

Sarawak Gazette

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The Sarawak Gazette.

SATURDAY, MAY 7th, 1949.

Birth.

RICHARDS.—To Daphne, wife of A. J. N. Richards, at the Kuching General Hospital, on the 16th April—a son, Michael Brian.

Disafforestation.

In "Notes and Comments" of our March issue of this year exceptionally high water was recorded at Kapit. A further rise of less than ten feet, it was reported, would have seen all the Government buildings flooded and the temporary bazaar swept away. Within less than two months, our contemporary *The Sarawak Tribune* through "The Listener" reports the highest flood in Sibu for

eight years, which resulted in the loss of the lives of four small children and much inconvenience to the general public.

In the last two decades the flooding of the Rejang has increased both in frequency and in severity, a sign that all is not physically well in the interior and that outraged Nature is beginning to assert herself. The Iban intrusion into the Third Division during the last half century, after devastating the lower and middle reaches, has been steadily pushing up into the headwaters. The Pelagus Rapids form a formidable barrier, and to this, as well as to administrative controls in favour of indigenous tribes, can be attributed the comparative immunity of the Ballui, or upper Rejang proper, from this intrusion. In the Balleh, the true left branch of the Rejang, however, it is another story. By shifting cultivation the Iban has removed, and is still removing, large areas of high forest annually to produce his hill rice, an uncertain crop and most uneconomic from the point of view of his domestic economy, in that he is blindly destroying the source of his normal daily requirements and natural livelihood. The dense cover of virgin forest, which should act as a sponge to retain the heavy tropical rain, is no longer there to perform this important function, and the secondary growth which is replacing it is no efficient substitute, although it may appear so to the layman. Unfortunately the damage does not cease here. Hill farms, lying as they do completely exposed, rapidly lose their top-soil, which is carried down by the resulting torrents. The greater proportion of this top-soil is borne down to the lower reaches, where it is deposited as the flow lessens. The lower river channels have become gradually silted up and in their turn are unable to cope with these rapid rises. Heavy inundations result, affecting agricultural land, particularly the wet padi areas, where too much and uncontrollable water is as great an embarrassment as too little or none at all. This, apart from the loss of small lives already recorded and the general inconvenience to all, is an extremely serious situation, which should be recognised and controlled if it is not already too late.

There is at present no direct legislation to control the shifting cultivator in the Interior Areas. In the headwaters of most inhabited rivers and streams in the far interior there is a loose form of local control, known as the Pak System, which consists of a mark planted normally at a stream junction, beyond which permanent habitations are not permitted. During the occupation period this Pak System went by the board. It was an aid to administration rather than a measure to protect the

hill forest; nevertheless, it was of assistance in protecting the hill forest, but it has not been re-introduced with sufficient speed.

In a paper on shifting cultivation tabled at the Malayan Forest Conference at Kepong in 1937, Mr. B. J. C. Spurway wrote that, while shifting cultivation was to be condemned, a point which should not be overlooked was that, "when a hereditary form of agriculture, however primitive, is forbidden or restricted, a better or more stable form of agriculture must be introduced; and, to achieve this, agriculture and forestry become interdependent. It would seem necessary that at the first opportunity a survey should be undertaken, from which it should be determined which areas are to be assigned to settled agriculture and which are to be retained under permanent forest for economic and physical reasons." The Agricultural Department is now engaged on such a survey and on it the future rural economy of the Colony may well be founded. At the same time the point has been reached by normal progression where something stricter than the Pak System would appear to be required in the form of direct legislation to prevent further inroads and waste in our high forest areas, to confine the shifting cultivator to secondary forest, and to alleviate distress in the lower reaches of our rivers.

Notes and Comments.

The Constabulary Ordinance enacted in December 1948 made provision for the constitution by the Governor in Council of "a reserve force to be known as the Special Constabulary." The establishment of a Special Constabulary of 500 officers and men has now been approved. A number in Kuching have already joined, and Mr. D. L. Leach has been appointed a Deputy Commandant.

The Special Constabulary is a purely voluntary force, to be used in case of need to relieve the regular Constabulary of ordinary routine police and guard duties; its personnel will not be called upon to undertake duties which are not of the nature of normal police work. It is hoped that a considerable number of the able-bodied citizens of Kuching, who are interested in the preservation of law and order and are willing to assist the authorities in this task in time of need, will enrol themselves. A short course of training will be given in normal police duties. These include the running of a charge-room, patrolling, traffic control; lectures will be given on law and the powers of the police to arrest and search; and some training will be given in musketry.

When the period of training is over, a Special Constable may be called on to assist in the training of new men; he may from time to time be asked to attend refresher courses; and he may be formally mobilised in order to take over normal police duties, either for practice or in a genuine emergency.

If good progress is made in the raising of Special Constabulary in Kuching, it is hoped to extend the organisation to the other larger centres in the country.

His Excellency the Commissioner-General arrived in Kuching by air on the 4th April. Mr. MacDonald had expressed a desire to pay another visit to the Balleh, and he left the same evening with

His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government and Mrs. Dawson. An account of the tour appears elsewhere in this number.

The Director of Agriculture is arranging for the Tarat Agricultural Station (34th mile Kuching-Serian Road) to be open to inspection by the public on Saturday, 21st May. Experimental work in progress will be explained to organised parties of visitors by members of the technical staff of the Department of Agriculture, and demonstrations of mechanical cultivation will be staged.

Outstation visitors to Kuching for Council Negri, and all others who are interested in agriculture, should find a visit to Tarat most instructive, for much progress has been made during the past year.

There will be exhibits of local farmers' produce and stock, for which prizes will be given, and space can be made available for trade exhibits.

Details with regard to organisation of parties of visitors and prizes for exhibits will be announced at a later date by the Director.

We record with regret the death on the 5th April 1949 of Pengiran Shahbandar anak Hassim, a member of the Brunei State Council. He was aged about 85.

In our January "Notes and Comments" we mentioned the project for providing a Youth Hostel and Boys' Home in Padungan. The Appeal launched under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble the Chief Justice has met with a very satisfactory response, and a sum of over \$20,000 has now been raised from donations and the proceeds of a Fancy Bazaar, Lottery and Concert. It is interesting to note that donations constitute the largest item in the receipts.

The target figure is \$30,000, but Government had agreed that, when \$12,000 had been raised, a five-year lease of the premises at Padungan would be granted, on condition that one-third of the members of the Management Committee should be nominated by Government. A Committee has now been appointed, consisting of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Hon'ble the Datu Bandar and Mr. T. B. R. Nicholl (Government nominees), Messrs. Ong Kee Hui, Dennis Law, Sim Ah Sey, Kong Yu Siung, Tan Poh Tin and E. W. Howell.

A successful and well-attended Regatta was held at Bintulu on the 16th April, which was attended by the Constabulary Band. The Band later went on to Tatau (for, it is believed, the first time in its history) and gave a short concert in front of the Government offices.

After protracted negotiations, dating from 1946, between the Government and the Sarawak Oilfields Ltd., the Miri Town Agreement was signed and sealed during last month. The delay over this has made it impossible for Government to grant leases for buildings in the town area, since any construction could obviously be carried out only at the builder's own risk. The long-retarded work of rehabilitation in Miri can now proceed.

It is reported from Miri that a certain official arrived in Miri on transfer a short time ago with a large family, household effects and 13 growing crocodiles. These pets are now kept in a pen in the Miri Town Area, and it is reported that in consequence the Municipal Board is much exercised in discovering how the crocodiles shall be controlled.

The Forgotten Land.

1. Recently, after fifteen years of absence, I returned to the land where some of the earliest and best years of my life in Sarawak were spent. The "Coast", as we know it in Sarawak, extends perhaps from Kuala Rajang to beyond Bintulu, for it is along this seaboard that most of the Melanaus live, and the Coast and the Melanaus go together. But for me, and for the purposes of this article, the Coast is the area occupied by Melanaus between Dalat in the Oya River and Balingian in the river of that name, that area being contained in the Oya-Dalat and Mukah Administrative Districts. For the information of the people who do not know this area (and very few, other than the inhabitants, do know it) the main occupation of the Melanaus in the Oya, Mukah and Balingian Rivers is sago cultivation and production. There is a little rubber and a good deal of fishing is done for local consumption, but in the main the Melanaus, men and women, work sago.

2. Balingian is several miles up the Balingian River and is a place not to be visited for mere pleasure. In the heart of a sago swamp, it is very small and comparatively unimportant even as a sago producing area; and there is little to relieve the monotony of steamy days and damp mosquito nights. Mukah is on the coast at the mouth of the Mukah River. It is a delightful spot if one omits the filth of the Bazaar, the powerful smell of sulphuretted hydrogen coming over like poison gas from the dirty, ramshackle, but strangely fascinating Melanau Kampong of Tilian, and the rain and inconveniences of travelling during the *landas* season.

With Dalat, Mukah ranks as the largest sago producing centre in Sarawak. Oya is a pretty, but insignificant spot at the mouth of the Oya River; it is sleepy and dull, enlivened by little else than the arrival or departure of the Mukah bus or the return of the fishing *barong* with their catch. Dalat, 10 miles up the Oya River, is, like Balingian, also in the centre of a sago swamp, and is often sultry by day and insect-infested by night. But it is an important place, and a busy centre, for from here the sago boats commence their journey through Sungai Kut to the factories in the Igan and Rajang Rivers. Dalat I like (though once I lived there for a year) and maybe the reason is that the Melanaus of this river can be good friends, and they are a happier, more care-free and less sophisticated people than those of Mukah.

3. This article is not meant to be a thesis on the Melanaus, but is merely an attempt briefly to explain the impressions gained by my visit in the light of my slight former knowledge, and to give some idea of the importance of these people in the economy of Sarawak.

4. It is perhaps unwise to talk of the Melanaus as a "race" because those who know these people recognise only too well how little cohesion there is between the groups up and down the coast; and even if they were firmly moulded, I might, nevertheless, be rebuked for the use of the word "race" and reminded of the fallacies of Hitler's "racial" theories. We might refer to the Melanaus as a "Cultural Group," but I am dealing in generalities and catering for the ordinary man and therefore,

despite the apparent inaccuracy, prefer to use the word "race" in this article for convenience.

5. Superficially there has been little change on the Coast since 1934. The old Mukah Fort and Bazaar and Mission School have gone, but these can be rebuilt. The old sailing schooners as such have completely disappeared, but some of their hulls remain, now doing useful service equipped with engines (many of them Japanese) and carrying sago. There is a daily bus service between Mukah and Oya; quite a pleasant change from the days of walking and bicycles, and a change to be expected. Mechanical sago rasps are to be seen everywhere now, but even in 1934 Chinese had progressed with these beyond the experimental stage. Outboard motors are numerous, but some were used in 1934. Sago grows everywhere just as it did before, and the same types of fishing vessels and equipment are used. Many old friends have died, some of old age, others because of epidemics during the Japanese occupation; but here again, though losses were more than expected, they were not surprising.

6. But I found certain other more interesting changes. Firstly, the Melanaus have, in many places, bought their own mechanical rasps of sago and are operating these with considerable success, in some places as in the Oya River almost completely displacing the Chinese. Secondly, many of the numerous outboards are owned by Melanaus. Thirdly, and not so happily, the Melanaus have acquired a taste for imported goods, cigarettes and alcohol included, which may have a serious effect on their local economy and customs, whether or not the present slump in the price of sago worsens. But fourthly, and to me most important of all, there appears to be, mainly in the Oya River, a growth of self-confidence and independence, and somehow, by what means I do not know, a tiny seed of racial pride is sprouting.

7. On a map of the East Indies exhibited in the Sarawak Museum and published around 1595 the word "MALANO" appears to indicate a place in "INSULA BORNEO", much the same as the geographical position of the Melanau race to-day. This by itself is by no means evidence of the existence of the Melanau race in those days, and indeed the name by which they are known to us may have come from a place "MALANO" after they settled there. It may be that the Melanaus split off from the Kayans, or the Kayans from them, but whatever the origins, which undoubtedly will be determined finally by scientists, there is plenty of evidence to show that the Melanaus have existed along the coast for centuries, mainly in small incoherent sub-groups, each with its own peculiarities, particular dialect and customs, but nevertheless with a common underlying cultural stratum.

8. There is a good deal of further evidence, most of it recent and some of it apparent in their characteristics to-day, that the Melanaus have lived in a state of subjection to other races for a long time. Maybe this subjection was at times partial and possibly non-existent for short periods, but we have sufficient evidence in recent history and in the life-time of some Melanau elders to say that they were oppressed by the Bruneis from the sea and harassed by tribes from the interior. Under Brooke Rule this oppression quickly disappeared, but the effects on their racial characteristics could not be eliminated so completely, and probably are still to be found in some degree to-day.

9. One practical effect of subjection upon the race was the absorption of numbers of them into the Malay race, usually by a combination of Malay *adat* through Muhammadan religious rules, a general identification of Malay "race" with Muhammadan "religion", and a "snob" complex seeking the higher Malay social status. Marriages, Malay with Melanau, almost inevitably meant adoption of the Melanau spouse into the Malay race and compulsory entry of the same spouse into the Muhammadan religion. The descendants of such couples were regarded as Malays and indeed preferred to regard themselves as such. Another development of recent years, consequent upon the European insistence on racial tags, has been that the Melanau, when asked his "race", usually replies, quite correctly in his view—"orang Islam" or—"orang Leko", the first meaning he is a Muhammadan and therefore, to his mind, a Malay, and the second meaning he is a pagan since he has never heard of the word "Melanau" and has never learnt to regard himself as a member of what we regard as a race.

10. The Melanaus are peaceful, apparently inoffensive and occasionally servile, although this latter characteristic is found usually only among the descendants of slaves; they are quiet of speech and give outward lawful obedience; they labour hard, men and women. All these characteristics no doubt are in some measure due to their former state of oppression, yet the observer notes that there is a point in their acquiescence beyond which they will not move. They will stand a lot, but, beyond a certain point, passive inaudible resistance commences; and herein, to my mind, lies their strength of race. I think that that strength is now beginning to show itself, and if nursed and allowed to grow the Melanaus may yet become a race to be reckoned with in this country. In the past they have never been audible and it has been left to a few foreigners to speak on their behalf at irregular intervals with varying and meagre success.

11. Until now the Melanaus have not enjoyed the benefits of Government equally with some others, not because these rights have ever been denied to them but because they have not been sufficiently cohesive as a race, sufficiently vocal in their demands. They have lacked leadership, not because they did not want it, but they had lost the knowledge of the value of co-operation and had not been taught the way to regain such knowledge. It is easy to refuse benefits to one race and give to another when it is known that the one cannot or will not complain and the other can and will and has the power to press its demands.

12. The following is an extract from page 51 of the 1935 Blue Report of a Commission to enquire into the working of the Administration of Sarawak:—

"2. As is well known, the Liko headmen retain little power; their *adat* has been allowed to fall into abeyance, and is, in fact, fast disappearing; and, technically, the Melanaus come under Malay *undang-undang* in so far as their family is concerned.

3. Various attempts have been made in the past to revive this *adat*, attempts which have not met with success. It has been said that certain responsible Melanaus deplore the disappearance of their *adat*, and would like to see some sort of code prepared.

4. Nevertheless, from discussions I have had with Officers and others in those districts (Mukah,

Oya and Dalat), I have received the impression that the Melanau has become, as a race, disinterested in his past or his customs. Slowly, but surely, the race is being proselytised into the Mohammedan and Christian religions.

5. Is this desirable? And if not, can anything be done to retain the Liko individuality?

6. It appears that, in the past, all Liko cases came directly before the District Officer. For some reason this custom was dropped, and these cases are now dealt with by the Native Court.

7. It has been suggested that a codification of the Liko *adat* should be prepared, and that the Melanau Tua Kampong should be empowered to deal with questions affecting marriage and divorce, etc., among his own people.

8. The ultimate decision must necessarily depend on whether it is considered desirable to retain this *adat*; or whether the interests of the Melanau people would be better served by allowing their ancient customs to be forgotten, and to permit the gradual process of proselytisation to continue. In which case, the individuality of the Melanau race must ultimately disappear.

9. From what I have seen of these people, and from my discussions with persons acquainted with them, I am of the opinion that the latter course would be more desirable, i.e. mergence with neighbouring races and religions."

13. The attitude of "laissez faire" expressed above was typical of the Government as a whole, though not typical of the views of a few Administrative Officers who knew these people intimately. I would add that I was never asked my views by the writer of the Report—they would have been different from those expressed above.

14. The opinion expressed in the last paragraph of the extract quoted above gives the clue to the official attitude of "non-intervention." The "latter course" was desirable to Government because it was the easy way out; the people had not the power to cope with their own racial problems, and rather than give them the helping hand required it was easier to let them merge with neighbouring races and religions. I suggest that the time is not too late to reverse this attitude, and the Melanaus should be given that assistance necessary to re-establish themselves as a Sarawak race on a footing equal to that of other more influential and vocal ones. They are ready for this assistance, and their Liko *adat*, fifteen years after the Blue Report, is not a dead thing. I believe that, despite Government indifference, the individuality of the Melanau race has been sustained and is becoming more and more apparent with relief from oppression. These people have given much and will contribute more to the culture and economic progress of Sarawak if they are assisted, but so far they have been treated with indifference, tolerated but despised.

15. It is likely that some of the generalities stated will be challenged, and I hope they are. I have no qualifications for setting myself up as an expert on the Melanau race and there are still a few in this country who have a much better knowledge of them than I have. Perhaps these few will now record their own views and correct my errors in later Gazettes. At present Mr. H. S. Morris, Sociological Research Officer, is carrying out an important survey of these people from headquarters in Kampong Medong above Dalat, and his scientific investigation should supply valuable material for assisting in the re-birth of this race.

represented 19% of the total Sarawak exports for the year, if we omit crude and diesel oils which in any case were mainly imports from Seria in Brunei. Thus we find that the Melanaus of the Coast produced 13% of the total value of exports of the country, yet they are only 2.9% of the total population.

23. In the same year, 1947, total export duties collected for Sarawak amounted to \$4,927,499 and the export duties collected on sago flour amounted to \$963,533.

24. During 1947 the Singapore value of the total sago flour export from Sarawak was \$10,605,908, and it may be said that approximately half of this, say \$5,000,000, went back into the pockets of the producers. Probably most of this five millions was circulated, mostly in the purchase of imports, and over \$3,500,000 would be circulated by Melanaus of the Coast.

25. As yet, we haven't the figures for 1948, but it is unlikely that the value of exports for that year was less than in 1947.

26. The above figures give some idea of the value of the sago trade of the Coast in Sarawak economy. If it is lost, then the effect on revenue will be very substantial. This trade is mainly the outcome of Melanau industry.

27. It seems that most of this revenue *will be lost* for 1949. The price of sago flour has fallen to a dangerous point and a slump may have set in. There are spasmodic variations, but generally it can be said that the price offered to the producer is about one-third of the price ruling in 1948 and there are indications that it will drop lower. If it does, then it will not be economical to work sago, and the effect upon the Melanau population, with its total dependence on sago, can well be imagined. The external influences at work to effect this drop in the price appear to be no longer temporary, and it may be a long time before a reasonable price is offering. It has been suggested that the only solution to the problem of maintaining a reasonable price level for the producer is the establishment of a Sago Marketing Board operating an Equalisation Fund.

J. L. NOAKES.

Notes on some Mukah and Balingian Melanau Customs.

Mr. W. G. Morison, lately District Officer, Mukah, very kindly forwards the following article. In a covering letter he states:—

"The attached notes on Mukah and Balingian Melanau Customs were collected during the year 1947. It is realized that these notes are not comprehensive but it is thought that they may be of interest to readers of the *Sarawak Gazette* and as I am no longer in the position of being able to obtain first-hand information for further expansion of these notes they are offered for publication as an article in the *Gazette* as they stand.

I have attempted in these notes to give some idea of the customs which are in existence amongst the pagan Melanaus of Mukah and Balingian of the present day, and customs of the

past have not been touched upon. For example these notes make no reference to the way in which high-caste persons of the past were placed in the burial chamber of huge wooden and elaborately carved burial posts known as 'Jerunai'."

A. Pregnancy.

One month before a child is due to be born the husband and male relatives and friends of the woman must proceed to the jungle to obtain wood. The wood should be taken from a strong, straight tree with as few blemishes as possible. The number of men who go on this trip depends on the class of the husband; for example if nine men, including the husband, fetch the wood, the husband is a nine pikul* man. On the tree being felled it is cut into logs convenient for carrying. The heaviest load must be shouldered by the husband who leads the party back to the house. Once the journey home has been started there must be no delays and no stopping on the way as this would affect the woman. The wood should be taken straight to the boat or, if river transport is not necessary, direct to the house.

On returning home the party stack the wood under or near the house and it will be used for burning in the mother's 'puyan' (specially prepared fire-place) after the birth has taken place. On this wood being stacked a small 'feast' is prepared, the wood carriers and family partaking. This 'feast' is known in Mukah Melanau as 'pigeu moung' and is only held for the first pregnancy. On the same day as the wood is brought to the house the womenfolk, other than the pregnant woman, prepare coconut oil from a sprouting coconut; the shoot should not be higher than the clenched fist. This particular coconut is, on this occasion, given the name of 'benyoh tubah jagum'.

B. Birth.

When labour is near, the 'bidan' (native midwife) is called in and the woman is placed on a mat near the specially prepared fire-place already referred to. After birth the umbilical cord is severed with a sharp piece of bamboo. The child is taken care of by the 'bidan' who washes it and smears its belly and cord with wood ash taken from the mother's fire-place. After the cord has come away it is mixed with ash and is hung up under the house in a small basket as near as possible under the place where the woman has given birth. On a second birth taking place, a second basket is hung up in the same way and is tied to the first by 'wai' (rattan); the baskets should be about a foot apart. This is done, apparently, to appease the evil spirits who might otherwise take it into their heads to hurt the child or children.

With the coconut oil made during the pregnancy any female guest or relative attending at the birth or visiting the house soon after must, on entering the house, just touch the oil with a finger and then transfer a small drop to their own hair. The oil should be of the best quality and should be prepared as carefully as possible; it is believed that failure to do this may affect the child adversely and may even result in its death.

*Melanaus of the present day are divided into 4 classes. 9 pikul the highest, 7 pikul the next, 5 pikul the next and 2½ pikul the lowest and probably the descendants of former slaves with no property at all.

C. Childhood.

Two months after the child's birth the centre of its head will be shaved. This is generally performed by an old woman well versed in Melanau custom. The lock of hair will be dipped into coconut oil and kept by the mother. Any oil remaining will be kept for the child. If this is not done it is believed that the child will die.

If after two or three years the child is taken to another house for its first visit its forehead is marked with soot.

D. Death.

When a person dies the corpse is placed on a 'pakat a matai' (a kind of bed) where it lies in state for three days. If the person comes of wealthy stock the body will be clothed in 'bidek lugi' (valuable sarongs). On top of the body are placed 'pengayah' (figures made from wood and leaves, representing men and animals).

During the three days the corpse remains in the house the inmates must bathe regularly morning and evening. On both occasions men and women must wear, over their ordinary workaday clothes, their 'bidek lugi'. On arrival at the water's edge they take off their finery and pour water over their fully clothed bodies. On no account are they allowed to immerse their bodies in the river. The womenfolk when they go down to bathe shroud their heads in sarongs.

During the time that the corpse is lying in state people may come in with offerings of food; these are placed on a tray at the foot of the 'pakat'. Such people generally come to the house for a definite purpose other than just to view the corpse. They will wish the spirit of the dead person "bon voyage" on its journey to the Melanau heaven; but, more important, they will request the spirit to take various messages to dead relatives and friends who have already arrived in heaven.

Every morning that the corpse remains in the house, lighted 'damar' (resin) will be placed in a coconut shell which will be set afloat on the river. This light ('apui alui') is to guide the spirit of the dead on its way to heaven.

After the three days of lying in state the body is placed in a coffin. Just before the coffin is taken from the house the remaining spouse must step on it for a moment and then pass on. This act on the part of the living spouse signifies the severing of the dead from the living. As the coffin leaves the house it is accompanied by a great deal of lamentation on the part of the deceased's relatives. Those not accompanying the coffin to the burial ground take part in a ceremonial bathe, completely immersing their bodies in the river. As the coffin leaves the house on the way to the graveyard, those within sight of the coffin should pick up a pebble or small object and cast it to the ground or into the water. This is also a sign that the spirit of the deceased has passed to the next world. This casting of the pebble is known as 'galieng batu.'

On arrival at the cemetery the coffin is lowered into the ground and covered over. Flags and decorations may be hung above the grave, while the food offerings from the 'pakat' are placed on the top of the grave together with some of the deceased's clothing and other possessions. What funeral flags are used depends on whether the

deceased was of the nine or seven pikul class. Flags should not be used for those of lower rank. After burial there are three days of mourning.

(To be continued.)

His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government at the ceremony of blessing the turtles.

Taking advantage of the presence of his brother-in-law, Mr P. A. B. McKerron, Colonial Secretary, Singapore, on a short visit to Kuching, His Excellency took the opportunity to witness the ceremony of blessing the turtles on the island of Talang Talang Besar.

Accompanied by the Chief Secretary, the Resident and the Conservator of Forests, His Excellency and Mr. McKerron left by the "La Follette" on the early morning of March 23rd and went straight to Lundu where a warm welcome had been prepared. Several salutes were fired as the launch made its way up river and the station itself was attractively decorated. Owing to the falling tide, only the briefest of visits was possible, and, after inspecting the Guard of Honour and listening to an excellent rendering of "God Save the King", sung by the pupils of the mixed Malay and Dayak school and the Chinese school, His Excellency had only time to take a quick walk round the station and to visit the two schools, before sailing for Talang Talang Besar.

The Curator of the Museum had gone direct to the island with the Datu Bandar, the Datu Hakim, the Mufti, the Datu Amar and the Datu Tuanku Taha, and, as the High Priest of the ceremony and his followers had already arrived, all was set for the first part of the ceremony, in which the chief performers are Land Dayaks, to whom apparently the secret is handed down from generation to generation.

The afternoon and evening were spent in preparation of the necessary offerings and sacrifices and the erection of the new turtle flag and mast, and the following morning the High Priest and followers boarded His Excellency's launch and encircled the two Talang Talang Islands waving flags, beating gongs and making incantations. Land Dayaks though they may be, a party of the followers gave a most impressive exhibition of seamanship, landing on a rocky headland on the seaward side of Talang Talang Besar from a small boat to place a sacrifice on a holy spot.

As soon as the launches were safely anchored again, the High Priest and his supporters attacked the island garrison armed with turtle eggs as ammunition, much to the disgust of the Conservator, whose gastronomic feats in egg consumption are notorious, and whose opinion of a good egg is one inside him. In spite of a spirited defence in which the Curator and the Datu Bandar were prominent, the storming party were successful and the High Priest was last seen washing his uniform.

Though a wet morning, everything went off according to plan and, after an excellent curry, the party returned to Kuching after a most enjoyable expedition.—(Contributed).

Tour of the Third Division by Their Excellencies the Commissioner-General and the Officer Administering the Government.

Their Excellencies the Commissioner-General and the Officer Administering the Government and Mrs. Dawson, accompanied by Major M. J. Gilliat, M.B.E., Comptroller of the Commissioner-General's household, and the Private Secretary, embarked at Pending on M.L. "La Follette" at 10.15 p.m. on the 4th April en route to the Third Division. The journey began in a slight drizzle of rain and the party retired almost immediately, hopeful of an undisturbed night crossing the bay.

All was well until 5 a.m. on the 5th when "La Follette" ran into rough weather and would-be sleepers had difficulty in staying in their bunks.

Sarikei was reached at 11 a.m. and an unofficial call paid upon the District Officer, Mr. A. R. Snelus, and Mrs. Snelus.

A visit was made to the Pepper Gardens at the Third Mile Repok Road and the party was then entertained to lunch at the District Officer's Bungalow.

Leaving Sarikei at 1.30 p.m., Sibu was sighted at 5.30 p.m., and the approach of Their Excellencies was heralded by a 17 gun salute.

Their Excellencies were met at the Government Wharf by the Hon'ble the Resident, Third Division, Mr. J. C. H. Barcroft, and Datu Abang Yan, and, after inspecting a smart Guard of Honour under the command of Mr. K. S. Leeston-Smith, were introduced to Senior Government officials and leading members of all communities.

The Resident kindly had put the Residency at the disposal of Their Excellencies and in view of a rather long journey to come, the evening was spent quietly.

The following morning at 7 a.m. the party, joined by the Resident, set out for Kapit. The first part of the journey was made in heavy mist but was without incident. Kanowit was passed at 10.45 a.m. and Song at 2.15 p.m. Heavy rains had swollen the Rejang and progress became slower. After a few inevitable calls of "Satu Tanjong lagi", Kapit was reached at 5.15 p.m. There Their Excellencies were welcomed by the Native Officer Abang Indi, in the absence of the District Officer, Mr. I. A. N. Urquhart who, unfortunately, was ill in Sibu Hospital.

A Welcoming Arch had been erected over the path from the jetty to the office and the path was lined by leading members of all communities and by school children carrying flags.

After inspecting the Guard of Honour Their Excellencies talked for some time with the welcoming party before walking up to the District Officer's Bungalow.

A short tour of the bazaar before dinner concluded the events of the day.

At 9 a.m. the next day His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government heard requests in Court and this was followed by a tour of the Station and a visit to the Methodist Mission. After lunch the party divided to proceed up the Balleh in four

perahus driven by outboard engines. Competition between perahus was keen and the "Admiral-driver" had difficulty in keeping his fleet in formation.

Although the river was high the journey was uneventful and the noise of 4 engines meant that not a single bird or animal was seen on the banks.

Rumah Penghulu Jinggut was reached at 5 p.m. where the party was given a traditional welcome by the Dayaks. During the firing of salutes a small brass cannon exploded, injuring a woman in the leg. The Dresser who accompanied the party treated the injury and pronounced it to be superficial, so that the welcome was not marred by any bad omen.

In the evening, offerings of ritual food (bedarah) were made either in each "bilek" or on the "ruai" of the house. The party split up in order to carry out the ceremonial, which ensured reasonable abstinence and an early night.

At 7.30 a.m. the following morning the party once more embarked en route to Temonggong Koh's house. A brief halt was made at a house close to the confluence of the Balleh and the Ga'at in order to have a picnic lunch.

The inmates of the house were a little bewildered at so many Europeans descending upon them unannounced and in such a hurry, and one old man who remembered the Krakatau eruption felt that this new upheaval was no less impressive.

Temonggong Koh's house was reached at 4.15 p.m. and after a welcome at the jetty Their Excellencies mounted to the house through lines of assembled Penghulus and other notables and girls in traditional costume dispensing "tuak".

Once inside the house, a "bedarah" was performed on the "ruai" and a "pantun" sung to each of the guests. A welcome pause then followed and later the party assembled in Temonggong Koh's room where Penghulu Gerinang acted as Master of Ceremonies with startling efficiency.

After dinner the real business of the evening began:— a "bedarah" in each room or on the "ruai", followed by dancing in which the visitors joined. During the performance of these "bedarah" Mrs. Dawson was in great demand, and all the male "pantun" singers vied with each other in singing her praises.

The next morning a "Gawai", stated to be "Gawai Nanga Rumah", one of the "Ranyai Gawai", was performed. Their Excellencies went down to the jetty and made a ceremonial entry into the house, in which the killing of a pig figured. A "piring" (dish of ritual food) was prepared which included, to the momentary discomfort of the guests, cups of fowls blood. This was described as a "Piring Pengalu," the normal offering made to the gods in honour of the arrival of distinguished visitors. His Excellency the Commissioner-General then undertook the ceremony of "Nanam".

On this occasion all the preparation had been made beforehand. A small house (Rumah Meniga), symbolic of the dwelling of the gods in heaven, had been constructed on the ridge of the roof of the long house. A ladder led up to "Rumah Meniga" from the "ruai" of the house and a further ladder from outside on the verandah. A long piece of cloth, signifying continuity between earth and heaven and promising long life and good luck, was hung from "Rumah Meniga" to the "ruai". A fence made of a rotan mat and a Dayak blanket

was then constructed around the ladder leading from the "ruai", the whole being called "Ranyai", a symbolic tree and long house.

At the same time His Excellency the Commissioner-General was performing a further "bedarah" (Piring Namam: the planting or placing of the offering to be made to the gods).

The "bedarah" concluded, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government bore the "piring", by way of the outside ladder, to "Rumah Meniga." There another "bedarah" took place and a fowl was slaughtered during the performance and its blood offered to the gods. This "piring" was placed on a pole set up in "Rumah Meniga".

This ceremony concluded, each of the guests in turn, attired with hat, sword, shield and monkey skin, proceeded with "Nepas Ranyai" (the sweeping of the "ranyai") using a circular mop of grass. They were accompanied by a sponsor who led them in sweeping each main post of the house as well as the "ranyai" and in uttering loud shrieks opposite each door where the inhabitant offered a glass of "tuak". The strength of the shriek seemed to depend entirely on the quality of "tuak" offered or perhaps it was that as the libations increased the vocal effort became easier. "Nepas Ranyai" was followed by "Nimang", the recitation of traditional myths connected with the deities, performed by four persons. A final "bedarah" was performed before the party left the house and the "piring" given to His Excellency the Commissioner-General, with the injunction that it should not be disposed of for three days. The "piring" was ceremoniously consigned to the Sarawak river three days later.

This whole "gawai" appeared to be a portion of the larger "Ijok Pampang" ceremony, in which the gods are persuaded to come and stay in the house especially constructed for them, when, after a night of festivity in which the gods have shared, a pig will be offered to the God Singalang Burong, who in gratitude will give an omen and enter the room of the giver of the feast, in this case Temonggong Koh.

It was also explained that the ceremony was symbolic of Temonggong Koh's ascending to the house of the gods and consorting with them.

It was a very reluctant party who left Temonggong Koh's house, amid many sincere and often fond farewells, for Kapit. The following day the "La Follette" was boarded once more and, on the way to Sibu, the newly built Song Station was visited. Their Excellencies were given a rousing welcome and after hearing requests and inspecting the Station were entertained to light refreshments at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

A further stop was made at Kanowit where Their Excellencies were met by the District Officer, Mr. J. F. Drake-Brockman, and the Principal of the Rural Improvement School, Mr. R. A. Bewsher, and Mrs. Bewsher. A most instructive hour was spent in touring the School with Mr. Bewsher who explained its activities.

Sibu was reached at 4.30 p.m., and in the evening the Resident gave a party at the Island Club in honour of Their Excellencies' visit.

An enjoyable evening was spent with Government officials and leading citizens of Sibu, to bring to a close a most memorable tour.

The journey back to Kuching was accomplished on the 11th.—(Contributed).

News-letters from Outstations.

'SLEEPY HOLLOW'.

Most Dayaks were busy during the month attending to the harvesting of their padi. This year's crop promises to be a bumper one, but some days of heat and drought caused minor losses to some farms. The police and Government padi plots in particular look healthy and well tended and serve as an example to the general public as to how swamp padi should be kept and weeded.

Some engkabang was reported to be fruiting in the Skrang, but not in commercial quantities.

The senior service quarters recently constructed at Simanggang of brick with all mod. con., including those handsome articles referred to by outstationites as 'pull-plugs', caused for a few weeks quite a stir among the public who visited this shrine of modern sanitation (the first of its kind in Simanggang) and, to the embarrassment of the inhabitants, peered quite unashamedly through the windows of the most intimate rooms to see what they looked like in action.

A recent exchange of private telegrams between a Dayak near Engkilili and a Company in British North Borneo resulted in promises being made, without informing Government, of work for a hundred Dayaks in B.N.B. Those who could realise the chaos caused last year by recruitment of Dayaks for labour in B.N.B. even when on a proper footing, and to a lesser extent by the recruitment of volunteers for Malaya, would understand the trouble that might have been caused. Fortunately the true situation was discovered before it had gone too far (we hope), and the business is now in course of being placed on a proper footing. The trouble with recruitment of Dayaks in large numbers, for short periods of work, in fairly distant places, is that this type of work, as is well known, is the answer to a Dayak's prayer. For weeks the office is literally besieged by hundreds of Dayaks each with a very good reason why he should be selected. 'No' is not considered to be an answer, but merely the opening gambit for further argument. At six a.m. they greet you as you rise. In the evening the house is full. At last, bit by bit, persuaded by argument, and perhaps a glass of arrack and a cigarette, the stream begins to thin and there is peace once more. The ragged nerves of the office staff are smoothed and routine once more starts forward in its groove.

One of the main topics, apart from the stories of the returned volunteers, is the forthcoming Regatta to be held at Simanggang on H.M. the King's Birthday this year. It is now definitely "on", and the Regatta financial committee are working hard to raise subscriptions as a recent collection in the Bazaar raised the very small sum of \$855. Many Dayak houses are building, or have built, racing boats, and finished ones, painted in gay colours, may be seen on the river banks when travelling along the Batang Lupar or its tributaries. All this activity, particularly as the harvest appears a good one, helps to keep idle hands busy and over-active heads occupied. The Committee hopes soon to contact all those connected with Simanggang in the past, and who remember it with affection, who may desire to help us increase our Regatta fund to a reasonable total, in order that this first post-war Regatta may compare not unfavourably with those

held before the occupation.

D. F. A. E. D. MORGAN,
15th March, 1949. *Simanggang.*

'SLEEPY HOLLOW'.

At the time of writing most sub-districts have completed their harvests and on the whole a good average crop has been experienced, and it is expected that a larger surplus than last year will be sold to the Government padi purchasing unit.

Fifteen Dayak volunteers arrived on leave from Malaya during the month but by the time their leave was up only seven had held fast to their promise to return. There were about a hundred applicants to fill the eight vacant posts and these went in every instance to ex-Rangers or Police.

A flood of applications for work in North Borneo was received from those areas which had completed or nearly completed their harvest. They had apparently got wind of the abortive attempt at recruiting mentioned in my last letter. The only reply that could be given was that Government knew of nothing officially. Some disgruntled 'sealawyers' sent telegrams of their own, offering themselves and scores of followers for work with companies of whom they had heard, but to date no replies appear to have been received.

An incident which typifies the often unrealised hazards of outboard-motor boating on small swift-running rivers occurred on the Batang Ai below Engkilili. The M.L. 'Doris' proceeding upstream collided with a small, fast outboard containing the Resident, Mr. W. P. N. L. Ditmas, and the Superintendent of Trade and Customs, Mr. G. A. C. Field. The outboard, coming downstream at full speed with a fast current, was under the impression that the 'Doris' had broken down further downstream. The 'Doris' was under the impression that the outboard had not left Engkilili. The combined speed of both vessels was probably about 25 m.p.h. and they met at a "tanjong" where the river is very narrow. On both vessels it is impossible to hear the noise of an approaching engine. It was a matter of seconds between their sighting one another and the collision. The 'Doris' shuddered but proceeded, little the worse for wear. The bow-man of the outboard was flung violently from his perch on the bows where even at the best of times he seems in imminent danger of falling into the river. He sustained bruised ribs and a grazed arm. The outboard was split for some six feet on both sides below the waterline and began to fill rapidly. With great presence of mind the Superintendent seized the Resident's hat, a well-known article of headgear in Second Division, of rather Bohemian appearance, and bailed energetically but ineffectively. The outboard sank until only the superstructure of 'Kajang' and heads and shoulders of the occupants appeared above water, an unnerving sight to any stray Dayak chancing on them suddenly from the river bank. He would see a twentieth century Poseidon arising from the waves over his outboard, minus trident and with an old trilby hat as a bailer. By now the 'Doris', unable to come about in the narrow channel, was out of sight round the "tanjong" and our voyagers proceeded wetly, borne along by the current and making frantic lunges at bedding, pots and pans and other trifles floating upon the bosom of the river. The "Doris" eventually came about and

took the shipwrecked mariners aboard, fortunately salvaging nearly all the equipment. A whiskey bottle and a gin bottle, half empty just before the collision, were miraculously full again, but, alas, this was no miracle of the Sea-god, and Batang Lupar water does not make a good "stengah." The party arrived safely and more or less dry, with the outboard awash and in tow, at Simanggang some three hours later. We trust the Superintendent was suitably impressed. 'Sleepy Hollow' had shown its fangs for him.

An unprecedented event took place at the end of the month when the M.V. *Rajah Brooke* anchored at Lingga to take on board a cargo of timber for Messrs. Ralph Symonds and Co.

The Resident and District Officer (Mr. D. F. A. E. D. Morgan) met the vessel in M.L. "Doris" and were royally entertained on board by Captain Richardson and the Managing Director of the S.S. Co., Mr. A. T. Wedgwood. The Resident, First Division, Mr. D. C. White, O.S.S., the Conservator of Forests, Mr. B. J. C. Spurway, the Director of Agriculture, Mr. R. W. R. Miller, the Principal Assistant Secretary, Mr. R. F. Mole, and the Divisional Engineer, Mr. E. W. Howell, were on board. The Resident, Second Division, loaned M.L. "Doris" to Captain Richardson who took soundings off the Lingga channel on the afternoon of the 9th April.

A most convivial party gathered on the evening of the 8th and stayed late talking of ships and sealing-wax. The latest "have-you-heard-this-ones" from home have now filtered through to Second Division.

On the 7th April a prize-giving for the winners of the Badminton men's singles and doubles and table tennis champions took place at the Simanggang Recreation Club. The prizes were presented by Mrs. S. Kitto and the prize-winners were as follows:—

Badminton Mens' Doubles:—

Mohammad Zulkifli bin Topin
Mr. Cambi Chung

Badminton Mens' Singles:—

Mohammad Zulkifli bin Topin.

Table Tennis:—

Mr. Quentin Tzu

Two silver cups were presented by Messrs. Chiang Wah Onn of Kuching and one silver cup by Messrs. Chong Kim Eng of Kuching.

Most of the Simanggang Government Officers are in a ferment over the forthcoming football match with Kuching which takes place on the evening of the 16th April at Kuching. It will be remembered that Simanggang beat Kuching by two goals to one in 1947. However, although determined to do our best, we are not over-optimistic as most of the best players have been transferred in the interim to other stations.

Plans for the Regatta are proceeding apace and the Financial Committee are working desperately to raise sufficient funds. More and more boats are being built and it is hoped that some generous members of the Kuching and Simanggang business communities will come forward and present suitable cups for the prize-winners in addition to the cash prizes which will be provided from the Regatta Fund.

During the month Messrs. Miller, Mole and Howell (mentioned above) visited the station and Engkilili, Lubok Antu, Lingga and Bijat.

D. F. A. E. D. MORGAN,
Simanggang.

15th April, 1949.

During the first quarter of the year land disputes, usually about ownership of gutta percha trees, continued to provide the main entertainment for Sarikei Dayaks and a perpetual headache for the wretched Magistrate trying to find a solution agreeable to all parties. This is of course an impossibility, no matter how many decrepit old gentlemen are borne into court, to swear that they heard as kids how the plaintiff's grandfather had been the first to claim that spot of land and fell the surrounding jungle; for the young defendant is sure to find an equal number of other old stagers to swear that it was his great grandfather who first acquired the land.

There is much to be said for allowing the Dayaks to settle these disputes in their traditional manner, viz. by trial of water or, as they are better known, diving contests. (This method is in fact still sometimes allowed, but only with permission from the Divisional Resident). For they still love a diving contest and are quite prepared to pay the 1 picul fine all round for the pleasure of such a party, even though they also know that the dispute will not be finally settled until it has been brought to court. Professional divers are of course engaged and their services now command handsome fees. A successful diver usually puts up his price after each contest. A common fee nowadays for a beginner is \$15.00 or \$20.00, but a diver who has already won 4 or 5 contests will demand and get as much as \$40.00 or \$50.00 as the price of his services for 4 or 5 minutes—though the divers themselves will tell you that they stay under for an hour or more!

The quest by the Chinese for land for agricultural purposes continues and there is as yet no sign of a lessening of their newly awakened interest in padi farming. This remarkable volte face from their pre-war attitude to planting rice deserves every encouragement, but it is at least partly their own fault that they find such a shortage of Mixed Zone land available for them; for sometime before the war the Government realised the insecurity of a single rubber crop economy and wisely put a limit to the amount of land the Chinese could acquire for planting rubber, which was then their sole interest in land.

Almost all the Chinese padi farmers, of whom there are now well over 1,000 in this district, are therefore renting land from Malays, Melanau or Dayaks in Native or Interior Areas; and they invariably get a crop twice as heavy as the native farmer working a neighbouring plot. A return of 20 piculs an acre has not been uncommon this season in the coastal areas of the delta and there is even a report of a Chinese at Bruan, along the coast near Matu, reaping no less than 100 piculs from 3 acres. There must be some fine land there—an average of 800 gantangs to an acre is nice going—and the Agricultural Dept. are now shewing a keen interest.

It is not only for padi farming that the Chinese now want more land; the search for land suitable for pepper planting also grows more intensive week by week. These signs of revival of Sarikei's fam-

ous pre-war industry are most welcome. Much has already been accomplished; over 60,000 vines are now in the ground and the first post-war crop will be harvested at the end of this year.

A new Lower Rejang industry that looks set fair to prosper for some years to come is the working of timber, mainly softwoods for export to Australia and China. The business is steadily gaining in momentum and attracting ever more competitors to Sarikei's original Colonial Timber Coy. This firm made a big advance in extraction methods recently, when they completed the laying of a 2 mile long railway line and put into operation a small home-made locomotive ingeniously converted for propulsion from a stationary winch. No less than fifty logs have already been hauled to the river by this locomotive in one day's working and, by employing several felling gangs to feed logs up to the line at various points along the 2 mile stretch, the Company will assuredly attain their aim of extracting at the rate of 1,000 logs per month. This method of extraction also ensures proper, systematic working of the timber stands deep into the forest, which is a great advance on the river bank scratchings of Chinese operatives hitherto.

In two of the Colonial Timber Coy's timber areas nature is working in league with them. Along the coast north of the Belawai river and again up the west coast of the Sirik Peninsula the sea is encroaching so rapidly that big trees of inland species are crashing to the ground in their dozens and line the beach for the taking. The land is being swallowed up so fast that Sg. Nonok, which used to flow into the Belawai river, has now been divided in two by the intruding sea. Its upper course, which ran parallel to the coast and 10 years ago some 1½ miles from the coast, now flows out into the sea which has burst upon it about 4 miles north of Muara Belawai; while its lower course has become a 'loha' running from the sea to the Belawai river and thus creating a new island.

From the Courts. Together with some chandu dross a python's dried gall bladder was laid on the bench recently for inspection of the Magistrate. It appears that the gall bladder enhances the opiate effect of the emasculated chandu and ensures a greater soothing sensation from the smoking.

6th April, 1949.

A. R. SNELUS,
Sarikei.

There is still no sign of any rise in the price of sago in the Coast District. The present Mukah price is now 90 cents per passu, having fallen from \$1.10 since the end of February. In consequence of the low price being offered, many Melanau are already experiencing very real distress.

Quite a considerable proportion of the population own no sago gardens and normally work trees purchased from their neighbours; as, however, the present price of a sago palm is still between \$4.00 and \$5.00, many are unable to afford their purchase.

It is generally stated locally that the purchasing power of the dollar has fallen so low since the war that the sago producer is even now far worse off than at any previous time, with the exception of the Japanese occupation period. There seems to be much to support this contention, and I understand that, even during the depression of the early thirties, the price of raw sago at no time fell below 18 cents per passu, whilst rice was always available for 25 cents per gantang or less.

The representative of one sago exporting company has informed me that the present price of sago flour c.i.f. European ports is \$10.00 per ton higher than potato starch, and, if this is in fact the case, it seems unlikely that there will be any substantial appreciation in the local price for the time being.

Unfortunately the bulk of the coastal population of the District depends entirely on sago for their income and, with the exception of a few fishermen and tradesmen, there is no other occupation to which they can turn. It seems that in the not too far distant future the Coast District is going to provide an excellent example of the disabilities and evils attending a single-crop economy.

The annual *Kaul Liko* took place at Kuala Oya at noon on the 13th March. Representatives attended from all Kampongs and Chinese communities from Medong down, the great majority paddling and sailing to the Kuala in gaily decorated boats of every description and size. It is estimated that almost a thousand people participated.

The *Kaul*, which is known as *Semah Leko* and *Berkaul Kuala*, is held each year as soon as the *landas* shows signs of having abated. The object of the ceremony is to ensure fair winds, good sailing and good fishing during the year by offering oblations to the spirits.

Small altars are set up consisting of saplings from which spiral shavings have been cut but not detached: these are hung with decorations of bleached *daun apong* and small woven baskets. Rice, eggs, cigarettes, sirih, pinang nuts and sago are attached to the altar as an offering.

Prayers are offered, following which the majority of those attending participate in a *makan selamat* before returning home.

The ceremony performed in the Coast District is almost identical with that which takes place at the mouth of the Birdsnest Caves in Mount Subis, and, just as the caves are *pantang* after the ceremony, so no vessel may leave the Kuala for a period of twenty-four hours after the *Kaul Liko* has been completed.

R. H. MORRIS,
Mukah.

29th March, 1949.

At the beginning of March there was a mild case of *amok* in Lawas Bazaar when one night a Javanese coolie woke up all the members of the house he was living in and insisted on doing a "dance". After a few minutes of dancing he suddenly attacked another Javanese who was present and a fight developed. The man attacked managed to escape and ran outside, but was caught by the lunatic a little way from the house, where they both fell into an old bomb hole. Fortunately help was soon forthcoming and the pair split up before any serious hurt had taken place. The lunatic is still under observation in hospital, as he is at present incapable of making his defence.

The District has had another excellent harvest this year, but the padi census has not yet been completed and figures are not available. Padi purchase at Sundar exceeded 1,515 piculs in March, this being part of the surplus padi from a population of approximately 3,000 persons only living on the Trusan River.

P. B. SMITH,
Lawas.

12th April, 1949.

Wings over Sarawak.

This is 1949 and we in Sarawak are conscious that before long the aircraft of one or more civil air lines will be flying over the countryside.

Already the outlines of a modern airport are beginning to take shape some six miles South of Kuching and I use the word "airport" advisedly for this will be no mere stretch of beaten earth, no so called "strip" for emergency landings but an airport with a fine tarmac runway and terminal buildings and a wind sock and air control officers—in short an airport well adapted for the requirements of modern commercial aircraft.

And before civil aviation becomes a commonplace in Sarawak, before we accustom ourselves to the weekly, or even daily, services furnished by well known airlines I would ask you to consider, for a short while, that period twenty years ago when the Government of Sarawak had its own Air Service.

In the *Sarawak Government Gazette* of November 16th, 1928, under the heading of "Appointments" there appeared the following:—

"No. 595—His Highness the Rajah has been pleased to appoint Mr. J. A. H. Hardie to be Director of the Government Air Service, with effect from 29th October, 1928, inclusive.

No. 596—His Highness the Rajah has been pleased to appoint Mr. W. H. Phillips to be Flight Lieutenant in the Government Air Service, with effect from 29th October, 1928, inclusive.

No. 597—His Highness the Rajah has been pleased to appoint Mr. T. W. Goodban to be Leading Aircraftman in the Government Air Service, with effect from 29th October, 1928, inclusive."

And so the Air Service of the State of Sarawak was born with three men and two De Havilland "Moth" aircraft fitted with floats.

The seaplanes were named *Venus* and *Royalist* and they were kept in, and launched from, a hangar situated on the river bank about 50 yards downriver from the Satok bridge on the town side of the river.

Regulations were made for the carriage of mails which were confined to letter mails only and no mail bags could be carried in the planes without being franked by the Director of the Air Service.

Additional postage at the rate of 8 cents per 2oz. or part of 2oz. was charged on all letters despatched by air mail and, of course, these mails were confined to destinations within the State.

Written permission to travel in the seaplanes had to be obtained from the Director and it was laid down that no Government official under any circumstances would be required or instructed to take passage in a seaplane on duty and that all flights made by Government officials on duty were to be voluntary.

His Highness' seaplane *Royalist* had a very brief existence for on January 12th, 1929, she was wrecked at Simanggang, although prior to this disaster she had made two successful flights over Kuching and district early in January.

On 12th January *Royalist* took off from the Satok base at 6.20 a.m. and arrived over Fort Alice, Simanggang, at 7.25 a.m.

In coming down low to fly under the telephone line, extending across the river from the Fort hill, *Royalist* struck an air pocket and, touching the water at 80 m.p.h., crashed.

Flight Lieutenant Phillips and Ground Engineer Goodban were lucky to escape drowning; Mr. Goodban was penned in the cockpit by the petrol tank which fell on top of it.

The seaplane was damaged beyond repair though the engine and other valuable parts were salvaged.

Nothing daunted, Flight Lieutenant Phillips, accompanied by Mr. W. L. Clark, flew the seaplane *Venus* to Simanggang on the 26th of the same month, the trip taking one hour and a quarter.

At 9 a.m. they flew on to Engkilili, returned to Simanggang at 10.30 and reached the Satok base at 11.35. On 1st January, 1929, Mr. T. W. Goodban was appointed Ground Engineer and Mr. H. M. Calvert succeeded Mr. Hardie as Director of the Air Service on 15th February, 1929.

It was intended that there should be a regular weekly service to outstations and it was estimated that Sibu would be reached in less than 2 hours, Mukah in 2½ hours, Bintulu in three and a half, Miri in a little over four and Limbang in about 5½ hours.

Before undertaking the service to outstations Flight Lieutenant Phillips took *Venus* to a height of 11,600 feet over Kuching and was able to see, between cloud patches, the coast at the mouth of the Rejang and in the neighbourhood of Lundu. The large water tank on Datu Muda's hill looked to him to be just about big enough for one "stengah"!

It does not appear that the weekly service to outstations ever materialized though one return trip was made from Kuching to Limbang carrying mail. A night was spent at Sibu and on February 14th *Venus* passed over Oya at 7.25 a.m.; at 11.20 she was over Bintulu and Miri was reached at 1 p.m.

She continued her journey the same day and arrived safely at Limbang.

On 15th she left Limbang at 10.20 a.m. and ran into a heavy rainstorm on her way to Miri; for a time Flight Lieutenant Phillips was completely lost until he suddenly saw the Baram river on which he alighted and where he sheltered until the storm passed and eventually arrived at Miri at 2.30 p.m. He remained at Miri for the night and continued next day, passing over Bintulu at 8.20 a.m. and reaching Kuching safely.

A story is told which illustrates how useful the Air Service could be on occasions.

His Highness the Rajah was on tour in the Third Division and it was desirable that an important document should reach him without delay.

Flight Lieutenant Phillips was given the document and left for Sibu but upon his arrival there he found that His Highness had already left for Kanowit; the pilot flew on up river and spotted His Highness' yacht *Maimuna* between Sibu and Kanowit.

He circled over the ship and alighted on the river near her and the ship stopped; the document was handed over, *Venus* took off for Kuching and the Rajah continued his trip up the Rejang.

At last in June, 1929, the decision was made to disband the Government Air Service, *Venus* was

handed over to Flight Lieutenant Phillips—a very unusual wedding present for he had married a short time before—and at 7 a.m. on 14th July, 1929, *Venus* left Sarawak and flew, with Mr. and Mrs. Phillips aboard, to Pontianak where, owing to the strong winds prevailing, she was shipped aboard the s.s. *Boelongan* for Singapore.

In these days when it is the constant cry that communications in Sarawak are wretched we should do well to remember the stout effort made by the Rajah's Government twenty years ago to improve those communications.

The Air Service was before its time, the planes were fragile, operations commenced during the *landas* and aids to navigation were virtually non-existent but it did show what could be, and has since been, done by well handled seaplanes and flying boats—the obvious method of rapid transport—in this country of innumerable waterways.

No. 425.—Mr. T. W. Goodban ceases to be Leading Aircraftman and Ground Engineer, Government Air Service, with effect from 1st June, 1929.

No. 427.—Mr. H. M. Calvert ceases to be Director of the Government Air Service, with effect from 1st June, 1929.

No. 428.—Mr. W. H. Phillips ceases to be Flight Lieutenant, Government Air Service, with effect from 1st June, 1929.

No. 366.—His Highness the Rajah has been pleased to appoint Mr. T. W. Goodban to be a Second-Lieutenant in the Sarawak Rangers, with effect from 1st June, 1929.

"PERISCOPE."

The Baram District.

(Concluded).

It is supposed that the original inhabitants of this district were Lemetings, the Narums, the Lelaks, and the Bakongs in the lower reaches, the Kelabits in the upper reaches, and the nomad Penans. Then came the first wave of Kenyahs, the so-called Lepu Pu'un, to drive back these people, the Kelabits to the hills, and the others gradually further and further down-river. They in their turn had to give way to the conquering Kayans who, during their raids, swept down the Baram and along the coast as far as Bintulu, finally driving the Bruneis out of the river. The Lepu Pu'un retired to the hilly country and the rich plains between the Baram, the Balui and the Belaga, and there lived in comparative peace until the Great Kayan Expedition in 1863. It was the news and the effect of this expedition that drove them back towards the rivers of the Baram, and drove the Brawans, Sebops and Lirongs from the Senapau, the Peliran and the Danum into the Tinjar. The Lepu Pu'un were living in the vicinity of the Silat and were already suffering from the attacks of the Lepu Bu'au, the last arrivals, when just before the death of Sultan Abdul Munin the Baram river was ceded to Sarawak on the 13th June, 1863. All the various tribes save the Kelabits and the Penans were persuaded to leave the small streams and the highlands and to settle on the banks of the main rivers, and apart from occasional outbreaks of old blood feuds there has been peace in the land ever since.

Except for a few scattered Bruneis who had married women of the upriver tribes and were therefore unmolested, all the other inhabitants of the district arrived after the cession of the territory. The Malays were brought in from the Batang Lupar and were settled at Marudi to be of assistance to Government in time of need, and mostly became traders. Nowadays almost all the trade is in the hands of the Chinese, and the Malays have become farmers, rubber garden owners, craftsmen, boat builders and carpenters. They have kept exclusively to the vicinity of Marudi and made no settlements elsewhere in the district.

The Ibans inhabit the streams between Marudi and the Tutoh river as far as Linai, the Bakong river, and there are villages in one or two of the lower streams of the Tinjar. All migration of Ibans has now been stopped since all available land has now been occupied by them. Like the Malays, they also were brought to the district in the first place as a nucleus for assistance should any of the upriver peoples prove refractory, and it is said that, had one or two of the chiefs of the Tinjar been less truculent, there would have been no necessity to bring them from the Batang Lupar. They are composed mostly of people from Kumpang, the Lemanak, the Skrang and the Layar, are primarily farmers, but also to a large extent owners of rubber gardens. They live in long houses built on a more substantial plan than the average Iban village and have tended to model themselves on the social system of the upriver tribes, thus, as a rule, obeying their chiefs, who are often hereditary, and living a peaceful and industrious existence.

The Malohs, originally natives of Netherlands East Indies, came to the district in the first place as traders, settling in the vicinity of Lubok Nibong where they have remained ever since. They do little trading now, but, having planted or acquired a great deal of rubber, are amongst the most wealthy people here. They have always proved themselves useful and dependable citizens and have, on occasion, been of great assistance.

As in most parts of Sarawak, the trade of the district is almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese, who have been permitted to come in gradually, as order prevailed, to handle the export of jungle produce from the interior. They have settled in and around Marudi and also in small upriver bazaars of the interior, where they have become partly merchants, partly farmers, and live in complete accord with the natives. They are industrious and intelligent and take a keen interest in the welfare of the district. This merchant class is composed of Hokienese, Cantonese, Hylams and Teochius, but there is also a Colony of Foochows—with a small number of Khehs—living in the vicinity of the Poyut river where they have planted approximately a thousand acres of rubber. They arrived some fifteen years ago, have been most law abiding and industrious, and, with their own rice and vegetable fields, are quite prosperous.

The Kayans, Kenyahs and kindred tribes inhabit the middle reaches and are found in large numbers on the banks of the Baram, Tutoh and Tinjar rivers where they live in strongly made, large, long houses containing from a couple of hundred to, in some cases, over a thousand persons. They have a social system consisting of three classes and a broad distinction is still maintained between them, the hereditary chiefs and their families forming the upper class, their former servants and retainers the

middle class, and their former slaves the lower class. The chief or headman is obeyed as a rule implicitly, thus their administration presents little difficulty and a system of indirect rule exists automatically. Like the Ibans, some of them own rubber gardens but the majority depend on hunting, fishing and their farms for a living, and in this they are badly handicapped by their superstitions and adherence to old outworn traditions and taboos. Efforts are being made continually to persuade them to relinquish their present methods, but with only gradual success, and no real progress can be made until some form of agricultural and hygienic education and demonstration is there before their eyes as an example of the benefits of progress.

The Kelabits inhabit the hills and upland plains of the upper reaches and, partly owing to the nature of the soil, partly owing to their industry unfettered by many inhibitions, are successful farmers and are rarely known to have a bad harvest. To a certain extent they follow the social system of the Kayans and have the habit of obeying their chiefs, and this is perhaps fortunate in that their country is difficult of access and only rarely visited. They firmly believe in their superstitions concerning omen birds and dreams and on this account have been known to take over two months on a journey to Marudi. And they are still a little scared of the Kenyahs, and when travelling by river often wait until nightfall before slipping silently past one of their villages.

Finally there are the Penans, nomads who still keep to the existence their forbears followed in the jungles, living on the edible fruits and palms, on wild sago and on pig and deer. They are fine hunters and wonderfully accurate with the blowpipe and are skilled in the manufacture of baskets and mats. The Lepu Pu'un say that, when they first came over the hills into the Baram valley, they found the Penans here in large numbers living as they do to-day, save that it was then customary for them to build rude shelters in the tree tops, or to live in caves, and not to make their shelters on the ground as they do now. And the women had to give birth to their children between the buttresses of the great bee trees. It was the Lepu Pu'un—or so they say—who taught the Penans how to work jungle produce, how to make their blowpipes, and the art of hunting with dogs. Although rarely met with, these people are protected from exploitation by regulations forbidding anyone to trade with them except in the presence of a representative of Government. These trading meetings are held three times a year and are well attended.

A recent rough estimate was made of the population of the district and figures are given below. The final figures of the enumeration now in progress are not yet available and it will be interesting to see what margin of difference there is.

Europeans	6		
Others	35	Marudi and its environs	4,571
Malays	1,253	Tutoh river	3,456
Chinese	2,887	Bakong river	2,861
Iban	5,920	Tinjar river	4,595
Malohs	91	Baram river	
Kayans	5,295	Long Lama area	3,094
Kenyahs	8,246	„ Akah „	4,432
Kelabits	2,035	Leo Matu „	3,396
Penans	687		10,992
	<u>26,405</u>		<u>26,405</u>

Note:—Mr. D. C. Hudden, from whose report the above account is taken, lost his life during the Japanese occupation. He was District Officer of the Baram District from 1936 to 1941, and one of his post-war successors has written of him as follows:—

"(He was) an officer whose amazing capacity for understanding and loving the district and its many and diverse peoples has passed into a legend and a by-word. None who knew him speak of him without affection, but it is particularly the people of the district who treasure his memory. To children he was a father and they loved him, to adolescents he was an example and they followed him, to grown men he was a guide and they trusted him, to the elders he was an oracle and they believed his every word. Courteous and quiet to the gentle sex, he was indeed 'a very parfait gentil knight.'

"He was beheaded just south of the Dutch border, during the Japanese occupation, by renegade Dayaks. His work is an inspiration to those who follow and his name will pass into the history of this district."

All who knew Mr. Hudden will re-echo the sentiments expressed above. He was indeed a fine gentleman and a wise and good administrator, an example to officers of his period, of a type which demonstrated the best in the system of "Brooke rule." Some readers may not know that Mr. Hudden was a brother of Mrs. Anthony Brooke.

The enumeration at the end of 1939 referred to by the late Mr. Hudden in his last paragraph gave the following final figures, against which we give the final figures of the 1947 census:—

Cultural Group	1939 Enumeration	1947 Census
European	13	11
Malay	1,679	1,308
Melanaus	3	12
Sea Dayak (Iban)	4,153	4,617
Land Dayak	-	5
Other Indigenous:		
Bisayah	61	67
Kedayan	-	9
Kayan	3,959	3,944
Kenyah	4,440	4,510
Kelabit	1,468	1,358
Murut	-	3
Dumu	-	1
Penan or Settled Penan	559	608
Nomadic Penan		
(or Penan)	687	1,139
Others	114	26
Chinese	2,341	2,682
Other non-indigenous		
Asiatics	32	36
	<u>19,509</u>	<u>20,336</u>

It will be seen that no very great change occurred between 1939 and 1947. Mr. Hudden's estimate was over-optimistic, particularly in respect of Kayans and Kenyahs, and the estimated total population of the District was about 7,000 too great. Readers are advised not to attempt to draw firm conclusions by comparing the changes in Cultural Group figures, but to await publication of the 1947 Census Report which explains the difficulties of grouping and gives reasons for extraordinary differ-

ences. One point should be noted here, however. Mr. Hudden estimated that 687 Penans were in his District. The 1939 Enumeration showed 687 Nomadic Penans and 559 Penans or Settled Penans. The 1947 Census showed 1,139 Nomadic Penans and 608 Penans or Settled Penans. Mr. Hudden does not appear to have allowed for "Penan or Settled Penan" and his figure of 687 was in respect of nomads, a figure accepted later for the 1939 Enumeration and admitted therein to be an estimate and not a count. The 1,139 nomads of 1947 were actually counted in the Census. There is some doubt regarding the name of these nomads, as indicated above, but as long as the reader remembers that Mr. Hudden's 687 Penans were nomads, then the position should be clear.

EDITORS.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE SARAWAK GAZETTE, MAY 1, 1899.

Extract from monthly report for March, 1899, by the Resident of Limbang.

(Note:—In January the Resident had reported that one Orang Kaya Puasa of Awang, who had lately moved into Limbang from Brunei territory, had complained that a man from across the border had seized three of his buffaloes, taken them to Brunei and handed over one each to the Sultan, the Pengiran Bendahara and the Pengiran di Gedong. The Resident thereupon wrote to the Pengiran Bendahara, requesting that an enquiry be held, but received no acknowledgment to his letter. The following month a band of about thirty men came from Brunei to Awang and carried off a further three buffaloes from Orang Kaya Puasa, saying that they had been ordered to do so by the Pengiran Bendahara, as the Orang Kaya was one of his people who had moved into Limbang. Further protests by the Resident to the Brunei authorities went unheeded).

Having reported to the Honourable the Officer Administering the Government that further cases of buffalo lifting had taken place at Awang, and that no reply had been received from either the Pangeran Bandahara or the Pangeran di Gadong to whom I had written concerning them, and that if any more cases occurred there might be a serious disturbance probably ending in loss of life, I received instructions by the Lorna Doone of the 7th to place a guard of Rangers at Awang to protect life and property and to arrest the cattle lifters if they came within the Limbang border.

Accordingly on the 9th I went up to Awang taking the guard with me and left them there with strict orders not to cross over into Brunei territory under any circumstances but to effect the arrest of any cattle lifters found within the border, and before leaving made further enquiries about the raids.

A few days later Kalam or Datu Pomancha as he is styled was known to be hiding in the house of one Uyong and, on the Rangers going to the house, he and his followers made good their escape, to Limbo Manis, the Rangers not coming up with them in the Limbang waters.

On the 21st I received an indignant letter from the Pangeran Bandahara in reference to the guard being placed at Awang and attacking "langgar" Datu Kalam who was stated to be quite innocent of any wrong doing, and also that I should have taken Orang Kaya Puasa's word about the raids as he was utterly an untrustworthy man and had several offences against him, the raids were not however denied, this letter I merely acknowledged and forwarded to the Officer Administering the Government.

On the 26th I received a letter from H. M's Consul enclosing a copy of one from him to the Honourable the Officer Administering the Government stating that His Highness the Sultan had made a complaint to the effect that the guard at Awang had followed Datu Pomancha to Limo Manis to arrest him and were still there waiting for him. Datu Pomancha being reported to have gone after Orang Kaya Puasa who was said to have stolen six of his buffaloes and that His Highness regarded this as a trespass and unfriendly act. Though certain that the facts had been misrepresented to H. M's Consul, I immediately sent up the Native chief Haji Abdul Halil to Awang to make special inquiry into this in order to leave no doubt on the subject; the Native chief returned and reported that the guard had never been over the border and as to Orang Kaya Puasa he had not left the precincts of his house at Awang within the time mentioned.

These facts I communicated to H.M's Consul and also under instructions from the Officer Administering the Government I forwarded to him particulars of the raids and the evidence supporting Orang Kaya Puasa's statements.

His evidence leaves no doubt that these raids have been carried on by the Pangeran Bandahara's people and all the witnesses state that the raiders acknowledged that they were done by order of the Pangeran himself as a punishment to Orang Kaya Puasa for having moved into Limbang.

Law Report.

SARAWAK EXPORTING COMPANY v. Chop CHEN SOON.

Before His Honour Judge K. H. Digby in the First Circuit Court at Kuching.

JUDGMENT.

1/3/49.

In this case the plaintiff firm, the Sarawak Exporting Company, sues the defendant firm, Chop Chen Soon, for \$1,758.61 being the price of goods sold and delivered. The defendant firm admit to receiving goods to this value from the plaintiff firm, but claim to set off against this amount first \$720 being storage rent for eighteen months at \$40 a month, and second \$345.60, being the price of 128 tins of sweets returned as unsaleable. The issue before this Court therefore is whether judgment is to be given for the plaintiff for the amount claimed, or for the amount of \$693.01 admitted by the defendants, or for some amount between these two figures.

There has been a certain conflict of evidence in this case but I have no difficulty in finding that the following are the basic facts of the matter. Sometime in the second half of 1946 a Singapore merchant named Yeo Joo Song decided to start a business in Kuching. For this purpose he

appointed three attorneys: Sim Cheng Joo who was particularly useful because of his previous business connections in Kuching and became manager; Siaw Chow Siang who became accountant, but who is now in sole charge of his principal's business and instituted this action on behalf of the plaintiff firm; and Ong Peck Kiong who became storekeeper but is at present in other employment in Singapore, where however his evidence was fortunately able to be taken on commission. The primary object of this venture appears to have been to buy rubber and export it to Singapore, but it seems early to have occurred to Mr. Yeo Joo Song that here was a favourable opportunity for unloading on to a virgin market certain stocks of sundry goods, which he had accumulated, or could readily acquire, and with which the public in Singapore had become surfeited. These goods seem to have comprised such articles as jams, drinks, sweets and so on, most of which were not distinguished by their quality and they soon proved difficult to sell even in Kuching. The first steps in getting the business on its feet were left to Mr. Sim Cheng Joo, who was and is a partner in the defendant firm, and the ground-landlord of the premises, No. 5, Jawa Street, in which the defendant firm carries on its business. Now Mr. Sim Cheng Joo experienced difficulty in securing premises for the plaintiff firm. It had already been arranged in Singapore that the temporary address of the plaintiff firm should be 5, Jawa Street, and Mr. Sim Cheng Joo proceeded to store the goods, which arrived thick and fast from Singapore, on the upper floor and in the back portion of those premises. The three partners of the defendant firm, that is Mr. Sim Cheng Joo himself, Mr. Sim Sui Ann, who has represented the defendant firm in this action, and Mr. Tan Chak Jui, who has never been mentioned as playing any active part, permitted the plaintiff firm's representative, Mr. Sim Cheng Joo again, to store goods on the premises, but the arrangement was that the defendant firm could themselves sell for their own profit as much of these goods as they wanted to. The defendant firm was not expressly given the monopoly of sale of the goods imported by the plaintiff firm from Singapore, but they were the principal middle-men between the plaintiff firm and the Sarawak consumer. In point of fact it does not seem that any substantial quantity of these goods reached the public through other channels, at least until the salesman, Mr. Goh Kiow Song, was engaged by the plaintiff firm in March or April 1947. Before the engagement of this representative the plaintiff firm had acquired, in one of the first three months of 1947, premises at 55, Main Bazaar. Thereafter consignments from Singapore were delivered at those premises. The stock at 5, Jawa Street, still unsold remained there, and was sold either by the defendant firm for its own profit or by the plaintiff's salesman for the plaintiff's profit. In May, 1948, when the relations between the plaintiff firm and the defendant firm came to an end, and, be it noted, the relations between the plaintiff firm and Mr. Sim Cheng Joo also came to an end, the balance of stock remaining seems to have been transferred to the plaintiff's premises in Main Bazaar. In October of that year the defendants returned to the plaintiff 128 tins of sweets which they had taken out of stock but found to be unsaleable.

Now I think it is clear that from about November, 1946, until May, 1948, there were certain goods

stored on the premises of the defendant firm, of which the plaintiff firm claimed to have the right to dispose for its own profit if it felt so inclined. The only question which arises here is whether the plaintiff firm thereby put themselves under a liability to pay rent. Mr. Sim Sui Ann assured me in his evidence in January that Mr. Ong Pek Kiong promised to pay rent on behalf of the plaintiff. Since then Mr. Ong Pek Kiong's evidence has been taken on commission and he, who, by the way, would not appear to have any interest in the result of this action, has denied that he was a party to such an agreement. It is now said that it was Mr. Sim Cheng Joo who made the promise, but I have already pointed out that he was himself a partner in the defendant firm. According to his own evidence he promised that his principal would pay rent at market rates to himself and his partners. Now I am satisfied that Mr. Sim Cheng Joo is an honest man and he was a straightforward witness. Nevertheless in these business transactions he put himself in a position where his duty conflicted with his interest. I do not believe that he expressly promised to pay rent because I am satisfied that the whole arrangement was at the time of a friendly nature, and Mr. Sim was merely making use for his own convenience and that of his principals of the premises of which he was the landlord. Indeed it emerged clearly from the cross-examination of Mr. Sim Sui Ann this morning that the defendant firm did not have any tenancy of the top floor at all. At the best they were permitted to use the top floor by the partner-landlord from time to time. They never had any exclusive possession. I am satisfied that neither Mr. Ong nor Mr. Siow ever agreed to pay rent for whatever use they might make of the premises either to Mr. Sim or to the defendant firm. It is true that certain of the goods alleged to belong to the plaintiff firm are said to have been stored at the back of the ground floor, but if this was so it was again principally for reasons of convenience, and was very useful to the defendants who thereby had ample stock lying ready to their hands. The plaintiff firm cannot in these circumstances be liable to pay rent to the firm in which its own agent was a partner. The claim for rent is without substance and fails.

With regard to the claim to set off the price of 128 tins of sweets returned it is clear that there is no business custom to that effect. I accept Mr. Siow's evidence that return is occasionally allowed as a matter of grace. There can be no doubt that in order to establish the right it must be proved that a specific condition in that behalf is attached to the original sale. Who is now alleged to have attached that condition to the sale of these sweets? Not Mr. Ong, the storeman, although the suggestion has been made that he concurred—a suggestion which he has explicitly denied; not Mr. Goh, the salesman; but the very Mr. Sim who is a partner in the defendant firm. Mr. Sim's own evidence amounts to an admission that he sold his principal's goods to himself with a specially favourable condition attached. He may have done or he may not have done. I am quite certain that if he did it was a breach of duty so to act without the express concurrence of his principal or of his fellow attorneys. Neither Mr. Sim's principal nor his fellow attorneys have so concurred nor have they ever consented to receive the goods back. This sale of sweets was the last one of several. The others had not proved unsaleable and there was

no reason to believe that the 128 tins would. I do not believe that the special condition to which I have referred was attached to this particular sale, but for the reasons which I have given the point is immaterial. The claim to set off the price of the 128 tins returned accordingly fails.

I give judgment for the plaintiff for \$1,758.61 and costs which I fix at \$60, being \$54 Court fees and \$6 for the time and trouble occupied by this action. The sum of money standing to the credit of the defendant firm in Court, representing the balance of the sum deposited to cover the cost of taking evidence on commission in Singapore, must be paid to the plaintiff in part settlement of the judgment debt.

"Kapal Maimuna."

Old Ships sunk during the war are now of no use to us, but we remember them all with affection, and would like to contribute the following in memory of the Rajah's yacht "Maimuna" and her peculiar attractions.

"Maimuna mine, may well you vie
With dancing maidens from Hawaii,
With mischievous and girlish glee,
You dance upon the calmest sea;
With head in air, and breasts laid bare
You dive into the ocean,
And out again—with undulating motion.
To see so fair a Neptune's daughter,
Shake shapely hips above the water,
The very clouds look down and laugh
Their mirth like lightning flashing.
The waves at sea roar thunderously
And rollicking and prancing,
Join Maimuna in her dancing."

Contributed.

Apology.

In a recent article entitled "The Large Mammals of Borneo" a certain collector was stated to have been collecting for the London Zoo.

We are informed by the Secretary of the Zoological Society, London, that this statement is not correct, and therefore we hasten to apologise for the misunderstanding.

The Museum.

The Museum seeks to safeguard documents which are likely to be of interest in the future, and welcomes gifts of this nature from all sources, particularly from private individuals. Thus, as far as is known, there is only one complete set of *Sarawak Gazettes* in existence—that in the Printing Office. This is a continual handicap to other departments which often need to consult the Gazette. The other day we tried to find a complete set of the *Sarawak Tribune*. We could not find one. Subsequently, as a result of an advertisement in the

Tribune, we had generous responses from Mr. L. Gregory of the Chartered Bank, Mr. Kah Yan of the Health Department and Mr. Wilfred Law. Thus we have now been able to make up a complete file of Kuching's first daily newspaper, from its 1945 beginning.

For some months the Museum has looked after nine live Mias (Orang Utans). Two of these have now been allocated to the Sydney Zoo, another two to Perth and arrangements are being made about the remainder. The Mias is perhaps the scarcest of all the apes in the world to-day, only to be found in a small part of Sumatra and Borneo. Therefore it deserves the fullest protection.

Mr. G. Perrin, Labour Adviser to the Borneo Governments, paid a short visit to Kuching during which he did some drawings and paintings of the Kelabits at present in town. Mr. Perrin has kindly promised to give some of his paintings of native peoples to the Museum, which lacks drawings and paintings, and would welcome further gifts of the same character.

The Postmaster-General, Mr. W. G. Tait, who is on leave in England, writes that the experimental gramophone recordings of Kelabit singing made in 1948 have been processed at the BBC and adjudged technically satisfactory as well as satisfying. It is planned to make a series of such records, if possible representative of Sarawak singing as a whole. Anyone who knows of any expert singers coming to Kuching please to notify the Museum.

Mr. H. S. Sola of the Island Trading Company, Selalang, has been translating one of our old Brunei manuscripts from its difficult Jawi and archaic dialect into modern Romanized Malay. This is slow, tedious work, and he has done a great deal of it, most helpfully.

A number of pupils from the Batu Lintang Training Centre are attending weekly classes in Taxidermy at the Museum. The idea is that they should learn enough to be able to preserve interesting specimens and forward such things to the Museum from time to time. If it proves possible to build up a system of part-time collectors over the country, it would provide a good way of obtaining interesting new items as well as of enlarging our knowledge of the country as a whole. If anyone else in Kuching is interested in this idea, we should be glad to make arrangements so that they can learn about preserving birds, insects, fish, snakes and so on. It makes both an interesting and useful hobby.



The Curator (Mr. Tom Harrison) left by air from Singapore for a short visit to England on April 10th mainly in order to visit museums and other institutions; Mr. B. J. C. Spurway is acting for him in his absence. During a week spent in Singapore, a long paper was completed for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* on the subject of gold objects and associated Hindu influences in Borneo. This paper is largely based on unpublished material, some of which has been collected at first hand in the past two years and some of which already exists in the Museum collections and records but has not previously been published. The most striking Sarawak find of gold objects was made at Limbang many years ago; the results have not before been made known to science. These finds include a number of gold rings with precious stones, one with an Orissa inscription of the 11th or 12th century. A variety of other ornamental objects were also found, including part of what appears to be a massive gold belt-buckle, as illustrated in the text figure at the foot of the preceding column. From time to time gold objects still turn up in the Limbang area, and in 1929 a miniature gold lion was discovered. The original is believed to have been in the care of Mr. J. R. Combe, then administrative officer in the area, but a brass cast truthfully records the character of this curious object, which is illustrated below.

Several of these gold objects have been sent to Professor Nilakanta Sastri, leading Indian scholar. He and Dr. Chhabra, Government Epigraphist for India, have been considerably puzzled by this material, though it is unmistakably Indian. One of the gold rings has a curious picture of a dolmen (stone table-like erection) on the surface. Another figure which they have examined was found when clearing the site of St. Thomas's Cathedral in Kuching. It represents a woman with a head band and a tall crown, fondling a child. On the back is an inscription in an unknown script. This object may be a votive figure of the sort Dr. Coedès has described from Siam. But, in common with the several gold objects found in Sarawak, and a curious female figuring found at Santubong, this material does not really fit into the usual form of Indian influences.

Unfortunately many of the gold objects found in this country have since vanished. Some were supposed to have been given to other museums, including the British Museum, and the Victoria and Albert; but the authorities of these institutions can find no trace of the items in their catalogue or records. Gold objects found in this way of course rightfully belong to the Government, and the appropriate place for them is in the country's own museum.



(Contributed.)

Extracts from Annual Reports of Administrative Officers for 1948.

FIRST DIVISION.

(Mr. D. C. White, Acting Resident).

The year marked the inception of the establishment of the first Local Authority in this Division at Bau. It cannot be said that this was the most fertile field for experiment, but the Authority has carried on and, while there is a lot of dead wood to be cleared away and much stimulus and encouragement needs to be supplied, interest is gradually increasing and with interest will come greater efficiency. Agreement was obtained to the formation of a mixed Malay, Sebuyau and Land Dayak Authority at Lundu and also a Malay cum Land Dayak Authority in the Upper Serian. It is hoped to start both these in the new year.

The squatter problem (on the Simanggang Road) has not yet been settled satisfactorily, the Ensengei area being rather disparagingly reported upon by the Agricultural Department and applications for land being few. It is clear that land must be made available to would-be Chinese farmers, but they always demand Land Dayak land which cannot be alienated to them, the Dayaks themselves in many cases being reduced to a dangerously low cycle of rotation in farming.

KUCHING DISTRICT.

(Mr. W. G. Morison, District Officer).

In June Travelling Dispensary No. 2, a large outboard-driven boat, was put in commission and since then has worked on a regular weekly schedule; the Dresser in charge visits some sixteen villages on this trip every week and treats on an average about 450 patients, mainly Malays and Chinese living on the Sarawak and Samarahan rivers. The scheduled trip has recently been extended to include the Sebuyau Dayaks of the Quop River.

The coastal Malays of Bako, Buntal and Santubong have urgently requested that they also shall receive a visit from the Travelling Dispensary weekly and it is hoped to include these villages in the programme for 1949.

A Dresser using the hospital jeep has for the last six months paid regular visits every Saturday to the Chinese and Dayaks living near the 15th, 24th and 32nd miles, Simanggang Road.

In the Nonok-Moyan area the Malays are at present leasing annually some 70% of their communal land to Chinese for padi planting; rents charged are at \$20 to \$25 per acre per annum. In many cases the Malays then do casual coolie labour on their own land. Every effort is being made to induce the Chinese to take up new land of their own in the mixed zone south of the main drains in order to give them security and cheapness of tenure and in order to persuade the Malays to work their own land.

The opening of the Boys' Home at the 1st mile, Pending Road, was an outstanding event of the year. This institution, supervised by Mr. Yeo Cheng Hoe, is proving an unqualified success; there are now some fourteen boys resident there,

many of whom were previously vagrants who had been driven by force of circumstances to theft for a living. The boys are now happy in their security; and are being educated and taught to live like respectable citizens, while petty theft in the town has decreased substantially as a result of their detention.

BAU DISTRICT.

(Mr. A. J. N. Richards, District Officer).

The Sirengkok end of the bazaar is more dead than dying, even with the occasional visits of travelling cinemas. The only centre of attraction is the new pork market. Trade, such as it is, centres upon the cross roads by the vegetable and fish markets. The car park was maintained in the same area and it is likely that the bazaar would benefit from development round the cross-roads.

Rebuilding was not undertaken and it has been decided to leave the present leaf-attap structures for the time being. The bazaar has been described as a "Hollywood version of a decayed boom town" which is apt and true, except that Hollywood had no hand in it.

Interest was shewn in antimony in the latter half of the year but samples were not up to expectations and interest has died. There are large quantities of this mineral still to be had, but in scattered pockets beyond the control of any one of the Chinese firms. The reputed large deposit near Boring is full of arsenic.

Some of the best and unoccupied mines have been worked by illegal miners throughout the year. These operations were at first thought to be carried on piecemeal by unemployed mine labourers in order to supplement a precarious livelihood. This is only part of the story and it is now believed that a large and well-organized labour force is conducting the scattered operations with access to explosives, chemicals and all that is necessary. It is not possible to do more than touch the fringes of this at present, although it would become much easier were all the mines fully occupied by the owners. The process began during the occupation and the Japanese were unable to prevent it with 4,000 men. The sudden appearance of new bicycles owned by a number of youths in the District coincided with the taking over of Rumoh by the owners.

Two Chinese firms in Bau shared the monopoly over the edible birdsnest caves in the past, and the occupation period upset efforts to break this. The Dayaks themselves have said they prefer to be tied to a particular firm. They also say that the quantity of nests available has increased considerably as a result of the mild control exercised, but it is probable that the swifts were permitted to breed undisturbed for most of the occupation. It now remains to exercise much stricter control in 1949 and obtain bids at the auctions by interested buyers from outside the district in order to break the buyers' agreements now made. In time the Dayaks may begin to insist that their Chinese creditors prove the debts in Court, or remain unpaid.

The nests are of the "black" kind and the caves are scattered, dangerous and poor in yield. In no case have I seen nests built less than 100 feet from

the floor or near the entrance. Over-collection is only part of the cause. There are snakes, bats and rats to prey upon the birds, and the "menaui" hawk at the entrance. Bats are shot in large numbers in some caves. In others, the injunction against killing anything, especially the white rats, makes the caves not worth collecting. One of these, Lanyang, is reputed also to be the most dangerous of all to climb into. It is possible that the caves here are more similar to those of Malaya, where no nests are collected, than to those of Niah and Baram.

SADONG DISTRICT.

(Abang Ismawi, Native Officer-in-Charge).

It is heartening to note that the Ibans of Lower Sadong have themselves organised four self-supporting schools. The Melikins have 1 self-supporting school, the Bidayuh have four and the Malays have one.

SECOND DIVISION.

(Mr. W. P. N. L. Ditmas, Resident).

Work was started at both ends of the Lidong to Betong road; this work is being financed from the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund. This new road will make communication between Simanggang and Betong via Lidong comparatively easy, and will open up a considerable amount of country. It is hoped that, at a later date, this will be made a motor road.

The formation of two new Local Authorities in the Kalaka district in 1949 was approved, one for the Malays and one for the Dayaks, who will share a building and clerks, but will have separate estimates and will keep separate accounts until in a year or two, it is hoped, it will be possible to form a combined Malay and Dayak Local Authority and Treasury.

As usual a large number of Dayaks, especially from the Ulu Ai and Ulu Skrang, left the Division, to find work; on many occasions against the advice of the District Officer. A number were recruited to work in the hemp and tobacco estates at Tawau, North Borneo. Many Dayaks demand work saying that it is the duty of Government to find them work, especially in places outside Sarawak! These people are reluctant to take any work which can be given to them locally.

SIMANGGANG DISTRICT.

(Mr. D. F. A. E. D. Morgan, Acting District Officer).

The pepper industry appears to be reviving rapidly, and applications for land on which to plant pepper are coming in in a steady stream. The Agricultural Department is trying to persuade the growers to use fish manure and other manures in place of the wasteful burnt earth method.

The Dayak Local Authority has taken a very great interest in education during the year but they have sensibly come to the decision that until properly trained teachers are available they will not vote money for the opening of new schools.

SARIBAS DISTRICT.

(Mr. D. L. Bruen, Acting District Officer).

In January the Saribas Local Treasury was formed—at present this Local Treasury is composed of and controls Dayaks only. The Treasury has so far been concerned almost entirely with education.

The most interesting Development this year has been the decision to impose a head tax instead of a door tax on all adult Dayak males in 1949. The great majority of Dayaks were in favour of the new Head Tax—in fact it can be said that the "Ili" Saribas Dayaks are unanimously in favour of this Head Tax. However the "Ulu" Saribas Dayaks (Spak and Layar) steadfastly refuse to accept this tax. The Local Treasury has decided that head tax will be paid by all adult male Dayaks except those in the Layar and Spak—it is hoped that the Dayaks from these two rivers will eventually co-operate and pay this tax. To force them to do so will lead to certain trouble and may well spell the end to the whole of the Local Treasury.

Although the Local Treasury has been mostly concerned with education, it cannot be said that their schools are functioning well. They are at present not satisfactory. This is partly due to the fact that the teachers are not trained and partly to the fact that certain teachers are inclined to resent interference, in any way, by the members of the Native Authority. At the close of the year it was learned that 5 teachers and 4 new teachers have been accepted for training at Batu Lintang, and when these have finished their course the schools will get the impetus they require.

The Dayak rubber producer produces a very poor quality sheet which he sells, unsmoked, to the Chinese dealers. Owing to lack of capital and the inability to wait more than a day to get actual cash in his pocket the Dayak refuses to smoke his own sheets as this delays his quick returns. Efforts have been made to encourage the Dayak to smoke his own sheets and to be more thorough in the actual preparation of it. Even though a better price will be thereby assured, it is highly doubtful if "home smoking" will ever be a practicable proposition in this district—especially as most of the tapping is done either by Malay or Chinese coolies who will certainly not wait an extra day or two for their "share".

KALAKA DISTRICT.

(Mr. W. C. B. Wilson, Acting District Officer).

Dayak opinion was sounded on all my tours and found to be much in favour of forming a Dayak authority. Many houses knew of the formation of an authority in the Saribas and were anxious not to be left behind even though they were not very clear what an authority was.

The Malay Schools in Kabong and Saratok suffered from the apathy of Malay parents, most of whom regarded the schools as day nurseries where their children could be kept out of trouble when they were not required on the farm or in the fishing boat.

Malay school attendance was very bad and very few pupils reached standard II before leaving.

The activities of the school masters out of school hours, scouting, gardening, sport, teaching minor crafts and educating the constabulary, gave promise that both Malay schools could give a sound primary education if parents were more co-operative.

THIRD DIVISION.

(Mr. J. C. H. Barcroft, Resident).

Owing to the high price of sago which is worked by the Melanau in great quantities, this community is exceedingly prosperous. Wages in the Coast district have risen steeply partly as the result of the high cost of living and partly as a result of labour shortages. Wages have averaged between \$100 and \$150 per month for unskilled labour.

Of the four bazaars totally destroyed during the war, one at Song has been rebuilt. Earth filling was nearly completed by the end of the year at Kapit and this bazaar and that at Mukah should be completed next year. It is also hoped to make a start on the Kanowit bazaar next year.

Unfortunately the areas suitable for rice cultivation appear to be limited and confined for the most part to the bank of the down river reaches of the Rejang and Igan rivers. A peat survey is in progress but it is feared that the depth of peat in the swamp jungle is too great to permit successful rice cultivation.

It is therefore essential that the swamp land which is already being farmed should be cultivated to its best advantage. In order to attain this end, a very complete investigation of the customary rights of user will be required and it is probable that it will be found necessary to extinguish many customary rights by means of compensation.

Investigation during the year revealed that large tracts of good land are not being farmed economically and there is little hope of their being so farmed as long as the owners are permitted to hold land far in excess of their requirements. Another objectionable factor is that industrious Chinese cultivators unable to obtain land from the Crown are forced to pay exorbitant rents to Natives whose rights to the land for which they collect rent are very dubious.

Preliminary investigation of customary rights was commenced but progress was very slow and not entirely satisfactory.

Next year five new Local Authorities, each with its own Treasury, will commence to operate. Three of these will be Sea Dayak and two Melanau, one Islam and one Liko. Spectacular results are not expected at first nor is it entirely desirable that progress should be very speedy, but the formation of these Authorities is a big step forward and will mean that more and more people are having a say in the management of their own affairs and gaining valuable experience in Local Government.

SIBU DISTRICT.

(Mr. T. St Dilks, Acting District Officer).

"Bazaar Lawyers" are increasing with legislation, and where once cases may have taken hours to hear they now take days, so cutting down the time available for pure Administration.

A large number of Dayaks, chiefly from non-productive areas, have passed through Sibu en route to Fourth Division in order to take up work with the Sarawak Oilfields Limited.

The Sibu Dayak Local Authority was inaugurated at the beginning of the year. The Dayak rest house, Native Court and adjoining buildings were taken over by the authority and an office and quarters for the Treasurer established.

The Committee consists of all seven Penghulus of the District, one of whom was elected Chairman.

Monthly meetings were held at which the Treasurer, District Officer and the Dayak Native Officer were present as advisers.

One school at Bawang Assan was taken over by the Authority.

Progress during the year has been slow of necessity but gradually the responsibilities and functions of the Authority have been instilled into members and the standard of debate at meetings has risen considerably.

Projects for the coming year include the taking over of three further schools, the inauguration of school fees payable to the Treasury, the inception of a system of school inspection, the provision of a padi bank, and, under the guidance of the Department of Agriculture, the establishment of a padi reserve.

Far too much hill padi is still being planted using the time-honoured wasteful methods but it is pleasing to see that one Dayak house at least has come off its hills this year and planted in the valleys. Provided nothing unforeseen happens this particular crop should be a record.

During the year there was marked progress in buildings in the bazaar area. All damaged shophouses were repaired to requirements, and are all now in line with pre-war standard. A row of six new shophouses were completed and occupied in late December. The Rex Hotel was also completed and is the only one of its kind in Sarawak; it is being fitted with all modern conveniences. The cost of each shophouse averaged \$20,000 and that of the Rex Hotel was \$32,000. At the time of writing this report work is about to commence on 2 blocks of 10 new shophouses.

The keenness on the part of traders to build new shophouses is attributed to the scarcity of trading premises. Rental value is still on the upward trend, and this is evidenced in the yearly increment of assessments. Figures for the coming year's assessment were completed at the end of this year and show an increase of \$18,000 over 1948.

A large number of pupils are moving quickly from school to school in order to gain promotion to a higher standard at each move and so accomplish several years' promotion in a few terms.

It is hoped to introduce a form of leaving certificate to stop this easy graduation and several Sibu schools have of their own accord started a similar system by mutual agreement.

LOWER REJANG DISTRICT.

(Mr. A. R. Snelus, District Officer).

Rubber output is steadily declining in Sarikei, though Binatang still manages to maintain its previous high level. The reason for this decline is unfortunately to be found in the fact that the rubber originally planted is now rapidly dying out and no efforts have been made to replace with good material. It seems clear too that much of the land was unsuit-

able in the first place for producing good rubber, being too swampy or peaty; while a disease suspected to be "foames" has created havoc and killed off thousands of trees. It is felt that the only way to rehabilitate the industry in Sarikei is to select suitable areas for replanting with clonal seed and budwood under the directions of the Rubber Regulation staff.

On the credit side of the agricultural balance sheet is the continued marked increase in the area under padi. This is, a very welcome trend which is receiving every possible encouragement and assistance from all departments of Government.

The Dayaks continue to favour farming the hills, although they themselves have at last realised the disastrous effects of too intensive cultivation—for they see everywhere around them in the hinterland of Sarikei and Binatang poor, barren soil covered only with low scrub which is miserably unproductive, and so they are now clamouring to be allowed to move elsewhere to devastate some other area of the country. Attempts to get them interested in farming by wet padi methods in the Lower Rejang delta have unfortunately so far failed to produce any results.

But the striking feature mentioned in last year's report of finding Chinese planting padi wherever they can acquire any suitable land is now becoming a commonplace. Fortunately they are not interested in farming on the hills, realising the more productive nature of the swamp areas, and so they help to bolster up the lead of the Agricultural Department and emphasize the true value of the latter's advice by adopting and demonstrating wet padi methods. Even greater numbers of Chinese have been farming this year at Kedang near Paloh and in the Batang Lassa area right up to Tanjong Sirik, while new areas have also been rented out where they near the mouth of the Matu river on the sea coast. The majority of these Chinese come from Sibul district, where they return home again after the harvest. All of them make use of irrigation by draining and bunding their farms; and their diligence in weeding and tending their farms invariably brings its reward in crops that are twice as heavy as those obtained by natives farming similar soil.

A few Chinese inland from Sarikei have advanced yet a stage further and can be seen successfully demonstrating irrigated terraced farming on the hill sides.

Pepper is again causing considerable interest amongst the Sarikei Chinese. The high prices prevailing finally brought on to the market almost all the old pepper stored up since pre-war days and it is most gratifying to be able to report quite extensive new planting. A rough estimate showed that there were well over 30,000 new vines planted in the Sarikei area at the end of the year, compared with about 6,000 at the end of 1947. The first small post-war crop is expected to ripen and be taken towards the end of 1949. Many more Chinese—both old hands and new—are eager to plant up pepper, but there are two vital drawbacks: firstly, lack of capital to tide over 3 years of unremunerative labour till the crop ripens; secondly, lack of what the Chinese regard as suitable land—so much having already been laid waste by the destructive methods of pepper planters in the past. There is in fact an urgent need for instruction and demonstration by the Agricultural Depart-

ment on the proper cultivation of pepper whereby soil fertility can be preserved. Then pepper may once again play the important role in the economy not only of this district but of the Colony which it did in the past.

The British Milling and General Trading Coy. was reorganised early in the year as the Colonial Timber Coy. and continued to export softwood timbers in lumber form to Australia. In addition they at last started to operate their sawmill in Sarikei, where they employ some 60 odd local Malays, and during the latter half of the year were turning out an average of about 200 tons sawn timber a month. Some of this is sold locally, but much sawn timber is also exported to Australia. All of it is softwood which is normally useless for constructional purposes in Sarawak's climate, but it is said to be in great demand in Australia. I understand the Colonial Timber Coy. are conducting drying experiments with the softwood to extract the moisture in an endeavour to render it serviceable in Sarawak.

KANOWIT DISTRICT.

(Mr. J. F. Drake-Brockman, District Officer).

On the whole relations between Dayaks and Chinese are quite satisfactory, although there are very different opinions in the different areas as to whether traders should be allowed in unlimited numbers. Some Penghulus have strongly requested Government to permit certain Chinese to sit, so to speak, permanently on their doorsteps. Others, presumably more indebted to the Chinese, have equally as strongly requested Government to keep them out.

There were several cases of Dayaks who had been married according to Christian custom in the R.C. Church and had apparently not realised, or pretended they had not realised, that they can never be divorced. One such marriage was in fact dissolved according to Dayak custom before it was discovered that it had taken place in Church. The husband has still not been traced and informed that he is still married. In another case a man and woman, both married, ran off together, but by the time they were found the respective partners had both re-married and there was no further complaint.

COAST DISTRICT.

(Mr. R. H. Morris, Acting District Officer).

A considerable amount of prospecting has been carried out by Sarawak Oilfields Limited at various places in the district, and in December a reconnaissance of the Balingian Area was made preparatory to the arrival of a Seismic Survey Party in January, 1949.

The Melanau population have been almost entirely engaged in the working of sago and one noteworthy development has been the purchase of small rasping engines by groups in the various Melanau Kampongs; this has resulted in the diminution in the supply of sago trees to the larger mills and to landless people; some of the smaller Chinese-owned mills have closed down in consequence.

A matter of considerable interest has been the phenomenal increase in the number of applications

received for new sago land. This may be the result of the continuous propaganda which has been disseminated through Tua2 Kampong but the major cause is no doubt the reduction in the time required to treat a sago tree due to the introduction of power-driven rasps.

KAPIT DISTRICT.

(Mr. I. A. N. Urquhart, Acting District Officer).

As usual food problems played a prominent part at the beginning and end of the year. At the end of 1948 many Natives were feeding twice daily instead of thrice, and were feeding on wild sago at that. I hope that talks and the refusal of Government to loan rice will cause the Natives to be more provident next harvest. It is infectious to see the childish joy of the Dayak who has purchased a gong for 17 pikuls of padi after his harvest, but a more realistic attitude regarding storage of enough padi to last a year would be more to the point.

77 doors of Dutch Borneo Kenyahs came into Sarawak in 1941 and have settled in Long Itam. In April 1948 Mr. F. B. K. Drake (then D.O. Kanowit) and S.N.O. Abang Indeh had an interesting trip there to find out how the matter lay. Many of these Kenyahs come down to Belaga and Kapit at intervals. There is said to be pressure from Kenyahs across the border who wish to come in too. At Long Itam they are quite out of administrative reach of the Sarawak or Dutch Borneo Governments. I hope a decision is soon reached as to whether they are to be returned to Dutch Borneo (a decision not easy to enforce without the consent of the Kenyahs themselves) or whether they are to be instructed to move upstream of Penghulu Hang Nyipa's area in the Balai and settle there. In either case the decision should be made before the padi planting season. These Kenyahs are quiet-spoken, many can read and write, and they may infuse fresh and more lively blood into the rather apathetic natives of the Belaga area. They are reported as being likely to have a bumper harvest in 1949 in Long Itam. Some of them are now working for Messrs. the Borneo Co. Ltd. in the Belaga area.

The natives have been perturbed, much interested, apprehensive or approving, as the case may be, regarding the introduction of the Kapit Local Treasury in 1949. Many wild rumours such as the one that compulsory Head Tax would be introduced into Song have had to be quashed. On the whole the idea of a Local Treasury is welcomed, but I can't say that all the nine Penghulus in Kapit realise its implications to the full.

A lot of goods that go to swell Sibui's export trade have come from Kapit District, including rubber, jelutong, rotan, damar and other jungle produce. The time may not be so far hence before once again steamships find it worth while to come to Song and Kapit to collect the produce on the spot. The Chinese launches on the route are usually full to the Plimsoll Line.

A side-trade has been going on at intervals between Dutch Borneo in the Kapuas and Kayan Rivers on the one hand and Belaga, Kapit and Song on the other. The Natives here take much needed cloth to Dutch Borneo and get in return parangs, gongs, mats, hats and occasionally cattle. Kenyahs

from across the border have come into Sarawak seeking work, but did not bring many goods with them. What goods they did bring soon saturated the local markets.

The work of greatest importance in the Public Works Department has been the complete removal of the Song administrative offices from the North side of the Rejang River (at the mouth of the Song River) to the South side beside the mouth of the Katibas River. This has been followed by the erection of the new Song bazaar, and the move in of the towkays on the 29th December, 1948. Only a few families remain in the old bazaar awaiting the allocation of residential lots across river. Some have suggested that "Song" should remain on the North bank and that the new station should be known as "Katibas," analogous to Buda and Pest, though the people concerned did not use that analogy.

The next most important work has been the filling in of the new Kapit bazaar, which is still in progress. This has been most necessary due to the insanitary, dangerous and uneconomic state of the old bazaar. It is hoped soon to see Kapit flourishing again as is Song at present, with increased rates to pay and increased trade with which to pay the rates. It was originally hoped to carry out the filling with bulldozers, but, at great cost to Government, it is being carried out by manual labour.

FOURTH DIVISION.

(Mr. J. O. Gilbert, Resident).

No progress was made on the rebuilding of Miri Bazaar. This is mainly due to the Miri Town Agreement with The Sarawak Oilfields Limited, negotiation of which was started in 1946, still remaining uncompleted. Until this Agreement is signed, no leases can be issued, and rehabilitation work cannot really begin.

With regard to The Sarawak Oilfields Limited operations in Miri, I am unable to report anything new in this line. The Company has continued to drill shallow wells without results. Deep test wells, which I am told should settle the fate of Miri as an oilfield, have still not commenced although I am informed that material is now almost ready in Seria.

Work on the rebuilding of the Sibuti Bazaar had to be postponed for another year. Money has been made available for this work, but the necessary supervision was unobtainable. Baram Bazaar layout was finalised during the year, and it is hoped to start rebuilding in 1949. In Bintulu a small amount of progress was made, in that the new Office was built, building commenced on the new Bazaar layout, the new Customs Godown was completed and the main wharf etc. were repaired.

The experiment of opening the Sebauh Local Authority has met with some success. This community has shown a certain amount of real interest especially in the direction of education. They have built themselves a good school which was just completed by the end of the year. It is too early yet to say whether this experiment will be a success or not, but it is safe to say that the experiment is making progress in the right direction.

No progress has been made yet regarding inter-racial Local Authorities. Each attempt has been

met with considerable opposition. Until some success in this line has been obtained, it is difficult to state whether in this Division the real aim and object of this Local Authority experiment has borne fruit.

MIRI DISTRICT.

(Mr. G. A. T. Shaw, Acting District Officer).

It is thought that Kedayans are proving as much a menace as Dayaks with their somewhat similar methods of farming. There are many good Kedayan rice farmers growing rice in the swamps of Niah and Sibuti, but there are probably as many shifting about the hills of the district. Explanations of the consequences of denuding hillsides of trees have been given whenever possible, but it is likely that prosecution will be required before the next planting season to have any real effect. In this respect the Dayaks in the district are under more control, settled as they are within fixed boundaries in the Niah and Sibuti areas. It is possible that if further padi lands are planted at Sibuti many of the Kedayans who have now wandered up the Riam Road and up both slopes of the Lambir range may be better occupied and less troublesome if they can be induced to go to Sibuti from which some of them came in the first place.

At the end of the year an auction of birds' nests was held in Niah. This is a return to former practice, but it was not a success. It will probably be necessary to hold the auctions in Miri to break the grip of certain Chinese interests at Niah. The Government contractor for guano has agreed to allow cave owners to take guano free for their own use. In the event of any abuse, this concession is to be cancelled.

Sibuti is flourishing as a rural bazaar, and its growth is directly due to rice planting. This bazaar has, in the words of one of the Chinese traders there, "Only one thing wrong with it—there is too much competition". There is a great deal wrong with the bazaar as it is at the moment, but most of it can be put right on the assumption that the present activity there will continue. There are now four rice mills operating in the bazaar, and a fifth is due to go up. A sixth mill may be established up river at Kuala Bakas. There is little doubt that, although Miri urban area and its surroundings do not produce much rice, the District as a whole is self supporting, provided that there is the means to mill the rice which now seems to be the case.

There has been a spate of applications for birth certificates and of affidavits on hitherto unregistered births. This has been largely due to the Sarawak Oilfields Limited having been advised to ask for birth certificates from their labour force to substantiate claims for children's allowances. A substantial number of fictitious children have been discovered on the Company's books. The opportunity has also been taken to require the parents swearing affidavits to produce evidence of marriage. The increase in the number of Chinese marriage certificates is also partly due to this.

BARAM DISTRICT.

(Mr. A. F. R. Griffin, District Officer).

The taboos of the Kayans and Kenyahs and other kindred tribes have in the past seriously affected

their domestic economy. It has been worked out that some Kayan villages would be 'pantang' for as many as 90 days in a year; during this period the villagers would not stir out of their houses or tend their farms no matter whether the padi was ready for harvesting or whether the farms were being ravaged by pig, deer and monkey.

A remarkable change is taking place amongst these upriver tribes. They no longer appear to retain the same belief in their own taboos with the result that the 'pantang' system may shortly disappear. I do not put this down entirely to the activity of the missionaries.

During the latter end of the year the Sarawak Oilfields Limited were surveying in the lower Bakong area. At Teraja (half way between Marudi and Kuala Baram) the Sarawak Oilfields Limited opened a Seismic Camp; its European members were housed in houseboats.

The Sarawak Oilfields Limited has recently informed the Government the Company proposes to quarry stone at Batu Gading below Long Lama some seven hours by launch upriver from Marudi. The Company has agreed to pay compensation to any Kayans whose caves are disturbed. This area contains limestone caves where swifts build their nests. These nests are auctioned and fetch high prices.

The Baram as a whole has been slow to form Local Authorities; however the Penghulus in the Tinjar river after a visit from the Hon'ble the Resident in July resolved to form a Local Authority and Treasury—this will start as from January 1st. This Local Authority will take over the running of the primary school at Long Tru. Unfortunately the Chinese have not agreed to join the Local Authority and it is confined to the natives (Kenyahs and Sea Dayaks).

Regular meetings of nomad Penans were held—every effort is being made to persuade these people to give up their nomadic life and settle down and build longhouses and plant food crops. I am optimistic that the day is not far away when they will try this way of living.

All the upriver tribes are rapidly becoming school conscious and expect the Government to give each village a separate school. The formation of a Local Authority in the Tinjar river, it is hoped, will teach them that if they want schools they must be prepared to assist in the running of them themselves and not rely on Government entirely.

BINTULU DISTRICT.

(Mr. H. P. K. Jacks, District Officer).

The Local Authority at Sebauh came into being in April when Mr. Charles Engkassan arrived to take up his duties as Native Treasurer.

The old Penghulu's Court house was repaired and extended for the use of the Local Authority. Towards the end of the year the building of the Dayak school was completed.

Much propaganda work and many meetings have been held to put this authority firmly on its legs. Though the Penghulus of the district have not quite got a full grasp, three or four of the other members of the committee are intelligent, active and go-ahead. The new school and its out-buildings are

quite impressive and credit is due to the said committee for this. Each house had to assist in the clearing and levelling of the site and providing timber for the actual building. A local contractor did the constructional work. While all this was in progress, preliminary propaganda work was going on for the institution of a Local Authority in the Tatau river. Extensive tours of both the Upper and Lower Tatau areas were made by the District Officer and Native Officer during which much time and breath was given to this subject. The Native Treasurer, Sebauh, was also brought over and he spent much of the night talking to a big crowd. Finally the propaganda official of the Sebauh Local Authority made a tour of the still doubtful houses. By the end of the year, it may be said that the scheme was generally accepted by the Dayaks of the Tatau.

FIFTH DIVISION.

(Mr. J. C. B. Fisher, Resident).

An interesting project was undertaken at Lawas and Sundar. Serious erosion of the river banks has been taking place at both these stations. Extensive piling has been carried out, and "Kayu Pedadah" has been planted in the hopes that further eating away will be stopped. The results of the work will not be noticeable for sometime.

LIMBANG DISTRICT.

(Mr. I. Harper, Cadet).

The chief item of importance during the year has been the organisation of an inter-racial local authority. This was carried out at a series of meetings of the District Advisory Council. The races who will be mainly affected are Malay, Kedayan and Chinese and the Authority will cover the Northern or coastal sector of the District. It is pleasant to note that at no time was any objection raised to the inclusion of the Chinese community in the Authority, although the latter at first showed some apprehension that they might be exploited by the numerically superior Malays and Kedayans.

In March a start was made on the opening of an Agricultural Experimental Station on the site of the old Golf Course about one mile from Limbang. In the course of the year much clearing was carried out and an area of just over 2 acres was fenced in. In this enclosure were planted cocoa, pepper, manilla hemp, citrus, oil palm and various fruits, all of which are flourishing.

A part of this scheme was the elementary training of upriver peoples in the growing of cash crops and irrigated padi. To this end a married Iban, Murut and a Malay were engaged, the first two being quartered in a barrack built on the station out of the remains of the old police barracks.

After only a few weeks these two decided they were too lonely and were accordingly sent home to find a friend each to come and learn with them. This the Murut did but the Iban, once home, decided he would remain there. In September, therefore, two Bisayah couples were taken on and, with the Muruts and the Malay, have proved very keen and willing workers. Now, at the end of the year, all have been offered the chance of further training in Kuching and all have accepted.

During the 1947-48 season the experimental irrigated padi plot produced 500½ gantangs of padi

on just under one acre. This year water control has been improved and ploughing was carried out with buffaloes. Crop prospects are good. This plot has now been incorporated in the Experimental Station.

LAWAS DISTRICT.

(Mr. P. B. Smith, Assistant District Officer).

The new scheme for employment of fewer headmen, giving each approved Tua Kampong or Penghulu a larger area to control and consequently a better salary, was put into effect from the beginning of the year. All the old headmen not re-employed have quite happily dropped out of the picture. There was some slight ill-feeling amongst the wakil Tua Kampongs and Penghulus when they discovered that they did not receive a 'Surat Kuasa' signed by His Excellency the Governor, but this was cleared up when they were presented with 'Surat Kuasa' by the Honourable the Resident.

Muruts from the Ulu Trusan and Dutch Borneo have visited Lawas throughout the year bringing with them rice and damar for sale, and taking back cloth and other bazaar goods to their houses. Lawas is the nearest bazaar for the great majority of Dutch Muruts and they come here in preference to Long Berang, the nearest bazaar to them in Netherlands East Indies. Long Berang is at least 25 days' round journey from the Sarawak-Dutch border, whereas the round journey to Lawas is 16 days only. The track on the Sarawak side is also less hilly and much easier for travelling, especially if carrying a load.

The Almanac.

3rd May. Trusan Expedition. 1900.

I.

"Peaceful overtures having repeatedly failed, an expedition is being organised to attack some interior Muruts of Trusan under a chief named Okong. This man has been for many years past hostile to the Government and his party have killed several of the inhabitants of the interior as well as prevented people from trading by demanding black-mail. They have been in many ways disturbing the peace of the country and keeping those who are peaceably disposed from earning an honest livelihood.

"His country is six days march from the Trusan Fort and his following consists of fifteen houses. It is expected that this demonstration, should it be successful, will settle for many years to come the interior inhabitants of the rivers, Trusan, Lawas, Padas and even further.

"The expeditionary force numbers 800 men and will be under the command of Mr. O. F. Ricketts, Resident of Limbang, who will be accompanied by His Highness the Rajah Muda, Resident of Sibul, Mr. P. F. Cunynghame, Resident of Brooketon, and Mr. E. A. W. Cox, Resident of Trusan."

The Sarawak Gazette, May 1, 1900.

II.

The expedition left Brooketon for the Trusan on 2nd May. The 800 men were composed of 600 Dayaks, 100 Rangers and 100 Malays. The night

was spent in Trusan and on the 3rd morning Mr. Ricketts mustered the whole company in front of the bazaar, and impressed on the chiefs and Rangers the necessity for keeping together and for not firing at night. A start was made at 9 a.m. for Briwan, and for ten days the party marched over difficult mountainous country, crossing the Tengoa, Berangan, Brayong, Tuyo, Merarap, Baung and Matalan streams and finally the main river, till they reached the houses of Dayong, Okong's brother and principal supporter.

Without delay the Dayaks rushed down the hills surrounding the houses. About six men were seen to bolt into the jungle, and the houses were deserted when they were reached. In the onrush twelve Dayaks received *suda* wounds and one Ranger, similarly wounded right through the calf, succumbed to his injury in less than half an hour. Search parties were sent out to comb the surrounding jungle; they succeeded in killing three of the enemy and took as loot a number of jars and other goods that were found hidden. The search continued on the following day and a further twenty-two of the enemy were killed and more loot taken, including three pikuls of gutta percha valued at \$400. In one place the ground was found cleared and set thickly with *sudas*; it seemed that the enemy had intended to make a stand there till they found that they were outnumbered. The following day, 14th May, having burned down Dayong's ten houses, the expedition moved on.

In the early afternoon of the 16th Okong's houses were reached, and were found to be deserted. Three of the enemy were seen and pursued, but without success. The remainder of the day and the next day were spent in searching for the enemy, but only five were killed and very little property was found, as they had apparently moved themselves and their property farther away than had Dayong's people. On the 18th Okong's six houses were burned, and the party started on its homeward journey.

A better route was found, whereby two days' marching was saved, and the expedition arrived back at Trusan Fort on the evening of the 22nd.

III.

The operation had proved completely successful. A Government force of 800 men had gone out against an enemy numbering some 1,500 to 2,000 men, and had destroyed the villages of their two leaders, with the loss of only four men. Their punishment was a source of satisfaction to the law-abiding Murut tribes of the interior of the Trusan, and before long there was a revival of trade with the Bah and others beyond, who had been prevented from coming down-country owing to the activities of these two men.

Postscript.

"The Rajah of Sarawak's expedition turns out to be most important. It consists of fifteen hundred men, part proceeding to the Trusan River and part to the Baram River. The Rajah is said to have organized the affairs of Muara, which is in the Sultan of Brunei's territory, without the Sultan's permission and by so doing condemning the latter's sovereign rights and with no protest upon the part of Great Britain, the protecting Power.

"It is reported that the contingent sent to the Trusan River, under the command of the Rajah Muda, has experienced considerable trouble and has halted to await reinforcements coming from

Sarawak with Rajah Brooke, four days hence.

"The hinterland tribes are said to muster ten thousand strong and to be well armed. It is reported that they refuse to consent to the Rajah's benevolent assimilation and decline to pay tribute, which has never yet been exacted by the Sultan of Brunei."

(An account from a Hongkong newspaper, in almost every statement of which there is an error.)

This Sarawak.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO THE NEW STATESMAN
AND NATION.)

"VISITORS TO TALANG-TALANG.

Visits to the above islands now occur with a frequency which disturbs the regular inhabitants thereof to an extent likely to interfere with their procreative activities

—A Secretariat Circular.

It appears to us that this might be a "Good Thing," as on one of the islands there are already six children in one family. But we admit the turtles themselves have a higher standard to keep up.

(The Editors are 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.)

Borneo is Shrinking?

We read in a recent publication of the North Borneo News that a certain "back-bench" Member of Parliament is reported by Hansard to have said:—

"The British North Borneo of the Chartered Company, Sarawak and the island of Labuan together have a total area of 30,000 sq. miles, a sizeable area, but with a population of only 330,000. Most of these people live in the coastal belt, leaving the interior largely undeveloped jungle."

We are aware that politicians are given to making inaccurate statements, and we realize that figures mean little to some of them so long as they can put their point over, but the fact remains that the inaccuracies of pseudo-experts are annoying to the people who must suffer them.

The area of Sarawak alone is 47,071 square miles and its population at the 1947 Census was 546,385.

Bestowal of Honours!

"As at present arranged, the Governor will land officially at 11 a.m. on the 17th, and after inspecting the guard of Honour, and the Boy Scouts and school-children will proceed to the Court House and there present his M.C. to and his M.B.E. to"

"NORTH BORNEO NEWS."

Pythons for Padi Protection!

An outstation contributor, who desires to remain anonymous, submits the following news:—

"Two fairly big size pythons were found in store 18A when padi stock was cleared. It appears that they have volunteered themselves to assist in the stamping out of the unwanted rats which are harbouring in the store and causing considerable damage to guni bags and padi. Both have done good services, and this is proved by the fact that in places where they were found there were very little or no damage done by the rats to the stock etc.

In February, 2 small size pythons were presented by the kampong Malays. Both were given a place to live in store No. 17. We are looking for more pythons, because it is thought that the more the pythons the lesser the chance for the rats to breed and live longer in the store."

We understand that the Curator, Sarawak Museum, may be breeding from Polly the Pet Python of Pusa (see page 88 of the last Gazette). We hope that if he succeeds he will give our contributor a chance to take over the little pets. However the Controller of Essential Commodities should be interested in this new method of "disinfestation" and a python pool for padi protection seems a plan he may wish to pursue.

Since writing the above we find that the Controller is well aware of the value of pythons in padi stores, but he finds difficulty in keeping them, as some local inhabitants, not content with stealing padi, steal the pythons also for food.

While on the subject of pythons it may be noted that a pet python was kept in the ceiling of the Oya bungalow in the early thirties, to one Editor's knowledge. This pet lived on rats and vermin and occasionally would come down to the floor for short periods for exercise. Maybe it is still there.

The Library.

FOUR SEA NOVELS.

"*The Rage of the Vulture*" by Alan Moorehead.

The biographer of Field-Marshal Montgomery and an ace war reporter tries his hand at a novel set in the Himalayas as British control over India comes to an end. It often reads less like a novel than a reportage, but is good meaty stuff.

"*Master Mariner*" by Leo Walmsley.

This author has written several good books about fishermen and the Yorkshire Sea. This is another good one.

"*Captain Caution*" by Kenneth Roberts.

A highly coloured adventure tale by the author of "Northwest Passage". For myself, I prefer the sea more quietly. But there is much that is enjoyable in these exaggerations, since they are well written.

"*The Unknown Sea*" by Francois Mauriac.

The book really isn't about the sea, though set

in Bordeaux. The brilliant French writer explores the oceans of human unhappiness. His exquisite prose and sensitive analysis will suit the taste of the most intelligent reader.

FIVE NOVELS OF TURMOIL.

"*Man's Estate*" by André Malraux.

A vividly told and exciting novel of revolt and confusion in China. Set in 1927, it is both a prose masterpiece and an important historical document showing the roots of the great civil conflict that is still raging in China twenty-two years later.

"*Saraband for Dead Lovers*" by Helen Simpson.

Reprint of pre-war book society choice which also made a recent successful film story. A sad tale of George I's Hanoverian wife, sensitively told.

"*Prince of Foxes*" by Samuel Shellabargar.

Italian Renaissance drama, Bags of Borgia.

"*The Ides of March*" by Thornton Wilder.

A fine writer reimagining the last year of Caesar's life in letter form.

"*The Bright Promise*" by Richard Sherman.

A competent light novel, written by a man but projected large on an emotional woman. Women certainly seem to be getting a very big share in the literary output at the present time. I suppose there is nothing I can do about it.

SIX FEMALE NOVELS.

"*This Brittle Glory*" by Stella Morton.

The conventional conflict between a woman's husband and her art. Of course it comes out all right—but pretty brittle.

"*The Valley of Decision*" by Marcia Davenport.

Yet another of these huge books about rich life in America. It doesn't exactly go with the wind, but there is quite a pleasant breeze blowing over most of its 768 pages. I admit I only took a puff here and there, but these refreshed me when the thermometer was at 90.

"*Return to Jalna*" by Mzso de la Roche.

No. 10 in the "Chronicle of the White Oaks" family. The authoress is as successful as ever with her tale, and even more of her characters than usual seems to have great successes too.

"*Bridie Steen*" by Anne Crone.

A well told story of life in the Irish countryside. Something out of the usual.

"*Melissa*" by Taylor Caldwell.

A vigorous psychological story of family ruthlessness and love. This authoress is already well-known for writing about what her publishers here refer to as "vivid and unforgettable people" with "powerful and striking characterization".

"*Miss Jill*" by Emily Hahn.

This is rather tough stuff, somewhat unexpectedly by the author of "Raffles of Singapore". Anglo-Indians, Japanese, opium, espionage and prostitutes are some of the ingredients. But these are mixed with decorum and delicacy. The story is seen through the eyes of an Anglo-Indian girl liberated from her sex problems by war internment.

HUMOUR AND EASE.

"Vogue's Fireside Book."

Light stories and essays of all sorts, contributed by well-known writers of vogues.

"The Stray Lamb" by Thorne Smith.

Very, very funny. The hero is, in my opinion, at his very best when he has a goldfish.

"Uncle Dynamite" by P. G. Wodehouse.

The standard of country-house humour and aristocratic cross-burglary is adequately maintained.

CRIME AND FEAR.

"The Case of the Baited Hook" by Erle Stanley Gardner.

Paul Drake and Della Street do their stuff, and the number of corpses is reasonably satisfactory.

"The Pocket Book of Father Brown" by G. K. Chesterton.

Needs no recommendation.

"My Best Detective Stories."

Most of the best British crime writers choose their best.

"The Flying Saucer" by Bernard Newman.

An interesting readable book along a straight track, with just enough corners to break the monotony. A French Sûreté counter-spy is a little too pat with his misquotations, but the book gives one plenty to think about and enjoy.

"No Ordinary Cheyney" by Peter Cheyney.

Nor extraordinary. A good mixture of short story, poem, slaps at literary critics, and a rather unconvincing short novel. Prefaced by a photo of the master himself, looking unconvincingly untough.

"Haunted Britain" by Elliott O'Donnell.

An illustrated handbook by a regular authority. I remain singularly unconvinced even by the horrible looking snap-shot of a materializing monk, which the author himself qualifies in chapter 12. Favourite ghost anecdote is of the guardsman who loosed off a burst at a bunch of ghosts in Windsor Castle—and got 3 days C.B. for his trouble.

FOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHIES.

"Everybody's Pepys."

An abridged edition which well represents the whole of the diary, though I felt that the illustrations by Ernest Sheppard were too whimsical.

"All I could never Be" by Beverley Nichols.

For those who enjoy public exhibitions of intense modesty!

"Beyond 1925" by Vera Brittain.

I do not know why I put this one to autobiography, for it is written as a novel. It seems something more. Perhaps the 1925 is confusing me with Mr. Nichols up above—his first piece of successful autobiography was, if I do not misremember, entitled "25"—or did his book called "Self" come before then? Anyway, this book is written as well as anything Miss Brittain has done since her own autobiography best-seller "Testament of Youth."

"Ease and Endurance" by Marcel Boulestin.

One of the world's great cooks, keeper of the most memorable London Restaurant (how remote those dishes seem here and now), takes us on a general ramble of his own Bohemian life.

FOUR BIOGRAPHIES.

"The Years of Peril" by Arthur Bryant.

An absolutely fascinating account of the middle period in the life of Samuel Pepys. The type seems to be a little small; for several nights running I gave myself eye-ache—as well as intense pleasure.

"Cardinal Newman" by Henry Tristram.

A competent biography of the great churchman.

"Mrs Beeton and Her Husband" by Nancy Spain.

A cookery book queen nicely presented against the background of her family, with all sorts of odd facts—e.g. that she died at the age of 28, after being brought up in Epsom Racecourse.

"The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle" by John Dickson Carr.

A well-known detective writer gives us a thorough and convincing, if uncritical, description of the creator of Sherlock Holmes.

This month books have generously been presented by Mrs. Sandbach, Miss Pape, Dr. Marjoribanks, Mr. Dee and Mr. Bainbridge-Hawker, and a further list of 74 books presented by Lt. A. Nelson of the 13th. USAAF. Detachment is given below.

LIST OF NEW BOOKS PRESENTED BY LT. NELSON.

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Tux'n Tails | ... R. Andrieux |
| 2. Remembered Anger | ... M. Albrand |
| 3. What to do till the Psychiatrist Comes | ... N. Anthony |
| 4. Yeoman's Hospital | ... H. Ashton |
| 5. Death Stops the Bell | ... R. Baker |
| 6. Looking Backward | ... E. Bellamy |
| 7. So Shall they Reap | ... J. Bennett |
| 8. Young 'Un | ... H. Best |
| 9. The New Veteran | ... C. G. Bolte |
| 10. Survival | ... P. Bottome |
| 11. Yankee from Olympus | ... C. Bowen |
| 12. Occupations Today | ... M. Brewer |
| 13. My Unconsidered Judgement | ... F. Busch |
| 14. The Wide House | ... Caldwell |
| 15. The Red House | ... A. Chamberlain |
| 16. History of Cavalier De La Salle | ... Chesnel |
| 17. The Deer on the Stairs | ... F. Cooper |
| 18. The Black Rose | ... Costain |
| 19. The Affair at the Boat Landing | ... Cunningham |
| 20. Evidence of Things seen | ... E. Daly |
| 21. Adventures of the Great Crime-Busters | ... C. Evans |
| 22. The Charing Cross Mystery | ... J. S. Fletcher |
| 23. Working my way around the World | ... M. Franck |
| 24. Silas Marner | ... G. Eliot |
| 25. Scrap Fun for Everyone | ... Glantz |
| 26. My Under Elm | ... D. Grayson |
| 27. Heart-Break for Two | ... M. Greig |
| 28. Knights of the Range | ... Zane Grey |
| 29. Jennifer's House | ... Govan |
| 30. Farmer Takes a Wife | ... John Gould |
| 31. Luck in all Weathers | ... H. Haines |
| 32. This Pounding Wheel | ... G. Hale |
| 33. Staff Nurse | ... A. Hancock |
| 34. The Clue of the Leather Noose | ... Hobart |
| 35. Trial by Murder | ... G. Hooster |
| 36. Railroad Avenue | ... Hubbard |
| 37. Fire in the Snow | ... H. Innes |
| 38. Young Bess | ... M. Irwin |
| 39. Horses I've Known | ... W. James |
| 40. Rosnah | ... Kelly |
| 41. Kindred of the Dust | ... P. B. Kynne |
| 42. One Cried Murder | ... Jean Leslie |

43. Death Behind the Door	... MacClure
44. The Man on the Box	... H. MacGrath
45. Farewell to Tharrus	... Macdonald
	... Maclean
46. Colour Scheme	... N. Marsh
47. Babe Ruth	... Tom Meany
48. The Emperor's Physician	... Perkins
49. Forgotten Crimes	... Poynter
50. The Broad Arrow	... Raine
51. The Master's Violin	... Reed
52. Heat and Health	... F. Reh
53. The House of Cobwebs	... M. Reissner
54. The Door	... Rhinehart
55. The Sign Post	... Robertson
56. The Seco Bonanza	... Rodney
57. Rain in the Door Way	... T. Smith
58. Americans One and all	... H. Shaw
59. People on our Sides	... E. Snow
60. All Embarrassed	... W. Steig
61. Knight Missing	... Stone
62. Album of Destiny	... J. Stuart
63. Image of Josephine	... Booth
	... Tarkington
64. Little Orvie	... Booth
	... Tarkington
65. With my Heart in my Mouth	... Norton-Taylor
66. The Long Winter Ends	... Thomas
67. Heritage of Fire	... F. Wagner
68. Everything Rustles	... M. Walker
69. The Cathedral	... H. Walpole
70. Lords of the Levee	... Wendt
71. The Lonely Steeple	... V. Wolfson
72. The Champion Cross Word	
Puzzle Book	
73. Release from Nervous Tension	... D. Fink
74. The Walsh Girls	... E. Janeway

T.H.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A HISTORY OF SARAWAK CURRENCY ISSUES.

SIR,

I am engaged in writing a history of the Sarawak Currency Issues and since, for a variety of reasons, official records prior to the 1880's are practically non-existent (at least in the offices where they should be), I would be very grateful if any reader who can produce any information of value or interest would be good enough to write to me.

2. Even hearsay information will be appreciated, since it may be possible to relate it to the few records that are available, and produce clues for further research.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
C. E. GASCOIGNE,
Acting Financial Secretary.

SIRS,

I was most interested to read Mr. Digby's letter on the shooting of "ikan kaloi" in the neighbourhood of Serian.

I took over the Serian District from Mr. Digby in 1938 and although I have not actually witnessed this sport, I know that it used to take place.

On occasions members of the public would buy cartridges for the purpose of shooting fish.

Yours faithfully,
W. P. N. L. DITMAS.

KAPIT.

7th April, 1949.

SIR,

The Kapit Madrigal Society (of which I am a silent member) has amongst its repertoire an S.R.D. Song which appears to be in emulation of the 8th Army Lili Marlene for it is sung to that same popular and haunting German tune. I understand this Song used to have a great many topical verses referring to the Allied victorious sweep down the Rejang River valley. So far I have only been able to get hold of four verses which I reproduce below.

I wonder if any of your readers know of other verses? I also wonder who are Captain Royal and To Pek Kong?

MALAY OH MALAY (LILY MARLENE).

1. Captain Royal terlampo bising
Sebab banyak perkara di-meeting
Panggil soldadu memukul loncheng
Jepun di-Sibu kirim ka-Kuching.—Malay Oh Malay 2.
2. Di-pegang Jepun tiga tahun lalu
Banyak orang fikiran keliru
Habis kelambu di-buat baju
Itu pun habis tampong seribu.—Malay Oh Malay 2.
3. Tiga buah kapal angkat dari Song
Sarat ber-muat soldadu Jepun
Tembak machine gun ter-lambong lambong
Chuma ta'kena rumah To Pek Kong.—Malay Oh Malay 2.
4. Saya ini sain volunteer
Datang di-sini bersuka ria
Bersusah payah sakit sengsara
Mendengar Jepun sudah surrenda.—Malay Oh Malay 2.

Yours faithfully,
I. A. N. URQUHART.

Editors' note: "To Pek Kong" is probably the Chinese "Tua Pek Kong". "Rumah Tua Pek Kong" in all probability means a Chinese temple for it is by this name that many such temples are known in Sarawak.

DISTRICT OFFICE,
KAPIT.

23rd April, 1949.

SIR,

I was most interested to read Tinggi's letter on Belaga Muvui in your April edition. The 1942 flood is still fresh in everyone's memory in Belaga Sub-District and the people there have not yet fully recovered from the enormous losses it caused.

Since December, 1948, Lands and Surveys Department water gauges in the Rejang River have been measured daily opposite Belaga and at Kapit. As a result of this I can now give, to within 10 ft. the height the water reached at Belaga in 1942 and in Kapit in 1934, namely 220 ft. and 62 ft. above sea-level respectively. These figures should be compared with the maximum flood water figures in Belaga and Kapit in the five months since the water gauges have been in operation which are

194 ft. and 50 ft. respectively, and the minimum levels which are 146 ft. and 13 ft. respectively.

These figures also bring out the great variations that can occur in a short time in the Rejang River in this District. When it is also remembered that, as well as rising, the river broadens and increases its speed considerably, the difficulties in erecting suitable landing stages and approaches thereto can well be appreciated.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

I. A. N. URQUHART,
Acting District Officer,
Kapit.

Sibu Bowling Averages.

Name.	No of Rolls.	Average.
E. A. Edmeades	6	195f
N. Mace	15	151
R. Stephen	9	135
R. E. Chater	8	104
Lady Members.		
Mrs. Edmeades	2	124
Mrs. Mace	8	121
Mrs. Wallace	4	112

f Includes one possible.

Kuching Market Price List.

Monthly Average Market Prices from 20th March, 1949, to 20th April, 1949.

RICE—(per gantang)			
White milling	...	...	\$ 1.75
Local, polished Dayak	...	...	1.56
SUGAR—(per kati)			
Nipah Sugar	...	...	.19
EGGS—(each)			
Duck, fresh	...	...	.11
" salted	...	...	.15
Fowl	...	...	.10
EDIBLE FATS—(per kati)			
Coconut Oil	...	...	.80
Pork Fat No. 1	...	...	1.40
" " 2	...	...	1.10
PORK—(per kati)			
Lean No. 1	...	...	1.80
Lean with fat " 2	...	...	1.20
BEEF AND MUTTON—(per kati)			
Mutton (Australian)	...	...	2.00
Beef, steak	...	...	2.20
Beef, curry meat	...	...	1.20
Buffalo No. 1	...	...	2.00
" curry meat	...	...	1.00
Kambing (daging)	...	...	2.00
POULTRY—(per kati)			
Capons	...	...	1.90
Duck	...	...	1.40
Fowl, Chinese breed	...	...	1.80
Fowl, Dayak breed	...	...	1.40

FISH—(per kati)

Fresh fish No. 1	...	...	\$.99
" " 2	...	...	.78
" " 3	...	...	.39
Prawns " 1	...	...	1.00
" " 2	...	...	.78
Crab " 1	...	...	.60
" " 2	...	...	.50
Salted fish " 1	...	...	1.00
" " 2	...	...	.70
" " 3	...	...	.40
" roe	...	...	1.34

VEGETABLES—(per kati)

Bangkung (Yam beans)	...	...	.08
Bayam	...	...	.30
Bean Sprouts	...	...	.20
Cabbage, imported	...	...	.60
Changkong Manis	...	...	.25
Daun Bawang	...	...	.60
Ensahi Puteh	...	...	.39
" Bunga	...	...	.29
French beans	...	...	.60
Garlic, fresh	...	...	.30
Kacang panjang	...	...	.24
Kangkong	...	...	.25
Keladi (China)	...	...	.25
Ketola	...	...	.30
Kribang	...	...	.07
Kundor	...	...	.08
Labu	...	...	.08
Ladies Fingers	...	...	.36
Lettuce (per tie)	...	...	.08
Lobak (Chinese radish)	...	...	.30
Lobak, salted, imported	...	...	.50
Onions, Bomba	...	...	.32
Onions, small	...	...	.58
Potatoes, Bengal	...	...	.30
Pria (Bitter Gourd)	...	...	.35
Bamboo shoots, salted	...	...	.20
Trong (Brinjals)	...	...	.20
Yams	...	...	.15
Cucumber (timun)	...	...	.20
Ginger	...	...	.25
Chillies (red)	...	...	.47
" (green)	...	...	.31
Santekraat, imported	...	...	.50
" local	...	...	.20
Tamarind	...	...	.30
Tomatoes, fresh	...	...	.80

FRUIT—

Pisang Umbun	... per kati	...	.10
Pisang Tandok	... each	...	.08 to .12
Pineapples	... per kati	...	.10
Papayas	... "	...	.10

SUNDRIES—

Bean Curd	... per 8 square piece	...	.10
" Cake (white)	... per piece	...	.10
" " (yellow)	...	...	.20
Kerosene Oil	... per tin	...	4.25
Charcoal	... per bottle	...	.20
" semi-converted	... per pkl.	...	4.50
Sauce (kitchup)	... bottle (local)	...	3.00
Blachan	... per kati	...	.70
Dried prawn	...	...	.46
Coconut, fresh	... each	...	1.55
Bako Wood	... per panchang	...	.10
		...	17.00

Notice.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, TEO THUAN CHIANG and SIM KIONG SONG, pursuant to the Order of the Resident's Court dated 13th June, 1947, have retired from the partnership business of Chop KUI SENG HUAT with effect from the 13th day of June, 1947. Owing to the imposition of the Moratorium they have not yet been paid their shares.

TEO SIEW KIA P/A for TEO THUAN CHIANG.

SIM HUAI KNG P/A for SIM KIONG SONG.

Kuching, 11th April, 1949.