of the tiny anti-session Malay community in Kapit and urging permission to take active measures to put a stop to them. They were particularly annoyed by the claim of these Malays



that they represent the natives of the District, when in fact they amount to little more than 1% of the indigenous peoples of Kapit, while the remaining 99% (viz., the Ibans) are wholly in favour of the new regime.

Early on the 24th Their Excellencies and party, now joined by the District Officer, Kapit, crawled into three long boats driven by outboard motors and set off on the adventurous trip to Belaga, while Lady Arden Clarke returned to Sibul. After the boats had been hauled through the Pelagus rapids by a band of 50 Dayaks, an operation requiring three hours to cover the three miles, and the while Their Excellencies walked along the tow-path—in reality nothing more than a narrow track hewn and blasted out of the cliff face and presenting here and there some tricky places to negotiate—Rumah Penghulu Sandai at Pala Wong was reached about 5 p.m. Here the night was spent. The Governor's boat arrived rather later than the others as it had shipped a large wave at Pala Wong Tajau which nearly swamped them, and they had to call a brief halt at Penghulu Bilong's house to dry out. In the same incident the District Officer, Kapit, who was travelling with the Governor, had the misfortune to lose his watch overboard. After the Governor had made a short address to the assembled company Their Excellencies participated with obvious enjoyment in the usual Dayak welcome festivities and heard stately Kiri, daughter of Penghulu Sandai, sing their praises in allegorical "pantuns" before retiring to the Penghulu's room for a well-earned rest.

Getting away to an early start in the morning the three boats negotiated the Mikai, Tukok and Bungan rapids successfully in easy water and travelling well together eventually reached Belaga about 5 p.m. on the 25th. Here Their Excellencies found a great reception awaiting them, being greeted with traditional songs of welcome from the large crowd of Kayans, Kenyahs and Kelantanans assembled on the river bank: and after meeting the local chiefs and headmen they retired to the Port for the night.

On Wednesday the 26th the Governor granted audience in Court to all Belaga people who had requests to make, and then addressed the assembled representatives of all native tribes on the aims and policy of His Majesty's Government in Sarawak. His Excellency gave immense satisfaction to all present when he assured them that Government would respect their old tribal laws and customs, which would in no way be changed without full and prior consultation with the people themselves.

Later Their Excellencies inspected the Abim Matn School, the dispensary, and the Bazaar. In the afternoon a trip was made by outboard to the foot of Gimm Pasang in S. Belaga, so that Their Excellencies could see for themselves the impassability and magnificence of these wild and turbulent rapids.

That evening there was an entertainment of Kayan dancing and singing on the lawn outside the Fort. It is a pity to have to record that the standard of Kayan dancing in Belaga seems to have fallen, and it is hoped that these people will be encouraged not to allow the practice of such an admirable art to be abandoned altogether. Perhaps the infusion of new dances from the Kenyahs in Apoh Kayan over the border would do much to revive the Belaga people's skill and interest in this delightful form of self-expression.

The next morning was spent in a trip to the Metjawa rapids which, owing to the low state of the water, unfortunately appeared very mild and gave no indication of the menace they can be to anyone trying to go up or shoot down them when the Balui is full. On the way back a call was made at T.R. Lassah's Kejaman house, which gave Their Excellencies a most warm and enthusiastic reception. Both here and at Penghulu Puso's house, to which a visit was paid in the afternoon and where Their Excellencies were accorded another vociferous welcome, refreshments were provided in both solid and liquid form, the native "burak" flowing freely to the accompaniment of the usual drinking songs. In the evening Their Excellencies received a large gathering of chiefs and headmen in the Fort, when an informal talk was held on a variety of topics of vital interest to the Kayans, Kenyahs and Kelantan tribes of Belaga. And this drew to a close the stay of the most distinguished visitors Belaga had had the privilege of receiving in the course of the last several decades. It had been as enjoyable and informative to Their Excellencies as it will be memorable in the annals of Belaga.

Early on the 28th the party set off on the return journey down river. A halt was made just above N. Bah to watch the Borneo Company's elephant at work, which duly gave a most interesting and clever performance of dragging a huge log up a steep gully, then pushing it into position and rolling it over the cliff into the river. It is understood that the one elephant can deal with 10—15 logs in this way every day, depending on the distance of the extraction point from the main river. The Borneo Company's foreman and loggers must be congratulated on the perfect timing of this admirable exhibition.

Another stop was made later to enable His Excellency the Governor to inspect a coal outcrop at S. Ibah, some half hour's walking inland from the Rejang river, before finally drawing up for the night at the long-house of Penghulu Bilong at Nanga Iap.

Here a tremendous celebration was put on in honour of Their Excellencies' visit. No less than 9 deors held separate "mirieng" ceremonies and a riotous party, at which the enchanting Mauer carried off the honours of the "pantun" only ended in the early hours of the morning.

The next day Kapit was reached shortly after noon. The water in Pelagus rapids was so low that "shooting" them was quite out of the question: the boats had to be lowered down by long rattan ropes, while Their Excellencies again footed it along the narrow track. Several groups of Dayaks were again passed between Pelagus and Kapit, as on the way up, patiently waiting on the river banks in the hope of spearing pig, which were said to be migrating, as they swam across the river. Our party only saw an odd few and Dayak Native Officer Benet Jarow got in a couple of cracks with a 303 but with unknown results. The honours of the rifle went to the Governor who bagged a couple of crocodiles during the course of the trip and so rid the Batang Rejang of two of these dangerous pests. Thus ended a noteworthy trip; and the highest praise is due to the three Malay outboard drivers on whose shoulders lay the responsibility for getting Their Excellencies to and from Belaga: they displayed skill and concentration of the highest order in a long and hazardous journey.

On the 30th Their Excellencies left Kapit in the "Mermaid" and stopped at Song for three hours where they received a tumultuous welcome from crowds of Dayaks and the local Chinese. Flags were out and the pretty little temporary station, still on the hill opposite the Katibas river, was attractively decorated. The Penghulus led Their Excellencies straight to the Kubu and insisted on an immediate "berdara" ceremony in view of the unique importance of the occasion. When this had been duly performed His Excellency the Governor heard requests and then delivered an address to the assembled multitude—the Court room being packed to overflowing. Thereafter followed jollifications so intense and overwhelming in their warm-heartedness—for the Dayaks (and Chinese) here had to cram their expressions of delight in the occasion into a very limited space of time—that it was only with difficulty and reluctance that Their Excellencies were able to drag themselves away. But there was a programme to be adhered to and Sibü had to be reached the same day.

On the way down from Song a hurried call was paid at Salim to inspect that admirable institution, the McCarthy Lodge for paupers, and the party finally arrived at Sibü late that afternoon. In the evening a very gay and well-attended dance was held at the Island Club in honour of Their Excellencies and Lady Arden Clarke.

The following morning Their Excellencies left Sibü on the return journey to Kuching, proceeding via Selalang. At this little centre of the Island Trading Company's operations another very warm reception awaited them. After being greeted by Messrs. Bomphrey and Sola and the District Officer, Lower Rejang, Their Excellencies passed under an archway of welcome and received an address from the Melano community, later being entertained to tea, an address of welcome from the Chinese community and a musical entertainment given by the Chinese children in their temporary school house. Selalang was looking very spick and span, and the holiday spirit that was abroad added to the charm and gaiety of the place.

In the evening, after dining at the Manager's house, the party attended an impromptu "bangsawan" put on for the occasion by the Melano community.

Their Excellencies finally arrived back at Kuching at 4.30 p.m. the next day, April 1st, after a calm crossing from Rejang.

Thus ended an historic tour which must have conclusively proved to the natives of the interior that under the new regime the representatives of His Majesty are as accessible to them, as concerned for their welfare, and as eager to participate in their simple pleasures, as have been their Rajahs in the past. Their Excellencies took an intense interest in every detail of their daily lives and showed that they could "down" their "tuak" with the best of them.—(Contributed.)

## The Governor in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions.

### ANOTHER HEARTY GREETING.

His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by Lady Arden Clarke and the Private Secretary, took off by Sunderland flying boat from Pending at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 16th April, for a tour of the

Fourth and Fifth Divisions. Arriving at Labuan at 5 p.m., where the Governor was met by the District Officer, the party immediately transferred to the *Karina* and sailed for Limbang. Tanjong Sapu on Muara Island was reached at 7.30 p.m. and the entrance to the Limbang River about 8.45 p.m.; but the pilot then failed to pick up the channel marks in the dark until, after about two hours of vain searching and circling, a local Malay fisherman came to the rescue and guided the *Karina* up the channel. The party finally arrived at Limbang shortly after midnight. There the Resident and Mrs. Anderson were waiting to greet them, and weary spirits were uplifted by the sight of the pretty illuminations lining the path up the hill to the Residency.

At 9 a.m. the following morning His Excellency inspected the Guard of Honour drawn up outside the Government offices and, after being introduced to the leading representatives of all communities, proceeded to the Court-house to hear requests and address the assembled company. Later in the morning His Excellency met the Junior Service staff in the offices, visited the Limbang sick ward and dispensary and then walked out to inspect the Chinese and Malay schools.

After lunch His Excellency again walked along the Buang Siol road as far as the Malay Club, where he was entertained to refreshments and received most cordial addresses of welcome to which he was pleased to reply. After photographs of His Excellency seated amongst the members of this Persatuan Melayu had been taken he and his party returned through the Bazaar to the Chinese Union Club. Here another very friendly reception awaited His Excellency who was now joined by Lady Arden Clarke and Mrs. Anderson at a delightful tea party, given in his honour by the Chinese Community and attended also by Malay and other native Chiefs. After an address of welcome from the Chinese and a gracious reply from His Excellency this party also concluded with a mass photograph outside the Club.

In the evening prominent Government officials, the leaders of the Malay and Chinese communities and Dayak, Murut and Bisayah Penghulus were invited to a *pahit* party at the Residency to meet the Governor and Lady Arden Clarke. Arrangements for the entertainment, which was to have taken place later in the open, were unfortunately spoilt by rain, but His Excellency nevertheless saw an hour's Dayak dancing in the Court-house.

At 7 a.m. on Friday, the 18th, His Excellency left in the *Karina* for Lawas, accompanied by the Resident, while Lady Arden Clarke stayed at Limbang. Lawas was reached at 1 p.m. and after being greeted by the Native Officer, the Datu Pengiran Haji Matussin, and assembled representatives of all communities, His Excellency proceeded under an archway of welcome past lines of school children to the *kubu* for lunch. In the afternoon His Excellency addressed the people in Court and heard requests, thereafter visiting the Lawas dispensary and wards before being entertained to a tea party in the *kubu* given in his honour and attended by Government officials and all the local prominent people. Later His Excellency walked round the Bazaar, returning in time to watch the end of a football match between Lawas and Mengalong (B.N.B.) teams and after which he was graciously pleased to present the cup to the winning Lawas team.

While the party was resting in the *kubu* in preparation for the entertainment to follow the Assistant District Officer, Mr. A. R. Meikle, suddenly came staggering along in the gloaming. He had been called away up the Ulu Trusan to investigate into the murder of some Muruts and had returned post haste in an endeavour to get back before His Excellency's departure. To accomplish this he had had to walk from Fa Tengoa over Ruan Sepakoi down to Lawas in a day, and his amazing time of only 12 hours for this gruelling trek must surely constitute a record.

After dinner His Excellency again walked down to the bazaar, this time along a gaily illuminated path, to watch a very cheery *ronggeng* which the local people had put on in his honour. Despite interruptions caused by the rain it was a most enjoyable party, in which His Excellency's entourage participated with real gusto.

An early start was made the following morning and after lunching at Lumbang, collecting Lady Arden Clarke and taking farewell of the Resident and Mrs. Anderson, Brunei was reached the same afternoon. Here His Excellency and Lady Arden Clarke had been invited to spend the night with the British Resident. After tea the Governor took the opportunity of paying a courtesy call on His Highness the Sultan in his Istana.

Early on Sunday the British Resident kindly drove the Governor and Lady Arden Clarke down to Tutong on the first lap of the overland journey to Miri. Engine trouble unfortunately caused some delay, but, after meeting the Resident, Fourth Division, who took the party on from Kuala Tutong in a couple of jeeps, Seria was reached shortly after midday. Here His Excellency and party were kindly entertained to lunch by Mr. and Mrs. Higgins, General Manager of British Malayan Petroleum Co., Ltd. Leaving Seria at 3 o'clock and driving mainly along the beach, Kuala Belait, Kuala Baram and Miri River were crossed by ferry and the Residency at Miri finally reached at 5.30 p.m. In the evening His Excellency granted an interview to some Dayak Tuai Ramah, who had come all the way over from Tatuu to see him about their farming land, but soon after dinner everyone was ready to retire early after the tiring jeep journey.

The next morning His Excellency, now accompanied by the Resident, Fourth Division, but leaving Lady Arden Clarke behind at Miri, left at 6.30 a.m. by jeep for Kuala Baram, where the party again transferred to the *Karina* for the trip up the river to Marudi. More trouble was met when one of the *Karina*'s engines broke down and Marudi was only reached at 4.30 p.m.—but this was perhaps just as well since it had been pouring with rain there until a few minutes previous to arrival.

A vast crowd of people were waiting to greet His Excellency and, after being met by the District Officer and the Native Officers and inspecting the Guard of Honour, he walked past lines of Kayans, Kenyahs, Dayaks, Chinese and Malays shaking hands unceasingly. His Excellency then walked round the Bazaar, every shophouse of which was gaily decorated and displaying a banner of welcome. It was in fact a splendid effort on the part of the Chinese of Baram who can congratulate themselves that nowhere had the Governor seen a more prettily decorated bazaar in the course of his tours throughout the Colony.

His Excellency then proceeded to the Court-house where he first addressed the crowd therein assembled on Government's future policy, at the same time assuring the native chiefs and headmen that there would be no change in their *adat lama*, and then gave replies to their requests. It was almost dark before His Excellency finally rose and retired to the District Officer's bungalow.

That evening there was an entertainment in His Excellency's honour on the flood-lit lawn in front of the bungalow. First there was an interesting and efficient display of physical training combined with some gymnastics by Chinese school boys; this was followed by the traditional Kayan dancing and the ceremonial drinking of *burak* by His Excellency after his praises had been sung by Penghulu Tuma Weng Ajang and female *pantun* experts to the accompaniment of a Kayan chorus. The huge crowd which had gathered to watch the show began to disperse shortly after 10 o'clock.

Early on the 22nd, after a photograph had first been taken of His Excellency surrounded by Native Officers, Penghulus and Tuai Rumah, he and his party left for upriver in two launches. One of the *Karina*'s engines was still out of action and it was a long trip up against the flood water coming down the Baratu. The party finally arrived at Long Laput in the dark shortly before 7 o'clock, but there were lights twinkling along the whole length of Lalang's and Akam Deng's 98 door house where a vociferous welcome awaited His Excellency. Great preparations had been made for this festive occasion: a magnificent stairway with decorated hand rails led up the river bank to the house and, inside, the main verandah was hung with a variety of Kayan decorations. A vast crowd, including numerous Penghulus and local headmen, assembled to hear His Excellency's address wherein he again repeated his assurance, given in the *kubu* the previous day, that there would be no change in their *adat lama* unless the people themselves desired it of their own free will and accord.

Later in the evening there was a display of dancing, at which Kalang, son of Penghulu Tuma Weng Ajang, excelled with a brilliant performance, and much Kayan singing to the usual accompaniment of *burak* drinking. The party became hilarious as the evening grew older and the revels continued far into the night.

Leaving Long Laput early the next morning, some of His Excellency's escort still being in rather a dazed condition, a brief call was made at Long Lama bazaar where the Chinese were eagerly waiting to greet His Excellency who spent about half an hour ashore there. Marudi was reached again about 3 p.m., and His Excellency immediately proceeded to visit in turn the R.C. Mission school, the Government dispensary, the Chinese school, where he was graciously pleased to be photographed in a large group with masters and children, and finally the Malay school after walking through the bazaar and *kampung*.

In the evening His Excellency was entertained to dinner by the Chinese community in the Chung Hua School.

It was necessary to leave Marudi early on the 24th in order to fulfil engagements at Miri, and it was with great regret that it was thus found impossible to wait and watch some of the regatta that had been arranged for that day. After taking farewell of Native Officers and Penghulus at the



bungalow His Excellency boarded the *Karina* at 7.45 a.m. and was escorted down river as far as the Bazaar wharf by two racing *prahus*.

Arriving at Miri at 3.30 p.m. His Excellency proceeded to the Court-house to hear requests after first inspecting a very smart Guard of Honour of the Miri Constabulary.

In the evening there was a large and gay party at the Residency to which all European Government officers and prominent officials of Sarawak Oilfields, Ltd., were invited to meet His Excellency and Lady Arden Clarke. Dancing was enjoyed by many of those present.

Early on the 25th His Excellency and Lady Arden Clarke left Miri by jeep for Kuala Baram where the Sunderland flying boat alighted at 9.30 a.m. to pick them up; and Kuching was reached shortly after noon the same day.—(Contributed.)

### Notes and Comments.

His Excellency the Governor-General and His Excellency the Governor and Lady Arden Clarke returned to Kuching on April 1st from their very successful tour of the upper waters of the Rejang. On Wednesday, April 16th, His Excellency the Governor and Lady Arden Clarke left by plane for a visit to the Fourth and Fifth Divisions. They returned to Kuching on April 25th. Accounts of both trips appear elsewhere in this issue.

Comment in Kuching at the beginning of the month was largely concerned with the circumstances in which the resignations of certain Malay Government employees had finally taken effect. By that time the fact that there were a superfluous number of applicants for the vacant places, many of them Malays from exactly the same *kampongs* as those departing, had become widely known, but we were ill-prepared for two officers, who had resigned from one department on grounds of conscience, forthwith offering their services to another. There was also a certain amount of surprise when it was discovered that one old public servant, who had, to his superior's regret, found it necessary to leave the service, had sent his son along to apply for the job thus left empty. Our own office-boy, having shaken hands warmly, murmured earnestly "Tuan, jangan tidak ikut orang banyak," and then offered to return whenever he might be wanted. There was universal appreciation of the fact that those who had resigned thoroughly instructed the newcomers in their duties, even to the extent in some cases of working overtime for this purpose. There was no resentment, no unpleasantness, no sabotage. It is with full appreciation of the past services of these officers that we say that nothing in their work became them more than the manner in which they left it.

The following extract from the February number of "Wood" is indicative both of the close similarity between Sarawak and Burma in respect of the fantastic misconceptions which possess the popular mind with regard to these countries and of the vast difference in the effects of the war on each territory. The good fortune of Sarawak is sometimes too easily forgotten.

"A cold douche was given to romantic visualisers regarding conditions in Burma by A. H. Seymour of the Indian Civil Service,

during a lecture to the Royal Society of Arts recently. Said Mr. Seymour . . . . The mental vision of Burma, as a country situated somewhere in the Far East, of impenetrable jungle with elephants nonchalantly tossing teak logs as a Scotsman might toss the caber, of pagodas with bells tinkling in the silent and mysterious night, of fishes flying gaily in the Mandalay air, of girls, almond-eyed and brightly arrayed and laughing as they eat their lotuses and smoke their large cheroots—all this has given way to something more substantial, more accurate, albeit more sad." Burma, of course, never was quite like that to anyone other than the tripper who 'did' the country in five days.

### AND FACT.

Arena of the bitter struggle in the Far East (in which the Burmese themselves had no wish nor part) the country has now to contend with the stark aftermath. From north to south, scarcely a town escaped serious damage, some were obliterated, and the thousands of people homeless—literally without shelter that is—is one of the most serious and unsettling problems in Burma. The economic life has got to be reconstructed from almost foundation level. Railways and ports have been wrecked and transport is practically non-existent. Great efforts are being made to get timber production flowing once again, but the conditions are adverse. Many of the mills have been either bombed or burned, and in those still standing the equipment is "held together with string." The elephants, vital to the extraction of the logs, have been reduced by half of their pre-war number, and these are in extremely poor shape through neglect. First call on the timber being produced is understandably for internal use—rebuilding for the homeless; but some small quantity of teak has reached here. Meanwhile the Civil Affairs Service is having to tackle the tremendous task of getting the country economically and socially into working order—a job which will require unbounded patience and sympathy."

On April 16th the new issue of postage stamps, with the Rajah's head over-printed with the Royal cypher, were on sale for the first time. Large crowds besieged the Kuching Post Office in the competition to obtain "first-day covers," and business in the town was appreciably dislocated by this counter-attraction. We are informed that \$42,308 worth of stamps were sold over the counter on that day in Kuching and approximately \$20,000 worth of stamps were despatched to fulfil orders by post. Not the least interesting feature of this sale is the fact that not one mistake was made by the clerks at the counter.

A correspondent informs us that an optimist has sent a parcel of ten new-laid eggs by airmail from Sarawak to egg-starved England. The parcel duly arrived completely intact and it is known that the eggs were consumed in London within ten days of being laid in Kuching. Many fresh eggs that we buy in the local market are, according to our correspondent, considerably older than this. Postage on the package amounted to \$68.

Towards the end of the month the preliminary work for the projected census began. It should be explained for the benefit of those who appear to keep this country under close observation from afar, and who are inclined to put their own construction

on every new development here, that it is reliably understood that the decision to take a census has no connection with the current alarming increase in the European birth-rate in Sarawak. Census work in Singapore and the Malayan Union is now in full swing. It is impossible to plan adequately economic and social policies unless figures are available to indicate the numbers and location of the population for whom provision should be made.

No disparagement of the excellent efforts of the new telephone operators is intended, but we cannot forbear from publishing the following story which was told us by way of comment on the leading article which appeared in the last number of the *Sarawak Gazette*. It seems that in the early days of the new dispensation Mr. Stickle's telephone rang. "Hallo, Stickle here," responded Mr. Stickle in his well-known musical accents. Then there was a long pause. At last the operator's voice came through. "Very sorry, sir, Mr. Stickle is engaged."

We have been handed the following, which we have much pleasure in publishing, as it finally and irrefutably establishes the truth of the theory, previously advanced by scientists, that there is human life in "Whitehall":

"For 'Colonel Coots' read 'Colonial Governments.' Any confusion which may have resulted from the inadvertent introduction into the despatch, owing to a typing error, of a purely fictitious military figure, is regretted."

Rumour whispers that a recent gambol at a well-known centre of social life in Kuching was stopped in the early hours of the morning by a senior Government official, who invoked the time-honoured authority appertaining to his office on the very reasonable ground that the noise being perpetrated was a nuisance to sleepers in surrounding houses. It is surely our duty to posterity to place on record the picture, drawn by our informant, of startled revellers in this new Sarawak creeping away to their jeeps and murmuring to one another in hushed tones, "My dear, wasn't that ultra vire?"

## Land and Custom.

(Continued.)

(The following article is the comment of the Director of Lands and Surveys on the article, entitled "Land and Custom" which appeared in the last number of the *Sarawak Gazette*.—Ed.)

The article on Land and Custom raises some very important questions in a native agricultural country such as Sarawak where the indigenous population is almost entirely supported by the products of the soil. The main question is: When will we be in a position to know exactly the purpose to which all the occupied land in the Colony is being put and to know that the individual and communal rights of the occupiers are properly recorded and recognised?

In the case of non-natives this is a relatively simple matter beginning as a rule in original application for Crown Land followed by a survey, which is delineated on the cadastral map and then by issue of a lease. When dealing with the lands

occupied by the indigenous people of Borneo the matter is of course far more complicated as the article pointed out. To begin with let us examine the way in which these lands are protected from embarrassing infiltration by non-natives until such time as the situation can be said to be under full control.

The following are my definitions as I understand them but, for various reasons, there is a measure of confusion in parts of the country regarding category and boundaries of these areas.

**INTERIOR AREA.**—An area which is to all intents and purposes entirely inhabited by natives existing in large racial groups. Owing to the nature of communications and economic factors, it would not be possible at present to inquire into, settle, or recognise in any permanent manner, individual or communal claims to land. It is logical, therefore, in order to avoid confusing the situation, not to issue titles or to permit aliens to take up land in such areas. The Interior Areas are therefore "locked up" for the future. In special cases a title can be issued in an Interior Area. In fact one is being issued in the Lawas District for a mission station. It is not necessary to declare the small piece of land affected a "Mixed Zone."

**NATIVE AREAS.**—These were the areas in which, because they are surrounded by or adjacent to large areas of Mixed Zone, the state of surveys, general administration, and communications is such that they could be dealt with in the near future. They, like Interior Areas, are inhabited mostly by natives, and for the present alienation to others is not allowed. In those that are under the control of the Lands and Survey Department titles to natives are and should be issued where land is held individually. A great deal of the land in these areas is, however, held communally. The limits of these communal holdings are not in all cases defined for record purposes. Where these Native Areas are not under control of the Lands and Survey Department they are really Interior Areas.

**NATIVE RESERVES.**—These were strictly reserved for all time and no alien may acquire a title therein. They were as a rule not properly constituted until "settlement." The term was dropped in 1940 and they are now called Native Areas.

Broadly speaking the Land Orders do not operate in Interior Areas; in Native Areas L—2 operates and L—7 applies in Native Reserves (now Native Areas also).

Native Areas are a good field for investigation and settlement, after which there will result a balance of "State Land," some of which it may be politic to alienate to others than natives. This will not happen in the Interior Areas for so long that we can disregard the question for the present. There are no doubt many portions of the country now labelled "Interior Area" which could better be called "Native Area."

The third paragraph of the article referred to is generally correct except that for new leases issued since 1933 there is small danger of registration not being conclusive title, since the existing rights (if any) are investigated at the time of survey and dealt with.

The title should not attempt to tell the whole story. The matters brought up in paragraph 4 are the responsibilities of Probate Officers, Native Courts and (if we had one) a Native Land Court. It would be no part of the function of Lands



and Survey Department to be involved in such questions except insofar as they affect the general land policy of Government as expressed in legislation.

May not the following be the answers to the four questions propounded in the article? I realise that the questions were rhetorical but give the answers as an indication of the "right of user" principle that seems to be the land *adat* of our up-country people.

*First question.*—At present once only provided the people concerned remain in the community.

*Second question.*—The individual rights are generally subject to the common good of the community when it is a vital question of *padi* land. Generally speaking, in Interior Areas the individual does not become the possessor of any rights until he has a family and a place in the longhouse or village.

*Third question.*—If he is a *bujang*, he has no rights to forfeit. If he is married and disappears for ten years alone, he is presumably running away from his family and with it his land. If he takes his family intending to come back again presumably his rights are recognised until it is obvious he is not coming back.

*Fourth question.*—All rights lapse and it reverts to the Crown.

May it not be said that so long as new land is plentiful no complications of tenure exist among a native race? Complications only ensue when it is desirable to establish a personal right for oneself and one's descendants because of the particular location of the land or because of a comparative scarcity of land suitable to the pursuits and industry of the people concerned. Compare sago growers with up-country hill *padi* farmers. In regard to rubber plantations, I think the man in the *ulu* regards the trees as his property and would not care a hoot about the land on which they grew if some calamity destroyed the trees and made the site difficult to replant, provided he did not have to go very far away for a new site. Officers endeavouring to codify land *adat* should bear these points in mind and thus evolve a code which will be of real use to the people.

I think that possibly the article laid too much stress on the complications of the administration of Interior Area lands. Interior Areas are intended to be those in which there is still plenty of room and from which foreigners are excluded. If complications arise in any particular area, it is a sure indication that the land is close enough to the "civilised" part of the country, and hence is becoming comparatively "crowded," to be dubbed a "Native Area" and disputes settled once and for all by the land surveyor who was described by Cassiodorus as "like a judge . . . . . You would fancy him a madman when you see him walking along the most devious paths. But in truth he is seeking for the traces of lost facts in rough woods and thickets. He walks not as other men walk. His path is the book from which he reads. He shows what he is saying; he proves what he has learned; by his steps he divides the rights of hostile claimants . . . . ."

I do not agree at all that the time is ripe for a wholesale investigation of native customs in respect of land. It should certainly be undertaken in those areas where my comments apply, i.e. in the areas where the shifting cultivation is already damaging both the country's assets and the people's chances

of survival. In such particular areas steep slopes should be excluded from native farming lands at the same time as an intensive drive to teach better methods of farming is made. In these cases there will be a definite "infringement" of immemorial rights but this cannot be helped and must be overcome by some means.

In other areas there is still time to show by demonstration and example that it is far easier and more profitable to use suitable land intelligently and continuously than to clamber over steep hillsides for odd grains of *padi* or to keep large areas of land, suitable for supporting an agricultural people, growing *jerami* most of the time.

I can give the assurance that the Interior Areas are far from properly defined. The sooner we can tidy our minds and clarify

(a) What should be Interior Area to be left alone for the time being, (only so far as land tenure goes: agricultural instruction in the proper use of land should be intensified in these areas more than anywhere else);

(b) What should be Native Area and therefore to be a subject for (in some cases urgent) examination now,

the sooner we shall be correctly on the proper road to the intelligent use of all the land in the Colony.

The policy of the Land Department continues to be one of progressive investigation into land rights but this does not necessarily mean the introduction of procedure under Order L—7 *in toto*.

Order L—7 provides for a detailed judicial examination of every square foot of land in a certain prescribed area and is the logical method when the conditions I mentioned before exist, namely a comparative scarcity of land suitable to the pursuits and industry of the people concerned. It tends to become cumbersome when applied elsewhere. There are many practical difficulties in defining and recording rights when the people are in one river this season and in another the next. Some more flexible form of procedure and record is required in Interior Areas and some Native Areas.

I agree that this work of investigation should be forced ahead but do not agree that the Department may become merely an official machine, etc., etc. Since the introduction in 1933 of the principle of eventual settlement of rights to land which can be recorded on a basis of the sound survey system instituted some years before, the whole work of the Department has been organised with this end in view. Since that date, in the areas under the control of the Department, no new "pre-settlement" title has been issued which could not be transferred to the new Register without further investigation. I except the Jubilee Occupation Tickets in the Second Division which were issued as a matter of expediency.

Also no investigation or revision survey, (and there have been many thousands in areas not "settled") for many years has been made which does not automatically "settle" that particular lot or area. So there exist many lands held under "pre-settlement" leases which could be transferred to the new Register without calling on the owners to prove rights. It would, however, be necessary to publish a schedule of accepted claims in the statutory manner. Also, close attention is paid to the recording on survey sheets of any communal lands and other native interests in anticipation of settlement.

So the important ground and spade work of registering rights goes on every day. The introduction of statutory powers could almost "settle" some lands overnight, but the practical difficulty is that all lots in a particular survey block must be of this category.

It is my intention as far as Mixed Zones are concerned to examine each survey block and assess the work required to bring to the state where settlement could be easily carried out, before any more "settlement" areas are created under Order L-7.

D. L. LEACH.

[It would be both impertinent and improper to enter into controversy with the Director in the *Sarawak Gazette* but there are three points which require clarifying in order to avoid confusion.

1. The Courts do not appear to be entirely in accord with the Director over the conclusiveness of titles issued under L-2. In 1941 these titles were being cancelled right and left by magistrates in the Third Division and similar cases have often occurred in the past elsewhere.

2. It is surely not the District Officer's duty to formulate an *adat* but to discover what an *adat* is. If amendments are desirable they can be secured by legislation. When codifying custom one of the greatest dangers to be guarded against is the codifier's natural tendency to substitute for the true custom something which he thinks the custom ought to be.

3. The reference in the original article to the need for investigating now native customs with regard to land rights has possibly been misunderstood. It was not intended to suggest that Interior Areas and Native Areas were ripe for "settlement." But the following propositions are indisputable:

- (a) Untitled land over which rights are claimed is administered according to native custom.
- (b) There is a growing tendency for natives to dispose of their rights over such land for valuable consideration.
- (c) There is inadequate knowledge concerning the extent to which a native is entitled to dispose of such rights by custom.
- (d) And therefore there is an urgent need that the position should be investigated, not by Land Officers, but by Administrative Officers.—Ed.]

### The Labourer And His Hire.

Since the liberation the rumblings of industrial unrest have rolled across the narrow waters separating Sarawak from Singapore. Round and round and round our great neighbour has seemed to go, in a vicious circle of strikes, riots, inquiries, settlements, and strikes. No doubt the picture drawn by the newspapers which we receive is blacker than the model from which it is copied, as it is to be expected that the high-lights should be thrown on every isolated disturbance. It is a commonplace to say that these troubles are the inevitable aftermath of any world war, and that in a period of abnormally high prices no country which relies on private enterprise, and prides itself on its free institutions, can possibly avoid them

altogether. Sarawak has been remarkably fortunate in this respect, not so much because of our superior virtues, as because we have few highly industrialised centres. We have felt slight repercussions, notably in the Miri oilfields stoppage of 1946, but on the whole strikes and threats to strike have been few in number and all disputes have been amicably settled after a short period of disagreement. We can in no wise be certain, however, that our immunity will continue indefinitely, and it is well that we should understand the symptoms and nature of the disease in order that we may be the better equipped for dealing with it should the necessity arise.

When one turns the pages of a Singapore or Malayan newspaper at the present time and peruses the columns dealing with the latest outbreak, it is hard to resist the impression, whether one is reading an editorial, a letter from an indignant correspondent, an interview with some important person involved, or a news report, that one is putting on again a very old gramophone record. One can almost repeat the column with one's eyes shut. Trade Unions are a good thing in principle because they facilitate negotiations but they must not get drunk with power; workers must not hold the public up to ransom; the maintenance of essential services is a paramount duty of Government; strikers must keep within the law; the strikers would have gone back to work a long time ago if it had not been for intimidation; strike funds are being collected by threats and violence; the strikers never really wanted to strike at all but were stirred up to it by "political agitators." How familiar it all is but familiarity is not inconsistent with truth. It would certainly ill-become a writer in Sarawak to question these assertions, and innuendoes, and the fact that in England they have been made in respect of practically every trade dispute since the repeal of the Combination Acts is no reason at all for questioning their authenticity in the circumstances under review.

There is, perhaps, some qualification required with regard to the use of the word "intimidation." It is surprising how often a majority is considered to want a certain state of affairs and yet to be frightened into the opposite camp by a vociferous, though unarmed, minority. The same sort of thing is said in Sarawak in connection with the anti-cession agitation. The point surely is that the sheep-like majority is not so much "intimidated" as dominated, or, to prefer, psychologically over-awed, by a handful of powerful personalities and natural leaders. The ascendancy of Winston Churchill in the England of 1940 is not unlike the ascendancy of union bosses or anti-cession advocates, though opinions may well differ as to the comparative merits of their respective causes. The analogy is not complete because in 1940 the British public were merely looking for a leader and not for a philosophy, while the messiahs of the new awakening are almost as much concerned with teaching their followers what they ought to think and want as in showing them how to attain their ends; but the substantial point, that the relation between "the majority" and "the minority" is one of personality and influence rather than one of physical violence, remains. This is not to say that the word "intimidation" is not often properly used in its full and literary significance with reference to trade disputes, but sometimes it is loosely applied to circumstances which do not warrant it.

There are some propositions which can be enunciated with equal truth from another point of view and which surely should not be ignored. Subject to certain outstanding exceptions employers are as a class slow to improve conditions of work; the "strike weapon" is an indispensable instrument in the hands of union leaders who are attempting to secure better terms for those whom they represent, the collection and maintenance of strike funds and the right to persuade peacefully are essential corollaries of the right to strike; and it is quite impossible to draw a hard and fast dividing line between "politics" on the one hand and "genuine trade unionism" on the other, because "political action" is every bit as important as "strike action," and realisation of this fact is one of the main reasons for the strength of the British movement as compared to its contemporaries in the U.S.A. Complaints of the anti-social effects of the growing pains of the Malayan trade unions might be read in the light of the history of its British counter-part, particularly possibly the legal history, the long series of reports of Royal Commissions and the volumes of evidence given before those commissions. It is not enough to say that in this part of the world we are so many years behind the United Kingdom that we must be an equal number of years behind in so far as trade union legislation is concerned. Admittedly it might be unwise to adopt the full British paraphernalia and to allow unions exactly the same liberty as is accorded to those associations affiliated to the T.U.C., but it is important that we should avoid the squalid history of repression, opposition, and discouragement, and it is to this end that the British Government has appointed experienced trade union advisers throughout the Colonial Empire.

The remark of a famous Lord Chief Justice that not only should justice be done but that it should appear to be done is now so well-worn as to be almost threadbare. It is, however, especially applicable when considering the relations of employers and workers. It is fatally easy to look upon Government officers as the impartial arbitrators, which they usually genuinely are, on commissions of inquiry as animated by that complete integrity and lack of prejudice, which nearly always possess them, and on the police as the impersonal instruments of law and order, which they enforce more in sorrow than in anger; and at the same time to forget that the matter looks very different indeed from the worker's point of view. To him the judges, magistrates, Government officials, commissioners, and senior police officers, closely resemble the employers with whom he is locked in struggle. He knows that, broadly speaking, they have the same background and training, that they were educated at the same schools and acquired the same tastes, that they pursue the same recreations and fete together in the same clubs, and so he suspects, quite wrongly of course, that they are all in league against him. In this part of the world, where it is roughly true to say that a race distinction is superimposed on a class distinction, the position is naturally aggravated.

The fact that it is the inescapable duty of Government to maintain essential services and to preserve law and order does not assist matters. Food and water must be distributed, riots must be suppressed, hooligans must be punished. The very nature of the dispute makes it inevitable that it should appear to the worker that the intervention

of the authorities is intervention on the side of the employer. Provision for the basic needs of society is represented as the encouragement and protection of blackleg labour, the prevention of breaches of the peace as military tyranny, and the imprisonment of offenders as the mobilisation of the forces of the law for the purpose of breaking the strike. It may be contended that this is the consequence of distorted vision, but, given the facts as they are, it is extremely difficult to prescribe a cure. No doubt a certain amount can be done by the utilisation of the services of progressive-minded men of goodwill, like Frederick Harrison in the early days of the British movement, to help in removing reactionary prejudices and in allaying the fears of the unions, and even more by the education and stimulation of union leaders to assume positions of responsibility, but in these territories this latter antidote, in any substantial measure at any rate, will take time. Meanwhile it can always be remembered that, when the fairest trial has been held, when the most impartial arbitration board has made its findings, when a completely unbiased commission of inquiry has presented its report, when the police have displayed exceptional tact, moderation and self-control, the final peak has not yet been scaled. There still remains a mass of hostility, suspicion and distrust to overcome.

No Government can tolerate strikes in certain undertakings without abdicating from its responsibilities. This has always been recognised in the case of military forces, and in England in 1919 the rule was extended to cover the police as well, a proper safeguard of society to which it is very difficult for any reasonable objection to be raised. These, however, to many minds by no means exhaust the list. The possibility of a "strike of doctors" is from time to time canvassed, but, even if the profession was prepared to take this extreme course, it is arguable how far the public interest would require protection, although the other professions are no doubt not nearly so indispensable. Every person has his own pet catalogue of essential services, but there is usually common agreement on such matters as the provision of water, lighting, transport, and hospital treatment, though opinions may differ as to the extent to which preventive action would be justified, particularly when the undertakings in question are privately owned. Indeed there are good grounds for maintaining that the public ownership of essential services should be a *sine qua non* of the prohibition of strikes therein, or of the provision by Government of labour to take the strikers' place.

It is clear that a union in its infancy is sometimes inclined to make unjustifiable and unreasonable claims. Perhaps the demands are not always so extortionate as appears on the surface, as, where labour is organised for the first time, it generally finds that it has got a lot of lee-way to make up. Occasionally there seems to be some solid foundation for the charge that some people think that there is in the possession of either Government or private employer an unlimited fund of money which can be doled out at discretion, and which is withheld only by reason of spite or parsimony. The opposite contention, that any increase in wages must always be passed on to the consumer, is equally untrue. A rise in the wages bill may be offset by increased efficiency or by a reduction in profits. The *Sarawak Gazette* has no intention of participating in the controversy which



has been running in the *Sarawak Tribune* between the Manager of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company and that Company's critics. It must be said in fairness to the latter, however, that increased cost is not a conclusive argument for increased price, although it appeared to be treated as such. The Company's efficiency is beyond doubt, and, as far as the writer is aware, there is no reason to believe that profits are exorbitant, so that the Manager and the Company are on strong ground in the argument, but any implication that a rise in cost is bound to be followed by a rise in price is surely dialectically and economically unsound.

While therefore it behoves workers to be aware that, if their demands are met, the sufferers, if any, may well be the public and not their employers, yet an examination of balance sheets and accounts is one of the most important factors in the settlement of a trade dispute. Times have changed, and profits and opportunities have changed likewise, but a worker is not likely to be easily convinced by a statement, published recently on one page of a Malayan newspaper, that it is not financially practicable to pay him a higher wage, when he reads on another page that, not so long ago, it was possible for a man to retire wealthy after five years in a partnership. The two statements are in fact perfectly consistent and the truth of one by no means implies the falsity of the other, but to the worker's mind detailed explanations of the apparent discrepancy are necessary if misunderstandings and disputes are to be avoided. Even if the increased cost is to be passed on this is by no means a conclusive argument against the demand. The distinction between "worker" and "public," like the distinction between "producer" and "consumer," is a false antithesis, although this is often forgotten in controversy, because the two expressions may merely be two facets of the same man. Nevertheless that particular portion of the public on whom the burden is going to fall may well be able to afford a higher price, and in any case the worker's standard of living is likely to be more radically affected by the increased wage earned by him than by the increased price charged to him for the finished article.

No doubt both sides in this new world have a lot to learn, and the worker, while he is perfectly entitled to rejoice in his new found strength, should realise quickly that strikes must be avoided whenever possible. This has been the policy of the British trade union movement for a hundred years, and when this fact was drawn to the attention of the members of a Royal Commission in the middle of the nineteenth century it caused those gentlemen no little surprise as they had been instructed differently. A few early successes in the days when the disadvantages of years of disorganisation are being wiped out is no guarantee of successes in the future. The sad and dismal tale of the gradual exhaustion of strike funds, the efforts to maintain wife and family just above the level of starvation, the recurring clashes with the police, the slow trickle back to work of the weaker brethren, gradually swelling to a flood in which even the strongest minded are engulfed, the humiliation of facing victorious and possibly arrogant employers, often in worse conditions than those which the strike was expected to improve, has been told too frequently before to be ignored. Strikes more often fail in their object than achieve it, and, when the resentment of the public at being

inconvenienced is taken into consideration as well, it should be understood that it is only a weapon to be handled in the direst extremity. Whether it is possible in a system of private enterprise to persuade workers that they have a common interest with their employers, or to produce something of that spirit of co-operation and unity which seems to be so easily evoked in time of war, is a controversial field on which the *Sarawak Gazette* cannot enter; but it can surely be made clear to both workers and employers that, as a general principle, industrial disputes and stoppages have a harmful effect on employers, workers, and "the public" alike. "Political agitators" and inveterate malcontents no doubt play their part, but the causes of economic unrest lie far deeper and have to be analysed and understood if trouble is to be avoided.

## London Letter.

REFORM CLUB.

PALL MALL, S.W.1.

8th April, 1947.

By now I had hoped to be in Kuching and maybe out again on my way to Bario. Alas, although I was not sick a day during two years missing about in the Pacific war and after—and felt O.K. for the first six months back home—amoebic dysentery crept up on me in February. I must have picked it up when I came down the Baram last August through the big epidemic then raging in the Ulu. Being fairly fit, I kept it off, but the everlasting cold of February was too much for me. Anyway, that has delayed me a few weeks, and there is time to write you another letter ahead of my own body—which is now filled with emetine, yatriner, and all the other latest hell-doses of Dr. Hawes and Harley Street; I never knew before that a cure could be worse than a disease.

But though I'm anxious to be back and get on with the job, it's been worth staying in other ways. I have spent my spare time in museums and other places, getting books and equipment for the Sarawak Museum and following up some interesting points arising from my Kelabit studies.

When I left Bario last July I brought a few beads, which my Kelabit friends loaned me—so that I could try and find some more for them in "Negri Ingria." Although I have often heard the Kelabits talk about the great antiquity and value of these beads, I never thought much of them myself. To me they looked just as if Charles Hose had them made from the bottom of Bass bottles. But having hunted through all the beads in the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert, and the Pitt-Rivers at Oxford, to my amazement I found the only near parallels in the Beck Collection at the Cambridge Museum of Ethnology, where some almost identical beads are from Egyptian tombs and from excavations at Ur of the Chaldees, about 1,000 B.C. Dr. Beck had already excited interest some years ago by examining the Ranees' necklaces and finding some of the Dyak type of "eye" beads to be very like others from ancient Greece and Rome. The Kelabit beads are quite different from those valued by the Dyaks, and apparently the Dyak stuff is of later date. The Cambridge people have now loaned me some B.C. beads to take back to Bario and see if Lawai there accepts them as

genuinely Kelabit. It certainly provides a fascinating puzzle—heads separated by thousands of miles and thousands of years, with no known link in between.

I have been spending a lot of time trying to fill in the terrible gaps in the Kuching Museum Library, whence the Japs removed all the Borneo Books. I have done fairly well. But I cannot get the most important item of all—back copies of the *Sarawak Museum Journal*. Even Banks, who's living quietly in Monmouth, can't help. If anyone in Kuching has a set, do let us have it. It is a vital need.

While I was at Cambridge I had a chance to fly over the Fen Floods which put the final cap on the weather disasters of snow and blizzard in March. It was an amazing sight from the air—hundreds of square miles of rich farmland under water, and beyond Ely many a farmhouse with merely the roof sticking out, water up to the eaves. The damage can hardly be estimated in money, though experts say it may be £20,000,000. Contributions are pouring in to the Lord Mayor's Fund—and will be welcome from Sarawak too! The worst of it is the effect on the year's food supply.

Food gets worse and worse. Nature really has done Europe a bad turn in 1947. Vegetables are the most affected now. The largest queues are for—of all things—cauliflowers! All sorts of strange-looking objects are being sold as "celeriac," "seakale," "chives," etc.; I fancy some of them are iris roots and bullrush tops! I saw a fairly harmless pineapple in our Holland Park green-grocer's window this morning, considerably inferior to the sort that grow freely all around the upper Baram. It was price 15/- . A handful of mushrooms come to 3/-; carrots have risen from 2d to 1/9 a lb. But the fat situation is hardest for the housewife. And, of course, rice is unknown. I long for it—even as borak!!

Don't let me paint too depressing a picture. I've now been home long enough to get well back into the sacred British rite of grumbling. Of course, there is plenty that's fine or that's fun, too. For instance, talking of Museums, there is a wonderful exhibition of French Tapestries of all ages in the Victoria & Albert. And the National Gallery has just had a superb show of Old Spanish Masters—Philip Hendy, the new keeper of the Gallery, tells me their next big show, in the autumn, will be of the famous old pictures they recently had cleaned, an act which caused terrible uproar in the press. Some of the experts say picture-cleaning is sacrilege; a first-class arty row should blow up in July, then, to enliven the endless parliamentary ones.

I have had to give several talks to groups of M.P.s lately (NOT about Borneo). I have the impression all parties have internal troubles; and that there may be surprising new political alignments before long. I'm glad to find there is more interest in the East, lately. The Lancashire Group of M.P.s. have even asked me to attend a dinner to tell them about Kelabits next week! The main point of going to the House is, of course, the fact that it has the best cheap food, and the best drink of all, in England!!

A young man, Douglas Home, who has several times unsuccessfully stood for Parliament, has written the most provoking new play of the season—"Now Barrabas," which is well worth seeing, if

you can take it. You also have to be as tough as ever to take "No Room at the Inn" in which Freda Jackson, after a year, is still superbly playing the monstrously cruel evanee "hostess"; it remains the best evening out in Town, except when the Ballet is at its best. Laurel and Hardy have been appearing in the flesh at the Victoria Palace; both my sons are crazy for them. Just out are new Ivor Novello and A. P. Herbert shows,—the usual competent entertainment we expect from these old hands.

Personally, I prefer the pictures. Fuel restrictions are keeping London nearly blacked-out and it's SUCH a job struggling home after the theatre. There have been several more good English films. I saw "Odd Man Out" for the third time; it's terrific. "Hue & Cry" is a lovely, gay, thrilling piece of blitzed moonshine, too—not to be missed. "Temptation Harbour" and "The Man Within" are well above average. From the Americans, there is multi-awarded "The Best Years of Our Lives," with Myrna Loy, too long and crypto-sloppy for me; Hepburn and Tracy in unusual and beautiful "Sea of Grass"; "Dead Reckoning," an honest-to-badness Humphrey Bogart; and for them as can bear that Yank ballyhoo about "the little guy," there's quite a decent version à la James Stewart, "It's a Wonderful Life," produced by that cunning Mr. Capra. There's also one of those pep-tales of how the Americans taught the world to fly (via Anne Baxter); Susan Hayward as a dipsomaniac ("A Woman Destroyed"); and one of the usual odeonic, and to me odious, Warner technicolors called "The Time, the Place and the Girl" (HOW original!) An interesting new star is Miss Crain in "Marge"; and there's an unusual slant in Barbara Stanwyck's latest "The Other Love."

Not feeling very bright and well, I have nevertheless rather concentrated on the simple life. After all, simplicity is the surviving good thing in Britain to-day! Nothing of politics, shortage or Sam Goldwyn can spoil our English spring. And, reluctantly, through cold and rain and constant wind, Spring is creeping out, the promise of better and kinder days to keep people going for another year. It's been worth staying for that alone—for the crocus banks by Hyde Park Corner, the tiny irises on the Backs at Cambridge, the first few tender buds on Chestnut and Rose in our little London garden. On the orders of the Colonial Office Doctors, I'm just off to Lynmouth's loveliness for a Devonshire fortnight before they give me another (and I hope final) medical.

There are two unbreakable things in Britain—the exquisite Spring, and the infinite self-discipline of our people. Thank God for both—and those abroad must especially thank God that these wonders continue unflinchingly at home!

T.H.

### Sidelights on Internment: 9.

Every Sunday evening a little procession, equipped with stools, winds its way to the piece of waste ground below the "bottom hut," where the Church of England weekly service is held. The individuals composing this motley throng are, for the most part, living indications of the proverbial

unreliability of mankind's judgments on man, because, in the days before hardship came, it would have occurred to few of us that they were such fervent followers of the faith. Those who do not attend the services are slightly disturbed and incensed by the extraordinary noise that is raised there, but a broad-minded tolerance is essential in the conditions in which we live. One Sunday a particularly officious guard, disregarding the order that "religion" amongst the prisoners is to be permitted and encouraged, invades the compound, shouts down the "choir," and with many threats and brandishings informs the congregation that they are an unlawful assembly and commands them to disperse. These directions are conveyed through our own interpreter, who does not go to church and has been hauled off his bed for the purpose. It is with mingled feelings that those of us who were not present at the incident crowd round to hear what all the trouble was about. "The guard showed" says our interpreter "an extraordinary mixture of good taste and bad manners."

### This Sarawak.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO THE NEW STATESMAN  
AND NATION.)

Saya ada pereksa ini hal Fikir ini Bicycle yang Government property punya.—*Investigation report.*

Lunatics continue to turn up with truly amazing regularity, and one memorable day saw three in the office at once.—*A monthly report.*

Torbenite and autunite (and Abishag the Shunammite).—*Official document.*

He is a brave man and would do anything that proved offensive.—*Statement to police.*

I have been doing a bit of writing myself lately.—*Tom Harrison in the Sarawak Gazette.*

Should a couple with two children aged 7 and 3 years apply for this accommodation, then two childberths—one large and one small—will be placed in the cabin.—*A letter.*

(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 SARAWAK GAZETTE, MAY 1st, 1897.

SARAWAK & SINGAPORE STEAM-SHIP  
COMPANY, LIMITED.

To the Editor of the "Sarawak Gazette."

DEAR SIR,—On my arrival in London a few days ago I saw your issue of 4th January and 1st February. The former contains a leading article on the Sarawak and Singapore Steam-ship Coy. Ltd., and the latter two letters on the same subject. As in one of these I am referred to, I hope I may be permitted to say a few words on the matter.

The leading article and both letters are written under the misconception that the S. & S.S. Co. has a monopoly from the Government of the carrying trade to Singapore. It has none. As far as I know, any steamer may run on the Sarawak—Singapore line.

It would have saved confusion to your readers had the writers ascertained the true position before proposing to discuss it.

The S. and S.S. line was formed twenty years ago to take over from the Government the s.s. *Royalist*, with her good will on the Singapore line. The chief shareholders were the Government, the Borneo Co. Ltd., the Sago Factories, and certain persons connected with these, of whom I was one. The view of the Government was, I believe, that if a sufficient number of shippers would combine to give a steamer their full support each way, a regular service could be kept up at a profit, instead of running at a loss as the *Royalist* had done. Such combinations as this have been, and are found useful in very many ports, enabling merchants and owners to maintain better shipping facilities than would otherwise be possible.

As a fact the S. and S.S. Coy. was able by this means at once to reduce freights below those the Government had found necessary, and to keep them ever since at a moderate level. There are no doubt a few articles of small importance on which full rates are charged and these might be subject to revision, but they are not of a character to interfere at all with the trade of the place. Such charges for outside small articles are made by all steamer lines.

Soon after the formation of the S.S. Coy. the Government sold most of its shares to the Borneo Coy. At that time, when the success of the enterprise was very doubtful, there was not the same inclination for the public to take shares as there has been later. It seems only fair that those who took the risk in the early days should reap the benefit now. As a matter of fact, however, the Borneo Coy. has not stood upon its right to have this consideration shown to it, but has, on each re-construction, given up a portion of its interest as the investment became more assured, in favour of other shippers, in order that the S. and S.S. Coy., which seems to be very useful to the trade of Sarawak, should not fall to pieces.

There is not however any such difficulty as "M.O.L.E." suggests in buying or selling shares. Shares which form a good investment are usually strongly held; but, as in every such case, the purchase is merely a question of price. Indeed some of the S. and S.S. Coy.'s shares have, not long ago, been sold by auction, which is the most open manner of sale known and, though not usual for this class of property, may of course be employed by any shareholder at his discretion.

In the same letter the suggestion is made that the Steam-ship Coy. should be done away with, but the Coy. holds no monopoly, as I have said, and (apart from the circumstances which in this case would seem to allow the expectation of special favour) no Government would suppress a private enterprise in its territory, simply because it is successful.

I now come to the letter signed "Junior," and I must say I think it is very bad taste on his part to use such words as "avaricious," "parasites,"



"Israelitish greed" in discussing a matter of public interest. In spite of his disclaimer, it lays him open to the suspicion of a feeling of spite against some person or persons, connected with the S. and S.S. Coy.

"Junior" further accuses me, as chairman when the last Company was formed, of having influenced the allotment of shares to the friends of friends of mine in Singapore. I am writing now from memory, but I can only say that to the best of my belief no one in Singapore got shares either through my influence, or otherwise, who did not previously hold shares or who did not have the right to hold shares, under the rule that was observed at the first formation. In justice to me, I think that "Junior" should state any given case in which I influenced the allotment of shares in any other way. If he will do so, and make inquiries at the office of the S. and S.S. Co. in what way these shares were allotted, I think he will find that he has done me an injustice. Further, in writing as he has done. "Junior" seems to ignore the fact that there was one European, and three or four Chinese Directors, concerned in the allotment as well as myself.

Yours faithfully.

EDW: J. SMITH.

Late Chairman,  
Sarawak and Singapore  
Steam-ship. Coy. Ltd.

Langham Hotel,  
London,  
26th March, 1897.

## News from Far and Near.

### FIRST DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that the Resident's Court sat on twenty-seven different occasions in March. This does not include hearings "in chambers," and in addition there were sixteen inquiries under the Lunacy Order.

The District Officer, Kuching, reports that a *semah* was held at Kuala Buntal on March 6th, attended by a large crowd of people from various coastal *kampongs* to pray to the sea-god for a good catch in this *tedoh* season.

Thirty-five vagrants were brought before the Kuching Courts in March.

The District Officer, Bau, travelled extensively amongst the Land Dayaks in March, and explained the scheme of Advisory Councils and the Village Shop By-laws. He says with respect to Kampong Serasot: "It must be admitted that it was pleasant to be able to get bottled refreshment in the *kampong* shop after a somewhat warm journey." He points out that it will be difficult to control prices charged by village shops.

The "clerk" who was reported in our last issue to have enticed Bau Dayaks, desiring to sell illipe-nuts, away from the doorstep of Messrs. Sime, Darby and Company, is now reported by the District Officer, Bau, to have been a "certain trader."

Many people were reported to be leaving Bau District in March for Miri in the hope of finding employment there.

According to the District Officer, Bau, a two-ton lorry left Auehing on March 24th and arrived at Bau in the evening in tow, having jammed its steering gear, put its brakes out of action, and consumed twelve gallons of benzine for the 25 mile journey. "It would appear," says the District Officer, "that this somewhat well-worn and unreliable vehicle is not the answer to the transport problem here." The Kuching road, he adds, is now in an appalling condition. He understands that a bus recently took 5½ hours to reach Kuching from Bau, as compared to 55 minutes in 1941, and he himself took 3½ hours in a jeep at the beginning of March.

The District Officer, Bau, reports that certain Tondong Chinese have applied for 130 acres on which to plant pepper. This project is at present held up by the fact that the vacant "mixed zones" in Bau District are extremely limited.

The District Officer, Serian, reports that great interest is being shown there in the purchase of padi scheme.

The District Officer, Serian, reports that there seem to be two versions of the same rumour current amongst the Dayaks. Some have been told that all photographs of the Tuan Muda or Anthony Brooke must be removed on pain of a fine, while others have been told that all *kampongs* must purchase a print of King George, price fifty cents, and hang it up. The District Officer says that these rumours are very vague and as usual the origin is unknown.

Both the District Officer, Bau, and the District Officer, Serian, report a great increase amongst Land Dayaks of interest in educational facilities. The latter quotes Orang Kaya Rijau of Kampong Piching as saying "Myself and my Committee are all old men now. In our day we got on very well without education, but we realise that times are changing, and we want the children to keep abreast of these changing times."

### SECOND DIVISION.

The District Officer, Simanggang, reports that a Malay recently released from gaol was brought down from Lubok Antu in March under police escort. He was alleged to have threatened to injure Chinese and others in Lubok Antu and burn their houses down. The case was heard at the end of the month at Lubok Antu and accused was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment under section 506 of the Penal Code. Early the next morning he escaped and is believed to have made for Majang, Dutch Borneo, where he has relatives. An inquiry was being held into the escape.

The *juragan* of the m.v. *Hua San* was fined \$50 in Simanggang District Court in March and ordered to compensate the Dayaks who were swamped when that vessel was on the way to Engkilili.

In the Resident's Court in Simanggang in March a Dayak boy was convicted for causing death by a rash act and sentenced to one year's detention. He was dispatched to Kuching and it is understood that he has the good fortune to be employed on the turtle islands.

The District Officer, Simanggang, reports that the outstanding door-tax for 1946 is beginning to be paid and comments that the Dayaks up-river can no longer say that they have no money now that *engkabang* has been collected.

The hunt for the flat-bottomed valleys continued in the Undup in March.

The price of *engkabang* at Lubok Antu in March was ten dollars a *picul* but the District Officer, Simanggang, says that little money changed hands as a barter system was adopted.

The District Officer, Simanggang, reports that the Director of the Two Million Metre Band Broadcast Simanggang In Town To-night has announced he intends to run a competition with the object of discovering new talent."

It's a dog's life being a buffalo in the Saribas. A recent census has revealed that there are only 7 amongst 874 cows, or perhaps we have misunderstood the District Officer's report.

Thirteen sites for new bazaar shops at Betong were sold by public auction on March 25th. Total sales amounted to \$3,834, several lots fetching over \$500 each. Eight went to Chinese, three to Dayaks, one to a Malay, and one to an Indian.

At Pusa the traders have refused to handle supplies of Government cloth as they are afraid of having it left on their hands when supplies of cheaper materials arrive. The cloth ration is therefore being sold direct to the public by Government.

The District Officer, Saribas, reports that a nine-year old son of the Tua Kampong, Supa, was taken by a crocodile on March 8th, in the presence of his father, who had just finished bathing him on the river's edge.

The following points raised at a meeting of the Saribas Chinese Advisory Board in March are of general interest. Concern was expressed at the number of cases of notice being given to Chinese occupiers of shops by their Dayak landlords, who now wish to use the premises for trading themselves; it was contended that the by-laws regarding *perahu lampu* should be amended; it was requested that an increment be added to the controlled price in respect of goods sold by boat-hawkers trading up-river; and lastly the need of Betong Bazaar for a public lavatory was pointed out.

The District Officer, Saribas, visited the Ulu Paku from March 15th to the 20th. He says that his welcome "was nothing short of amazing," and that "the four schools which have been opened in Paku alone would ensure the loyalty of the people to the new Government, so great is their desire for education." After describing the schools in detail the District Officer adds, "There is a general feeling

that schools should function all day instead of in the morning or afternoon only. This will need examining and regularising at a later date, when more teachers are available, as I think the number of pupils would increase substantially if the schools worked all day. The need for text books, a standardised time table and curriculum are of course apparent, and it is hoped that these will be forthcoming shortly." Three "village shops" were visited and permission was given to open a fourth. "It is significant that as soon as a village shop is opened the *perahu lampu* disappears." The District Officer found that, in view of the higher price of *engkabang* in Kuching, Dayaks are hiring *bandong* and taking their produce direct to the capital. The District Officer concludes his travelling report as follows: "The election of a new Penghulu for Ulu Paku was arranged. Several of the educated Dayaks approached me on this subject. They were afraid that an uneducated man would be elected Penghulu, and they were very much against this. They want a man capable of leading them and improving their standard of living generally. At the time of writing this report, the election has not been confirmed, but, if the man who obtained the most votes is accepted by Government, as I anticipate he will be, it is fortunate in that he is acceptable to both the educated and uneducated people alike."

### THIRD DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that in February there was an appeal from the District Court in a case in which some twenty shop-keepers and petty hawkers had been convicted and fined for selling cigarettes above the controlled price. The convictions and sentences were quashed as, in effect, no sale had taken place. Supply Office investigators had inquired the prices of cigarettes and jotted down the answers in their note-books.

One and a half tons of gelignite in an ex-Japanese ammunition dump at the airfield were exploded successfully on February 27th. The Honourable the Resident says that this gelignite was in a highly dangerous condition and the greatest credit is due to the officers responsible for the excellent and efficient arrangements made for the operation. It was thought probable that the inevitable solitary *Henghua* carrying a load of, for instance, firewood, would cross the danger zone about two minutes before zero hour but even this did not take place. What impressed Sibn people was the excellent timing of the operation. This was set for 2 p.m. and as the guard-room bell struck two the boom of the explosion was heard. The District Officer, Sibn, says that this operation involved the evacuation of population to the depth of one mile, including Sungei Merah bazaar. It was feared that in the absence of house-holders there would be numerous cases of theft but this fortunately did not occur.

The District Officer, Sibn, reports that when the Prison Visiting Board inspected Sibn jail in February there were no complaints from the prisoners and the prison presented an especially neat and tidy appearance. The Deputy Superintendent has planted up the surroundings of the prison with beds of canna and roses which has done much to improve the place.

During February six motor-cars were registered in Sibü, including two private cars.

The District Officer, Sibü, says that there can be no doubt that the monthly meetings of Chinese Headmen do an enormous amount of good. The Headmen themselves gather in the morning of the day of the meeting and get their agenda ready for the afternoon's session. In this way a wide range of subjects is always discussed.

The District Officer, Lower Rejang, proceeded to Matu on February 7th to investigate a report regarding the Illanun pirates who were said to be robbing the people passing off Tanjong Sirik. This investigation showed that there were one sailing vessel and seventeen small boats anchored off Tanjong Sirik and carrying about one hundred persons from Sulu en route for Kuching and Sumbas. Two of the small boats visited Brit and Pulau Patok to look for rice. They were natives of Sulu and not pirates after all.

When His Excellency the Governor visited Sarikei in February it came to light during the hearing of the petitions that several people, who had applied for permission to plant fruit trees, had already planted rubber trees instead. When asked why they replied that they had planted *buah getah*.

Information was received in Kapit at the end of February that the authorities in the Ulu Mahakam and Ulu Kapuas feared that Dayaks from Kapit District were about to attack them. It was not considered that there was any truth in the rumour but the Senior Native Officer was to proceed up-river in March to investigate. The District Officer says that from reports received in Kapit it appeared that the boat was on the other foot as there were said to be many Ukits in the Ulu Balleh and they had been seen in the Menyong and in Batang Balleh.

The District Officer, Kapit, reports that, owing to the fact that flour was unobtainable locally in February, the prisoners had to return to their ration of rice, and the grounds for complaints he had previously reported had therefore ceased to exist.

The following is an extract from the report of the District Officer, Kanowit: "It was learned on the 26th that Mikai had been exiled to Landu. It is said that his trouble began with *engkabang*. A Chinese collected \$500 worth of *engkabang* in the Poi in 1932, and got away without paying for it. The Dayaks were as usual too trusting or too lazy. The Chinese did not return for some months, but when he did he was at once asked for the \$500. He said he was only a *coolie* and reference would have to be made to his *toukay* in Sibü. Whereupon Mikai shot him, took his head, and ran off to join Asun."

The District Officer, Kanowit, says that the Julau police are asking to buy khaki to make their own uniforms. They have in the past paid \$9 for a pair of shorts rather than wear civilian clothes on duty.

The District Officer, Kanowit, reports that on February 19th there died an old lady named Adun anak Imang of Rumah Tutong, Kanowit, after a year's illness. She had been wife to a wealthy

Maloh at Baram, but had lived in poverty for years at Kanowit. She remembered the establishment of the Mission in 1888, and was reputed to be well over one hundred years of age. She was aunt to P'enghulu Temonggong Koh.

The District Officer, Mukah, reports that on February 8th the *Berkaol* or blessing of the sea ceremony was held at Oya in aid of the coming fishing season. It is stated that some of those celebrating the festival made use of the reputed magic water from the well of the famous Tuanku Kedah.

From February 18th-25th no less than nine motor vessels were weather-bound in Mukah.

#### FOURTH DIVISION.

The Honourable the Resident reports that February was marked by a general increase in activity in the Miri oilfield. Two sites for new wells were chosen and preparation for drilling on these sites commenced during the month. The Resident understands that these wells are "not to be the deep tests as was the original plan, but will exploit further one of the known sands." Work on the programme for deep test drilling cannot yet commence owing to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary equipment required for very deep drilling.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that in February there had been a pleasing decrease in the number of thefts from dwellings. This was apparently due to the imprisonment of one, Chiew Fatt, whose arrest was mentioned in our last issue.

Two Malays at Lutong were arrested in February in connection with the Sungai Adong murder case. They were identified by the four-year old survivor of the murder. It is understood that in March they were convicted and sentenced to death, and in April they were executed.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that Dayaks at Niah and Sibuti are still causing trouble over their farming land. The Honourable the Resident comments that the Dayaks wish to move down-river into Malay and Kedayan swamp *padi* areas. If mutual agreements can be made this may turn out to be a good thing, and Dayaks will be encouraged to farm swamp *padi*. This is contrary to the situation in other districts where Dayaks have moved up-river in search of virgin jungle.

The District Officer, Miri, says that great difficulty is being experienced in harvesting the Government *padi* at Pujat owing to shortage of labour. The Honourable the Resident adds that the scheme for this year is doomed to be a failure. The crop is good but, due to the impossibility of obtaining labour for the harvest, it looks as if a large proportion will be lost, and the price for production per *pical* will be enormous. He ascribes the failure to the malaria epidemic, the drought just before the *padi* ripened, and the poor response to the request for labour for the harvest.

The District Officer, Miri, reports that a large notice defaming the Chinese Chamber of Commerce was affixed to their notice-board one night in March. At the end of the month, the perpetrator



had made no move to retract his allegation, and a Court action looked imminent. He signed his name as "satirized and disgraceful."

Both the Honourable the Resident and the District Officer, Baram, report the smuggling of rice to Kuala Belait where the price is higher than in Sarawak. The Commissioner of Trade and Customs had been asked to make regulations to provide for the examination of boats.

The Sarawak Steamship Company's *Ong Tiang Swee* now appears to be paying regular visits to Marudi, Miri, Bintulu, and Kuching.

The District Officer, Baram, reports that the school at Beluru has got off to a rather shaky start as it was opened during the middle of the harvest. Consequently attendance figures are not what they might be. However, now that the harvest is practically over, says the District Officer, these should rise sharply as many fathers have promised to secure the attendance of their sons and daughters. There are a number of boarders at this school, principally from the surrounding Dayak *kampongs*, who are very keen and industrious and will no doubt set an excellent example to the new scholars when they arrive.

The District Officer, Bintulu, reports that the *Lucille* was made available in February on the Kuching-Bintulu run in addition to the *Ong Tiang Swee*. This eased the situation of the Bintulu traders to a great extent since they were able to send away large quantities of plantation rubber and other produce hitherto shut out by the Company's vessel.

It is reported that the Hock Lee Sawmill in Bintulu had at the end of February fifty tons of good quality timber ready for shipment to Australia via the Borneo Company Limited of Sibu.

After a *padi* census was taken in Bintulu District it was revealed that the Tatan natives had not given accurate reports of seed planted, because they suspected that Government intended to charge quit-rent on their *padi* farms and to purchase their whole crop by force.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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

### What's in a Name?

KUCHING,  
18th April, 1947.

To  
The Editor,  
Sarawak Gazette.

SIR,

We hear of great writers getting their inspirations in diverse ways; some by going to the quiet countryside, some by travelling, some by accident, some after a hearty curry tiffin supplemented by a generous helping of Gordon's Dry Gin—to wit the

article on "Curry,—and How to Eat it" which appeared in your issue of January 2nd, 1936. I however got my inspiration on one of my sleepless nights, when tossing about in bed trying to count sheep and as a last resort tried recounting the names of roads and streets in Kuching although I don't pretend to be a writer. It suddenly occurred to me some road names are notoriously inappropriate although the majority of them are quite good.

Taking some road names at random, Rock Road is a good example indicating as it does the way to "Batu Kinyang," once famous as a rendezvous where the piously bent Chinese and Malays went to pray for a son and heir or for a pretty wife or husband as the case might be. It was quite a picnic for the populace when on an expedition to the famous "Batu Kinyang." Groups of family parties could be seen wending their way to Batu Kinyang almost every day with offerings to the "Kramat," burning candles and incense, and tossing coins as a last grace around the Batu just before leaving. As is usual in such places the usual quota of street urchins were much in evidence scrambling for the coins.

McDougall Road is eminently suitable in honour of one of the great pioneer missionaries and so is Crookshank Road in honour of one of our great Residents. Reservoir Road, Pending Road, Batu Kawa Road, Ewe Hai Street are all very good examples.

Green Road is a misnomer as it is no longer green after the metalling and surfacing was carried out; Pisang, Nanas, and Rubber Roads show lack of imagination whilst Pig Lane takes the cake. I don't deny that they served their purpose in their time when pisangs were in abundance in Pisang Road, pineapples were the main crop to be found in Nanas Road whilst there was a maze of rubber trees in Rubber Road. Pig Lane was so named when there was a string of pig-stys along this road.

It is time that more appropriate names be found for these roads. I suggest "Jalan Patinggi Abdillah" in honour of the hereditary Datu who recently departed from us, despite his difference of opinion which should be respected rather than rebuked. "Crocker Avenue" would be a good name for a road called after one who is well remembered.

"Cubitt Road" should be a good one for one of the first nursing sisters of the S.P.G. Mission who devoted her life to the welfare of the lepers. "Barker Road" might be another suitable name to remember Dr. Barker as one of the earliest doctors to come to this country, although most of the new generation may not be familiar with the name. Last but not least "Tan Sum Guan Lane" should definitely be included in honour of one of the finest citizens of this country having rendered invaluable services to the Government and public alike during his lifetime.

Can any of your readers offer other suggestions?

Yours faithfully,

"INSOMNIA."

[It was explained to us the other day that "the Bund" is so-called because the "Constabulary Bund" used to play in the "bund-stund" which is erected there.—Ed.]

## From "Adversity": Internment Quarterly.

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

### THE GENIUS OF JOSEPH CONRAD.

It is the literary fashion latterly to belittle Conrad, and even so successful an author as Mr. Somerset Maugham puts into the mouth of one of his unpleasant nymphomaniacs the expression: "How could you English let yourselves be taken in by that wordy Pole!" But this need not distress the Shade of Conrad. It is the sort of concession that Genius must make to talent however distinguished. Let us remember that Shakespeare was treated in somewhat cavalier fashion too by both Frank Harris and Bernard Shaw a few years ago. But as the tumult and the shouting of the immature litterateurs subside at last into a mere peevish complaining we discover that Conrad remains, unassailable in the place that he made for himself because of his pure literary artistry.

He stands above contemporary writers as conspicuous as the Alps from the plains of Piedmont and his books focus attention upon themselves as does a wart on a bald head; unintentionally but without fail. Whereas Somerset Maugham delineates characters with such journalistic precision that we can often recognise the originals, Conrad pictures for us men whom we should like to know but cannot and who do things that we should like to do but dare not. Men who are inspired to effort, not by rational commonplace urgings of the ubiquitous Babbitt—love of woman, love of money, love of notoriety expressed as the urge to be chairman of a Board of Directors, President of the Republic or even chief walla-walla of some secret society—but by some strange inner necessity that is incomprehensible to us until, as we discover one after the other of these Conradian protagonists, we begin to realise something of his credo and understand that, now we are free of the jungle, romantic love is not the fons et origo of all masculine endeavour; and that men would still strive, adventure and slave were there no women in the world at all, and heirs and assigns were manufactured in laboratories.

Oscar Wilde, in his essay, *The Critic as Artist*, says: "The critic occupies the same relation . . . as the artist does to the visible world of form or colour or the unseen world of passion and of thought. He does not even require for the perfection of his art the finest materials. Anything will serve his purpose. And from subjects of little or no importance he can . . . produce work that will be flawless in beauty and instinct with intellectual subtlety." And Joseph Conrad does precisely this; and whether his characters are the denizens of the mean streets of European cities or the outcasts on the beaches of some far-away archipelago, he presents them to us with that reverence for the mystery of the human mind, and that ruthless regard for artistic veracity that make his stories literary triumphs of the first order. In following the careers of his heroes we are made aware, not only of the events of their daily living, but of the thoughts that accompany them; not only of the physical accidents of deed or circumstance that surround their bodies, but also of the

spiritual moods and imaginative passions that agitate their minds. Each player in the Conrad drama is a psychological study par excellence.

I have used the phrase, "the careers of his heroes." How lamentably inadequate is that word to describe the hates, the greeds, the villainies and wild adventures of the actors he puts before us. Who can associate those polite syllables with the Nigger of the Narcissus in his bloody forecastle fighting, or with Falks' filthy feeding in the Southern Ocean, or Kurtz' illicit trading up his evil African rivers? What ghastly career could it be that would have as its final reward the loss of power, honour, self-respect, and then, lagging far behind, the slow, reluctant approach of death in an alien land and among outcast men, as in the case of Almayer or Heyst. Conrad accepts, it seems, a philosophy of absolute predestination and throws against the onslaughts of fate characters who are most vital champions of free will. What we discover is the consequent clash of forces and it is in the telling that he raises up our wonder of the fascination of life and the way that men live it in his world. Struggle as they will, one and all of his heroes go down a Greek road to defeat and disaster, battered and beaten, crushed and humiliated by the blind, inscrutable forces that beset them. What of Nostromo, that story of latitudes of wild crimson dawns and sweltering tropic noons, where treachery rubs elbows with inexplicable loyalties! And The Secret Agent. Here we travel to Vienna, St. Petersburg and London in the company of a professor of such sinister seeming that the very passers-by avoid him by instinct: for although he walks harmlessly alone he seems to emanate an atmosphere leprous and plague-ridden. The story "Victory" brings us to the Netherlands Indies, and we take the hand of that South Seas Hamlet who is Axel Heyst and with him discover the faith of a wandering minstrel of a girl who plays a violin to no purpose that can be called artistic. We see her rescued from the bully Schomberg only to fall at last in a welter of blood and fire that consumes the entire cast. "Almayer's Folly" describes life on the East coast of Borneo: but not as we know it! Who can sympathise with a character so weak as Almayer? The man did not know enough to come in out of the rain! Who but Conrad would ever have given serious thought to the "career" of such a harmless invertebrate? Obsessed by vague dreams of immense wealth he marries the daughter of Sulu robbers at the bidding of the old sea rover who found it expedient to kill off her piratical family. He struggles solo and in vain against the machinations of Malay chiefs. He finds himself the husband of a scold and—last dreadful disillusion—the daughter he loves, in whom all his hopes are centred and for whose sake he struggled for wealth and power, answers the call of her native blood and runs off with a Malay. He swears that he will kill her rather than suffer this last indignity, but he does not kill her. He kills no-one. He turns to dreams for consolation; the inspired dreams of the opium-smoker.

And what of Karain, that lordly prince who walked unarmed and without fear? He appears on his stage at glittering high noon, monarch of all he surveys. His tiny empire has for its confines the fetid jungle and the level green seas, and for sentinels the smoking peaks of volcanoes. He struts his majesty without fear and without reproach, clothed in an atmosphere of unavoidable success.

His subjects worship him. All honour him. They are free men and worthy subjects of such a ruler. But a nameless fear invades his sanctuary. He flees before a shadow: he is terrified by a thought. Impalpable and menacing his bogey takes him by the throat and saps his strength and his pride until he seeks safety in a charm and the company of wondering white men.

And there is Lord Jim with his sacrifice of life to honour, and Kurtz the mean-souled adventurer, defeated by fever and native women, and Prince Romain—that gallant chevalier, squaring accounts with his conscience on the frozen wastes of Russia in the wake of Napoleon's remnants, and carrying off that grim occasion as though he had been back in the Paris salon where it all started. And what of the young man in the story "Youth"? Is this the story of youth besting destiny? Free will? Nonsense! The ship was cursed before ever she left port. In the vernacular phrase she never had a chance, and, once again, in the hands of any other than Conrad, the story would have degenerated into a mere catalogue of calamities. They never reached Bangkok of course: but the coast of Java was their journey's end, and they saw it first from an open boat (having abandoned the burning ship at last) after hours at the oars. "In the morning mist the mountains rose out of the sea. So this was the East! This is how I shall always remember it, the way she came veiled to my side, like an Eastern bride."

His powers of description are magnificent. He describes the sea, its furies and fierce scorn of human endeavour so that we feel, in imagination, these moods of an element that remains always above and beyond our control. In his quick, staccato phrases and balanced, rhythmic sentences we hear the shouting of the breakers on the reef and the quiet litany of the lazy lagoon. The song of the wind in the palm-trees—that outworn cliché of tropical scriptures—takes a new and more sensitive cadence from his pen. The swift, alert sweep of the surf-borne canoe, the salt tang of the air, the feel of the spindrift whipping into our faces, sunshine and the glitter of the sea—they are all there, together with the everlasting terror of dark, unfathomable depths. He tells of green islands strong across shallow waters like a handful of emeralds on a buckler of steel, of narrow entrances to secret havens hidden in fog or curtained by rain, of sulky, yellow rivers, of fever-haunted swamps. We learn to know the dull ache of a merciless calm and the despairing helplessness of useless strength against the passive immobility of wind and water.

To read him, said Arthur Symonds, is to stand on the edge of a gulf, in a silent darkness.

### Kuching Market Price List.

Average monthly Market Price (March 20th to April 20th, 1947).

#### RICE—(per gantang.)

Local, white milling No. 1	...	...	\$2.00
polished Dayak " 2	...	...	1.89
Pulut, local	...	...	2.52

#### SUGAR—(per kati)

Nipah Sugar	...	...	.17
-------------	-----	-----	-----

#### BEAN CURD—

Bean Curd 5 sq.	...	...	...	\$ .10
" (white)	...	...	...	.10
" (yellow)	...	...	...	.20

#### EGGS—(each)

Duck, fresh	...	...	...	.11
" salted	...	...	...	.17
Fowl	...	...	...	.11

#### EDIBLE FATS—(per kati)

Cocount Oil	...	...	...	.89
Lard No. 1	...	...	...	1.00
Lard " 2	...	...	...	.80

#### PORK—(per kati)

Lean No. 1	...	...	...	1.80
Lean with fat " 2	...	...	...	1.16

#### BEEF—(per kati)

Beef steak	...	...	...	2.50
Beef curry meat	...	...	...	1.50
Buffalo No. 1	...	...	...	2.50
" curry meat	...	...	...	1.50
Kambing (slaging)	...	...	...	2.00

#### POULTRY—(per kati)

Capon	...	...	...	1.91
Duck	...	...	...	1.61
Fowl, Chinese breed	...	...	...	1.87
Fowl, Dyak breed	...	...	...	1.57

#### FISH—(per kati)

Fresh fish No. 1	...	...	...	1.03
" " 2	...	...	...	.74
" " 3	...	...	...	.86
Prawns " 1	...	...	...	.73
" " 2	...	...	...	.52
Crab " 1	...	...	...	.70
" " 2	...	...	...	.50
Salted fish " 1 special cut	...	...	...	1.20 to 1.60
" " 2	...	...	...	.70
" " 3	...	...	...	.50
Fish Roe	...	...	...	1.20 to 1.60

#### VEGETABLES—(per kati)

Langkuang (Yam bean)	...	...	...	.04
Bayam	...	...	...	.22
Bean Sprouts	...	...	...	.36
Cabbage, imported	...	...	...	1.15
Changkook Manis	...	...	...	.32
Dam Hawang	...	...	...	.80
Ensal	...	...	...	.40
French beans	...	...	...	.80
Garlic, fresh	...	...	...	.20
Kuchang (paujang)	...	...	...	.25
Langkong	...	...	...	.16
Keladi (Chinese)	...	...	...	.28
Ketela	...	...	...	.88
Kribang	...	...	...	.07
Kundor	...	...	...	.05
Labu	...	...	...	.05
Ladies Fingers	...	...	...	.80
Lettuce	...	...	...	.50
Lobak (Chinese radish)	...	...	...	.30
Lobak, salted imported	...	...	...	.60
Onions, small	...	...	...	.40
Petaloes, Bengol	...	...	...	.70
Pria (Bitter Gourd)	...	...	...	.40
Bamboo shoots salted	...	...	...	.16
Trong (Brinjals)	...	...	...	.17
Yams	...	...	...	.10
Cucumber (timun)	...	...	...	.19
Ginger	...	...	...	.50
'Chillies (red)	...	...	...	.70
" (green)	...	...	...	.35
Sauerkraut, imported	...	...	...	.58
" Local	...	...	...	.27
Tomato	...	...	...	.50

#### FRUIT—

Pisang Umbun	...	per kati	...	.08
Pisang Tanduk	...	each	...	.05 to .10
Pineapples	...	per kati	...	.10
Papayas	...	"	...	.10

#### SUNDRIES—

Sauco (kitchup)	...	bottle (lo'al)	...	.50
Blackan	...	per kati	...	.44
Dried prawn	...	"	...	1.88
Cocount, fresh	...	each	...	.05 to .08
Sago	...	per packet	...	.12
Ground Nut	...	per kati	...	.20