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OF

INTO

THE STATE OF LABOUR

IN THE

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

AND

PROTECTED NATIVE STATES

WITH APPENDICES AND PAPERS IN CONTINUATION

SINGAPORE

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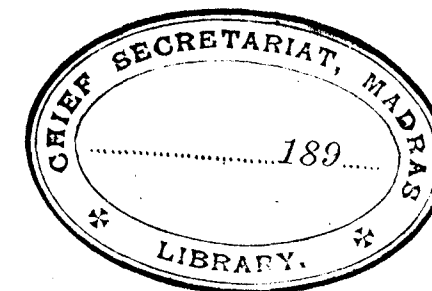
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THE COMMISSION.

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, Empress of India.

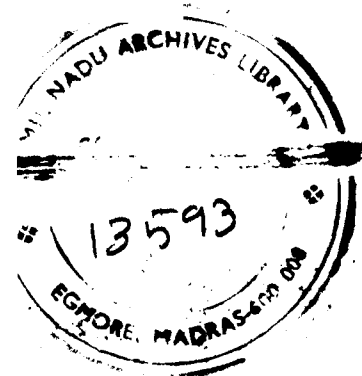
[L. S.] J. F. DICKSON.

To the Honourable Captain MAURICE ALEXANDER CAMERON, Royal Engineers, Acting Colonial Engineer and Surveyor-General; the Honourable JAMES MONTAGUE BENT VERMONT, a Member of the Legislative Council; the Honourable JAMES YOUNG KENNEDY, a Member of the Legislative Council; FRANK ATHELSTANE SWETTENHAM, Esquire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, British Resident in the Protected Native State of Perak; FRANCIS POWELL, Esquire, Protector of Chinese; ALEXANDER MURRAY MACGREGOR, Esquire, Indian Immigration Agent; DAVID COMRIE, Esquire, Chairman of the Penang Chamber of Commerce; THOMAS HESLOP HILL, Esquire; JOHN TURNER, Esquire; EDMUND AUGUSTUS BLUNDELL BROWN, Esquire; and KHO BU ANN, Esquire.

WHEREAS We have deemed it expedient, for divers good causes and considerations, that a diligent and full enquiry should forthwith be made into the question of the state of labour in the Straits Settlements and the Protected Native States, with a view to devising a scheme for encouraging immigration and thereby supplying the demand for labour:

KNOW YE, therefore, that reposing great trust and confidence in your zeal, industry, discretion and integrity, We do by these presents authorise and appoint you, or any three or more of you, to make a diligent and full enquiry into such subjects as have hereinbefore been set forth, and We do by these presents give and grant to you, or any three or more of you, full power and authority to call before you any such persons being in the Colony as you shall judge necessary for the purpose of making the aforesaid enquiry, and also to call for and have access to, and require the production before you of all official and other books, documents, papers and records as you, or any three or more of you, may deem expedient, and to examine witnesses on oath, and that, within forty-five days after the date of this Commission, you do certify to Us, under your hands, or under the

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hands of any three or more of you, your several proceedings, and your opinion and recommendations on the premises; and this Commission shall continue in full force although the proceedings thereunder shall not be continued by adjournment from time to time, and you, or any three or more of you, may, from time to time, if you shall see fit, without waiting for your full and complete report, certify your several proceedings as the same shall be respectively perfected; and We hereby command all Government Officers, and other persons whomsoever, within the Colony, that they be assistant to you, and each of you, in the execution of these presents; and We appoint you the Honourable Captain MAURICE ALEXANDER CAMERON, Royal Engineers, Acting Colonial Engineer and Surveyor-General, to be President of this Commission, with authority to give a second or casting vote at any meeting at which an even number of Commissioners may be present voting; and We do give power, at your discretion, to procure such clerical or other assistance as may be absolutely necessary for enabling you duly to execute this Commission; and We appoint you EDMUND AUGUSTUS BLUNDELL BROWN, Esquire, to be Secretary of this Commission.

In testimony whereof, We have caused these Our Letters to be made patent, and the Public Seal of the Colony to be hereunto affixed.

Witness His Excellency Sir J. FREDERICK DICKSON, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, the Officer Administering the Government of the Colony of the Straits Settlements, at Government House, Singapore, this third day of October, 1890.

By His Excellency's Command,
A. P. TALBOT,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Singapore, 3rd October, 1890.

Ordered that the time for executing the within Commission be extended until the 31st of January, 1891.

J. F. DICKSON,
Colonial Secretary.
Singapore, 15th November, 1890.

Ordered that the time for executing the within Commission be further extended until the 28th of February, 1891.

J. F. DICKSON,
Colonial Secretary.
Singapore, 26th January, 1891.

Ordered that the time for executing the within Commission be further extended until the 20th of March, 1891.

J. F. DICKSON,
Colonial Secretary.
Singapore, 2nd March, 1891.

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

[L. S.] J. F. DICKSON.

To WILLIAM EDWARD HOOPER, of Singapore, Esquire.

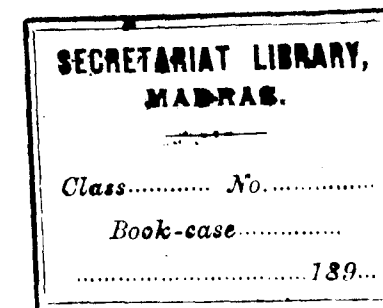
WHEREAS by Letters Patent under the public seal of the Colony dated the 3rd day of October, 1890, divers persons therein named were appointed to be Commissioners to enquire into and report upon the question of the state of labour in the Straits Settlements and the Protected Native States, with a view to devising a scheme for encouraging Immigration and thereby supplying the demand for labour:

KNOW YOU, therefore, that reposing great trust and confidence in your zeal, industry, discretion and integrity, I, Sir JOHN FREDERICK DICKSON, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Administering the Government of the Colony of the Straits Settlements, do by these presents, under my hand and seal appoint you to be a Commissioner in addition to the persons named in the said Commission.

Given at Government House, Singapore, this 31st day of October, 1890.

By His Excellency's Command,
A. P. TALBOT,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Singapore, 31st October, 1890.



REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ENQUIRY INTO THE STATE
OF LABOUR IN THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS AND
PROTECTED NATIVE STATES.

To His Excellency Sir CECIL CLEMENTI SMITH, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of the Straits Settlements, &c., &c., &c.

We, the Commissioners appointed by Sir J. FREDERICK DICKSON, K. C. M. G., when administering the Government of the Straits Settlements, to make diligent and full enquiry into the question of the state of labour in the Straits Settlements and the Protected Native States with a view to devising a scheme for encouraging immigration and thereby supplying the demand for labour, and to certify to your Excellency our proceedings and our opinion and recommendations, do respectfully report as follows:—

INTRODUCTORY.

I. We have held 46 sittings, two of which were preliminary to determine upon our course of action; 36 for the purpose of taking evidence; and 8 to decide upon and conclude our report.

II. Four series of questions (Appendix C) were prepared at the preliminary meetings and issued to 233 employers and persons interested in labour. Replies were received in 42 instances, comprising 14 sets of answers to series A, 23 to series B, 9 to series C, and 20 to series D. Of the 42 persons answering, 22 represented planters, 7 miners, 6 contractors, and 7 Government Officers and Municipalities.

III. We have examined 96 witnesses, including Officers of Government, employers of all classes of labour, agents and others interested in the importation of labour, and persons whom we deemed qualified to afford necessary information. But few coolies were examined as witnesses, such information as they can give being more readily obtained during visits of inspection.

IV. Although our conclusions are in the main based upon the printed evidence and the written answers to questions, yet we have drawn upon other sources of information. During our visits of inspection and at other times much information was obtained in conversation, which is not recorded, but has materially assisted us; official documents have also been largely utilised.

V. We made 19 visits of inspection, the estates visited being as far as possible representative of every class of cultivation and description of labour. As our enquiry was not into the treatment of labourers, except in so far as their treatment may affect the number obtainable, we deemed it unnecessary to visit a large number of estates, or to enquire with extreme minuteness into the condition of the coolies.

VI. Our proceedings were at the outset delayed by the want of a definite starting point for the enquiry, and it was not until after some time that we began to see clearly before us the points upon which our attention must be mainly directed.

VII. The fact that the Commission consisted of a large number of members resident in Singapore, Penang, Province Wellesley and Perak, tended to render the proceedings cumbrous, for it was thereby rendered impossible to summon meetings without long notice. For the same reason, single meetings could seldom be held, owing to the waste of time entailed in travelling to and from them, and the drafts of this report and some other documents had to be printed or lithographed for issue, as it would have been impossible to circulate them to each member within a reasonable time. Much evidence also had to be recorded and printed for the benefit of absent members, which might have been omitted had all been present. The necessity of this is apparent from Appendix D, shewing the number of meetings attended by each member.

PART I.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

No supervi-
sion until
1873.

1. Although immigration from China to the Straits has been going on since the last century, it appears for a long time previous to 1873 to have been without supervision. References to it appear from time to time in the *Indian Archipelago Journal*, but nowhere is the existence of any form of control mentioned. Speaking on the 16th September, 1873, in Committee of the Legislative Council on the Chinese Immigration Bill, which subsequently became Ordinance X of 1873, the Colonial Engineer quoted from an Ordinance of the 1st May, 1823, published by Sir STAMFORD RAFFLES, shewing that protection of immigrants had even then been considered, the following extract:—

"As it frequently happens that free labourers and others are brought from China and elsewhere as passengers, who have not the means of paying for their passage, and under the expectation that individuals resident in Singapore will advance the amount of it on condition of receiving the services of the parties for a limited period in compensation thereof—such arrangements are not deemed objectionable provided the parties are landed as free persons, but in all cases the amount of passage money or otherwise is limited to twenty dollars, and the period of service by an adult in compensation thereof shall in no case exceed two years, and every such engagement shall be entered into with the free consent of the parties in presence of a Magistrate, and duly registered."

This Ordinance apparently dropped out of notice, for throughout the debate of 1873 it was treated as non-existent, and the only law mentioned as bearing on the subject was an existing labour law by which a person was liable to punishment for breaking a contract.

Petition of
1871.

2. Attention was called to the subject of Chinese immigration by a petition from a number of Chinese merchants and citizens, dated the 17th May, 1871, addressed to the Governor and laid before Council. The following extract gives the gist of it:—

"Nowadays we hear of ill-disposed people (vagabonds) that often make it their trade of the *Sin-Khehs* or newcomers who, on their first landing here, not happening to be acquainted with any one in the place, are by these vagabonds invariably deceived and cheated, or these vagabonds at times board the fresh arrivals and clandestinely trade in these *Sin-Khehs*, with whom to enrich themselves. When the bargain is secured the *Sin-Khehs* disappear, oftentimes never to be traced, and neither is it possible for the living or the dead to divine. Such practices, besides being detrimental to the place, are a lamentable deterrent to the *Sin-Khehs*, unless means be devised to inform them of the place where to lodge their complaints."

The petition concludes by asking that a trustworthy officer be appointed to superintend the new arrivals, and that a general scheme of protection be planned.

Commission
of Enquiry
into Riots of
1872.

3. On the 29th October, 1872, riots occurred in Singapore arising from an apparently trivial cause, but important as shewing the existence of a large body of rowdies or "*Samsengs*"—a perpetual menace to the peace of the community. A Commission was appointed to enquire into the causes of these riots, and in their report the following passage occurs:—

"Our attention has been drawn to the fact that two steamers within a week or two of one another landed in the Settlements 3,200 Chinese coolies. Of such and their movements neither the Government nor the Police have any knowledge, nor have they any control over them, they land and know of no governing authority but that of the Secret Societies, to which they are soon affiliated, or of those employers of labour who make their own terms with them and draft them off to their plantations.

"It appears to us that were once a power obtained over these people, and their movements and doings made the subject of observation, a great step would be taken to shake the power of the Societies, and of those who control these men often for their own bad purposes.

"Without pledging ourselves to details, we would state generally that a system of Registration of Chinese Immigrants should be undertaken by the authorities. Each coolie ship on arrival should be boarded by a Registering Officer and accompanied by a staff of Interpreters, who should at once take a list of all the coolies, their names, place of embarkation and occupation. These coolies should then be landed and kept under proper superintendence, until they had found occupation, or occupation had been found for them. In the Registrar's Office there should be kept a list of all persons who require the service of coolies, and these persons should be summoned and an arrangement made with them by the Registering Officer for the employment of the labourers. Each coolie as he leaves should be furnished with a parchment ticket, numbered, and which should shew in Chinese the name of his employer, and the place to which he is to be taken, and the terms on which he is to serve."

4. The report of the Commission was followed up, in May, 1873, by a second Petition of 1873. petition signed by a large number of Chinese and addressed to the Governor, begging for an Ordinance prohibiting the disgraceful kidnapping of *Sin-Khehs*; for the establishment of a dépôt for registration and lodging; and for the appointment of officers to visit and inspect the *Sin-Khehs* at intervals after their engagement, to see that they are comfortable and they do not suffer from oppression.

5. About the same time articles appeared in the Straits and China papers Press articles, alleging shameful overcrowding of steamers engaged in the coolie traffic and calling attention to other abuses connected with it.

6. In consequence of the state of affairs indicated by the above occurrences, and following a suggestion of the Secretary of State that the suggestion of the Committee with reference to the treatment of Chinese immigrants was well worthy of consideration, a Bill to provide for their better protection was introduced into Council in 1873. In moving the second reading of this Bill on the 9th September, 1873, the Governor (Sir H. ORD) stated that "cases of kidnapping persons and taking them by force to other places were continual," that the treatment of women was even worse, and that he was satisfied that if the existing state of things was not shortly remedied by the Colony there could be little doubt that the subject would be taken up at home and that legislation would then have to be introduced under pressure. Ordinance of 1873 introduced.

7. This Bill met with considerable opposition at the hands of the Unofficial Opposition to the Ordinance of 1873. Members, mainly on the grounds that it was unnecessary, the evil state of things having been exaggerated, that it was restrictive and would hinder immigration, and that its provisions were in many respects unworkable. However, it was passed as Ordinance X of 1873, but was never brought into force. The opposition of the community took the form of a very large public meeting at which the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

"That the proposed Chinese Coolie Immigration Act is both impolitic and unnecessary; impolitic, because it interferes with the importation of free labour to this Settlement, and unnecessary, because it can never accomplish the object which it is supposed to secure."

And in 1874, after the passing of the Bill, a petition, of which the following is the substance, was presented to Sir ANDREW CLARKE, who had in the meantime succeeded to the Government:—

"No doubt the object sought to be obtained by the measure is the protection of newly arrived immigrants from China against imposition upon the part of their countrymen; and it is true that some years ago, and even now to a considerable extent, the influence of the Secret Societies is brought to bear more oppressively upon men arriving ignorant of our laws and customs than it can be upon those to whom some residence in the place has taught their rights and privileges. But the evident cure for this is to abolish and do away for ever with these Societies, which have been the origin and support of every serious disturbance which has broken out in the Settlement. Once landed in Singapore, and apart from this influence, the competition for labour is so great as to obtain for the newly arrived immigrant perfect security from extortion or unfair labour bargains. The only danger which assails him is that he may be, either before landing or after, hurried and cajoled into engagements to work in countries outside of this Settlement, and in ignorance shipped away beyond the influence and protection of our laws; and to meet this an emigration and not an immigration measure is required. Your Petitioners are of opinion that the Harbour and Police authorities should be authorised to board all vessels arriving with coolies, and to see that none of them are shipped off without landing, unless they thoroughly comprehend and assent to their engagements; moreover, that the Harbour and Police authorities should see that no vessels leave the Port with coolies for service outside the Colony, unless the engagements of such coolies are explained to and assented to by them.

"Above all things, your Petitioners would urge the maintenance of absolute freedom of immigration. Rules and Regulations which would offer no great obstacle in European countries, would prove here a most serious check; if, indeed, they did not put a stop to immigration—the oriental mind taking ready alarm at every interposition of authority. At no previous time did the prosperity and progress of the Colony depend more upon an abundant supply of labour than it does now; for such labour the Colony has no sources of supply within itself; and, if immigration be cut off or discouraged, enterprises of great moment that are now developing must wither and collapse."

8. Sir ANDREW CLARKE further delayed the coming into operation of the Bill, Ordinance of 1873 not being of opinion that all that was necessary would be effected "by some additional powers granted to the Police and by a modification of the Registration system now brought into operation. in operation at Hongkong, but worked under the management of the Municipal Commissioners instead of the Central Government."

9. Sir W. JERVOIS, however, who succeeded Sir ANDREW CLARKE, did not consider this the proper solution of the question, and in 1876 a Commission was appointed Commission of 1876 to enquire into the condition of Chinese labourers in the Colony. The Commission put forward the following conclusions as the result of their enquiry:—

"1. That as regards the immigrant leaving China the process is altogether voluntary, and is surrounded with sufficient safeguards.

"2. That a considerable proportion of the immigrants get their passages down on credit, and that, as they have no effects which can be made liable, a detention of their persons or a lien on their services must be legalised, in substitution for the illegal detention on board ship, or in houses on shore, by which payment is now enforced.

"3. That during his stay here the Chinese immigrant should be taught to look more to Government and less to his Societies for protection.

"4. That the malpractices connected with emigration from Singapore and Penang to neighbouring Settlements must be put down with a strong hand."

And their recommendations were as follows:—

"That Protectors of Chinese be appointed in Singapore and Penang (possibly, later on, in Malacca), who should be European gentlemen conversant with the Chinese dialects, and that they should be assisted by respectable Chinamen belonging to the different nationalities which resort here.

"That depôts should be established for the reception of immigrants on arrival and emigrants on departure under engagement, and that every such immigrant or emigrant should pass before the Protector and, if detained, be detained only in the depôt. The need for this on arrival is not so strong as on departure as regards prevention of abuses, but we attach great importance to bringing the newly arrived immigrant at once into direct contact with an European speaking his language, and that he should from the first understand that there is an Officer of Government whose special duty it is to protect him and be his friend.

"That written engagements, made before the Protector, for service in or emigration from the Settlements be legalised, and the infraction of them made penal.

"That the expense be met by a fee of one dollar charged on every immigrant who has not paid his passage, and on every emigrant leaving under advance or engagement. Such fee to cover three days' subsistence in the depôt. Also a fee of fifty cents on every immigrant who has paid his passage. The Supercargo to be responsible for the fees.

"That Coolie-Brokers be licensed, as well as their recruiting agents; that no bad characters should receive a license, and that there be a heavy penalty for brokers acting as such without a license or employing unlicensed recruiters.

"That a certain proportion of the Cadets sent out for the Public Service of the Settlements be sent first to China, to learn to read Chinese, and to speak one, or if possible, two of the dialects. It would probably be advisable to vary in some degree the examination for the selection of these Cadets, with the special view of obtaining candidates possessing an aptitude for acquiring modern languages.

"Finally, that in passing an Ordinance protecting Chinese immigrants and emigrants, Government should content itself at the outset with a few simple clauses, and should not attempt to deal with the matter exhaustively. The essential point is to obtain the confidence and co-operation of the respectable portion of the Chinese community for whatever is done. Any too large and sudden interference with their habits and customs would merely provoke opposition and evasion, and would increase the influence of the Secret Societies to an incalculable extent."

Report by Mr. Pickering in 1877 on abuses in connection with coolie traffic.

10. Early in 1877, attention was called by Mr. PICKERING, then Chinese Interpreter, to the urgent need of proper protection for newly arrived Chinese. His report, which was laid before the Council and is published in the Council Proceedings 1877, disclosed a scandalous state of affairs, gangs of coolies being driven on board tongkangs by armed men for shipment to Sumatra and elsewhere, and every conceivable extortion and oppression being freely practised.

Ordinance II of 1877.

11. On the 23rd March, a second Chinese Immigration Ordinance (No. II of 1877) was passed, based mainly on the recommendations of the Commission. It provided for the appointment of a Protector and Assistant Protector of Chinese,* and contained clauses regulating the proceedings of ships arriving with Chinese passengers, to ensure the inspection of the passengers by the Protector and his officers. It authorised the establishment of depôts for the reception of *Sin-Khehs* and for their detention therein if deemed necessary by the Protector, and it obliged the registration of all contracts to labour by Chinese immigrants.

Sections of 1877 Ordinance relating to depôts not brought into force.

12. This Bill, though it fared better than its predecessor, to which it was in its main lines very similar, was only partially brought into force, the sections relating to the establishment of depôts being, by desire of the Secretary of State, left inoperative until he should have had an opportunity of further considering the question. Meanwhile defects were discovered in the working of the law, especially with regard to the examination of new arrivals on board steamers, and further experience and knowledge were gained, which in 1880 led to the preparation of a wholly new Ordinance.

Ordinance IV of 1880.

13. In moving the second reading of this Ordinance, which became No. IV of 1880 and is now in force, the Attorney-General, Mr. BRADDELL, explained its objects as follows:—

"When the Ordinance of 1877 was passed, it was considered then to be premature to go the whole length which was provided by the present Bill, that is, to take charge of the immigrants on arrival in the Colony, and give them direct Government protection. It was thought that we were not in possession of such knowledge as would allow a step involving so much responsibility to be taken; and, further, that any system which would recognize what might be called barracoons was inexpedient in any civilized Government. Since then we have had considerable experience as to the management of Chinese immigrants arriving in this Colony, and have had a Department constituted for protecting the Chinese population.

"Having that Department, it is thought the Government can now go a step further and take charge of the immigrants as they arrive, take them under the immediate protection of the Chinese Department, and, after they are landed, see that justice is done them, and that they are not victimised by persons desirous of making money by importing them into the Colony.

"Under this Bill, those whose passage has been paid, will be at once dismissed; those whose passage has not been paid, that is, those for whom the Government has been trying to provide protection, will be taken under the charge of the Government itself, and placed in a Government depôt, where they will be

* In accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance, Mr. W. A. PICKERING was appointed Protector of Chinese, and Mr. E. KARL Assistant Protector (for Penang) on the 3rd May, 1877.

under the protection of the Chinese Department. They will not be subject to an indefinite time of detention, but they may be detained ten days, thus giving the ship-owner time to find some one who will pay their passage-money. It cannot be doubted that the Government will be able to protect all those persons who are landed in the depôts, and, when employers can be found, they can be started in their career without any burden of debt, instead of having a heavy drag upon them, not for services rendered to the immigrant, but to afford a profit to middlemen, who bring them into the Colony as a speculation. They will start fairly, with no other debt upon them than the exact amount of their passage-money, to be worked off by regular deduction from their wages, under engagements entered into with the supervision of the Protector.

"The great difference introduced by the present Bill is to make the use of the depôts compulsory. We have to consider all the circumstances of the port, because in a free port anything likely to embarrass the trade of the port would be undesirable. It is necessary that vessels landing coolies here should be as little delayed or inconvenienced as possible. One of the provisions in this Bill is that all the passengers shall be landed immediately on arrival in the harbour, and, in order to prevent evasion, the vessels must be anchored in such place as is pointed out by the Government, and the immigrants are not to move until the vessel has been visited by the Officers of the Protector's Department."

Defects in the Ordinance of 1877 which had been pointed out from time to time by Mr. PICKERING, notably the difficulties attending the examination of immigrants on arrival, were also amended by the new legislation. It was strongly opposed by the Unofficial Members, the chief grounds being that it was too restrictive and that the tax of a dollar per head on the immigrants, leviable against the ships, which the draft Ordinance imposed, was an interference with the freedom of the port and would injure the shipping interests. The clause imposing this tax was eventually withdrawn, a fee on signing the contract being substituted and the Bill passed on the 13th July, 1880, and came into force as Ordinance IV of 1880 on the 1st April, 1881.

14. Intimately connected with the subject of both Chinese and Indian immigration is the Crimping Ordinance, No. III of 1877. In moving the first reading, the Colonial Secretary stated that it had been drafted in consequence of a petition recently received from the planters of Province Wellesley and that there could be no doubt as to its necessity. It was unopposed in Council. It imposes a penalty on any person who, by deceit or other illegitimate persuasion, induces any person to leave the Colony for service elsewhere. It authorises recruiting for such service by licensed recruiters and renders a written contract, signed before a Protector appointed under the Ordinance, compulsory for all intending emigrants whose passages have been paid or who have been assisted by advances. It imposes penalties on those who, having signed such contracts or received advances, refused to carry out their agreement. It also forbids any person to seduce a labourer from his present employment or harbour or employ a deserter.

15. The only other Ordinance which it is necessary to mention is the Labour Contracts Ordinance, No. I of 1882, which deals with labourers of all nationalities alike. The Attorney-General, in moving the second reading of this Ordinance (Council Proceedings 1881, pages 116 and 124), pointed out that this Ordinance repealed Indian Act XIII of 1859, that Act being unworkable and incomplete as it only dealt with contracts under advances, and it had been decided in India that as soon as the advance was repaid the Act ceased to have effect. He went on to state that a labour law had been repeatedly asked for by employers of labour, and that the Magistrates also complained of the existing Act. Generally, he explained, the Bill deals with three classes of contract. Firstly, verbal contracts which are of small importance and require little regulation. Secondly, contracts made in writing but without advances. These are more serious owing to the great loss which may be entailed on an employer suddenly left without his labour force. Thirdly, contracts under advances, which require the strongest precautions and safeguards. Domestic servants* and skilled artificers, the Attorney-General explained, are specially exempted.

16. During Committee, contracts of the second class were placed more nearly on a footing with the third class, as it was recognised that the position of an employer with capital invested on the strength of his labour contracts was nearly the same as that of one who had made advances. The Secretary of State wrote out that he considered that the term of contract should be reduced from five years to one, and that simple imprisonment should be awarded instead of rigorous for a simple breach of contract, the principle being that where no advance had been received there was no element of fraud in the breach, and, therefore, nothing to justify the severer punishment. These amendments were opposed and the matter referred home again.

In reply, the Secretary of State allowed a period of five years for contracts made without the Colony, or three for those made within the Colony; that no labourer should be imprisoned for offences under section 14 without the option of a fine; and that either rigorous or simple imprisonment might be awarded by the Magistrate in these cases. An Amendment Bill embodying these instructions was passed on the 17th April as Ordinance III of 1883.

* By Ordinance XXI of 1881 the provisions of "The Labour Contracts Ordinance 1882" are extended to apply to domestic and menial servants.

Crimping Ordinance of 1877.

Labour Contracts Ordinance of 1882.

Alterations previous to passing.

Provisions of
Labour Con-
tracts Ordi-
nance.

17. Briefly, the provisions of the Labour Contracts Ordinance as it stands are as follows:—

Verbal contracts exceeding one month are not recognised, and a verbal contract may be determined at any time by a month's notice or a month's wages on either side.* Written contracts, either with or without advances, may be made within or without the Colony for service in the Colony, but must be signed within a certain period before a Magistrate if made abroad, or before a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace if made in the Colony. Such contracts can only be determined by mutual consent or the disablement of one party. The "joint and several" system, by which a number of persons render themselves liable for the default of any of them, is forbidden. Legal measures for the settlement of disputes and for the punishment of breaches of contract, absence and other offences are provided, together with the provisions usual in such contracts as to payment of wages, arrest of deserters and so on.

Decision of
Court of Ap-
peal with
reference to
detention in
depôts.

18. Since the passing of this Ordinance, the laws affecting the immigration of Chinese have remained unaltered, but in June, 1890, an important decision was given by the Court of Appeal, which is reported as follows in the *Straits Law Journal*:—

"The defendant was charged on the 26th November, 1889, before Mr. HUDSON, Acting 3rd Magistrate, with an offence under section 14 of the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance (IV of 1880):—

"Any person or persons who shall induce or attempt to induce any immigrant whose passage money shall have not been paid to go to any place other than a depôt established under this Ordinance, or shall entice or attempt to entice away from any depôt any immigrant sent there by an Officer of the Protectorate, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty dollars for each immigrant."

"On the 3rd December, 1889, the case was argued before WOOD, J., by the Attorney-General on behalf of the Crown, and DREW on behalf of the Defendant.

"The learned Judge held that he could not depart from the words of the section; there was no ambiguity. He quashed the conviction, but, on the application of the Attorney-General, reserved the question for the Court of Appeal.

"On the June, 1890, the question was argued before the Court of Appeal, consisting of O'MALLEY, C.J., and WOOD and PELLEREAU, J. J.

"The Attorney-General appeared for the Crown, and asked the Court to construe the words 'any immigrant whose passage money shall have not been paid' in section 14, as meaning paid by the immigrant himself, pointing out that to construe the section otherwise would be virtually to put an end to the work of the Chinese Protectorate. The evil which the Ordinance was intended to meet was the virtual slavery which the immigrant would be under to the man who had brought him down from China and paid his passage money, if he were free from the supervision of the Chinese Protectorate.

"NAPIER for the Defendant.—This is a Penal Ordinance and must be construed strictly.

"O'MALLEY, C. J., held that the section being a penal one, its words must be read in their general sense, and not in the particular sense contended for by the Attorney-General. He thought that the evil hinted at by the Attorney-General had arisen since the passing of the Ordinance.

"WOOD and PELLEREAU, J. J., concurred."

Effect of
this decision.

19. The effect of this decision was to deprive the depôt-keepers of their power to retain coolies in the depôts, as no coolies now arrive whose passages have not been paid by some person. Notices were posted in the depôts in October, 1890, informing the coolies that they were at liberty to leave, with the effect of paralysing the trade, since the depôt-keepers would not incur the risk of advancing the passages of men whom they could not retain.

20. In January, 1891, as a temporary measure, and pending a general improvement in the system, Ordinance I of 1891 was passed, amending Ordinance IV of 1880 so as to enable coolies who had not themselves paid their own passages to be retained in the depôts as heretofore. In fact, this Ordinance restored the law to what it had been believed to be previous to the decision quoted above.

CHAPTER II. THE SIN-KHEH SYSTEM.

a.—RETROSPECTIVE.

Early im-
migration.

21. In its origin, immigration from China to the Straits was, like that from India, purely voluntary and unassisted, but for many years a system of assisted passages has prevailed. In the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* the following account is given of the immigration system in 1854:—

"The Chinaman on landing in the Straits is called a *Sin-Kheh*, or new man or new friend by the Chin-chew, and *Sin-Hak* by Macao men. These immigrants are thus obtained. One or more of the Chinese merchants charter a vessel and leave Penang in April or May for Macao or Amoy. On arriving at the destined port, the charterer, who usually proceeds in the vessel as super-cargo, sets a number of agents to work. These men go about the country and cajole the unsuspecting people, by promises of a speedy fortune and return to their native land, to accept the bounty money, which varies according to the respectability of the victims. They are then huddled on board. The agents receive a dollar a head. The immigrants are usually overcrowded on shipboard, but treated well on the whole. They arrive in the months of January, February and March. The anchor is scarcely cast when the resident Chinese flock on board to buy *Sin-Khehs* as they term it. The charterer gets for a master workman, either tailor, goldsmith or carpenter, 10 to 15 dollars, for a cooly 6 to 10, for a sickly man 3 to 4 or less. The *Sin-Kheh* then agrees to serve for a 12 month, receiv-

* The notice required in the case of domestic servants is fourteen days (Ordinance XXI of 1889).

ing food, clothes and a few dollars for his services. Should he be an expert workman and fall in with a generous master, he may receive more than the sum agreed on. The *Sin-Kheh* costs 2 to 4 dollars per mensem for food and clothing. If not paid for, they are detained on board ship (if convenient) or in a godown, until a purchaser turns up. Should the charterers be forced to the latter alternative, the *Sin-Khehs* are not well treated. Complaints have been lodged before the sitting Magistrate at different times on this ground, and the *Sin-Khehs* were set at large after signing a bond promising to pay the passage money. Their agreements are generally faithfully fulfilled; at the end of the 12 months the *Sin-Kheh* is at liberty to enter his master's service on a monthly stipend or to seek his livelihood elsewhere. He is also then admitted into one of the Hoes and into the Kongsee of his tribe. Very few Chinese remain clear of the Hoes, but as few will acknowledge themselves members, it is difficult to arrive at the truth. From 2,000 to 3,000 Chinese land annually at Penang and spread from thence to Province Wellesley and the Siamese and Malay territories."

22. The following passages, in volume IX of the same Journal, are also of Method employed in 1855. interest:—

"The numbers (of immigrants) according to the official returns have latterly been on the increase, but whether this is owing to a real increase or to a more careful enumeration, it is not easy to say. The probability is that the numbers have been underrated from the first rather than otherwise. The masters of the junks, not understanding the science of statistics, view any attempt at counting their passengers or bales of goods as a certain prelude to taxation, if not 'squeezing', and are anxious to pass themselves off at as low a figure as possible. The arrivals for the last 13 years are published as follows:—

1840-41	41-42	42-43	43-44	44-45	45-46	46-47	47-48	48-49	49-50	50-51	51-52	52-53
5,063	6,154	6,391	...	10,680	8,646	9,569	9,948	9,817	10,928	8,205	9,685	11,484

Previous to this, they averaged for some years about 5,000. In addition to these, a number of square-rigged vessels yearly import Chinese into Penang. The numbers thus brought must be added to the total, not having entered at Singapore, unlike the junks which touch there first and afterwards sail on to Malacca and Penang. From Singapore, the labourers are distributed over the countries between the Malayan Peninsula and Sumatra.

"The mode of conducting the emigration business is as follows, and would appear to be deserving of attention, as perhaps capable of being introduced elsewhere. The passenger (called *Sin-Kheh*) not having money to pay for his passage, enters into an agreement with the master of the junk to bind himself apprentice to some one at the port of arrival for one year, without wages, only receiving food, clothing, and a small sum for barber's expenses, tobacco and other little indispensable luxuries; the balance of consideration for the labour of the year is to be handed over to the master of the junk as payment of the passage money. The *Sin-Khehs* are kept on board the junks, as security for the passage money, till taken by an employer who, in consideration of obtaining his services for a year at a low rate, pays part of a year's wages in advance, with which advance the *Sin-Kheh* clears himself with the junk master. This is the principle of the operation, but as the business is conducted, not through each *Sin-Kheh*, but directly between the junk master and the intending employer, and as the amount for passage money varies with the demand for labour, it has a certain colouring of slave dealing which has prejudiced many against the system. The *Sin-Kheh* is not bound to go with any person who chooses him. If he pays his passage money, as he agreed to do when starting, at the same rate as the others, he is quite free to go wherever he pleases."

23. The systems in force in 1876 are described in the following terms in the Systems of Report of the Labour Commission of that year:— 1876.

"Immigration takes place chiefly between the months of June and October, during the fine weather in the China Seas of the South-West Monsoon, and though in former times, when sailing junks were the exclusive means of conveyance, much hardship was no doubt incurred during the voyage, the transport is now mainly effected by well-appointed steamers which make the passage in six or eight days, and there is so much competition for the business that the comfort of the immigrant is thus secured more efficiently perhaps than it could be by legislation.

"The method of recruiting the immigrants is as follows:—The steamer is usually chartered by a Chinese supercargo for a lump sum, the maximum number of immigrants she may carry being regulated by her official measurement. Some three weeks before the date of her projected departure, notice is given in the adjoining villages that a ship is going to leave for Singapore, when bands of men are formed under the leadership of a *Kheh-Thau*—or, as he is usually called in the evidence, Headman—who is generally, but not always, a returned emigrant from the Straits; the *Kheh-Thau* takes his band to a lodging-house at the port of embarkation, and their departure is arranged for through the agents of the ship—invariably an European firm, as being less open to be squeezed by the Chinese Officials.

"The rate of passage-money when paid in advance is about \$7 to \$8 (say 30s.), and in the case of immigrants from Amoy and Hongkong the money is almost always paid down. From Hainan the passage is often on credit, but oftener paid or arranged for in advance. From Swatow about half the Te-chius—the people from this district, who are mostly agricultural labourers, are called—pay in advance, the other half get credit, the rate of passage on credit being about \$12 (say 45s.), and the *Kheh-Thau* being responsible for it to the supercargo as regards the band of from 10 to 20 men under his charge. It is to be noted, as showing the purely voluntary nature of the immigration, that no advances are made (except for trifling expenses) to induce the parties to leave China, that while waiting to embark they are under no restriction of any kind, and that the ships are visited and carefully inspected by Officials, both European and Chinese, before their departure. The significance of these observations will be understood when the process of emigration from the Straits Settlements has been described.

"Each immigrant has a ticket which specifies the port of destination, whether his passage-money has or has not been paid, &c., &c., and on arrival in Singapore harbour, those who have paid their passages land and go where they like, or it would perhaps be more correct to say, wherever their *Kheh-Thau* likes to take them. The charter of the ship usually allows for three or four days of detention, and during those days of grace the immigrants who owe for their passages are detained on board, the *Kheh-Thaus* being allowed to land and find employers for their bands who will settle for their passage-money. If there is a demand for coolies, the *Kheh-Thau* makes a large profit, getting perhaps \$20 per head for his band, whereas they will probably have cost him \$13 to \$14. The usual price paid by the employers is from \$17 to \$20, and the margin between this and the passage rate constitutes the *Kheh-Thau's* profit.

"No doubt there is something in this which savours unpleasantly of buying and selling, but practically we have no reason to suppose that it leads to many real abuses in the case of immigrants remaining in the Settlements.

"When the steamer's days of grace are up, if there are still immigrants on board whose passage-money has not been paid, they are either landed in Singapore, and shut up in houses, or are sent on to Penang, if

the steamer goes there, whether their passages were taken for there or not. In most immigrant ships there are immigrants regularly engaged for Penang, who are taken on in the ship if she is going there, or in one of the local steamers if she is not; but if there be a demand for labour in Penang and none in Singapore, it is believed that the supercargo and the *Kheh-Thaus* are not very particular as to landing the immigrants at the particular port for which they embarked."

Principle is an old one.

24. It is apparent from these extracts that the principle on which emigration from China is conducted has remained the same for a long time, and such changes as have taken place have been confined to matters of detail.

Abuses in 1876.

25. The report goes on to say that it is at this stage, namely, the arrival and landing of the immigrants, that abuses begin and the intervention of Government is specially required. The nature of the abuses referred to is indicated in the report, and has already been briefly stated in Chapter I.

Coolies were detained for several days on board ship, often confined below, waiting to be redeemed by any one who required their services, and, being completely at the mercy of the *Kheh-Thau*,* were liable to be carried to whatever port offered the best market, regardless of their own wishes. Kidnapping of men who had already landed was freely resorted to, force being used if necessary. The following is given in the report of the Committee of 1876 as a usual practice:—

"There are always crimps on the look-out for new immigrants who, having paid their own passages, land by themselves. The crimp accosts the immigrant when he lands, asks who are his friends in Singapore, and offers to take him to them, but instead takes him to a house, locks him up, and sells him to be exported to a neighbouring Settlement."

Remedial legislation.

26. The first step towards remedying this state of affairs was the introduction of Ordinance II of 1877, already described in paragraph 11, which, however, was rapidly succeeded by Ordinance IV of 1880.

Attorney-General's report.

27. How it was intended to work the system is explained as follows in the Attorney-General's report on the Ordinance, dated the 13th August, 1880, (Col. Sec. 81⁶/₁₀):—

"Most of the immigrant ships go alongside one or other of the wharfs in New Harbour, and it is expected that arrangements can be made with the proprietors of the wharfs to allow the use of one or more sheds for the reception of the immigrants as they land, and as the great majority of them will pass out at once under section 10, their passage-money having been paid, only those under section 11, whose passage-money is not paid on arrival, will require to be kept under protection for a few days till they are engaged by persons who will pay their passage-money. For housing these (the minority) it will be necessary to provide depôts in convenient places, and by the section the depôts may be provided by Government or by persons licensed by the Government, and such licensed depôts will be subject to the same rules, regulations and supervision as the depôts provided by Government."

Intended system not fully adopted.

28. The system was not, however, carried out in its entirety, no Government depôt either for examination or housing—except that at Kampong Glam for coolies arriving by Hainan junks and the examination depôt at Penang—having ever been provided.

Detention of unpaid passengers extended to all who had not paid their own passages.

29. The provisions for the detention of unpaid passengers, instead of being confined, according to the strict wording of the Act, to those who owed their passages to the ship, were applied in practice to all who had not paid their own passages, and thus included men brought down by *Kheh-Thaus* and speculators. That this application was illegal has been recently shewn by the Court of Appeal (case already referred to in paragraph 18), but no question of its legality appears to have been raised throughout the years that it was practised, and it was manifestly of advantage to all concerned. The following passage from the report of the Committee of 1876 epitomises their information on this subject. The "abuses" referred to consist of detention of coolies with a view to removing them to other countries against their will:—

"These are specimens of the abuses of the present system. Though they were in both instances perpetrated upon immigrants who had not paid their passages, we have no reason to suppose that similar and equal abuses do not prevail in the case of immigrants whose passages have been paid for them by the *Kheh-Thaus*, if the latter are not respectable men."

Practice adopted better than that laid down by Ordinance.

30. Clearly the alternative, if immigrants paid for by *Kheh-Thaus* may not be detained in established depôts, is that the *Kheh-Thaus* will take their own measures to prevent their escape. We consider that the present system, faulty though it may be, must be better than any which could have sprung up under such conditions and which could only have been prevented by an amount of Police inspection and supervision which would virtually have stopped the immigration of all coolies who could not afford to pay their way down.

b.—THE PRESENT SYSTEM.

Two classes of immigrant.

31. The cooly traffic as now constituted is divided into two main classes—free passengers and "credit-ticket" passengers.

* *Kheh-Thau*, headman in charge.

32. Free or paid passengers are, as the name implies, those who either really or nominally pay their own passage down, and land in the Colony unhampered by debt. Beyond being asked on arrival if they have paid for their own passages, they are subject to no examination or control, but are free to go where they please.

They form a large and increasing majority of the whole number of passengers, the numbers who landed in 1889 being:—

In Singapore:—		And in Penang:—	
Paid	86,630	Paid	35,190
Unpaid	11,962	Unpaid	9,251
Total	98,592	Total	44,441

33. A "credit-ticket" passenger is one whose passage is declared to be "Credit-ticket" paid by any one else but himself. These passengers are, or formerly were, of two classes, the first comprising those who are actually brought down on credit by vessels, on board which they are detained until somebody redeems them by paying their expenses and a margin of profit to the ship; and the second, those whose passages are paid for them by a person who brings them down as a speculation, keeps them in a depôt on arrival, and disposes of their services to an employer as soon as one can be found. These, though paid passengers so far as the ship is concerned, are classed in the returns and generally spoken of as unpaid or "credit-ticket" passengers.

34. Only the second class is now of importance, since steamers, by which nearly all the immigrants arrive, never bring passengers as a speculation, their passage money being invariably either paid in advance or guaranteed by the agents shipping the coolies. The coolies arriving in junks at Singapore also have always their passages paid for them by importers, and the only case in which the old method is still known to survive is that of the junks which bring Hailam coolies to Malacca (paragraph 39).

35. Speaking generally, all Chinese immigration is conducted on the same system, that is to say, a recruiter or agent pays the passage and expenses of the intending emigrant, in some cases giving him a small advance as well, on condition that the cooly ultimately works off by his labour the expenses so incurred. Usually the China agent recovers his outlay, plus a profit, from an agent or broker in Singapore or Penang, to whom the cooly is consigned, and who remits the necessary sum to China on receipt of the cooly. This second agent then disposes of his cooly to the employer or his agent, making the best terms he can, according to the state of the market, to recoup his outlay and secure himself a profit.

36. On arrival in Singapore, the cooly, after being inspected on board ship by an officer of the Chinese Protectorate, is taken by the broker to whom he is consigned to a licensed depôt where he is to be lodged until he finds employment. The broker always has orders on hand from the agents of the various employers in Sumatra and elsewhere, and when coolies arrive, he informs these agents and arranges a price at which he will deliver the required coolies on board a steamer sailing for their destination. The representative of the agents, accompanied by a doctor, then visits the depôt and selects such coolies as appear suitable, receiving a photograph in duplicate of each man so selected, one copy of which he forwards to the Protector of Chinese, keeping the other for his own use. The broker, on the day of sailing if possible, takes the selected coolies to the Protectorate, where they are identified by the photographs received from the agents, and the contracts are signed. At the same time the coolies are paid whatever advances they have to receive, in the presence of the Protector. The contracts are between the agents and the coolies, the broker's name nowhere appearing. One general contract in English is signed by the agents, the Protector and all the coolies, and in addition each cooly receives a Chinese translation of this, also stamped by the agents and signed by an Officer of the Protectorate. The coolies are then taken on board the ship, and the agent's representative comes on board at the time of sailing and checks them by the photographs. The agents take no responsibility for the safeguarding of the coolies, who remain in charge of the broker until they are taken over by the employer or his representative. The point at which the broker's responsibility ceases varies. Coolies for Borneo are generally handed over to the employer or his agent before the departure of the ship, but those for Sumatra are, as a rule, delivered by the broker on the estates. Coolies for Pahang are taken over on the ship's arrival at the port of disembarkation, and other practices prevail on the various other lines of traffic.

General system of immigration.

Process on arrival in Singapore.

Process in
Penang.

37. So far we have dealt only with Singapore, but large numbers of coolies are brought to Penang, their destinations being generally Province Wellesley, Perak, or Sumatra. The system prevailing there is generally similar to that in Singapore. As a rule the brokers of Penang correspond direct with agents in China, by whom the coolies are shipped for Penang, their passages being taken for that port. To a certain extent the Penang brokers work in collusion with those of Singapore, and when a better price is obtainable in Penang, coolies are sent on there though they may have been originally destined only for Singapore. On the other hand, the Penang brokers complain that coolies intended for them are often enticed away by the Singapore brokers. Coolies for Penang are, as a rule, landed and taken to a depôt during the stay of their ship in Singapore, so that there is every facility for this practice. There is a Government examination depôt close to the landing jetty in Penang, but in other respects the systems in both places are alike.

Disposal of
inferior
coolies.

38. It occasionally happens that coolies arrive so inferior in physique and health that no one will redeem them, notwithstanding the great demand. In some cases the Protector makes the broker return such men to China at his own expense. When this is not done their ultimate disposal is thus described by a Singapore depôt-keeper (90)*:—

"Coolies whom no one will accept on account of their inferiority are sometimes redeemed by their relatives, and if this is not done I dispose of them to shop-keepers or others for whatever price I can get, when they make a contract with the shop-keeper who has redeemed them."

Malacca sys-
tem.

39. In Malacca, where a large number of coolies are employed by Chinese planters, the system is similar to that which prevailed before the establishment of the Protectorate, and already described. The coolies, who are almost all Hailams, are brought down in junks and kept either on board or in lodging-houses on shore until disposed of. There is no examination, no Government or licensed depôts, and, until about ten days before our visit in January, no written contracts were made in Malacca, though occasionally contracts for work in that Settlement were made at the Singapore Protectorate by passengers in junks bound for Malacca. The employer procures his coolies from the *Kheh-Thau* who has imported them with the understanding that they are to work as *Sin-Khehs* without wages for a year, after which, if out of debt, they become free men.

Attempts at
direct import-
ation.

40. Attempts have been made by various European employers, both in the Peninsula and elsewhere, to dispense with the intermediary of brokers, and recruit and import their coolies for themselves. Several of these are given in the evidence. As a rule, they have failed owing to the obstruction of the brokers, which the efforts of individuals could not cope with.

The Deli
Planters' As-
sociation.

41. The largest and most successful effort is that of the Deli Planters' Association, one of the chief objects of the formation of which was the importation of coolies. Steamers are chartered by this Association, which has been joined by nearly all the Deli planters, to run direct from Hongkong and Swatow to Deli, and the Committee has its own agents by whom it obtains the coolies in China. On arrival they are landed at a depôt belonging to the Association and at once distributed. Owing to the cost of the steamers the price of these coolies has so far been excessive, but in other respects this importation, which was only started in 1887, appears to have worked well.

Coolies for
Tanjong Pa-
gar Dock
Company.

42. Another instance of fairly successful direct importation of Chinese labour, though only on a small scale, is that of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company, or rather GAN ENG SENG, who is contractor to the Company for the discharge of cargo. He sends Mandors to Swatow and Amoy to bring down Hok-kien and Te-chiu coolies independently of the brokers. The coolies get a small advance in China, which is afterwards recovered from them, receive a free passage down and are expected to enter into a contract for six months' work. GAN ENG SENG states that no restraint is placed on the coolies to keep them from leaving the docks, and that in consequence they nearly all abscond before their time is up. So great is the loss from this cause that he states he would only use free coolies but for the necessity of having a certain number of men always on the spot to act as a reserve in case of a strike of the others. The large majority of the coolies employed in the docks are stray men picked up as required by the day.

Coolies for
Penang Sugar
Estates Com-
pany.

43. An instance worthy of notice is that of the Penang Sugar Estates Company, by whom a small number of men were recruited direct from China in 1889 on very

* Numbers in brackets, thus, (90), refer to paragraphs of the Evidence. When preceded by the word paragraph, they refer to paragraphs of the Report.

liberal terms. Owing, probably, to the machinations of Chinese who considered themselves likely to be injured by this system, almost the whole of the first gang were induced to abscond. More have, however, been obtained, and most of these still remain on the estate, but their wages are so high that the experiment is limited to a small scale and thus deprived of a chief element of success.

44. Chinese employers, however, occasionally import their own coolies by sending up Mandors to recruit in China, and thus obtain men at rates much lower than those paid by Europeans. Direct importation by Chinese.

45. The method of obtaining Fui-Chiu coolies for the mines in Selangor appears to be different from any other, and is described as follows by WONG SIN HENG, the keeper of a Singapore depôt, whose account the Protector of Chinese believes to be substantially correct. Fui-Chiu coolies for Selangor.

The *Kheh-Thaus*, who are generally Selangor miners, return to China from time to time and, on coming back to Selangor, induce a certain number of their friends and relations to accompany them. No advance is given to these *Sin-Khehs*, and it is stated that scarcely any run away before their arrival in Selangor. The Singapore depôt-keeper's share in the transaction is confined to receiving coolies into his depôt on arrival from China while awaiting shipment to Klang. He pays to the *Kheh-Thau* all the expenses of bringing down the coolies, to be ultimately recovered from the employer who purchases the man's services. A contract for work is made at the Chinese Protectorate in Singapore between the *Kheh-Thau* as employer and the coolies, but it is not acted on, for the *Kheh-Thau* never really employs the man, but, on his arrival in Klang, hands him over to a miner who, however, makes no fresh contract, considering the coolies bound under the one he has already signed.

c.—THE PROTECTORATE.

46. The whole machinery for the regulation of Chinese affairs in the Straits Settlements centres in the Protectorate, the head of which is the Protector of Chinese, appointed under Ordinance IV of 1880. His duties are not specifically defined, but, in addition to many which do not concern our enquiry, they comprise the carrying out of the Ordinances affecting Chinese immigration, and all emigration for labour, besides which he is the adviser of Government in matters relating to Chinese affairs. He has under him an Assistant Protector in Singapore and two in Penang, who board vessels arriving, keep the contract registers, inspect the depôts, sign the contracts and carry on the detail work of the office. Under them is a staff of boarding officers, boatmen and others. The department is, however, not represented in Malacca, the duties of Assistant Protector there at present devolving on an officer who does not speak Chinese and who has other and arduous duties to perform. To carry out the work of the Protectorate efficiently, it appears to us essential that a qualified officer with the necessary staff be appointed at Malacca for these duties alone. The Protectorate Staff.

d.—THE DEPÔTS.

47. The depôts for the reception of *Sin-Khehs* are all kept by private persons licensed by the Government under Ordinance IV of 1880. They are Chinese houses of the ordinary street type and are Description of the depôts.

(2,154) "under the control, as regards sanitation, of the Principal Civil Medical Officer, and are constantly inspected by an Apothecary."

(2,155) "Wells are closed up, water laid on, &c., under the directions of the Principal Civil Medical Officer, and an allowance of 20 square feet is enforced for each inhabitant."

48. Notwithstanding these precautions, the sanitary arrangements of the Singapore depôts are not, in our opinion, up to the standard that might well be insisted on. Defects in arrangements. The latrines are dark and indifferently ventilated and, in some cases, too close to the cook-houses, seeing the large numbers that may have to use them.

50. There were in Singapore in November last 14 *Sin-Kheh* depôts, licensed to contain in all 1,193 inmates, the largest being licensed for 125 and the smallest for 36. In addition to the foregoing there are 8 licensed *Lau-Kheh* depôts in Singapore, to contain 592 inmates, the largest being for 150 and the smallest for 30 men. These are licensed under the Crimping Ordinance of 1877. They are similar to the *Sin-Kheh* depôts in general arrangement. Number of licensed depôts in Singapore.

51. There were in Penang 7 *Sin-Kheh* depôts in December, 1890, licensed for 545 inmates, and 6 *Lau-Kheh* depôts, for 280 inmates. These are, like the Singapore depôts, Chinese street houses, but are very much better in their sanitary arrangements than those of Singapore, leaving in this respect but little to be desired. Number of depôts in Penang.

Examination
depôt at Penang. 52. There is also a Government examination depôt in Penang, consisting of a room under the Protectorate which is close to the jetty at which the coolies land. This is of great advantage, enabling the inspection of coolies to be held with a degree of care that cannot be attained on board a newly arrived ship.

CHAPTER III.

COMPLAINTS LAID BEFORE THE COMMISSION.

Three main heads of complaint. 53. The complaints laid before us regarding the Chinese labour system may be classed under three main heads.

Quality. Firstly, the physique and quality of the coolies imported.

Quantity. Secondly, the deficiency in numbers, with its attendant evils of crimping and desertion.

High cost. Thirdly, the excessive cost of obtaining coolies.

Minor complaints. 54. Various complaints of a minor nature were also brought before us, and will be considered in Chapter IX.

a.—QUALITY OF COOLIES.

Physique of coolies. 55. The coolies received are not of as good physique as could be wished. Many witnesses state that they are very bad, and are worse than formerly; but on the other hand some, of equal reliability, do not hold this opinion. In this connection, the following extract from an article in Volume IX of the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* for 1855 is of interest:—

“Poverty in China, as elsewhere, breaks down all artificial rules, and among the myriads of almost destitute paupers in the eastern provinces, when suffering from the pangs of hunger, many were found willing to undergo any distant or imaginary evil as the price of present ease and plenty. Our immigrants, unfortunately, are all of the lowest classes. * * * Landing, as they do, on our shores, naked, diseased and poverty stricken, we must be surprised * * * to find after a few months the same people well clad, well fed and in the enjoyment of the best of health. From the large proportion of absolute paupers arriving in the junk, it has been asserted that the Mandarins in the shipping ports take advantage of the opportunity of the sailing of the emigrant vessels to force on board their diseased paupers and criminals, thus getting rid of a nuisance, and improvising a system of criminal transportation at the expense of other nations.”

The grievance, therefore, is a very old one.

Coolies have not deteriorated. 56. We think that the class of cooly received, though inferior to what could be desired, is, on the whole, probably as good as in former years, and that no serious deterioration requiring special investigation has taken place.

Causes of inferiority. 57. The causes of this inferiority are to be found chiefly in the absence of any supervision over the recruiters, or of any proper inspection of the emigrants before they leave China.

b.—SCARCITY OF LABOUR.

Scarcity exists. 58. Nearly every witness before us, many of whom were agents or brokers engaged in getting men for Sumatra and Borneo, testified to the difficulty of getting sufficient men. The returns furnished by the Protector of Chinese (Appendix E) shew that the supply has fallen off, and when this is considered in connection with the constantly increasing demands of neighbouring countries, it is not to be wondered at that, even though the demand for labour in the mines of the Native States has somewhat diminished of late, the cry for more labour is general.

Causes of scarcity. 59. The causes of the scarcity in the Colony and Native States naturally fall under two heads, namely, causes tending to check emigration from China, and the competition of other countries.

Causes tending to check emigration from China. 60. In considering the causes which tend to check emigration from China, we have endeavoured to ascertain whether any circumstances of service in the Straits exist which, by rendering the country unpopular among Chinese immigrants, would tend to deter others from coming. We have not found that any of the evils or abuses which exist have this effect to any appreciable extent, and we see no reason to think that, except perhaps in occasional instances and to a limited degree, immigration is hindered by reason of ill-reports spread by returning coolies. By this we do not mean that the position of the cooly is what it might or should be, but merely that the

opportunities of acquiring wealth and the generally improved circumstances in which the cooly finds himself here as compared with those of his native land, outweigh any incidental drawbacks which he encounters. He is, as a rule, well fed and housed, and better paid than he could ever expect to be in China, and these advantages more than compensate him for any ill-treatment or extortion to which he is ever likely to be subjected. There is, moreover, nothing to shew that the health of the coolies is materially injured by residence here, and their death-rate is not, so far as can be ascertained, a high one.

61. We must, therefore, look elsewhere for the causes of scarcity. The explanation which has been most prominently before us in evidence is the establishment of direct importation from Amoy and Swatow to Sumatra. This was started in 1888 in consequence of the high charges of the Singapore brokers and is now being carried on on a large scale. The number of coolies imported from June, 1888, when the first steamer ran, to the end of 1888 is given in the Annual Report for 1889 of the Consul-General for the Netherlands as 1,165; and the number for 1889 as 4,927.* It does not appear, however, that this innovation possesses the importance which is usually attached to it, or that it has seriously diminished the supply of coolies available for work in the Malay Peninsula. Had the trade remained as formerly in the hands of Singapore agents, the high wages offered by Sumatra planters must still have attracted coolies in large numbers. The establishment of the direct line has been in fact rather a transfer of the trade route, resulting in loss of custom to the brokers and agents of Singapore and Penang who formerly profited by the Deli market, than an increase in the demand for coolies, and we do not think that it has had any very serious influence upon the numbers available for work in the Peninsula.

62. We do think, however, that the great and increasing demand for labour in Sumatra is one of the prime reasons for the present scarcity, but it is one which would have been equally felt by the Straits employers whether the coolies were conveyed through Singapore or direct to Sumatra.

63. The development of British North Borneo has had great influence on the supply. The number of contracts signed in Singapore for this country has been for the last four years as follows:—

In 1887,	...	...	390 contracts.
„ 1888,	...	...	3,028 „
„ 1889,	...	...	6,158 „
„ 1890,	...	...	7,223 „

Thus we have in Borneo a competitor whose needs advance rapidly and whose present labour supply has been obtained at the cost of a direct diminution of our own, for almost all the labourers of British North Borneo have been obtained through the Singapore brokers, and would otherwise have been available for employment in the Straits. How much this is the case is shewn by the statement of the Protector of Chinese in his Report for 1889, that “a large number of coolies from Klang have lately passed through Singapore eager to find work and willing enough to engage for British North Borneo or elsewhere, although the new labour is generally agricultural and not mining.”

64. It appears to us, however, that, while giving full weight to the competition of surrounding countries, the chief causes of difficulty in obtaining men lie in China. These causes cannot be ascertained with certainty without enquiry on the spot, but from information at our disposal we are satisfied that if a constant supply of coolies is to be ensured, it is in China that our principal action must be taken and our remedies for the present deficiency sought.

65. The evidence regarding the obstructions placed in the way of emigration from China is somewhat conflicting, but it shews that difficulties are certainly made there. Correspondence on the subject has passed between the Straits Settlements Government and the British Consul at Swatow, and between the latter officer and the Governor-General of the Two Kwang. The following extracts set out the views of the Governor-General:—

“I would observe that when Chinese have gone to other countries to seek their livelihood, the regulations hitherto in force have required them to pay their own passages, and to only allow them to proceed if they were willing to go abroad. For regard was had to the evils involved in borrowing passage-money, as it

* The number for 1890 is 5,940; and 1,293 for January, 1891.

was not desired that their persons should be placed in pawn and agreements contracted which should bind them down to a fixed term of servitude.

"Your despatch observes that if the credit system is employed, the emigrants on their arrival abroad are lodged as a preliminary in certain depôts where they await redemption, and that the contracts are drawn up and executed before the authorities.

"Now no matter how excellent soever the regulation prepared might be, when the contract was once entered into, the emigrant's movements could no longer be free, and from this fact a thick crop of opportunities for evil would arise. Would it not then be better to allow each emigrant to provide his own passage money and so leave his movements unfettered? The request that in future the credit system should not be interdicted it is impossible to comply with."

Attitude of Chinese Gov- 66. It is doubtful how far the prohibition thus expressed and acted on in Swatow
ernment un- and Amoy is in accordance with instructions from the Chinese Government. The
certain. Chinese Consul stated in his evidence that there was no such prohibition, but he did not
profess to be intimately acquainted with the subject.

Probable 67. On the whole it seems probable, after reviewing the evidence and papers
explanation. before us, that no definite rule on the subject has been laid down by the Chinese
Government, but that the Governor-General of the Two Kwang is personally strongly
opposed to the "credit-ticket" system, and does all in his power, with possibly the
tacit assent of his Government, to prevent unpaid passengers from emigrating. No
objection is, however, raised to the emigration of persons who say they have paid
their own passages.

Chinese Gov- 68. Such a restriction as the above alone suffices to account for all the difficulties
ernment res- met with in procuring labour from Swatow and Amoy, for its effect must be either to
trictions ac- prevent the emigration of coolies who cannot pay their own passages—and this is
count for the condition of the vast majority of those who desire to emigrate as labourers—or to
scarcity. drive such emigration into surreptitious channels, exposing those engaged in it to the
risk of severe punishment at any moment if detected.

Chinese fear 69. There appears to be in the minds of Chinese officials a deep-rooted fear of
of kidnapping. kidnapping, which forms a serious obstacle to emigration. Cases are numerous in
which the relatives of a man who has emigrated have complained to the Chinese
authorities that their son or brother has been kidnapped, and, on the bare word of the
person complaining, the return of the relative has been demanded of the agents
through whom he obtained his passage. In such cases application is made through
the Singapore Protectorate, when the man is traced to his employer by means of the
register and sent back to China; the expense falling on the broker who exported
him, who also has to supply the employer with another man to take his place. In
case the man cannot be traced, or has absconded, the Chinese depôt-keepers or
brokers must fly for their lives unless they are prepared to "square" those concerned.
It is needless to say that this attitude of the Chinese officials is frequently taken
advantage of for the purpose of extortion, either by the parents who threaten to com-
plain or by the subordinates of the officials themselves, who accept bribes from the
depôt-keepers to prevent the complaints of the relatives from reaching the ears of
their superiors.

Decapitation 70. A serious blow to emigration, as at present conducted, was dealt by the
of Siao A Kai alleged kidnapping. decapitation of a cooly-broker named SIAO A KAI at Swatow, on the 29th September,
1888, by orders from General FANG (also known as P'NG TAI JIN) acting under
instructions from the Viceroy of Canton. His alleged offence was having sent or
taken several persons to Hongkong and deceived them into going to Singapore, where
they were sold for labour in Deli. This execution caused great alarm and was one of
the causes which led to the dissolution of the I Ki Hong, which at that time recruited
and shipped coolies in very large numbers. What exact degree of truth there may
have been in this particular charge is uncertain, but the Protector of Chinese, who
enquired into the circumstances, reports as follows regarding the men said to have
been kidnapped:—

"Neither on board the ship at Hongkong nor on landing at Singapore, nor when brought to the Office
to have their names taken off the depôt-register, did they make any complaint whatever of being kidnapped.
They were four months in Singapore before they thought of returning to China."

The same officer says in his Annual Report for 1888:—

"From my knowledge of the circumstances, I would say that they left China willingly, but probably
without informing their families, and that on their return to their native country they were brought forward
by some persons who had a grudge to work out."

Other cases of 71. Two other cases of the same nature are given in the Protector's Report for
alleged kid- 1888 as follows:—
napping.

"In June, H. B. M.'s Consul in Swatow telegraphed that the I Ki cooly Hong was in trouble on a charge
of kidnapping, and asked that LAU NIAU, the man said to be kidnapped, might be returned. He was got out

from Serapong, an island belonging to Netherlands India, where he was working, and made a statement at
this Office that he had come down from China of his own free will, which statement, duly attested, was for-
warded to the Consul, and LAU NIAU himself was sent to China in July to vouch for its truth.

"Again, in October, a European firm in Singapore, at the request of a European firm in Swatow, asked
for our assistance in obtaining for them two men—NG HIEN HOA and NG KIM SENG—who had come down
so long before as April, 1887, regarding whom an attempt had been made in Swatow to fix a charge of kid-
napping on the same chop. The men were brought over from a tobacco estate in Bobongan, to which they
had gone under contract, and were returned to China in November. In all these cases, the expense of redeeming
the men from their employers and of passage back to China, &c., was paid by the firm which was wrongfully
accused."

72. It is probable that the prohibition of the credit-ticket system, although it Effect of res-
can only be directly applied at the ports of Swatow and Amoy, affects the emigration trictions felt
from Hongkong as well. Coolies for the Hongkong agents are recruited in the at Hongkong.
interior of the Canton Province, and their recruiters are, as was instanced in the deca-
pitation case already mentioned, liable to interference from the Chinese officials.

73. To sum up, the causes militating to prevent the immigration of Chinese Summary of
coolies to the Straits, for employment in the Colony or Native States, appear to be causes.
two in number.

74. First. The keen and increasing competition of surrounding countries, Competition
especially those growing tobacco, the high profit on which enables the planters to of other coun-
outbid Straits employers. tries.

75. Second. The action, with or without the sanction of the Imperial Chinese Action of Chi-
Government, of local authorities in China, in forbidding the emigration of all who are nese officials.
unable to pay for their own passages. Coupled with this is the alleged fear of kid-
napping put forward by the Chinese authorities, which tends to place recruiters at the
mercy of anybody who may come forward with a complaint, and thus prevents men of
standing and reputation from persuading or assisting men to emigrate.

c.—COST OF INTRODUCTION.

76. The third complaint laid before us is the excessive cost of importing coolies. Cost of intro-
The amount paid in Penang is from \$35 to \$38 for a Te-chiu *Sin-Kheh* for work in duction.
Province Wellesley; Te-chius and Hai-lok-hongs for Borneo command in Singapore
\$85 or \$90 each, to which must be added about \$7 for taking them to Borneo; the same
class for Sumatra is obtained from the Singapore brokers at about \$80 each, and in
Penang at \$80 or \$90, for which sum they are delivered on the estates.

77. No advances are given to the Province Wellesley coolie, and the cost of his Profits by
passage and other expenses must, therefore, be deducted from the \$38 in order to brokers and
arrive at the profits made on the transaction. Putting these expenses at \$14, or say others.
even \$16, which is probably a maximum figure, \$22 remains to be accounted for. The
sum paid for Borneo or Sumatra coolies includes the \$30 advance given at the Pro-
tectorate, from which his passage expenses are deducted, so that the whole balance
of \$50 or \$60 represents the profit made. One obvious reason for this immense
brokerage is the large number of persons who have to profit by the transaction,
namely, the recruiter who originally enlists the emigrant; the depôt-keepers and
agents in China who take charge of him on arrival at the port of embarkation; the
Kheh-Thau who brings him down and is responsible for him on the voyage; the
depôt-keepers or brokers who house him on arrival and dispose of his services to the
agents of his future employer; and lastly the agents, usually a European firm, of the
employer. These are all legitimately entitled to a profit, but to them must be added
such persons as are able to extort bribes for their services, active or passive.

78. Many witnesses have given their opinion that the local brokers do not Larger share-
make excessive profits, but that most of the money goes to China. This is a matter of brokerage
that we cannot determine with exactitude, but we believe that the China brokers do goes to China.
receive the greater part of the money, and that the expenses for brokerage in Singa-
pore are a minor share of the whole sum charged.

79. It must be remembered, in considering this point, that the brokerage by no Brokerage
means all goes into the pockets of those entitled to it. In Chapter IV we have covers heavy
shewn that large amounts are probably spent in China owing to the circumstances expenses.
under which the recruiting is carried on, and in addition the brokers are subjected
to heavy losses through men deserting, being recalled to China, and so on. Still,
making all allowances, there is no doubt that the brokers somewhere make great
profits, and that the cost of introducing coolies could be vastly reduced by any system
which would avoid these middlemen. They form a ring, the influence of which has
invariably made itself felt when outsiders have attempted to dispense with their ser-

vices, and they are thus able to force prices up to a height only limited by the inability of employers to pay more.

Effect of Deli
importation
on brokerage.

80. How great the profits of such a combination may be, whether they are mostly made in Singapore or China, is shewn by the effect of the direct Deli importation on the prices. Before this the price of coolies for Sumatra had been driven up from \$70 to \$125 by the increased demand, but when the direct steamers began running this fell suddenly to about \$80 or \$85, shewing that the brokers could afford to do the work for \$40 less and still carry on a lucrative business.

Coolies prefer
British rule.

81. In the opinion of the Protector of Chinese, the reason why the cost of the coolies for Province Wellesley and the Malay Peninsula is less than that of men for Sumatra and Borneo is their preference for countries under British rule. This enables the advance to be dispensed with, while there is also less risk of desertion and recall.

Suggested
remedies in
Chapter X.

82. We have in this chapter only considered the existence and reasons for the three main grievances dealt with. The means by which we consider they may best be remedied will be found in Chapter X.

CHAPTER IV.

ABUSES IN CHINA AND ON THE VOYAGE.

Class of re-
cruiters em-
ployed.

83. The recruiting in China, leaving out of consideration such as is carried on by returned coolies and others who bring down coolies themselves for specified employers, is conducted by emissaries of the agents and brokers at the ports of embarkation. The men so employed are generally of the most worthless class, are probably quite unsupervised, and are free to obtain men where and how they can so long as they avoid the displeasure of the authorities.

Misrepresenta-
tions of re-
cruiters.

84. The natural result is that coolies are induced to emigrate by misrepresentation regarding the country and work they are coming to. The form such persuasions usually take is probably that given by one witness (613) in the following words:—

"The broker deceives the men, saying, if the man were a cook 'then you will do the cooking,' and to the tailor 'you will have nothing else to do but tailoring,' and so on."

Such practices lead to discontent and desertion as well as inferior work, with consequent loss to the employers and increased sickness. It is probable too that the fear of kidnapping expressed by the Chinese authorities is due to the prevalence of these practices, which cannot but discredit emigration in the eyes of respectable persons.

No faults in
Chinese de-
pôts brought
to light.

85. We having nothing before us to shew that the lodging houses used as depôts in the Chinese ports are otherwise than well conducted; nor have we evidence to shew that kidnapping is carried on.

Absence of
advertisement.

86. One condition of efficient recruiting is wholly absent in China, namely, a means of advertisement setting out the terms offered to emigrants and the advantages they will reap. At present, except the allurements held out by unprincipled recruiters, there is nothing to attract the labouring class. There are no means by which a Chinaman in his native village can obtain reliable information as to the countries to which he can go, or the terms on which he will have to serve there. Under such conditions it cannot be expected that the better class of labourers will leave in large numbers, unless they are induced to do so by returned friends in whom they have confidence.

Official re-
strictions
cause of above
defects.

87. All this must be to a large extent the result of the official restrictions already alluded to, which discredit the entire machinery of emigration; in fact the two causes appear to act and re-act. The dishonest practices of the recruiters throw them into ill-repute with the authorities; while the action of the authorities in endeavouring to repress a system which has long been in force, which is in the opinion of numerous competent judges of great benefit to the emigrants, which yields large profits, and which has the tacit approval of many Chinese officials, prevents the business from being undertaken by respectable men or put on a proper open footing under rules and supervision which would ensure freedom from abuses. From this cause doubtless springs much of the iniquity of which we have here and there obtained a glimpse; the bribing of subordinates, purchasing the silence of parents, and tutoring of emigrants to lie to those in authority.

88. It is superfluous to point out how such conditions as these increase the cost of emigration, since, irrespective of any forcing of prices due to scarcity and competition in the employing countries, the initial expenses must be much affected. The actual cost of obtaining coolies is probably considerable, taking into account not only the depôts and other legitimate expenses, but the fees, bribes and other expenses inseparable from the surreptitious nature of the trade. Some idea of what these expenses may be can be gathered from the following statement given in evidence by a Singapore depôt-keeper (130-131):—

"If the man is not recovered, the *Kheh-Thau* in China is arrested. If the *Sin-Kheh* has run away and is lost, the *Kheh-Thau* must pay \$300 or \$400 to the parents. Only this year a man named GEK SIOW (Chop GEK HAH) sent a batch of *Sin-Khehs* to Singapore, who left here for Sumatra. A complaint was made by the parents of two of them, but the sons could not be found. The parents of one of them consented to receive \$300 as compensation; the parents of the other refused.

"GEK SIOW had already paid \$150 when, hearing that the other case could not be 'squared,' he ran away and escaped, or he would have been arrested."

89. Making all allowances for exaggeration, it is clear that practices such as these must materially enhance the cost of the cooly. Moreover men will not engage a business in which they are liable to be driven at any moment out of the country with the additional risk of decapitation in the back ground, unless they see their way to large and immediate profits. It is probably true enough that these risks and abuses are chiefly due to the rascality of the recruiters and their employers but their effect on price is not affected by this explanation.

90. Regarding the treatment of emigrants on board steamers bringing coolies for the Straits, we have nothing to say. As a rule, the ships which bring them are ocean steamers owned by large companies and thoroughly well managed. It has not once been suggested to us that there is anything amiss in this link of the system, and we have not, therefore, considered it necessary to enquire specially into it.

CHAPTER V.

DEFECTS AND ABUSES UPON ARRIVAL.

91. There are points on which reform is, in our opinion, required after the cooly's arrival in the Straits Settlements and before he reaches the scene of his labour.

92. The first such point at Singapore is the want of an examination depôt on shore to which to take the men direct from the ship. At present the ship is boarded on arrival by a Boarding Officer who obtains a list of the passengers from the Captain, and, after collecting and sending to the Protectorate any female passengers, allows the paid passengers to land at once. He notes the number of "credit-ticket" (see paragraph 33) passengers and the depôt to which each goes, the entries in the depôt registers being afterwards checked by means of these notes. In case of complaints of any description, or disputes as to whether a man is paid or unpaid, the parties are sent to the Protectorate and the matter enquired into. The whole performance is necessarily hurried over in a cramped space, and under conditions which prevent it from ever being satisfactorily done.

93. Scenes of disorder, amounting almost to riot, sometimes occur on the arrival of cooly-ships, rowdies from the shore assaulting the Boarding Officers, boatmen, and depôt-keepers, snatching ear-rings and bangles from the women passengers, and endeavouring to persuade the "unpaid" passengers to run away. To prevent a recurrence of such scenes, several of which took place in 1890, special police have been quartered near the docks, but this cannot ensure the space and quiet necessary for an effective examination.

94. The coolies are next marched to the various depôts, guarded by employés of the depôt-keepers. Once in the depôt, they are confined until selected by the agent of an employer, and it is this detention which forms one of the chief blots on the whole system. From a sanitary point of view there is perhaps but little objection to it, for although the depôts are not perfect in this respect, yet they are probably quite good enough, considering the surroundings to which the coolies have been previously accustomed. There are also obvious objections to the confinement of a large number of Chinese for a period which may extend to ten days within the walls of a house where they are without exercise or occupation. These are points which, if they stood alone, would call for reform, but, in our opinion, a far more serious evil than either of them is the power which is thus placed in the hands of the depôt-keepers.

No actual
ill-treatment
in depôts.

95. It does not appear that men are detained over the legal limit of ten days in the depôts. Even were it not the case that the demand is so keen that they are usually disposed of before ten days have elapsed, the Protectorate inspection should suffice to prevent this. Nor do we think that the coolies are beaten or otherwise ill-treated. They may be cheated to some extent by overcharging for articles sold to them and similar methods, but this, if it exists, is a comparatively minor evil.

Power of
broker to
affect disposal
of coolies.

96. One form in which the influence of the broker can readily be exercised is in persuading his coolies to accept the employer from whom he can obtain the highest profit. To understand this it is only necessary to read between the lines of a few paragraphs of such evidence as the following:—

KHU JU CHIA, depôt-keeper, states (74):—

"The *Sin-Khehs* on arrival state themselves where they wish to go to. If coolies wish to go to places where they are not required, and cannot be persuaded to go elsewhere, they have to be released after ten days and the Singapore agent loses his money."

CHIN FIN LAN, depôt-keeper and broker (332, 333):—

"They will agree to go anywhere for work if they cannot get work in the places they prefer."

"If they refuse to go their relations must redeem them, and if not we must let them go after ten days."

Mr. COWAN, an officer intimately acquainted with the subject, says (2341):—

"I have known of many coolies signing contracts at the Chinese Protectorate, Straits Settlements, against their will at the instigation of the brokers."

LOH AH PANG, mining "advancer," Perak (2598):—

"Men used to be sold to Deli who had come down to work here: this does not occur now: the men who did it would be punished."

Mr. EVANS also states (2861):—

"The men are often forced to go to Deli against their will by threats of legal proceedings for debts incurred."

Cooly should
be free to
choose em-
ployer.

97. It is important that the cooly should be a free agent, at liberty to choose the employment and country he prefers, and this is not always the case under present conditions. The only check on undue persuasion is the opportunity given to the cooly of complaining when the depôt is inspected, or when he signs his contract before the Protector of Chinese. This suffices to prevent anything like removal by force and doubtless acts as a great restraint on the proceedings of the brokers, but it cannot prevent influence being used to persuade the cooly to go where the depôt-keeper desires.

Former con-
nection of
brokers with
Secret Socie-
ties.

98. Before the abolition of the Secret Societies many of the brokers were numbered among their headmen, and thus the first real power with which the *Sin-Kheh* come in contact on landing, namely that of the depôt-keeper who took charge of him, was identified in his mind with one of these Societies. Though the societies have been suppressed, the power for evil remains. While the *Sin-Kheh* is in the depôt it is the keeper to whom he must look as his government, and it is the servants of this man who bring him from the ship, guard him in the depôt, and eventually remove him to the scene of his future employment.

Licensed de-
pôt system
bad.

99. The power which is thus placed in the hands of the depôt-keepers, who are agreed on all sides to be unscrupulous, appears to us greater than should be entrusted to private individuals, and we consider, therefore, that the system should not be perpetuated.

Protectorate
inspection.

100. It is to be observed that the Protectorate officers who carry out the inspections have other duties to perform and that these duties are, as a rule, heaviest when large numbers of *Sin-Khehs* arrive and the depôts are at their fullest. Thus it is exactly at the time that inspection is most required that the officers have the least time available for this duty. We do not wish to imply that to this cause are attributable the evils we have pointed out; they appear to us inherent in any system by which the power of detention is delegated to unworthy persons, and probably no practicable amount of inspection would remedy them. And in this connection we would especially record our opinion that, whatever the faults of the present state of affairs may be, it is immeasurably superior to that of less than eighteen years ago, and reflects high credit on those who evolved it from the chaos then existing.

101. Some alleged abuses have been brought to our notice which require comment: one of these is the substitution of inferior men for those selected at the depôt. This practice does not appear to be common enough to seriously affect the trade, but it is only kept in check by the greatest care on the part of the agents, and by a system of photographs and inspection which was adopted in consequence of the cheating practised a few years ago. While the business remains in the hands of men of the broker class, this and every other possible form of dishonesty will be attempted. The remedies must be chiefly in the hands of those concerned.

102. A more serious charge against the brokers is that they take away from the *Sin-Khehs* the advances given them at the Protectorate. There is no direct proof that this is a common practice, and though many witnesses have expressed their conviction that it is so, not one of them has ever brought home a case. We have no reason to suppose that the money is ever forcibly taken away, but knowing the character of the men concerned, and the opportunities they have, it is probable that a great part of the money paid as advances finds its way under various pretexts into the hands of the brokers. This is an abuse which may be expected to continue so long as the present system prevails and large advances are given, and it can only be kept within reasonable bounds by vigilance on the part of agents and Protectorate officers.

CHAPTER VI.

DEFECTS AND ABUSES DURING THE CONTRACT.

103. A general understanding of the terms of contract in ordinary use for *Sin-Khehs* may be gathered from the following abstracts, but these are subject to variations in detail, and there are various other terms also in use.

104. For agricultural work in the Colony and Native States:—
(a) Three hundred and sixty days' work, the days not being necessarily consecutive. Agriculture in Colony and Native States.

- (b) Wages \$30 per annum. No advances are given on signing.
- (c) From these wages \$19.50 deducted for passage and expenses from China.
- (d) Fed free of charge by employers.
- (e) Free grant of a mosquito curtain and some clothes.
- (f) If in debt at end of a year, is kept on, but on wages of \$3 a month and his food.

105. For mining in Perak and Selangor:— Mining in Native States.

- (a) Three hundred and sixty days' work.
- (b) Wages \$42.
- (c) Deduction for passage not exceeding \$22 recoverable by half-yearly instalments of \$11.
- (d) Free food.
- (e) Free mosquito curtain and usual clothes.
- (f) If in debt at end of a year, is kept on, but on wages of a free cooly. No advances are given on signing.

106. For mining in Pahang:— Mining in Pahang.

- (a) 12 months' work.
- (b) Wages \$30.
- (c) \$16 is paid at the Protectorate to the broker for passage and expenses and the balance of \$14 to the cooly during his period of contract.
- (d) Free food.
- (e) Usual kit.
- (f) If in debt at end of year, works on at \$5 per mensem and his food.

107. For tobacco planting in Sumatra:— Sumatra.

- (a) One year engagement.
- (b) Advance of \$30 on signing contract in the Straits; of this, \$19.50 is deducted for passage and expenses, the remaining \$10.50 being paid to them in cash.
- (c) Coolies feed themselves, provision money being advanced by employers.
- (d) They grow their own crop and sell it to their employer at fixed rates laid down in the contract, and after deducting advances any balance in their favour is paid to them in cash.
- (e) They may then quit the estate even though their year is not up.
- (f) They have opportunities of earning extra pay for various special work.

Borneo.

108. For tobacco-planting in Borneo the terms are similar to those for Sumatra.

Terms are fair

109. By these terms the cooly is provided with all the necessities of life, and although in some cases he gets but little cash in addition, yet his contract is only for a year, and he fully understands that he is serving a term of apprenticeship after which he will be free to seek employment where he pleases. We think these terms would be fair provided the spirit of the contract were adhered to, but it is frequently the case that at the end of the 360 days, the cooly, being then indebted to his employer, is detained by him until the debt is paid, an indefinite period which in Sumatra is said to sometimes extend to five or six years or more.

Terms not fully carried out.

110. There are many points on which we have not been able to obtain precise information, for a number of members cannot often obtain statements of value by questioning Chinese coolies through an interpreter; indeed the coolies could probably only be induced to speak freely by an officer speaking Chinese fluently, and able to talk to them at sufficient length to gain their confidence. However, from the reports of officers who have thus visited estates, and the various sources of information open to us, together with the results of our observations and enquiries on the spot, we have formed the opinion that the real conditions under which Chinese agricultural labourers now work are thoroughly unsatisfactory.

Ordinary method of employing Chinese.

111. The ordinary method of employing Chinese on European estates is as follows. The coolies are procured through the agency of a headman. The usual contract with the employer is signed at the Protectorate, but it has no practical meaning, for the men are never paid direct by the manager, nor, in many cases, are their names known to him. All that the employer does is to sign the contracts and pay the necessary expenses to the headman who obtains them. The work which they afterwards do is paid for at contract rates through the headman, whose accounts with his coolies are never examined. Thus the control of the coolies is thrown entirely into the hands of the headman, who has them completely in his power. The lines or kongsi-houses in which they live are generally dotted about the estates at long distances from the main buildings and from each other, and are practically free from supervision. This state of things is calculated to favour ill-treatment on the part of the Tyndals, and such practices undoubtedly exist. Moreover, we have not seen or heard of a single estate employing a European who speaks Chinese, so that except through the headmen, or perhaps a Chinese clerk, there is no channel by which the employer can question his coolies or they can make their complaints.

Efforts of employers to remedy matters.

112. The above is the general outline of the method of employing Chinese labour on European estates. There are variations of detail which it is not necessary to enumerate here. Some employers have recognised the unsatisfactory nature of the arrangement, and introduced reforms with a view to exercise better supervision over their headmen and more direct dealing with their coolies. The Penang Sugar Estates Company, in the instance already quoted in paragraph 43, brought their own coolies from China, and the coolies are now paid direct without the intervention of a headman, as is done with Indian coolies. On Prye Estate also a system has been introduced by which an account is kept by the estate of the work of each man, to ensure proper payment, this account being kept wholly by Europeans and the monthly payment made to the individual coolies by the manager or his assistant. European employers almost without exception consider that the present system is unsatisfactory and demands reform.

Chinese estates.

113. It is less easy to ascertain the condition of coolies on Chinese owned estates, but we have no doubt that this is in many instances deplorable. The following report dated 2nd June, 1890, by Mr. WRAY, Acting Assistant Protector of Chinese in Penang, is of value:—

"On the 27th and 28th ultimo, I took the opportunity of inspecting the sugar estate of TAN KANG HOK at Batu Kawan, in connection with the case of the cooly reported to have been starved to death in a stable at the back of his employer's house.

"2. The Police will doubtless report as to this particular case, and I shall confine my report to the state of things which I found to exist on this estate, which immediately adjoins that of Mr. VERMONT.

"3. I found that there were on the estate a number of labourers who, having originally gone there as *Sin-Khehs*, were still working for the employer, though against their will.

"4. Some had fulfilled their original contract three or four years ago, but had been continually kept in debt, and apparently compelled to work under the impression that they were still legally bound to their employer.

"5. One man had, he stated, worked against his will for nine years, and was still in debt when I went there.

"6. The coolies were unanimous in stating that they could not have got off the island if they had tried to, the rule of the place being that the watchmen at the ferries stop all coolies unknown to them, unless they have a pass, nor will the sampanmen ordinarily take them as passengers.

"7. On hearing that their indebtedness was no impediment to their leaving the island, thirty of them immediately stated that they wished to leave, and it was instructive to see them running for two miles after my carriage in evident fear lest they should be again detained. Only three of those who were free agreed to remain on the estate for regular wages.

"8. Nearly all the coolies were suffering from some complaint or other, the only hospital being a little shed in the stable yard of the employer's private house, where the cooly is said to have been starved to death within fifty yards of a Police Station.

"9. I found about fifteen coolies there ill, one being a leper, and I told the employer to send them all to hospital. He stated that Mr. VERMONT's apothecary (a native) visited this shed periodically, but the coolies stated that they had never seen any doctor. Serious cases (he declared) he sent to Mr. VERMONT's hospital or Sungei Bakap; but that, as the cooly in question was dying, he did not care to run to the expense for nothing.

"10. I fear that similar irregularities prevail on other estates in the Province (and perhaps in the Native States), which may account for the scarcity of labour complained of by Province planters, and I trust that the new Labour Ordinance will grant full power to hold periodical enquiries into the accounts and condition of Chinese labourers.

"11. I am told that several other Chinese estate owners have, since my visit to TAN KANG HOK's estate, discharged large numbers of their labourers who had been illegally detained in a similar manner."

The effect of this discovery, and of the inspections of several estates shortly after it, was an improvement in many respects of the condition of the cooly.

114. A point which especially requires notice is the medical treatment of the coolies. They are frequently unwilling to go to hospital when sick and Chinese employers being often unwilling to send them, their ailments are too long neglected and become serious.

115. The abuses which may arise under present conditions are innumerable and only a general investigation has been possible. We have, however, no doubt that both in European and Chinese estates, coolies are not infrequently beaten and otherwise ill-treated by their Tyndals or headmen. This is done without the knowledge of the employer, who may often be almost without power to check such practices.

116. As a rule the coolies are well fed so long as they are able to work, but we are not satisfied that this is the case with men who, from sickness or unfitness, become a source of expense to their employers.

117. It appears also that they are frequently detained long after the year has expired for which they contracted, and after they have done more than 360 days' work. This is done by keeping them in debt by advances of cash or provisions, so that the cooly at the end of his year owes more than he did at the beginning.

118. It would be useless to go into details, which can only be elicited by careful examinations by persons speaking Chinese. What we have said should be sufficient on this subject.

119. The unsatisfactory condition of the Chinese labourer is due almost entirely to the absence of inspection. Up to the date on which he signs his contract he is looked after and cared for, and much has been done for him, but from this point, so far as the Protectorate is concerned, he disappears. His name remains on the register but that is all. With the carrying out of the contract terms or his release on its expiration the Protectorate does not concern itself. The results that have followed are only what might have been expected.

120. This matter has engaged the attention of Government for some time past, and in 1889 a draft Ordinance* for the protection of Chinese labourers on agricultural estates was drawn up but was not introduced.

121. The Protectorate officers, under instructions from Government, have during the past year inspected several estates, both European and Chinese. Although there is no legal authority for such visits, yet the owners have not objected, and the visits have doubtless been productive of good.

122. In Perak, on the contrary, there has been for years a strong Chinese Department whose officers have exercised constant supervision over the Chinese labourers working in the State, whether as miners or agriculturists. Regulations have from time to time been issued to provide for the proper construction and sanitation of the labourers' dwellings, the hours of their labour, and their care in sickness. As regards the last point, the Government has at great expense established, and maintains excellent hospitals all over the State, where all Chinese patients are treated gratis, but employers cannot be got to send labourers to hospital as often or as early as is necessary. Again, there are an immense number of mines scattered over a great area in Perak besides the Chinese owned estates in Krian where Chinese labourers are employed, and though the Chinese Protectorate has branches in two districts (Kinta and Batang Padang), the Department is not strong enough to carry out a thorough inspection of

* See Papers in continuation of this Report, page 5.

Chinese labourers, though it is probably able to give an effective supervision to those under written contract, and that is the main point. In the inspection of the Chinese generally throughout the State, the Protectorate Officers are assisted by the constant independent inspections of Police Officers who are able to get at even the remotest Chinese *kongsi*, and if the Police could converse with the labourers in their own tongue, the inspection would be a very effective one.

123. In Selangor it was stated that the sanitation of the Chinese labourers' dwellings used to be seen to by regular inspections of senior officers of the Medical Department. The Government of this State is just forming a Chinese Department of its own, and it may be trusted that measures for inspection similar to those in force in Perak will be introduced into Selangor, where already the same regulations exist for the control of mining labourers. The Captain China of Selangor stated that it was the practice there to charge the coolies twice the amount of the real expenses of their importation, but this will no doubt be put a stop to by the newly instituted Chinese Protectorate.

124. No inspection of Chinese appears to be in force in Sungei Ujong, though in that State there are both mines and estates employing Chinese labour. We are strongly of opinion that in all Native States where Chinese labourers are employed, the Government should provide for their effective and constant inspection.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CREDIT-TICKET SYSTEM.

125. The credit-ticket system described in Chapter II, is disapproved by certain influential Chinese authorities, and it will be well, therefore, to put forward the main arguments for and against it.

Arguments in its favour.

126. In its favour it is urged that there are millions of human beings in China in a state of abject poverty, and that it is of the utmost benefit to them and to China that they should emigrate and seek employment elsewhere. They are utterly without the means of paying for their passages, and they can only go if some one else advances the necessary expenses. It is argued that this method further benefits the cooly, in that the person who has advanced money takes an interest in his welfare and will not suffer him to be kidnapped or ill-treated, which would lessen his chance of recovering the money advanced.

Arguments against it.

127. The arguments against it are that when once a contract has been entered into the emigrant's movements are no longer free, and that hence opportunities for evil arise. Further, that a new arrival in a strange country is not in a position to choose with whom he will contract, and thus is not really such a free agent as he appears, but will be glad to accept the first chance of employment offered to him.

Credit-ticket system is of advantage.

128. That every emigrant should pay the cost of his passage beforehand is of course eminently desirable, but seeing the poverty of the class who emigrate it is impossible that such a state of things should be, and it therefore becomes a question whether emigration should be restricted to those who have paid, or can induce the authorities to believe that they have paid for their passages, or whether the credit-ticket or some similar system should be countenanced and encouraged. It appears to us that the argument is entirely in favour of the credit-ticket system *if properly worked*, and that the abuses arising under it can be so reduced as to be of no consequence whatever when weighed in the balance with the great benefits it confers.

Objections to principle at present introduced into system.

129. We have already pointed out some of the respects in which we do not consider the system properly worked at present, the chief of these being the bad characters who engage in it both here and in China, but there is one fundamental principle of the present cooly traffic which appears to us wrong. *Sin-Khehs* are largely recruited for no special or definite occupation. They are brought here by speculators and it may almost be said put up for sale to the highest bidder. While the best men fetch high prices, some are such poor specimens that they can hardly be disposed of at all. This introduces an element of speculation into the entire transaction; it throws open a field of action to rascals whose only interest in the business is the profit to be made from the sale of coolies; and it affords opportunities for dishonesty of which a trade of this nature should of all trades be the most free. It transforms the legitimate business of recruiting labourers for employers who require them into a speculative traffic in human beings.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAU-KHEH.

130. Very large numbers of *Lau-Khehs*, or old hands, are employed on the Condition of estates and in the mines. These men are, as a rule, obtained through depôts (licensed under the Crimping Ordinance of 1877) to which they are induced to resort by advances of money and other attractions held out by the depôt-keepers. When engaged for labour without the Colony, they sign contracts at the Protectorate under the above Ordinance, generally receiving a large advance. Until they have signed a contract they are perfectly free agents, and even after the contract is signed they frequently abscond with the advance. The evidence points to the independence of these people, and several employers have gone so far as to state that on this account they would have nothing to do with them if they could get enough *Sin-Khehs*.

131. *Lau-Khehs* in the Colony are generally under no contract, but can come Pay of *Lau-Khehs* and go as they please. The wages paid in Province Wellesley by Chinese employers vary from \$3 to \$5 a month; while as much as \$6 and \$7 a month is paid by Europeans, food being in addition supplied free in every case. When worked by the day they receive from 20 to 23 cents. In Perak they get from 25 to 30 cents a day, or \$3 to \$3.50 a month in addition to food. In Selangor *Lau-Khehs* receive about \$7 a month, and in Malacca sums varying according to the locality from \$7.50 to \$10, as well as food.

132. We do not propose to deal with the subject of *Lau-Khehs* at any length, as there is little in their condition and circumstances to call for comment. The chief want in connection with them seems to be some more direct means of communication between the employer and the coolies seeking work. At present they are usually obtained for Sumatra and Borneo through brokers, and the cost is consequently high. Thus in Singapore, for a Te-chiu *Lau-Kheh* for Sumatra about \$65 has to be paid. Of this sum, \$30 is an advance made at the Protectorate, and it is stated by the brokers that a further advance of \$25 is given by them to the cooly to induce him to go, leaving a profit of \$10 for the brokers. For Borneo the price is still higher, \$75 being paid, of which the *Lau-Kheh* is stated to receive \$65. In Penang the prices are somewhat less.

133. We think that the chief cause of any difficulties in connection with *Lau-Khehs* is their scarcity, and that the introduction of *Sin-Khehs* in large numbers, due to scarce proper measures being taken to ensure that they shall be released on the expiry of their contracts and thus become free, is the remedy.

134. Some difficulties in connection with the Crimping Ordinance have been brought to our notice which will be dealt with in Chapter IX.

CHAPTER IX.

MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS.

135. A number of points have come to our notice which require attention, but which cannot be classed under either of the main headings considered in the previous chapter.

136. The first of these is the state of affairs at Malacca, already described briefly in paragraph 39, and we think that this Settlement should be placed on the same footing as the others, seeing the number of Hailam *Sin-Khehs* that annually arrive there. The arrivals registered at the Harbour Master's Office for the last three years are:—

1888,	...	2,578	<i>Sin-Khehs</i> .
1889,	...	3,970	"
1890,	...	3,383	"

137. We recommend that an officer acquainted with the Chinese language, to perform duties similar to those of the Assistant Protector in Penang, be appointed an Assistant Protector with the necessary staff under him, and that a depôt be

established on lines similar in every respect to those proposed for the other Settlements. Should it be found, when everything has been brought into thorough working order, that his proper duties do not fully occupy the time of the Assistant Protector, it may be possible to combine this appointment with some other office, but we are strongly of opinion that in the first instance no duties should be imposed upon him but such as properly pertain to the office and we think it probable that if the work of estate inspection, which will form the most important part of his duties, be thoroughly carried out, his time will always be fully occupied.

Complaints in regard to Crimping Ordinance of 1877.

138. Several witnesses have complained of inconveniences caused by the restrictions of the Crimping Ordinance of 1877. One complaint is that agents or employers cannot use their own men to engage free coolies for work beyond the Colony without the intervention, and resulting extortion, of the *Lau-Kheh* brokers. Others would have the law relaxed so as to permit of *Lau-Khehs* emigrating without a written contract, on the grounds that many men object to sign a contract at the Protectorate, though they may be otherwise willing to emigrate.

As law is worked, no inconvenience need be feared.

139. There is nothing in the law to prevent any man from engaging labourers to work outside the Colony subject to two conditions: first, that a written contract must be made at the Protectorate; and second, that the recruiters employed must be licensed. In practice the latter condition is not insisted upon, as an employer, or his *bond fide* agent, can always recruit for himself. We think that the law thus worked should not cause inconvenience.

Want of power to punish coolies absconding when under contract.

140. A grievance prominently brought forward is that a man who has signed a contract in Singapore for work in any other territory may abscond at any time after leaving the Colony and return to Singapore, but cannot be arrested or punished, except by suing him for debt, which is useless. This state of things tends to encourage the "professional deserter," one of whose methods is thus described by Mr. ROMENIJ (177):—

"I believe that brokers' assistants often instigate the coolies to abscond and aid them in doing so, and then share the profits with them. Boats are sometimes kept waiting at Tanjong Katong to pick up the fugitives, and this could only be done by the brokers, and not by the coolies."

Such power should be given.

To meet this difficulty, provision must be made to enable the employer or his agent to obtain the arrest and punishment in the Straits Settlements of the absconding cooly, unless the cooly could prove to the satisfaction of the Magistrate that he had fulfilled the terms of his contract.

Task work should be introduced into contracts.

141. Many employers recommend the introduction of task work into contracts. This is a suggestion with which we entirely concur. The difficulty consists in the varied nature of the occupations with which we have to deal, but we think it could be satisfactorily arranged. The task on each class of work can be fixed from time to time between the manager of the estate and the Protector of Chinese, and a schedule of such tasks, written in Chinese, should be posted on the estate. A clause should be inserted in the contract enabling the employer to put the cooly on either daily wages or task work. Days or tasks would have to be made interchangeable in the contract, with a provision that in no case shall a man on task work be kept at his task for more than the legal hours of work. By such limitation we do not, of course, mean to interfere with the employment of men on overtime work for which extra pay is given. As a matter of fact task work is already employed in many instances under the present contracts, and is found to give most satisfactory results when fairly worked, both employers and men preferring it.

Chinese speaking assistants of great value on estates.

142. A suggestive reply is that by Mr. TURNER (2,224):—
"I think that the failure in connection with Chinese labour is largely due to our want of knowledge of the Chinese language."

This is one of the main difficulties of the employment of Chinese by Europeans. It is a truism to say that it is impossible for any man who can only address his coolies through an interpreter of their own nationality to acquire that influence over them which is necessary to obtain the best results. We are unwilling to recommend any rule on the subject, owing to the difficulty which would be found in carrying it out, but we believe that any manager who employed among his assistants a reliable European who could speak Chinese would find himself amply repaid for the extra salary which such a man might require.

Inspection will diminish evils existing in regard to medical treatment of coolies.

143. We have already drawn attention in paragraph 144 to the unwillingness of some employers to send their coolies to hospital. This is an evil which will be much diminished by the introduction of inspection. The question of medical attendance is one of equal importance to all classes of labour, and will be considered in Chapter XXI.

145. The long detention of men on estates (paragraphs 109 and 117) under a contract which, though nominally for one year, is frequently enforced for a longer period, is an evil which can only be remedied by inspection. The conditions under which an employer should have the legal right to detain his coolies beyond the 360 days require careful definition.

Undue detention on estates will be remedied by inspection

146. We consider that under no circumstances should a man who has completed 360 "kangs" or days' tasks, be liable to detention. That a man who cannot or will not work should be released from his contract after twenty-four months, whether he has worked 360 tasks or not, and irrespective of the re-payment of his advances; but that such period of twenty-four months may be extended for days actually absent as a deserter from the estate, provided the cooly shall have been convicted before a Magistrate, and the number of days endorsed on his contract by the Magistrate; similarly for days spent in gaol, and for days in excess of the thirty usually allowed (with exception of illness caused by misconduct) spent in a hospital and endorsed on his contract by the Medical Officer in charge.

No detention to be permitted after completion of 360 days of actual work, and under no circumstances after expiry of 24 months.

147. The withdrawal from employers of power to detain coolies for an indefinite time above recommended renders it necessary to include in the proposed Chinese Agricultural Labourers Ordinance provision for the punishment of men for neglect to labour; otherwise there is danger that a *Sin-Kheh*, knowing that he must in any case be released after two years, may resolutely refuse to work, while the employer would nevertheless have to feed and house him.

Chinese Agricultural Labourers Bill should provide for punishment for neglect to work.

148. The draft of the Bill referred to in paragraph 120 to regulate Chinese Labour on Agricultural Estates, has been laid before us. Such a Bill is necessary to enable our recommendations to be carried out, and should embody, where necessary, the provisions we have recommended.

Draft Ordinance.

149. Without criticising the draft Ordinance in detail we will call attention to two points in which amendment appears desirable.

Amendment required.

150. We would suggest that the Bill provide that in those cases where it is part of the contract that the employer supply the cooly with food, should the employer or his manager neglect to fulfil this engagement either he be liable on conviction to a very serious penalty both imprisonment and fine, and also that the Magistrate or Protector have, in case of conviction, the right to cancel the contract of the cooly so neglected. Also we would recommend that similar heavy penalties be introduced to meet the case of an employer or manager who neglects either to properly treat a sick indentured cooly or to send him in proper time, by conveyance, if necessary, to a hospital for treatment, making it incumbent upon all employers to see to the health of those bound to them by contract.

151. Section 13 of the draft Ordinance allows the employer to detain the cooly until the whole of his advances shall have been paid off. We have already in paragraph 146 recommended that an ultimate limit be adopted, subject to certain conditions, and this provision will require expression in the Ordinance.

CHAPTER X.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

152. Besides the miscellaneous points dealt with in the last Chapter, there are certain important changes which we believe to be necessary, and which we will now consider. These may be stated briefly as follows:—

Firstly.—Establish Government inspection over the Chinese coolies employed in the Colony or Native States.

Secondly.—Abolish the licensed depôts and brokers, substituting Government depôts both here and in China, at the same time reforming the method of recruiting on the lines indicated in Chapter IV.

Thirdly.—Endeavour to obtain the full sanction of the Chinese Government to the credit-ticket system on the improved lines on which it is proposed to work it.

153. These headings are, to a great extent, inter-dependent. Before we can hope to carry out the second thoroughly we must have the support of the Chinese

Government, but before we can consider ourselves fully entitled to this support we must reform the present system as proposed in the first and second headings.

(a)—GOVERNMENT INSPECTION.

Inspection.

154. The necessity of inspecting coolies employed on estates and mines has already been pointed out in Chapter VI. Such inspection should extend to both contract and non-contract coolies, but to a somewhat different degree for each class.

Duties of Inspection Officer with regard to contract coolies.

155. In the case of contract coolies the Inspecting Officer should have the coolies mustered and call over their names from his register, corrected to the latest date by returns received, to ensure that the coolies are really employed at the work for which they sign contracts. Absentees from muster to be accounted for to the satisfaction of the Inspector, who will at the same time see that the men are in proper health and fit for work. He will examine the contracts and obtain explanation should he find men being detained overtime or other irregularities. He will examine the accounts and pay lists, ascertain if there are complaints, and enquire into them as may be necessary. He should also inspect the coolies' quarters, together with the hospital and sick, if any, and in addition examine the water supply, and rations where supplied by the estate. He will make every other enquiry that may appear necessary.

Separate registers should be kept for different Settlements or States.

156. This work would be facilitated if a separate register book were kept at the Protectorate for the different Settlements and estates, as is done in the Indian Immigration Agent's Office. At present one register serves the Chinese Protectorate for all contracts, regardless of locality or nationality.

Duties of Inspection Officer with regard to non-contract coolies.

157. For non-contract coolies all that appears necessary is for the Visiting Officer to inspect the lines and hospital, if any, and ascertain if the coolies have any complaints, due notice of his visit having been sent to the estate and made known to the coolies.

Dates of inspection.

158. No specified dates for inspection need be laid down. For free coolies it will be enough if the inspection be carried out once a year unless there is reason to believe more frequent visits desirable. For contract coolies the inspection should usually be held once a quarter, or oftener if considered necessary. These periods to be regulated by rules made by the Governor, subject to variation as may be required for different localities or circumstances.

Qualifications required in Inspectors.

159. Much of the value of the inspections depends on the tact and judgment of the Inspecting Officer. He should not be a very young man or one without knowledge and experience of the Chinese. It is indispensable that he should speak the necessary dialects and he should, if possible, read and write Chinese to enable him to examine books and accounts.

Advantages of system.

160. Under such a system every man under contract will be traceable until released, and it can be ascertained that the contract terms are carried out. Free men will be ensured proper quarters, water and so forth; and all coolies will have opportunities of making known any complaints or grievances.

Medical Officer should accompany Inspector on visits.

161. The Medical Officer in charge of the estate should always, if practicable, accompany the Inspecting Officer on his visits.

(b)—DEPÔTS, BROKERS, AND RECRUITING.

Private depôts should be abolished, and replaced by Government establishments.

162. We have already pointed out the evils of the present system of detention in private depôts. The only remedy is their abolition, and the substitution of depôts owned and managed by Government, which in the Colony and Native States presents no difficulties.

System recommended.

163. It will be best to have the examination and lodging depôt combined in one establishment, which should be at the water side. Steamers carrying large numbers of unpaid passengers can then be obliged to anchor in the roads and discharge coolies into tongkangs whence they would land at a Government landing made for the purpose and quite private. The cost of thus disembarking them would be trifling, for instance, landing Klings at Penang costs two cents per man. Delay would be caused to some ships, but not much, and the lucrative nature of the trade would well enable them to stand this. Ships carrying under a fixed number, say 150, of unpaid passengers, might be allowed to go straight to their usual wharf, proper arrangements being made by the Government for the safe conduct of the *Sin-Khehs* to the depôt.

164. The depôt would consist of a receiving shed, directly entered from the landing, an examination room through which all must pass, and the depôt proper, which would be a compound surrounded say by a high corrugated iron fence, containing barracks as required. It might be found convenient to sub-divide the depôt into sections for Penang, Borneo, and elsewhere, but this would be matter of arrangement.

165. The depôt would be in charge of a Superintendent, speaking Chinese, who would be responsible under the Protector for every detail and should reside at or very near the depôt in order that he may be on the spot to arrange for the immediate reception of coolies whatever time ships may arrive. It would be visited frequently by Protectorate officers.

166. Contracts could best be signed at the depôt, instead of at the Protectorate as now, and then coolies need never leave it till re-shipped.

167. The arrangements at other ports of arrival would be similar, modified as local circumstances might necessitate.

168. At, say, Hongkong and Swatow, depôts, conveniently situated for embarkation, should also be established, each consisting of an examination room and the necessary barracks. Each would be in charge of a European officer whose duties would be to superintend the depôt and examine and pass the emigrants. He must speak Chinese and in consideration of his responsible position would have to be well paid and of such standing as to be above corruption. He should be acquainted with the country and people, as, until the system is in working order, he will have much opposition to meet. No depôt is recommended at present for Amoy, as we understand that the traffic thence is almost all in paid passengers.

169. An important step towards improving matters is to abolish the present brokers. This cannot be done as long as the practice of bringing coolies as a speculation and disposing of their services after arrival, universally obtain as at present. If the reforms suggested be carried out, the usual process, omitting recruiting, will be in its general outline as follows. The cooly is recruited, say, in Hongkong, and brought by his recruiter to the depôt, and examined; should he be rejected, the loss falls on the recruiter. If admitted, his name and the necessary particulars are registered, with the place and nature of work for which he is going, and he enters the depôt, where he is made well acquainted with the terms of his future employment. At the depôt he is in Government charge and is shipped by Government. He is received by Government at Singapore, and passes into a Government depôt, where he remains until handed over to the employer or his agent. If for Penang or Malacca, a *Sin-Kheh* remains in Government charge until delivered there.

170. The Captain of the ship is provided by the depôt Superintendent with a list of passengers with all necessary information for the depôt Superintendent at Singapore, and every ship arriving with Chinese passengers would have to be boarded by a Protectorate officer, as at present, to receive the passenger lists and land the coolies.

171. We consider that every man sent should, if possible, have been recruited for some special employment, and the Superintendent of the depôt will see that every unpaid passenger is recruited for some specified employment. There will be an opening for any firm to take up recruiting and agency on a large scale.

172. It would be best of all if the Government could undertake the whole business of recruiting, but this is scarcely practicable at present. Not enough is known of the country and people, and immense difficulties would have to be surmounted, which would, in all probability, defeat the whole scheme. We would, therefore, leave recruiting for the present in private hands.

173. Recruiting should be confined to recruiters licensed by the Superintendent of the depôt with the concurrence of the Chinese Government.

174. Arrangements must be made with the Hongkong and China Governments to allow no unpaid passengers to be shipped for the Straits Settlements except through Government depôts.

Advantages to employers under proposed system.

175. An employer requiring *Sin-Khehs* will be able to:—

(a)—Send his own recruiter to China with a letter from the Protector of Chinese enabling him to get a recruiting license in China. Such a recruiter will bring his men to the depôt, travel down with them himself and convey them to his employer. He might, if accredited to the Protectorate by a known employer, also sign their contracts for the employer.

(b)—Employ a permanent agent in Singapore, or China, or both, who will recruit coolies for him as required and send them down.

Brokers no longer necessary.

176. The first advantage gained by these arrangements would be that the necessity for brokers in Singapore disappears. There would be agents as at present for the various employers; but they would have nothing to do with the control of the coolies and would in fact be much in the same position as the European firms who now act as agents, doing a perfectly legitimate business.

Misrepresentation stopped.

177. The misrepresentation to coolies in China would be stopped. The coolie could choose his own destination, and a recruiter's license could be cancelled in case of attempted deceit.

Employers not dependent as hitherto on broker's agents.

178. Employers would be able to choose or send their own agents instead of being dependent on the agents of the local brokers, and the coolies selected would reach the employers for whom they were recruited. This would lead on to legitimate advertising and recruiting.

Evils of detention minimised.

179. The coolies would only be detained so long as might be necessary to find them employment, and in no case by private individuals; nor would kidnapping be possible.

Other advantages.

180. The so-called "buying and selling" would be done away with, with its temptations to fraud and its dubious appearance.

181. Coolies would be inspected *before leaving China* and unfit men would not be passed.

Cost would be reduced.

182. The profits of the lodging-house keeper in China, the *Kheh-Thau*, and of the depôt-keeper and broker in Singapore would be saved. Thus, except the recruiters' and agents' profits which, in a country like China, are difficult to forecast, nothing but legitimate expenses would be incurred and a great reduction in price should result.

Anticipated cost of proposed scheme.

183. The following rough calculation will give an idea of the anticipated cost of the proposal:—

Hongkong Depôt, say:

Superintendent, per annum,	...	...	\$6,000
Rent, ...	...	...	1,200
Clerk, ...	...	...	600
Peons, Watchmen, &c., ...	...	...	1,200
Contingencies, ...	...	...	1,000

Say, ... \$10,000

Swatow depôt, say, ... \$10,000

Singapore Depôt.

Superintendent, ...	...	\$1,800
Clerk, ...	...	360
Peons, &c., ...	...	1,440
Contingencies, ...	...	500
Interest at 12% on outlay of \$15,000 (includes cost of land), ...	...	1,800

\$5,900, say, \$6,000

Penang depôt, say, ...	...	\$26,000
Malacca do., ...	...	\$4,000
	...	\$2,000

Total, ... \$32,000

184. We could probably count on receiving even in the first year, when much difficulty and opposition would be met with:—

5,000 men for Singapore.
2,000 " " Penang.
1,000 " " Malacca.
8,000 men.

185. A charge of \$4 per man would, therefore, cover the above expenses. To this add passage down, say \$7, feeding, &c. in depôts \$1, and miscellaneous charges, say \$2 per man, and the total amounts to \$14. Allow even as much as \$15, which could scarcely be exceeded even after paying for stamp fees, and some allowance for losses by desertion or death. Considering that the recruiter in China has only to deliver the man at a depôt, it seems probable that a maximum of \$12 should suffice to cover all expenses of recruiting, bringing the total cost of importation to \$27. A *Te-chiu* for Province Wellesley now costs at least \$38 so that a saving of \$11 is made even with the above estimated cost, which, however, could probably be considerably reduced.

186. Even were no saving made, there would be gain in having the trade on a proper footing, and the present evils stamped out of, at all events, our own Colony.

187. The foregoing scheme will abolish all depôts and depôt-keepers in the Straits Settlements, and substitute Government depôts under Government control in Singapore, Penang and Malacca. It will equally abolish the depôt or lodging-house keeper in China; for then every "unpaid" passenger (*i. e.*, passenger on the credit-ticket or assisted-passage system) must pass through the Government depôts in China and the Straits and must be recruited by a licensed recruiter.

188. It is, therefore, necessary to point out very clearly that, whilst this system, from the moral view, effects a great improvement, must secure the sympathy of the Chinese Government, gives full protection to the *Sin-Khehs*, and probably will enable all Europeans who have hitherto had to obtain their supply of Chinese *Sin-Kheh* labour at a high cost from Chinese brokers, to secure it at less expense through the Government depôts, yet one form of immigration will unavoidably be interfered with.

189. A large number of Chinese, regular *Kheh-Thaus* or simply labourers returning to China after successful service in the Straits or Sumatra, now yearly collect, in their native villages or other suitable recruiting grounds, a number of their friends and relations whom they persuade to emigrate to the Straits, either as a means of helping those friends to make money or, more often, as a speculation for their own benefit. These old hands have perhaps sufficient funds of their own or advanced for the purpose to take from 5 to 20 recruits down to the port of shipment, but they can get them no further without assistance. Accordingly they now go to a Chinese broker or agent (to whom the recruiter may have been recommended by a Straits depôt-keeper) and he supplies the funds (making, of course, *his* profit) to send the *Sin-Khehs* to the Straits as "credit-ticket" passengers.

190. Under the new system such a method of recruiting could not be carried on, for the *Kheh-Thau* cannot recruit without a license, he probably does not know where to get it, it is unlikely that a license would be issued to the hundreds of un-recommended men that might present themselves, and even if each applicant got it and took his recruits to the nearest Government depôt, he would have no money to pay their passages, and, of course, he could not borrow it. Therefore if the system be worked exactly as we have suggested, this form of recruiting will cease and the emigrants who are now persuaded by these men to go to the Straits would remain in China. We are of opinion that any action which tends to diminish the supply of Chinese immigrants should be avoided, and have, therefore, given this matter special consideration.

191. There are two ways of meeting this difficulty: one is to permit any one to recruit without a license (or at least not to insist upon it in the case of non-residents at the ports of embarkation) and for the Superintendents of the Government depôts in China to accept fit recruits at a fair rate and themselves, on behalf of Government, pay or guarantee the passages to the Straits Settlements. The expenses both of the recruiter and the Government would then be recovered by the Protectorate in the Straits Settlements when the contracts were signed.

192. The other plan would be for the unlicensed recruiter to hand over his recruits to a firm of agents or licensed recruiters, who would pay the man a certain sum per head, and pass the *Sin-Khehs* through the depôts in the ordinary way. It

is questionable whether the *Khek-Thau* would consent to such an arrangement, and in any case the possibility has to be faced that these men might be driven out of the field by the new arrangements, and one source of supply be dried up.

193. It is here perhaps advisable to repeat that the new scheme would not in any way affect the so-called "free passengers," whose passages were paid either by themselves or by any one else, but, once landed in the Straits Settlements, they would be perfectly free to do what they pleased, and go where they chose, and, therefore, no one would be likely to run the risk of advancing passage money for which there was no security unless he meant to try and detain his passengers on arrival in the Straits and run all the risks attendant on a breach of the law. The probability, therefore, is that in many cases money would not be advanced for this purpose, and that these causes would lead to a falling-off in Chinese immigration, at any rate for some time to come.

194. Having pointed out the abuses of the present system and the remedies which seem to us best calculated to put an end to those abuses, we desire to record our opinion that, so far as we have been able to ascertain, the abuses of the depôt system are more sentimental than real, and though we much desire to see the present system of Chinese immigration put on a better footing for three principal causes—(1) to leave no possible opportunity of cheating or ill-treating the cooly; (2) to enlist the entire sympathy of the Chinese Government in the free emigration of its subjects to this Colony; and (3) to reduce the cost of importing Chinese labour—yet we must state that, as regards the first and most important of these points, the chances or realities of misrepresentation, extortion, or ill-treatment in the process of introduction to the Colony and detention in the depôt up to the making of the contract are, in our opinion, not as great as the hardships which the cooly may suffer during the term of service imposed by that contract. As we have already pointed out, under the present system, with all its drawbacks, the cooly is under the surveillance and protection of the Chinese Protectorate from the moment he arrives at a Straits Settlements port until he executes the contract, but from that time till the end of the 360 days or much longer period during which he may be labouring under a Chinese master in a remote part of the Colony, there is no provision whatever for his inspection. The same remarks apply with equal or greater force when that service is in Johor, Borneo, Sumatra or those of the Protected Native States where no inspection is provided.

195. After the present system, with its private depôts and their keepers, is abolished, it is probable that agents in Singapore will find there is no one to whom they can go for a ready supply of *Lau-Khehs* (old hands). We do not see how this is to be helped, for although the present depôt-keepers can if they please still act as middle-men between *Lau-Khehs* and agents or employers, it is hardly likely they will find it worth their while to do so, especially if by the new system *Sin-Khehs* can be brought down at considerably less cost than at present. In Province Wellesley and the Native States, employers find no difficulty in obtaining *Lau-Khehs* without the intervention of any broker, and it may be hoped that such will be the case in Singapore. Should it be found that a serious want is felt in this respect, there appears no reason why a branch should not be added to the new depôt for the accommodation of *Lau-Khehs* and the convenience of the agents who require them.

(c)—CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

196. It is essential that the consent of the Chinese Government be obtained, or it will be difficult even to work the recruiting on a satisfactory footing.

197. In negotiating with the Chinese Government we shall be able to point out:—

(a)—That emigration of unpaid passengers will only be allowed by the Straits Settlements to countries approved by China.

(b)—This is effectively guaranteed by the facts that the cooly is shipped under Government charge, and similarly landed; that he is detained by Government till his contract shall have been made with a known employer, and that after making the contract the proposed inspections ensure that he shall not work elsewhere until his contract expires.

(c)—That he engages for a certain employment before leaving China, when he is perfectly free, and is under no compulsion on arrival here except to keep his word.

(d)—That he is physically fit to leave China.

(e)—That he has the fullest opportunity before leaving China of ascertaining the terms of service.

(f)—That every reasonable precaution is now taken, and kidnapping not merely rendered difficult but impossible.

(g)—That none of these precautions can be taken with paid passengers, who cannot be controlled, and are, therefore, liable to be deceived in various ways and persuaded to countries where they may be ill-treated.

198. We must ask the Chinese Government:—

(a)—To agree to the establishment of depôts at Swatow and perhaps elsewhere by the Straits Settlements Government in which to lodge coolies for emigration.

(b)—To sanction the system of assisted passages worked as proposed, pointing out its advantages as above.

(c)—To allow no credit-ticket passengers to emigrate except through the depôts.

(d)—To give every assistance to licensed recruiters.

199. Should we, however, fail in obtaining their full consent to the credit-ticket system, we would still advocate the establishment of the depôts, to which it is inconceivable that they can object, on the above lines. Free passengers can then be passed through, declaring for what employment they are going, and any surreptitious detention of so-called free passengers by private individuals will be stopped.

200. Should they desire it, the Chinese authorities should also be allowed to be present at the shipping of coolies and to inspect the depôt.

(d)—MISCELLANEOUS.

201. The responsibility of Government for absconding coolies requires consideration, but it is probably advisable that beyond securely enclosing the depôts and taking every reasonable precaution to prevent desertion during embarkation from the depôts, Government should not undertake responsibility. Every facility should be given to persons who like to send their own *Khek-Thaus* in charge of gangs to prevent desertion.

202. With proper arrangements desertion would be much reduced partly by being rendered more difficult and also because with less misrepresentation and cheating there would not be the same desire to abscond.

203. It would be of great advantage if Inspectors were to travel in ships carrying coolies, as is done in the cooly steamers from India, to exercise general control over the coolies.

204. As regards finances it might, in case of doubtful agents, be necessary in some cases to insist on prepayment of depôt charges on receiving coolies in China, and Government should have power to do this. With agents of repute, payment in Singapore on handing over coolies would suffice. The agents would, in every case have to pay the coolies' passages.

205. In conclusion we would point out the necessity of giving full time to bring the foregoing changes into operation. Much opposition and difficulty may be anticipated which may at first reduce the supply of labour, and which nothing but time and determination can surmount.

(e)—THE PROTECTORATE STAFF.

206. The Protectorate staff of the Colony will require an increase in order to enable the inspection to be carried out.

207. It would be well if the inspection duties could be, as far as possible, separated from the office duties, so that a press of work might not reduce the inspections. This especially applies to the inspection of depôts which will have to be retained on their present footing till the new system recommended can be brought in.

208. The question of inspection in the Native States should be taken up by Government and arrangements generally similar to those of the Colony introduced. In Perak and Selangor where inspection of mines is already in force, this will present no difficulties. In the other Native States, namely, Negri Sembilan, Sungei Ujong and Pahang, Protectorates will have to be organized.

PART II.

JAVANESE AND NATIVE IMMIGRATION.

CHAPTER XI.

IMMIGRATION OF JAVANESE AND OTHER NATIVES OF THE PENINSULA AND ARCHIPELAGO.

Considerable number of Natives employed.

209. A considerable number of Javanese, Boyans, Banjerese, Kelantans, and other Natives of the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago are employed in the Colony and Native States as well as in Borneo and Sumatra, chiefly for such work as felling and clearing, drain-cutting and rough building. The number of Natives * signing contracts at the Protectorate is now large, and the Protector of Chinese informs us that the increase in the number of contracts signed in the last three years is almost entirely due to men for Borneo. The numbers are given in detail in the appended returns, the grand totals of Malays, Boyans, Javanese and Banjerese being as follows:—

1886, ...	2,741	contracts signed.
1887, ...	3,589	" "
1888, ...	4,931	" "
1889, ...	4,974	" "
1890, ...	5,133	" "

Satisfactory class of men.

210. These Natives are, as a rule, a satisfactory class of men, generally of good physique, and good workers if employed on task work. On work which does not suit them, or on daily wages, they have not, as a rule, been successful. They bring with them a considerable number of women, and have, in several instances, settled here with their wives and families.

Scarcity.

211. The majority of agents and employers complain that sufficient numbers cannot be obtained. This scarcity is chiefly attributable to the prohibition by the Dutch Government of emigration from Java to any country with which there is no convention for the protection of the emigrants. Thus, although emigration to Sumatra is freely permitted from Java, it is forbidden to other countries unless special permission be previously obtained by the intending employer. The supply for Borneo and the Straits Settlements is, therefore, limited to those who leave Java as free coolies looking for work, and are subsequently engaged in Singapore.

Coolies engaged in Java.

212. Men for Sumatra are usually engaged in Java and only pass through Singapore on their way. When thus in transit they are landed and detained in a depot established for the purpose by local agents, and remain there until re-shipped, not passing through the hands of brokers at all. A few men are, however, also engaged for Sumatra in Singapore where their contracts are also made. There is no legal authority for any such detention in Singapore, even though the men are under contract at the time.

Coolies engaged in Singapore.

213. Coolies engaged here are, as a rule, obtained through brokers. There are in Singapore eight depôts licensed under the Crimping Ordinance of 1877 for their reception, the total number of inmates allowed being 471. These depôts are under the supervision of the Protector of Chinese, and their contracts are always signed at his office. The process of engaging coolies is similar to that described in paragraph 36 for Chinese, except that no photographs are taken, substitution not being practised to such an extent as to render this precaution necessary. Unless their contracts are for Java, the men go to the Dutch Consulate before signing at the Protectorate, to ensure that they are going of their own free will. A certificate to this effect from the Consulate is produced when they sign the contracts. We do not see reason to believe that the men are ill-treated in these depôts, but it is possible that the coolies may be swindled out of a portion of their advances by overcharging for articles sold, and similar methods.

214. A system of agreement by which all the persons signing the bond undertake to be jointly responsible for loss caused by the default of any of their number, is used by the Mandors when bringing men from Java. Some specimens furnished by the Protector of Chinese are given in Appendix EE. Such agreements are illegal and cannot be enforced in the Colony or Native States.

* For convenience the word "Native" is used in this and the following Chapter exclusively to designate Natives of the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago.

215. The cost of a Javanese cooly in Singapore for Borneo on an eight months' contract is about \$37, to which must be added passage money to Borneo, varying from \$5 to \$7. This cost includes an advance of \$18, recoverable from the cooly, \$11 brokerage (which is divided between the agent, broker, and perhaps others), and \$8 to cover passage from Java and other expenses. If the contract is for eighteen months, the advance to the cooly is \$36, and the total cost is, therefore, increased by \$18.

216. For Sumatra the brokerage is only \$5 or \$6, as men are more ready to go there.

217. The cost of a Javanese cooly landed in Pahang is about \$40, of which the advance of \$27, usually allowed for a 12 months' contract, is recoverable. Some witnesses have recorded their opinion that the brokerage is excessive, but this view is not universally held, and the brokerage is certainly moderate as compared with that charged for Chinese coolies.

218. The usual wages of Javanese are \$8 or \$9 per month, and they make contracts varying from 8 months to as much, in some instances, as 3 years. They are more frequently employed, and work better on task work than on daily wages.

219. There is but little complaint against the system of engaging Javanese coolies, which appears to work fairly well; but there is an absence of supervision, giving ample opportunities for abuses, and we are satisfied that it is necessary to exercise more control than at present.

220. Java is a source from which our labour supply might be much augmented. Just as in India, there appear to be large numbers of men in indigent circumstances, whose emigration could only be a benefit to themselves and to their country, and who would be ready to come over were they given facilities.

221. At present, an employer wishing to import men from Java has to apply to the Dutch Government for permission through the Consul-General for the Netherlands at Singapore, and long delay occurs before a reply can be received, after which the coolies have to be recruited, so that probably several months elapse from the date of the application before the men arrive. This practically acts as a bar to immigration, and, with a few minor exceptions, no importation for specified employers is carried on.

222. To remove this hindrance, it would be necessary first to arrange with the Dutch Government terms on which the present restrictions, which were only recently introduced, might be withdrawn or modified. Whether the present restrictions be withdrawn or not, it is, we think, desirable, in the interests both of the coolies and those who employ them, to establish supervision over the process of importation and distribution, and proper inspection of the men while subsequently under contract.

223. The complaint that men who have signed contracts in Singapore for work in other countries abscond and are afterwards found in Singapore cannot be arrested has already been dealt with as regards Chinese in paragraph 140. What is there said applies equally to Natives. The following is an account forwarded by Mr. HOLLOWAY of a case which occurred in 1890, and is a sample:—

"On the 16th September, twelve Javanese and Malays signed at the Protectorate an agreement to proceed to Kuantan, Pahang, and work there as coolies engaged in building houses, sheds, &c. The agreement was for 8 months, their wages \$10 per month, and each man received an advance of \$20: this agreement was signed by me for PATERSON, SIMONS & Co., Agents for The Pahang Semiliang Limited. They duly went on board the steamer and arrived at Kuantan, but on arriving there five men, including the mandor, absconded. They thus never reached the mines at which they had contracted to work. On Friday, the 7th November, one of these men was arrested in Singapore and locked up at Rochor Station.

"He was charged with absconding after receiving advances under the Labour Contracts Ordinance and Crimping Ordinance. The case came before the Magistrate on the 11th, but was adjourned. Later the Magistrate informed me that the Court had no jurisdiction, as the coolies had actually proceeded to Kuantan and that the only course open was to get a warrant from the Pahang Resident authorising their extradition, or else take civil proceedings. This, I respectfully urge, is no remedy at all, as before civil proceedings can be instituted the man will have left the Colony, as we have no power to detain him, and the same applies to applying for a warrant from Pahang; before that could arrive the man will have left the man (as he never arrived at the mines) consequently to prove that he is the man who signed the agreement, it would also be necessary that I should go there; it would also be necessary to take as witness the broker who provided the coolies, and taking these things into consideration it would prove a costly transaction, and all this to proceed against a coolie who, it is evident, never intended working. If this is the law then I would respectfully urge that it should be altered, as otherwise employers are at the mercies of the coolies and have practically no remedy."

Contracts in Java for Sumatra valueless in Straits.

224. One witness, Mr. WITHÖFFT, pointed out (823) that men who have signed contracts in Java for work in Sumatra can abscond in Singapore without punishment, contracts made in Java having no value in the Straits Settlements. This appears a matter which might be dealt with by the Government on representations being made by those interested, but as it does not concern our own labour supply, we do not here consider it.

CHAPTER XII.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NATIVE LABOUR.

225. It appears that at present no very large number of this class of labourers is employed either in the Straits Settlements or the Native States, though many pass through here to Borneo and Sumatra. If the Netherlands Indian Government will consent to the free immigration of its subjects, regulations for their due and sufficient protection might be provided in the Bill that has been drafted to control the employment of Chinese labourers. Arrangements might be made for their importation under the control of the Chinese Protectorate.

226. We are of opinion that every reasonable measure should be taken to encourage the importation of Javanese labour, which is beneficial to the Colony and capable of large development.

PART III.

INDIAN IMMIGRATION.

CHAPTER XIII.

REVIEW OF INDIAN IMMIGRATION TO THE MALAY PENINSULA.

Reasons why immigration chiefly from Madras.

227. Indian emigration to the Malay Peninsula dates from the commencement of the present century, and originated in, or was developed by, the demand for labour which grew up simultaneously with the establishment of British power on the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal. Although, under Indian rule, our political relations brought us more into connection with Bengal, yet, the garrison being supplied from Madras, we had a closer connection with that Presidency. Numbers of camp-followers were constantly arriving among us, and thus there has been a constant stream of intercourse between the Straits and Southern India.

Secretary to Government of India to Secretary to Government of Madras, No. 27 E dated 29-1-83.

228. "It was a purely voluntary movement on the part of the people, stimulated by their own interests and wishes; it was not assisted by any law, neither was it impeded by any law till the year 1857." In that year, however, and again in the year 1859, Acts were passed for the regulation of passenger traffic in the Bay of Bengal, cases of overcrowding in the Native ships engaged in it having come to light. The effect was to increase the expense of the voyage and lessen the number of emigrants, and to meet the change, there sprang up a system of assisted emigration. The larger employers of labourers sent over agents to India to engage and advance money to persons willing to emigrate but too poor to pay the cost of the passage themselves, and it also became customary for shipowners, merchants and others to recruit and carry over labourers either on commission from employers or as a speculation, the expenses in such cases being delayed either by the employer of the coolie or by the coolie himself from his wages.

229. "This modified form of emigration continued unnoticed till 1870, although by an accident of legislation it had been rendered illegal by the passing of the Indian Emigration Act, XIII of 1864. At that time and for three years later, the Straits Settlements were part of British India, but the term 'British India' was so defined in the Act of 1864 as to exclude the Straits, and the result was that the Straits were placed in the same position in regard to emigration from India as the West Indian Colonies. In other words, it became unlawful to engage any native in India for services in the Straits, or to assist him to emigrate for that purpose until the issue of a notification by the Government of India authorising such emigration was issued, and then only subject to all the precautions imposed on emigration to the distant colonies of America. These provisions of the Act of 1864 remained, however, dormant and probably unknown for six years. It was in 1870 that a Madras Magistrate, believing that a system of kidnapping Indian peasants for the Penang market had been set on foot, drew public attention to the state of the law, and actually commenced some prosecutions for penalties.

230. "The subject came under the notice of the Supreme Government, and the Government of Madras was asked for a report. Mr. STOKES, the Sub-Collector of Tanjore, then made enquiries, and he sent in a very able and careful report to the effect that the supposed system of kidnapping did not exist, and that the system which did exist worked with a large preponderance of benefit to the Indian population.

* Speech of Sir ARTHUR HOBHOUSE in Council, 1875.

231. "At first the Government of Madras declined to permit the continuance of emigration unless legalised and subject to all the checks and safeguards imposed by the law in force; indeed, no other course was open as the law then stood.

232. "At length, on very urgent representations of the injury to the agricultural industries of the colony caused by the check to emigration, an Act (XIV of 1872) was passed enabling the Governor-General in Council to issue a notification exempting emigration to, or contracts for labour to be performed in, the Straits Settlements from all or any of the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1871, (which had meanwhile superseded Act XIII of 1864). On the 6th June, 1872, a notification was accordingly issued exempting such emigration and such contracts from all the provisions of the Act of 1871. At the same time the Government of India signified its approval of the following conditions, which the Madras Government had proposed by telegraph to the Straits Government, and which the latter had agreed to adopt:—

"All restrictions on coolies proceeding from Negapatam to the Straits will be removed for the present, planters' agents to bring coolies intending to proceed to the Straits before Magistrate, at Negapatam, and state all particulars as to repayments of cost of passage, money-advances, diet during voyage, wages in Straits Settlements, nature of work, duration of engagement, return passage. Magistrate will enter these particulars in a register, copy of which will be sent to the Colonial Secretary to be reduced in individual case into a contract on arrival. Magistrate will ascertain that coolies go willingly and with full knowledge of condition. Magistrate will protect natives from crimping, and prevent desertion of families; passages will be under Indian Passengers Act."

233. "The detailed arrangements for giving effect to these arrangements were left to the future; they took four years to perfect, and eventually made their appearance as Ordinance I of 1876 in the Straits and Act V of 1877 in India."

234. The first draft of the law which eventually became Indian Act V of 1877 Legislation was forwarded by the Government of Madras to the Government of India in December, 1872.

235. "It was framed on the hypothesis that emigrants to the Straits are divisible into three classes:— No. 27 E of 29-1-83.

- (i) Persons who proceed to the Straits on their own account without either an advance of money or an engagement open or secret.
- (ii) Persons who get an advance or have their passage and subsistence paid, and who make some sort of agreement or engagement as to future repayment.
- (iii) Persons who go with a regular agreement as to terms of labour and pay.

"To the first of these classes the Madras Government considered it impossible to afford further protection than to secure the respectability of the recruiters, and to place their operations under the surveillance of the local district authorities. This was done in the Bill by obliging every recruiter to take out an annual license, and to obtain the countersignature of the Magistrate of the district in which he wished to recruit. Of course these provisions would have applied only to those cases (doubtless very rare) when a licensed recruiter was instrumental in inducing a person of the kind described in class (i) to emigrate.

"The second and third classes were held to stand in equal need of protection; indeed, it seemed to the Madras Government that the position of a labourer arriving in the Straits 'with no regular engagements, but weighted with a vague obligation to repay his passage money or advances made to him' was more perilous than that of a labourer who has a regular engagement. The Government of Madras, therefore, considered that the same precautions should be adopted in respect of both classes, and that these should correspond generally with the precautions provided in the Indian Emigration Act, 1871, simplified, as far as possible, with a view to economy."

236. The measure was sent for opinion to the Government of the Straits Settlements, which in reply protested strongly against its provisions. "Necessary," it was said, "as immigration may be for the existence of a valuable interest in the Settlements, it would be better for the Government and those interested in it to abandon it altogether if it is to entail the expense, and be hampered with the restrictions, which must be involved in any Bill framed in the main on the principle of those Acts which regulate Indian emigration to distant colonies."

237. After further correspondence between the three Governments concerned, the enactment was introduced into the Indian Legislative Council on the 1st July, 1875. On this occasion Sir ARTHUR HOBHOUSE said he had hoped that:—

"When a sufficient law had been passed on the other side of the water, nothing would have been found necessary on our side beyond the mere removal of the shackles placed on the emigration by the Act of 1871. But the Madras Government who had the local knowledge necessary for a due understanding of the subject, and on whom lay the responsibility of duly protecting its subjects, did not think so, and hence the proposed measure."

238. On the 14th March, 1877, after modification in some points to meet the views of the Straits Settlements Government, the measure became law as Act V of 1877, and it came into force on the 1st January, 1878.

239. Briefly, the provisions of the Bill were as follows:—Emigration to be Indian Act restricted to ports approved from time to time by the Madras Government, and at V of 1887. each of such ports an Emigration Agent to be appointed by the Straits Settlements Government and a Protector of Emigrants by the Madras Government. Depôts to be established at such ports by the Agent, subject to inspection and approval by the Protector, by whom also the depôt licenses were to be granted and cancelled. Re.

cruiting to be restricted to persons licensed as recruiters by the Protector, and to districts specified in such licenses. Every recruit to be taken before a Magistrate who registered certain particulars, and ascertained that the man's emigration was voluntary. Written contracts to be made in India, specifying minimum wages and maximum term; the former not to be less than 12 cents a day, and the latter not to exceed three years. Necessary provisions for medical examination and to ensure proper treatment on board ship. Three documents had to be given for each emigrant when approved—the Medical Officer's certificate of health, the Magistrate's certificate that he had examined the emigrant, and the embarkation pass. It was also provided that contracts for the mere repayment of money advanced to procure emigration, or omitting to declare a maximum term of labour and a minimum wage, should be illegal in India, and they would, therefore, be illegal also according to Straits Settlements law.

Legislation in the Straits Settlements. 240. In the meantime, the subject of Indian immigration had occupied much of the attention of the Straits Settlements Government. The immigration of Indian labourers, which had been virtually stopped during some two years following the discovery in 1870 that emigration from India as it then existed was illegal, had been resumed under Act XIV of 1872, already noticed in paragraph 232, which was passed on the undertaking of the Straits Settlements Government to bring in an Ordinance protecting the Indian labourer from any misconduct or ill-treatment on the part of his employer, and complying with certain conditions laid down by the Government of India.

Ordinance IX of 1875. 241. This Ordinance, which was based on the Assam Act then before the Bengal Legislature, was referred to the Government of India, and, in anticipation of a reply, passed on the 6th May, 1875, as Ordinance IX of 1875. It was, however, never brought into operation, for the Government of India raised several objections to its provisions. The matter was referred home and taken up between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Secretary of State for India, who agreed upon a Bill which was sent out to the Colony with instructions that it might be passed.

Ordinance I of 1876. 242. Several of its provisions were unsatisfactory to the Colony, but the Government held that, although such objections might form the basis of future amendments, they could not be entertained with regard to a Bill prepared by the Secretary of State, and it was, therefore, passed on the 6th February as Ordinance I of 1876.

Difficulties in working Ordinance I of 1876. 243. Difficulties shortly arose in working the new law, for no person could, without subjecting himself to penal consequences, bring any immigrant into the Colony except under the Ordinance; and any engagement made not under the Ordinance was null and void. But the whole working of the Bill turned upon the appointment and duties of the Protector of Immigrants, who must be "nominated by the Governor of Madras, and receive from the funds of the Straits Settlements such reasonable remuneration as shall be fixed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies." Hence reference to these authorities was necessary before the Protector could be appointed, and meanwhile, in order to avoid a cessation of immigration, it became necessary to suspend the Ordinance.

Ordinances V and XII of 1876. 244. This was done on the 23rd May by Ordinance V of 1876, and after the necessary arrangements had been made, a further Ordinance XII of 1876 was passed on the 1st December repealing Ordinance V, and again bringing the Indian Immigration Ordinance (I of 1876) into operation.

245. This Ordinance and the Indian Act V of 1877, which did not come into operation till a year later, formed a joint system of control over Indian Immigration which remained in force until 1884.

Reports of ill-treatment on estates. 246. From time to time reports had been current that immigrants were badly treated on estates, and in 1868 this matter was taken up by the Government of India. In 1869, Governor Sir HARRY ORD, after making personal enquiries through the whole of Province Wellesley, reported that the coolies were properly attended to and cared for, and that any grievances which might have been reported to India were probably exaggerated.

247. Again, in 1872 an article appeared in the *Madras Standard* reflecting seriously on the treatment of Indian coolies in Penang. This article occasioned correspondence between the Governments of India and the Straits Settlements, the conclusion eventually arrived at being that there had been cases of ill-treatment, but that they were isolated, and not a general practice.

248. So late as 1881 a Commission was appointed to enquire into cases of alleged ill-treatment of coolies on estates in Province Wellesley. The Commission reported "that, speaking generally, the estates in Province Wellesley are well regulated, and the condition of the Indian Immigrants is such as to leave no reasonable ground for complaint."

249. The results of these enquiries, together with observation of the working of the restrictive measures then in force, seem to have gradually led the Indian Government to the opinion that the interests of both the countries concerned would be best served by the entire abolition of all restrictions in India, leaving the welfare of the immigrants entirely in the hands of the Straits Settlements Government. The action resulting from this opinion, which was not for a long time concurred in by the Government of Madras, was only taken after much hesitation and enquiry.

250. On the 13th May, 1881, a Bill to repeal and re-enact with amendments Ordinance I of 1876 was introduced to the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements. In moving this Bill, Mr. BRADDELL explained that the existing Ordinance had been found defective in many respects, notably in its large extent to which it was evaded by immigrants coming from foreign ports in India, and by impersonation after the medical examination. Many other modifications were introduced in the new Bill, which, however, never got beyond the first reading. It was sent to the Government of India for opinion, and gave rise to correspondence between the Governments of India and Madras in which they failed to come to any agreement, the Government of India advocating the removal of restrictions on emigration, while the Government of Madras was strongly in favour of their retention.

251. The correspondence terminated in a letter from the Government of India to that of Madras, dated 15th May, 1883, which concluded by saying that "as the Government of India itself is not yet at one with the Madras Government on the main issue concerned in the discussion, and is not prepared to resign its views, it has determined to depute Mr. BUCK, Secretary in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, to first consult with the Government of Madras as to whether the protection desired by it for emigrants cannot be secured by executive measures, and if so what the character and extent of such measures should be, either in Madras or the Straits. After conferring with the Madras Government, Mr. BUCK is under instructions to proceed to the Straits with a view of securing from that Government such measure of protection for the coolies on arrival in the Colony as may be deemed necessary."

252. The result of Mr. BUCK's visit to Madras appears in the joint note (Appendix F) signed by Mr. BUCK and Major FISCHER at Ootacamund on the 6th June, 1883. After drawing up the note, these officers visited the Straits Settlements and formed, with three Straits officials, a committee which drafted a new Ordinance and drew up a note (Appendix F) dated the 26th July, 1883, "embodying the principles on which emigration from India to the Straits Settlements will hereafter be conducted."

253. The Ordinance, which was accepted in its entirety by the Indian Government, was, after superficial objections raised at considerable length by some of the Unofficial Members of Council, read a third time and passed on the 17th October, 1884.

254. By this Bill, and by the subsequent repeal of Indian Act V of 1877, all restrictions on the part of the Indian Government were withdrawn, their stipulations for the protection of the emigrants being carried out by provisions in the Straits Ordinance. The main change effected by the new legislation was that the coolie entered into no labour contract until his arrival in the Colony, instead of as heretofore signing a contract before a Magistrate in India and another on arrival here. A new point was the introduction of "certificates" to enable immigrants not of the labouring class to go to Sumatra or other countries having no convention with the Government of India permitting the immigration of agricultural labourers. The Bill was also made to include all agricultural labourers, whether newly arrived or not, instead of being, as was Ordinance I of 1876, only applicable to fresh arrivals. The reasons for these provisions are fully set out in the Penang note of the 26th July, 1883.

255. In 1887 an important modification was made by the Indian Government in the method of working the system in India, namely, the abolition of all registration and supervision of non-indentured emigrants. This change arose out of a

memorandum written by Mr. MACGREGOR in 1886, in which he deprecated the system of registration as useless and vexatious, and advocated that the emigration of labourers not bound by any contract or advance should be left absolutely free, a suggestion which was adopted by the Indian Government, which expressed itself, after full enquiry, satisfied that the registration system had failed to serve any useful purpose.

Immigration to Native States.

256. The question of permitting immigration to the Protected Native States was first mooted in 1878, and was for some years the subject of correspondence. The situation in 1883 is summed up in Mr. BUCK'S note dated the 26th July, 1883 (Appendix F), and the conditions on which it is allowed are laid down in paragraphs 39, 40 and 41 of the joint Penang note of the same date.

Further improvements.

257. Since the passing of Ordinance V of 1884, two principal efforts have been made to further improve the supply of Indian labour. These are the subsidizing of a line of steamers from Negapatam, and the opening of a depôt there.

Subsidy to Negapatam steamers.

258. The steamer subsidy was first proposed in a letter from the Indian Immigration Agent to the Colonial Secretary dated the 28th May, 1886, the terms suggested being almost exactly those eventually adopted (see Appendix G). The reasons given for the change were the impetus which would be given to immigration by cheaper passages, and the improvement which would be effected in the condition of the steamers, which was then very insanitary. Collateral advantages would be gained in better supervision and control generally, as a result of which the removal of all remaining Indian Government restrictions might be anticipated. This anticipation was realised by the abolition of restrictions noticed in paragraph 255.

259. After much discussion, the agreement was signed in November, 1886, and the service began on the 1st June, 1887.

260. The approval of the Secretary of State to the subsidy was given in the following terms:—

"I am unable to regard favourably the policy of assisting the immigration of Indian labourers at the public expense for the purpose of diminishing the cost of labour in the Colony, or rendering the employers less dependent on Chinese labour, but looking to the benefits which will be derived by the Indians from this arrangement, and the advantage to the Colony by being protected from the influx of sick immigrants, whose treatment in hospital might impose a heavy burden on the revenue, I will not withhold my approval of the agreement."

261. Towards the expiration of this contract negotiations took place for its renewal, the object of the Government being to encourage immigration from the Northern ports of the Madras Presidency by inducing the subsidized steamers to call there, if required. The contractors, however, required a largely increased subsidy for this service, and the contract was, therefore, renewed for two years from the 1st June, 1890, the only change of importance being a reduction of the passage for non-indentured coolies from twelve to ten rupees.

Establishment of Negapatam depôt.

262. The second important step taken by the Straits Settlements Government was the opening of a depôt at Negapatam. This had long been urged on both sides of the water as a necessity if recruiting operations were to be properly conducted. The depôt was opened in March, 1890, a Medical Officer being appointed as Superintendent, and it has proved of great service.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PRESENT INDENTURE SYSTEM.

Development already described.

263. The development of the present system of procuring indentured coolies from India has been sketched in the last Chapter, in which the gradual relaxation by the Indian Government of the restrictions formerly imposed on emigration to the Straits Settlements is described.

Principle similar in India and China.

264. Although the terms on which Indian coolies engage, which will be dealt with later on, differ greatly from those in use with Chinese, yet the principle of the emigration from both India and China is the same. In each case the emigrants are gathered from the poorest classes and are assisted abroad by the payment of the expenses of their journey, giving in return an undertaking to repay by their labour the cost so incurred.

265. The usual method of procuring immigrants at the present day is to employ one of the firms in Madras or Negapatam which undertake recruiting business to act as agents for the collection of the coolies and their transit to the port of embarkation. These firms employ sub-agents who again have under them recruiters to do the actual work. The Indian Government insist that every recruiter shall be in possession of a license from a qualified Magistrate, but beyond this precaution, necessary to ensure some degree of control over the people so employed, no supervision is exercised over the proceedings at this stage. The choice of an agent lies solely with the employer requiring the coolies, who is at liberty to send men from the Straits to collect his labourers, subject only to the condition that they shall take out a license in India, for which purpose they should obtain a letter of recommendation from the Indian Immigration Agent in the Straits Settlements. The rules regulating recruiters in India are printed in Appendix H.

Present method.

Handwritten notes:
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266. Every cooly recruited under advances must be brought to the Straits Government depôt at Negapatam, since the opening of which in 1890 the use of private depôts has been forbidden. Here the cooly is examined by the Superintendent of the depôt, and if found medically and otherwise fit for labour in the Straits Settlements, he is admitted to the depôt, where he comes under the protection of the Straits Government, and remains until his embarkation. He is not under restraint while in this depôt, and can leave it if he wishes. It is found, however, that men rarely abscond, as they go there with the full intention of emigrating. Cases not infrequently occur, however, of coolies leaving the depôt on finding that misrepresentations have been made to them by the recruiters.

267. Previous to sailing, the cooly is inspected by the Protector of Emigrants—an officer of the Indian Government—who ascertains that he is leaving of his own free will and has already received the advances entered against his name.

268. Thus the points insisted on by the Government of India with regard to the enlistment of emigrants are two; namely, that recruiting shall, as far as possible, be carried on by men of respectability, and that every cooly shall have an opportunity of declaring before an officer of his own Government that he is not being kidnapped or swindled. In other respects the process is entirely unrestricted.

269. No contracts are signed in India, and even after arrival in the Straits the cooly is under no compulsion to enter into an engagement, if he can free himself by re-paying all advances together with a sum of \$12 by way of "smart money" (section 25 of Ordinance V of 1884).

270. From Negapatam the cooly is brought to Penang in one of the subsidized steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company. These are well-appointed vessels and afford excellent accommodation while they carry travelling Inspectors, paid by the Straits Settlements Government, who see to the welfare of the cooly.

271. On arrival in Penang, the ship is boarded by the Indian Immigration Agent or his Assistant, who inspects the coolies and sees that all the deck passengers, whether statute immigrants or "free" coolies, are at once landed and sent to the depôt, the free men after a warning by the Indian Immigration Agent that they must not go to Sumatra or countries which have no convention with the Indian Government, being immediately allowed to leave. The contract coolies are detained in the Government depôt until they sign their contracts and are handed over to the agents of their employers for transit to the estates where they are to work. A separate contract is signed for every man and transmitted to the employer for custody. A duplicate in the Tamil language is given to the cooly, and the office register serves as the Immigration Agent's record of the transaction. Immigrants for Selangor and Johor do not sign contracts in Penang, but are sent on to these States where the contracts are made on their arrival.

272. Many planters have endeavoured to reduce the cost of introducing coolies and to procure better men by sending over Tyndals of their own to recruit in India, but such attempts have, as a rule, been unsuccessful, the alleged cause of failure being the opposition of the sub-agents and recruiters in India. As a result the work of procuring coolies is now almost entirely in the hands of these sub-agents and the professional recruiters who work for them.

Handwritten notes:
24 dollars
inducement
1200/1890
NA

THE INDIAN IMMIGRATION STAFF AND DEPÔTS.

273. The working of Ordinance V of 1884, both in the Colony and Native States, is under the general supervision of the Indian Immigration Agent, who also controls the Negapatam depôt. His Office is in Penang, where the chief work of the depôt is carried on. Here there is, under the Immigration Agent, an Assistant who shares the duty of inspecting the Province Wellesley estates, which is ordered to be carried out once in three months. The Agent has nothing to do with obtaining coolies, his duties consisting entirely in carrying out the provisions of the Indian Immigration Ordinance.

274. In Singapore the Second Magistrate at present acts as Assistant Indian Immigration Agent in conjunction with his magisterial duties. As no estates in Singapore now employ statute immigrants, his work as Assistant Agent is confined to issuing certificates under section 10 of the Ordinance to permit men who are not agricultural labourers to leave the Colony. In Malacca one of the District Officers is also Assistant Agent. In each Native State in which there are indentured immigrants there is an Assistant Immigration Agent, the office being usually combined with other duties. The relations of these officers to the Indian Immigration Agent vary; as a rule they are under the orders of the Resident of the State, but correspond with the Agent on departmental matters.

Negapatam depôt. 275. There is in Negapatam a depôt for lodging coolies recruited for the Straits Settlements, and capable of accommodating about two hundred men. It is in charge of a Medical Officer termed the Superintendent, whose duties are the examination of coolies brought to the depôt, the general charge of the depôt, and superintendence of embarkation.

Penang depôt. 276. There is also a Government depôt in Penang in which the coolies are received and detained on arrival. It is close to the Indian Immigration Office and well suited for its purpose.

277. There are no depôts in Singapore or Malacca, the number of statute immigrants being so small that no such establishment is necessary.

Travelling Inspectors. 278. Attached to the Department are Inspectors who travel in the subsidized steamers by which alone statute immigrants are brought. They see that the coolies are properly treated and fed, and prepare the contracts for signature on arrival.

279. From the time that the cooly is admitted to the depôt at Negapatam there is but little fault to find with the foregoing system. The fact that the depôts are in Government charge, and the presence of the travelling Inspectors on board the ships, ensures good treatment and fair dealing to the coolies, and guards as far as is possible against deceit and coercion on the part of the recruiting agents.

CHAPTER XV.

DEFECTS OF THE PRESENT SUPPLY OF INDIAN LABOUR.

Main defects. 280. The three main defects in the supply of Indian labour appear to be insufficient quantity, defective quality, and heavy cost of importation.

Evidence as to scarcity. 281. The testimony on the subject of scarcity, with its attendant evils of irregularity, crimping and desertion, is almost unanimous. A few employers have stated that they have just now as many coolies as they want, but these are the men who have offered the best terms, and consequently absorbed the influx, and even of these witnesses some have stated that, though not at present in difficulties, they are debarred from extending their cultivation by the difficulty of obtaining, and still more of retaining, the necessary labourers.

Numbers arriving. 282. The figures in the Indian Immigration Agent's reports show a very marked falling off in the supply of statute immigrants for the last two years. The total arrivals for ten years have been:—

1881, 879	1886, 2,992
1882, 1,452	1887, 4,736*
1883, 1,450	1888, 4,684*
1884, 1,539	1889, 2,747
1885, 1,642	1890, 2,960

* During 1887 and 1888 the quality of coolies received was inferior to that of any other years.

The demand for labour is constantly increasing with the rapid development of the Native States, and this fact, coupled with the above figures, puts the scarcity beyond a doubt.

283. This scarcity has not been met by any increased stream of unindentured Free passengers. The following are the arrivals for the last ten years, shewing that the numbers have remained near the same level for some years back.

	Arrivals.	Departures.		Arrivals.	Departures.
1881,	5,769	5,269	1886,	17,316	18,105
1882,	8,276	5,947	1887,	12,156	12,596
1883,	8,979	9,041	1888,	15,812	13,190
1884,	14,365	10,749	1889,	15,285	14,099
1885,	19,819	13,417	1890,	*18,301	15,276

284. The causes of deficiency in the labour supply are not far to seek. The first and most obvious is the competition of other countries, the principal of which is Burma, where cheap passages, wages exceeding those of the Straits, and the absence of contracts, form attractions which we cannot at present outvie. The Madras Presidency Administration Reports give the following figures:—

Year.	Emigrants to Burma.	Year.	Emigrants to Burma.
1880-1, 6,682		1885-6, 7,616	
1881-2, 8,020		1886-7, 24,642	
1882-3, 22,075		1887-8, 38,956	
1883-4, 12,059		1888-9, 38,014	
1884-5, 5,993			

285. Ceylon is also a formidable competitor. Geographically almost a part of India, its climate and conditions thoroughly known, and with the advantage of uninterrupted intercourse from time immemorial, Ceylon must present greater attractions to the cooly than can be possible with the Straits, and only by better pay and improved conditions can we hope to outbid it. The number of immigrants to Ceylon from India has increased in the last few years, as the following shows:—

Year.	Immigrants to Ceylon from India.	Year.	Immigrants to Ceylon from India.
1881, 54,204		1886, 39,907	
1882, 51,640		1887, 72,660	
1883, 39,055		1888, 81,710	
1884, 45,962		1889, 64,459	
1885, 46,665			

286. A large increase in the total emigration from Madras to all countries is apparent from the following figures, taken from the Madras Presidency Administration Reports, shewing the total number of British subjects who left the Presidency for countries outside India:—

1879-80,	88,386	1884-5,	55,427
1880-1,	61,183	1885-6,	46,053
1881-2,	59,945	1886-7, (returns missing.)	
1882-3,	75,250	1887-8,	126,830
1883-4,	54,347	1888-9,	139,563

287. These figures go a long way to explain the difficulty we experience in obtaining coolies. Assuming for the moment that all other conditions are equal, the remedy, so far as the competition of other countries affects the supply, can only lie in offering more attractive terms.

288. The second main cause of scarcity is to be found in our defective recruiting arrangements. As has already been explained, the whole business lies in the hands of a few private firms. The first result of this is that no proper means of advertising is adopted. Notices are issued, which have, as a rule, been of a most meagre description. Recently a placard, purporting to give fuller details has been published, of which the following is a translation:—

"Wanted, Coolies.

"Many coolies are wanted for Province Wellesley, near Penang, to work on coffee, tapioca, and sugar plantations.

* Includes 1,905 passengers from Calcutta, none of whom arrive for agricultural labour. The number of arrivals from Calcutta has been insignificant in previous years.

"I. As soon as they arrive in Penang they must enter into a written agreement to work for three years. After three years they can either come away or remain to work on the estate.

"II. Those who work on an estate will receive for the first year, males, about \$3.60 (*i.e.*, about Rs. 8-2 ans.) a month. Women will receive \$2.40 (*i.e.*, about Rs. 5-8 ans.) a month. If they do extra work they will receive higher wages at the above rates.

"Houses, fuel, and land for gardens will be given free. All expenses incurred in going to the estates, such as trainage, feeding expenses, passage money, and a cloth will be given free. Besides this, as soon as they arrive on an estate they will be presented with one month's provisions and \$1. There are shops and a good supply of water. There are doctors, who speak Tamil. Rice is sold at market price. Fish, fowl, sheep, vegetables, &c. can be got at cheap rates. Cloths, &c. are taken from here and sold at cost price. The country is quite similar to our own places, and comfortable. Many of our own countrymen are working on each estate.

"III. There is a Protector, and under him Assistants, who are appointed by the Government to enquire into the welfare of the coolies and to see that they are well treated.

"IV. Fortnightly steamers run to Penang; they are comfortable, and good food on board is given. They carry Doctors and Inspectors to look after the coolies.

"V. Province Wellesley, which is adjacent to Penang, is much healthier than Perak, Sungei Ujong, &c. We hear that the water supply in Perak, Sungei Ujong, &c. is not as good as in Province Wellesley; moreover, fish is not obtainable, and everything is dear: a fowl which costs $\frac{1}{4}$ rupee or 5 annas in Penang will cost R. 1 or Rs. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$, and rice which in Penang can be bought for R. 1, will cost Rs. 1.12 in those places. As these countries have been newly opened, the climate does not agree with the people, and causes fever and dysentery.

"We think that on account of these difficulties they offer better wages and a shorter term of contract. But if both wages and expenses and comforts are compared, Penang seems a better place for coolies.

(Signed,) "GANAPATHY PILLAY AND CO.,
Agents for Planters, Penang."

"NEGAPATAM, 16th December, 1890."

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the part of this document setting out the terms of employment is misleading, since the wages and advantages described are offered by but a very few employers, and by no means represent the general conditions of the Colony; while the reference to the Native States, which reads like the attempt of an agent for the Colony to forward his own interests at the expense of others, sufficiently indicates the character of the people to whom we now trust our recruiting.

Recruiting
area limited.

289. Again, it appears that the sphere of action of recruiters is confined to a small area, and that no attempt is made to tap the remoter districts. By energetic action under the supervision of a responsible officer, large numbers of men could be obtained from districts now untouched.

Long con-
tracts deter
immigrants.

290. The question arises whether there is anything in the conditions of service in the Straits Settlements that is repellent to the intending emigrant. We think that undoubtedly one deterrent is the long period of contract, which cannot but place this country at a disadvantage as compared with Burma and Ceylon, our chief competitors. It is true that in the distant Colonies of Mauritius, Natal, and the West Indies the term is five years, but the number of emigrants from Madras to these Colonies is small compared to the number going to Ceylon and Burma, with which we must first measure our attractions. The three years' contract is distasteful to the emigrant, who naturally expects to be compensated for submitting to it by increased advantages in some other form.

Contract in
reality ex-
ceeds three
years.

291. It must not be overlooked, too, that the contract, as we shall show further on, is rarely in practice terminated in the stipulated term of three years, and, although any hint of such a possibility is absent from the advertisements of recruiting agents, yet the fact is doubtless made known by returned coolies, and tends to discourage emigration.

Insufficient
attractions.

292. Although there may be, with the above exception, no important active deterrents preventing coolies from emigrating to the Malay Peninsula, there is constantly the passive cause of insufficient attractions. Ceylon stands alone in its extreme proximity to India, which must always give it special facilities for obtaining labour.

Minor griev-
ances exist.

293. There are various minor grievances, unimportant in themselves, but all spread about by returned coolies, which no doubt tend to check emigration. The number of returned malcontents, originally deceived by recruiters and shipped under a misapprehension as to their work, must be large, and their influence may probably have a deterrent effect.

Insufficient
information.

294. We believe that the absence of full and correct information regarding the terms of contract engenders dissatisfaction, the existence of which is quickly known in India, and contributes to the paucity of immigrants from which we suffer. It also

the recoverable items—namely, maintenance in India, conveyance to port of embarkation, clothes, cash advanced in India, passage money, maintenance on board ship and in the depôt at Penang—amount usually to about \$8, the balance, or \$12, representing agent's expenses and commission. There is, we believe, no reason why this sum should not be reduced by proper arrangements to \$4 or less, bringing the whole cost down to \$12 at the most.

Recruiting
must be done
by Govern-
ment.

302. The reduction can only be effected by taking the recruiting out of the hands of the present brokers, and putting it under the supervision of an officer of Government. Considerable difficulty and opposition would be met with at first, but there can be no doubt of the ultimate success of a competent man. In Chapter XIX we have recommended the method by which we believe this desirable result can best be accomplished.

CHAPTER XVI.

FREE COOLIES.

303. Free Indian coolies are employed in considerable numbers in the Colony and Native States. They are scarcely ever imported by their employers, as with the present demand for labour it is impossible to rely on their remaining long enough under the importer to repay the expenses of their introduction. In a few instances they have been imported, with what success remains to be seen. As a rule they present themselves on an estate known to require men, and are then engaged; or else the manager tells his Tyndals that men are required, and they take what steps they please to obtain them.

304. The majority of the free coolies have no doubt originally come from India as statute immigrants and served their time on estates. Still, out of the 15,000 or so of free passengers who have annually crossed from India, a few are labourers seeking agricultural work. Until recently no return has been kept distinguishing the various classes of free passengers, but since March 31st, 1890, they have been recorded in most cases in the Indian Immigration Office, with the result that of 7,083 free passengers arriving from Negapatam, 5,023 were Muhammadans and Hindus, of whom an uncertain proportion were agricultural labourers, the remaining 2,060 being petty traders, Chetties artificers, and females. Some of the free coolies also are Straits-born men, who now form a considerable and increasing proportion of the Tamil population.

Wages in
Penang.

305. The wages of free coolies vary considerably. In Penang and Province Wellesley the Government rate is 20 cents per day, paid only for days actually worked, in addition to which free quarters are given, but nothing else. Mr. LOGAN pays his men at Bertam \$5 per month for 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ days' work a week with attaps for house-building and garden land (1,702-3). Mr. HENG BENG CHIAN (1,809-10) pays \$5.80 per month and gives quarters. In Penang the rates are about the same, and, speaking generally, may be put at 20 cents a day and free quarters, though for special work or single days they rise as high as 25 or even 30 cents a day.

Wages in
Singapore.

306. In Singapore wages are higher, the Government rate being 23 or 24 cents, and the Municipal rate 24 to 25 cents per day of actual work, while on Pulau Ubin Estate (4,651) the coolies get 25 cents, and 2 cents a day extra if they work regularly, as well as Sunday pay if they have worked 6 days during the week (4,659).

Wages in
Malacca.

307. In Malacca the Government rate is 20 cents a day and Sunday pay if they work 6 days a week (4,426). Contractors and some planters pay \$7.50 a month or about 25 cents a day (4,398-9, 4,435), while another, Mr. TAN HUN GUAN, stated (4,448) that his rate was \$6 per month.

Wages in
Perak.

308. In Perak the Government rate is about 30 cents (1533, 2528, 2532) with free quarters, and the same rate is given to free coolies on plantations (2,408, 2,441).

Wages in
Selangor.

309. In Selangor the wages are about the same, though on some plantations only 23 cents are given (3,051, 4,093). On contract and similar works as much as 35 cents are paid (877, 4,103, 4,135).

Wages in
Sungei
Ujong.

310. The Sungei Ujong rate is about 30 cents (4,204, 4,269) on Government and contractor's works. On Linsum Estate 25 cents is the average (4,303).

must have a share in bringing about the excessive desertion which now takes place and which the scarcity of labour renders easy and profitable. The only remedy is to adopt means to make the emigrants thoroughly acquainted with every condition of their contract service before leaving India.

295. A cause which has undoubtedly tended to reduce the number of statute immigrants is the establishment of a searching medical examination at Negapatam, bringing about the rejection of many coolies who would formerly have been sent here. There may be some points in which the examination is unnecessarily strict, but the result has been a general improvement of the class of coolies received, in view of which the resulting diminution in numbers cannot be greatly regretted.

296. Many employers complain of the irregularity of the labour supply and of the difficulty experienced in retaining coolies when they are engaged. This is only a result of the great and increasing demand. The labourers naturally flock to the better market, and an employer is constantly liable to be left without his men, to the ruin possibly of his crop, owing to the offer by a competitor of better wages. This is not only the case with free coolies, but desertion among indentured immigrants is largely increased from the same cause. The remedy is an increase in the supply of labour available.

QUALITY.

297. The second defect brought to notice is the inferior quality of the men recruited, both in physique and ability to perform agricultural or outdoor labour. This is an old grievance both in this and other Colonies, and until recently was keenly felt. Almost all witnesses agree, however, that the opening of the Negapatam depôt, with its attendant medical examination, has effected improvement, and by making the examination sufficiently strict, the physique of the coolies could be brought up to any pitch required. Under present circumstances, this would of course entail a corresponding decrease in numbers, and a line of compromise is therefore drawn, with results, on the whole, satisfactory.

298. Sufficient time has scarcely elapsed for the effect of the depôt to be fully felt, and it may be on this account that the coolies are still not always as good as could be wished. It is probable, seeing the improvement already effected, that any serious ground for complaint on this score will shortly cease.

299. A point in this connection on which some difference of opinion prevails is as to how far recruiting should be limited to men of the regular agricultural caste. Some witnesses consider that no man should be recruited for agricultural labour unless he belongs to such a caste; while a few contend that this point is of minor importance, and that any able-bodied man can do field work, no matter what his caste or previous occupation. Probably the truth lies between these extremes, and in many cases a man can take to out-door labour, though entirely unaccustomed to it and not of an agricultural caste, so long as he is strong and able-bodied, and provided especially that he undertakes it voluntarily and with a thorough understanding of the nature of the work. It is on this last point that we would especially lay stress, for we think that in most cases when weavers, dhobies, cooks, and other such men break down, it is because they have been deceived by the recruiters, who tell them they will only be required to practise their own trades. Then when they are required to use the changkol, and do hard work, they lose heart and strength, deteriorate into "hospital birds," and swell the death-rate.

300. It is impossible to carry out the examination and passing of coolies in a wholly satisfactory manner by rigid rules; a certain amount of judgment must always be exercised, as doubtful cases will constantly arise. With a recruiting agent of long experience and standing in India, difficulties in this respect would disappear, as he would know the requirements of the planters and the various classes of work. For the present, it seems desirable to adhere to the existing rules, which are appended to this report. (Appendix I.)

HIGH COST.

301. The reason of the high initial expense of introducing coolies is that recruiting has got into the hands of sub-recruiters who form a close "ring," with a practical monopoly of the business, and are thus able to command unreasonable prices. At present the cost of a coolie landed in Province Wellesley is about \$20. Of this,

311. In Johor 22 or 23 cents a day is the wage for free labourers (849-50, 4,704), lines being given as well; and in Kedah Mr. LENG CHEAK pays his free Tamils 20 cents per day on an estate situated near Province Wellesley.

312. Generally, it may be stated that the rate for the more accessible districts, such as in Penang and Province Wellesley, is 20 cents a day, while in the Native States it varies from 25 to 30, or occasionally 35 cents, according to the locality.

313. On estates in Province Wellesley free coolies are paid lower than in outside work, as they enjoy various advantages, such as quarters, medical attendance, and land for gardening or grazing cattle. The rate is generally 16 or 18 cents a day, with some such inducement as Sunday pay, or an extra rate for steady work.

314. The large majority of employers say that they prefer free to indentured labour, and if they could be sure of keeping their coolies they would employ nothing else; but under the present circumstances they are compelled to retain a number of men under contract to avoid the risk of being suddenly left without labour. They prefer free men as being generally more contented, better and harder workers, and, when acclimatised, of better physique than the indentured immigrants.

315. The free Tamil coolie is, as a rule, well able to take care of himself, and there is no reason to suppose that he is otherwise than well treated. We think, however, that the Indian Immigration Agent or his Officers should have power to inspect estates and works employing these coolies, especially on sanitary grounds. The coolie cares little or nothing about cleanliness or ordinary sanitary precautions, and it appears to us that some control should be exercised in this respect, and that the powers indicated in sections 59 to 63 of the Indian Immigration Ordinance should be extended to free men as well as statute immigrants. As regards the examination of the accounts of Indian labourers, every such labourer, if under a written contract, comes within the cognizance of the Indian Immigration Agent by section 36 of Ordinance V of 1884. If on the other hand the contract is a verbal one, which with free coolies is usually the case, the labourer has his remedy under the Labour Contracts Ordinance, No. I of 1882.

316. All the powers of inspection advocated above should be used most sparingly, and only when considered really necessary. Many witnesses have recorded their objection to any inspection whatever of free coolies, the usual grounds being that it unsettles the coolies. This must depend on the manner in which the inspection is carried out; and if done by an officer of judgment and experience, who does not encourage discontent or complaint, it should cause no inconvenience. The power would seldom be exercised in the case of well-managed estates, and it is only the exceptions, which are not properly conducted, that would be caused any trouble by the inspection. A large number of employers have stated either that they have no objection to it or are in favour of it, and we do not anticipate that it would form a permanent ground of complaint on the part of those concerned.

CHAPTER XVII.

GENERAL TREATMENT ON ESTATES.

a.—Quarters.

317. In the Ordinance of 1884 it is laid down (section 52) that the employer of a statute immigrant shall provide "sufficient and proper house accommodation such as shall be considered sufficient and proper by the Indian Immigration Agent for the time being," and this is the sole regulation in force regarding the class or extent of accommodation to be provided.

318. The quarters provided are of every conceivable description, from the substantial well-kept buildings on some of the Province Wellesley estates to the squalid hovel we saw at Malakah Pindah. Occasionally the lines are of brick and other permanent materials, but as a rule they are more or less temporary structures of atap and bertam, or with mud walls. Sometimes they are partitioned into rooms, of varying sizes, at other times left as open barracks. As a rule, they have verandahs from 3 to 10 feet in width. In some cases cooking is done inside the quarters, and in others in the verandahs outside. They are never raised above the ground on posts or

pillars, but the earth forms the floor, dried by a drain round the building, and in a few cases concreted. They are invariably constructed as one-story buildings, though in a few cases they are made to afford increased accommodation by temporary floors overhead either inside the rooms or in the verandahs.

Quarters not unsuitable.

319. On the majority of estates visited the coolies' quarters were not unclean, and were in fair repair. The coolies object to light or air in his dwelling, and we invariably noticed that where apertures were constructed for ventilation, the inhabitants had stopped them up. Dr. TRAVERS, an officer who has taken great interest in the Indian immigrants in Sungei Ujong, states (4,327):—"I think the coolies are generally well-housed; as regards health, they ought to be forced to give themselves proper ventilation, even against their will. They would soon grow used to it in the same way as they do in the hospitals, which are very freely ventilated"; and we cannot but think that, if only in the interests of cleanliness, more ventilation might be insisted on than at present.

Materials unimportant.

320. It matters little of what materials the quarters are constructed. Permanent buildings are probably cheapest in the long run, requiring less repair, but the coolies are equally content in mud or atap huts, which are also quite as healthy; and all that need be insisted on is that they shall be properly constructed, and kept in good repair.

Grounds and houses clean.

321. The houses and surrounding ground were, as a rule, kept fairly clean, and, considering the habits of the Tamil, we have no fault to find in this direction.

Often overcrowded.

322. In many cases the quarters were much overcrowded. On one estate the building is divided into a number of rooms about 10 feet square, in which six people are usually put. Other rooms in the same building are 20 feet by 14 feet, and in one of these eighteen people were living, men and women indiscriminately. Sometimes three married couples are together in one small room; in other cases one or two couples, as well as several single men.

323. We think that a minimum floor space and a minimum cubic space per adult should be insisted on, and that a separate room should be available for every married couple. The material and style of construction should be as little interfered with as possible, but the buildings should be good of their kind, and provided with proper drainage.

Standard plan desirable.

324. It would be an advantage if a standard plan were prepared and lithographed, showing a suitable building of ordinary construction, to serve as a guide. The adoption of such a plan should on no account be insisted on, but in practice it would probably, as a rule, be adopted.

325. The coolie is not particular as to his surroundings, and probably indifferent quarters have but little effect in checking immigration or improved quarters in stimulating it. Still, apart from any considerations as to whether it is not a duty to provide proper dwellings for labourers we import, it can scarcely be doubted that, other things being equal, the coolies who inhabit the building best built and kept will be most contented and in the best health.

(b)—Hospitals.

326. Section 52 of the Ordinance lays down that the employer shall provide:—

(f) Hospital accommodation.

(g) Medical attendance.

(h) A sufficient quantity of medicines of good quality.

And under section 53 the Governor may prescribe:—

(b) "The kind of hospital accommodation to be provided in accordance with sub-section (f) of the preceding section, having regard to the number of immigrants employed on the estate and its distance from the nearest Government hospital.

(c) "The description of medical attendance to be provided in accordance with sub-section (g) of the preceding section.

(d) "The kinds and quantities of medicines to be kept on the estate by the employer."

327. Under this section the following rules were made in 1886,* and are now in force:—

"Hospitals on estates employing statute immigrants shall be divided into two classes, as follows:—

(a) "First class hospitals, which shall provide accommodation sufficient to supply one bed for every 25 statute immigrants employed on the estate.

(b) "Second class hospitals, which shall provide accommodation sufficient to supply one bed for every 50 statute immigrants employed on the estate.

"All such estates beyond three miles by road from a Government hospital shall maintain a first class hospital, and all such estates within three miles by road of a Government hospital shall maintain a second class hospital.

"To each first class hospital shall be attached a medical officer, possessing the qualifications of an apothecary.

"To each second class hospital shall be attached a medical officer, capable of dressing ordinary wounds and dispensing simple drugs.

"All medical officers appointed to hospitals shall first be approved by a Colonial Surgeon.

"In each first class hospital shall be kept a supply of medicines as shown in the list appended, marked A.

"In each second class hospital shall be kept a supply of medicines as shown in the list appended, marked B."

[After this follow lists of medicines, A. and B.]

328. The hospital buildings existing are of two general descriptions, examples of which may be seen side by side on many estates. The first description has a wooden floor raised from two to four feet above the ground, and is well built and ventilated, leaving nothing to be desired. The second is a building of more or less temporary character, often a floor of bare earth, raised occasionally a few inches, but oftener on the general ground level, surrounded by a small trench.

329. The first description, which we found in every case in good or fair repair, is well suited for its purpose. The only fault we noticed was that in some instances the ward was unduly wide, in consequence of which the beds were placed in three rows. Narrower buildings with only two tiers of beds would be preferable.

330. The second class of building should, we consider, be gradually abolished. An earth floor is not, for many reasons, suitable for hospital use.

331. The rules do not prescribe any floor space or cubic space per bed, an omission which should be remedied.

332. The rules have not been equally enforced, for while in Province Wellesley owners have been obliged to incur considerable expense in hospital accommodation, and the buildings and arrangements are, as a rule, good, in Malacca we find statute immigrants without hospital accommodation, although ten miles from a Government hospital.

333. To ensure proper accommodation, over the door of every ward should be painted the number of patients it is intended to contain, these numbers being determined by fixed rules. A manager should not be allowed to increase the number of statute immigrants he employs unless his hospital accommodation is in sufficient proportion.

334. A list of necessities to be provided, which should not be confined, as at present, to medicines, but should embrace all such articles as are absolutely indispensable, according to the number of patients. It is now the exception to find sufficient blankets in a hospital for all the patients, although medical witnesses state that every patient should be provided with one.

335. Many hospitals are unprovided with latrines, the patients being left to wander into the jungle as they please. Buckets are supposed to be supplied at night, but are, except in special cases, removed during the day. The absence of latrines is a defect which should be dealt with under the rules.

336. Scales of diet should be laid down, as is done in the Government hospitals, and these should be posted in the wards, that a patient may know what he is supplied with.

* Government Notification No. 170, dated 15th April, 1886.

posed to get. On one estate we found the dresser was given, in addition to a ration of rice, two cents a day for each patient, from which he was expected to feed them.

Rules should be prepared.

337. We would suggest that rules on the above lines be drawn up by the Government after consultation with the Principal Civil Medical Officer and the Indian Immigration Agent, aided, if necessary, by a committee, and brought into force.

Medical attendants.

338. We have not touched on the subject of the medical attendants, as this will be dealt with in a later chapter, where we shall also indicate some points in which the present rules might be relaxed. We do not think the present system a complete success. It burthens the smaller employers with considerable expense without, in our opinion, producing eminently satisfactory results.

Native States.

339. We think that rules similar to those of the Colony should apply in the Native States.

(c)—Food.

340. In the consideration of such questions as hospitals and medical attendance in their bearing on the health of the immigrant, the cognate question of diet naturally arises, for it is important to ascertain whether the conditions of his employment place the cooly in a favourable position to maintain himself in proper health so far as his food is concerned.

341. Section 52 (d) and (e) of the Ordinance obliges the employer to provide "uncooked rations at wholesale current market prices," and "cooked rations when lawfully required," while section 53 empowers the Governor to make rules for the "kinds of rations" to be so provided. Under the latter section the following rule has been made:—*

"All employers of statute immigrants shall provide for them uncooked rations of Bengal rice, dholl and ghee, at wholesale current market prices."

The rule does not specify the amount which constitutes a ration, nor where the market price is to be taken, a matter of some importance, as will be seen if the market prices of Kinta and Penang be compared. The rule is never carried out as regards the dholl and ghee, and, in reconsidering the rules, these commodities might be omitted.

System of food supply.

342. The ordinary system is for the estate to sell rice to the coolies at a fixed rate, deducting the price from their wages. The purchase of rice by the cooly is, at all events in theory, entirely optional, and he is at liberty to buy it elsewhere if he pleases. In practice he has not always the choice, since, after paying his employer for the previous month's supply, he may not have any money wherewith to purchase more, and also because on some of the remoter estates there are no shops within a reasonable distance. The rice is procured wholesale by the estates, and is generally sold to the coolies at cost price, so that it is cheaper than elsewhere, and they prefer to obtain it from the estate. In some cases cost price on the estate is charged, in others, Gula for example, the coolies only pay cost price in Penang, transport to the estate being given free. The usual monthly allowance is one-third of a bag, containing 163 lb., or about 1½ lb. per diem. This is equivalent to one chupak or quart. This is given out on different estates monthly fortnightly, weekly, or daily. On the larger estates there are generally shops at which the coolies can procure all articles of diet, kept by traders under the supervision of the manager, who in some cases regulates the prices, but more frequently trusts to competition between the shops on the estate and those outside to prevent overcharging.

343. For coolies in good health and earning sufficient pay, in easily accessible localities, we think the system satisfactory, and there is no reason to suppose that under it estate coolies are unable to procure their food at least as good and cheap as would be possible elsewhere.

Sometimes estate supplies all food.

344. On some estates the manager supplies the coolies not only with rice but with all they want, stopping the cost from their pay. In the hands of a better class of managers, there seems no objection to this, though it is probably distasteful to the coolies, who like to haggle and deal with shop-keepers of their own kind. In the hands of unscrupulous employers the system is a bad one, since it can be utilised to keep the coolies permanently indebted to their employer.

* Government Notification No. 170, dated 15th April, 1886.

345. Where estates are isolated it is difficult to suggest any better method, as it would be just as easy to overcharge the coolies through a so-called shop-keeper as by direct dealings, but where such a practice is in use, it should be made the subject of special and searching enquiry at every visit of an Inspecting Officer.

346. It is the newly-arrived immigrants who are most vitally affected by the system of food supply. Some witnesses are of opinion that the new cooly can be trusted to feed himself well from the outset, and that there is no need of any special supervision to see that he does so. Others say that there is a tendency on the part of such men to starve themselves, with a result that they become sick and unfit for work. We think that there is very great risk of such a practice, and that it calls for attention. The remedy is clearly to put such men on cooked rations, as was done with marked success at Malakoff Estate in 1878. Authority to direct this is conferred on the Medical Officer and the Indian Immigration Agent by section 54 of the Ordinance, and it might frequently be used with advantage, even though the coolies always object to it.

347. We think that the issue of rice daily is of great advantage, for an improvident cooly frequently sells part of his rice when he receives a month's supply in bulk, while with a daily ration he can hardly do so. Daily issues are already made on some estates with success, and we should like to see the practice universal. As, however, some employers object to it, we would not propose at present to make it compulsory, but we would recommend that a weekly issue be enforced. A rule to oblige this can be made by the Indian Immigration Agent under section 53 (e).

348. A system, which we only mention to condemn, was formerly practised on some estates of only issuing rice for the days on which a man actually worked. By this plan a cooly who, possibly through weakness due to under-feeding, but seldom turned out to work, was deprived of his necessary food and of all chance of being restored to health. We are not aware that this is ever done now.

(d)—General Treatment and Points requiring Attention.

349. We have no doubt that Indian immigrants are practically free from physical ill-treatment on the part of managers or responsible assistants throughout the Colony and Native States. On this point there is a consensus of opinion by those best qualified to judge. Isolated cases to the contrary doubtless occur, but they are few and far between.

350. As to the treatment by native Tyndals, we are not so satisfied, and it may be taken as certain that on some estates coolies are beaten by these men, in spite of the desire of the managers to prevent it. The best remedy is a knowledge of the Tamil language on the part of managers and assistants. Without this the cooly can only complain through the intermediary of his Tyndal, the very man who has ill-used him, or perhaps through another Tyndal or a native clerk, neither of whom are likely correctly to interpret his statements.

351. Petty tyranny by Tyndals will always go on, and can only be kept in check by vigilance and knowledge of the language. Samples of such oppression have been given here and there in the evidence. For instance, an employer (1,286) says:—"I have known complaints made by coolies that they are punished by the Tyndals if they refuse to cut grass, and in a few genuine cases I have punished the Tyndals."

Opportunities for such practices are endless, and they are universal where natives are employed.

352. Education requires more attention than it receives. On the majority of estates it is wholly neglected, and where schools have been established the attendance is not compulsory and is generally very small. Considering the large number of children that are being brought up on estates, it seems to us that the Government might well provide buildings and teachers or other assistance.

353. A matter of importance is the proportion of women to men among the coolies. A few employers limit the proportion, but the majority do not, and many have expressed their willingness to take almost any number that can be procured, as they work well and reduce desertion. On most estates they are obliged to work, but this rule is not universal. There is no doubt that it is to the advantage of managers to encourage the importation of women, since they render the coolies more contented and willing to remain on the estates. This subject will be considered further in a later chapter.

THE PRESENT TERMS OF CONTRACT WITH INDIAN IMMIGRANTS.

Terms of contract have frequently varied.

354. The terms of contract with Indian immigrants, unlike those in force with the Chinese, have repeatedly varied since contracts were first regularly used, little more than thirty years ago. From a period, originally customary, of one year with a wage of 10 cents, the term was increased, as the effects of the Indian Acts of 1857 and 1859 were felt, first to eighteen months, and later to two years, the pay rising to 11 and 12 cents a day. In Ordinance IX of 1875, which (paragraph 241) was never in force, no maximum period was laid down, but from the clause (section 66) regulating the rates to be paid for redemption, five years was evidently contemplated. The maximum pay was not stated in the text of the Ordinance, but, in the form of contract appended as a Schedule, it was shewn as 12 cents for the first-class gang and 10 cents for the second-class gang, the apportionment into gangs being dependent on the will of the employer. Ordinance I of 1876 was similar in these respects to its predecessor, except that in the redemption clause no period was suggested. The Government of India disapproved of this part of the Ordinance, and enforced their views by taking advantage of a clause (section 3) of the Ordinance (by which all labour contracts were void if contrary to the law of India) to provide in Act V of 1877 (paragraph 239) a maximum period of three years and a minimum wage of 12 cents. In a letter (No. 242) dated 25th August, 1876, the Government of India laid down the maximum term of contract in the following words:—

"With respect to the period of indenture, I am to say that the Governor-General in Council regrets he is unable to consent to its remaining fixed as at present at five years. The concession of that term was made on the express understanding that a free back passage was to be given at the end of it to the immigrant: the requirement of a back passage has now been abandoned, and the term should, in the opinion of the Government of India, be reduced. Moreover, it was clearly shewn in the papers forwarded with your letter No. 3,696 dated 18th May, 1875, that the wages received by immigrants under indenture in the Straits Settlements are so much below the market rate as to make the customary two-year contract remunerative to the employer: and it would not be right to permit the term during which the immigrant is limited to those wages to exceed what is necessary to compensate the employer for the expense and risk incurred by him. Adverting, however, to the opinion expressed by the Government of Madras and to the circumstance that the new arrangements will impose some additional expense on the employers, the Governor-General in Council is willing to allow indentures for a maximum term of three years instead of two years, and this will accordingly be inserted among the terms of the contract in the measure to regulate emigration from India."

"Joint and several" contracts.

355. Previous to the enforcement of Act I of 1876, what was known as a "joint and several" contract appears to have been the rule. Under this system all the coolies of a gang signed a common document rendering themselves jointly liable for the default of any one of their number. This was, as pointed out by Mr. Justice FORD in a case arising under such a contract, "capable of a very inhuman application, even to the making one man in a hundred work out the defaults of ninety-nine absconders." On the coming into operation of Ordinance I of 1876, this system ceased, and since then there has been no change in the contract terms except that Ordinance V of 1884 authorised an increase in the minimum rate from 12 cents to 14 cents after the first year of indenture, provided the advances should have been repaid.

Present form of contract.

356. The form of contract now in use forms a Schedule to the Ordinance, and is as follows:—

"SCHEDULE B.

THIS CONTRACT made the _____ day of _____ A. D. 18____ under the Indian Immigration Ordinance 1884, between _____ hereunder described and hereinafter called "the Labourer" of the one part, and _____ called "the Employer" (which term shall include his executors, administrators and assigns) of the other part, WITNESSETH that it is hereby mutually agreed by and between the said parties hereto as follows:—

1. The Labourer will labour for the Employer as an Agricultural Labourer, in the Estate, in Province Wellesley, from the date hereof for the term

of thirty-six months (or until this contract is determined by one calendar month's notice on either side).

* 2. The Labourer will repay to the Employer the sum of \$ _____ being moneys advanced to or expended on behalf of the Labourer by the Employer, the particulars whereof are specified hereunder, and the Employer may deduct from the Labourer's wages a sum not exceeding \$1 a month until the said sum be thereby repaid.

3. The Employer will pay to the Labourer so long as this contract shall remain in force wages payable monthly at the rate of _____ cents a day (during the first twelve months of such period; and afterwards if and when the said sum of \$ _____ shall be repaid or tendered, at the rate of _____ cents a day).

4. This contract is subject to the provisions of the said Ordinance so far as the same are applicable, and shall be construed as though such provisions were expressly incorporated herein.

In witness whereof the said _____ have hereunto set their hands the day and year above written.

Signed _____

Signed _____

PARTICULARS OF ADVANCES.

1. Maintenance in India, ...	...	Rs.
2. Cost of Conveyance to port of embarkation, ...	...	"
3. Clothes, ...	...	"
4. Cash given in India, ...	...	"
5. Passage-money, ...	...	"
6. Maintenance on board ship, ...	...	"

Total Rs. _____

=Dollars _____

7. Maintenance in depôt after arrival, ... \$ _____
8. Cash given in the Colony of the Straits Settlements, ... "

Grand Total \$ _____

DESCRIPTION OF LABOURER.

Name.	Father's Name.	Age.	Sex.	Religion and Caste (if any).	Place of Abode in India.	General Description and Distinctive Marks.

[Endorsement to be made by the Indian Immigration Agent.]

I hereby certify that I have personally explained this contract to the said _____ and ascertained that he is fully aware of the terms thereof.

Indian Immigration Agent."

* This clause should be struck out in the case of a contract with an immigrant who is not under advances.

Full information should be given in contracts.

357. Now this contract is practically the only means open to the immigrant of authentically ascertaining the terms of his engagement. He can ask questions of the depôt Superintendent or the Indian Immigration Agent, but few men will do this, and if they do the answers cannot well embody the contents of the twenty-four printed pages of the Ordinance. His only other means of informing himself is to enquire of the recruiter, or to read the placards of the recruiting agent. Although a Tamil translation of the Ordinance was made some years ago it has not been published, and the conditions of service do not therefore exist in any document to which a scholar among immigrants can refer. It appears to us of the first importance then that the contract, of which he receives a copy in his own language, should set forth as fully as possible the terms under which he is to bind himself.

Detention over three years frequent.

358. The first clause binds the cooly to labour for thirty-six months, with no condition as to making up lost time, absence by sickness, and so forth. Yet in practice it is only a small minority of men who are released immediately on the expiration of the three years. Several causes prevent it, which are included in sections 44, 45, 58 and 95 of the Ordinance, but not a hint of these is given to the immigrant except by the allusion in clause 4 of the contract, which naturally conveys no idea to his mind.

Clauses authorising detention.

359. The clauses referred to run as follows:—

"44. The contract may be made for a definite term not exceeding three years or for an indefinite term terminable by either employer or Statute Immigrant on a month's notice, but any such term shall be exclusive of,—

- (a) Every day spent by the Statute Immigrant in prison or in going to or returning from prison;
- (b) Every day spent by the Statute Immigrant in going to attending before and returning from a Court in or about a case in which he shall be convicted of an offence, or in respect of which the Judge or Magistrate before whom a case is tried certifies that such attendance was not necessary for the ends of public justice;
- (c) Every period in respect of which an endorsement has been made on the contract by the Indian Immigration Agent under sections fifty-eight and ninety-five hereof;
- (d) Every whole day during which the Statute Immigrant shall without reasonable excuse neglect to labour. For the purposes of sub-sections (a) and (b) any part of the day shall be counted as one day.

"45. If the sum repayable by the Statute Immigrant be not paid at the end of the definite term, or in the case of a contract made for an indefinite term, at the end of the month's notice which may have been given by the Statute Immigrant, he may be required to labour until such sum has been paid in full.

In every such case the employer shall endorse on the contract the amount remaining due at the end of the term or notice, as the case may be, and shall produce such endorsement to the Indian Immigration Agent on his next visit for his allowance.

"58. If any Statute Immigrant is compelled to absent himself from work on account of sickness for a period or periods exceeding the total number of thirty days in any one year, and the employer, as soon as such number is exceeded, gives such Statute Immigrant a notice in writing to that effect, the Indian Immigration Agent shall from time to time endorse on the contract of such Statute Immigrant, after such enquiry as may be necessary, the number of days of absence in excess of thirty.

If the absence from work of a Statute Immigrant for any period is certified by a Medical Officer to be the direct result of the Statute Immigrant's intemperance, immorality, or wilful misconduct the Indian Immigration Agent may endorse on the contract of such Statute Immigrant, after such enquiry as may be necessary, the period of such absence.

"95. If upon any such inquiry made on the complaint of a Statute Immigrant the Indian Immigration Agent is of opinion that the complaint is untrue or frivolous, he shall enter in his book the particulars of such complaint and a short statement of the grounds of his opinion respecting it; and in such case he shall endorse on the contract of such complainant the number of days during which such complainant has been absent from work in consequence of such enquiry, and may impose on the complainant a fine not exceeding fifty cents, which may be deducted from the Statute Immigrant's wages and retained by his employer."

Imprisonment.

360. We consider the provisions of section 44 (a) and (b) to be just, but we consider that in every such case it should be necessary, in order to render the detention of the cooly legal, that the number of days to be added to the contract should be endorsed on the contract by the Judge or Magistrate before whom the case is tried.

Sickness.

361. Section 44 (c) enables the employer to detain a cooly after the expiration of his contract period for days lost by sickness, under conditions specified in section 58. Under the new terms we intend to propose we recommend that a cooly shall be allowed sixty days' sickness in hospital without endorsement on his contract. For absence through sickness in excess of this sixty days his contract should be endorsed by a Medical Officer appointed by the Government or by the Indian Immigration Agent, and for such days he may be detained after three years' service should he not have completed 720 days work or tasks.

Frivolous complaints.

362. Section 95, also referred to in section 44 (c), requires no comment.

Neglect to labour.

363. Section 44 (d) confers a power on the employer which is extensively used. Under this section every day less than six in the week on which the cooly

does not turn out to work can be recorded against him and added to the contract at the end of three years. The average cooly will not work more than five days in a week, and will, therefore, if the clause be fully enforced, be liable at the end of three years to a further detention of 156 days. That the prospect of such punishment has but little effect in inducing more regular work is shewn by the fact that its application, coupled with the grant of Sunday pay without work should six days' labour have been performed, has failed to increase the average number of days' work accomplished. We consider that the fact should be recognised that the average man does not, and will not, do more than twenty days' work in a month, and that should he have completed this number he should not be liable to punishment for neglect to labour. If a man fails to perform twenty days' work in a month, he should, on conviction before a Magistrate of neglect to labour, be liable to punishment, and the Magistrate should endorse on the contract the number of days less than twenty omitted to be worked.

364. We consider that the whole of these conditions should as far as possible be stated in the contract in language intelligible to the immigrant, who would then have it in his power to acquaint himself with the terms of his service, and would be aware from the first of the conditions of his contract.

Contract should set out conditions.

365. The terms of contract sanctioned by the Indian Immigration Ordinance of 1884 are a maximum term of three years, liable, however, under circumstances already described, to be extended for an indefinite period. Advances, limited to expenses incurred under the heads set out in the contract, to be recoverable from the immigrant by instalments not greater than \$1 per month, the total so recovered never to exceed \$12. The labourer not to be required to work more than six days a week, or nine hours a day. To receive not less than 12 cents a day for each day actually worked, and also for the seventh day should he have worked six full days in the week. The pay to be increased to 14 cents a day on the completion of one year's service, provided the advances have been paid off. The immigrant to be entitled to claim release from his contract on payment of all monies due to the employer, and in addition a sum, representing compensation for the unexpired portion of his contract, "of \$1 for every month of the unexpired portion of the first year and of \$2 for every such month of the second and subsequent years, of the original term of contract" (section 50).

Present terms of contract.

366. In considering the subject of contract terms, the question which first suggests itself is whether such provisions are necessary at all. Many witnesses are strongly in favour of dispensing with contracts and adopting a system of free emigration similar to that of Ceylon, where no contract is made, and so far as the planter is concerned his coolies are only under a verbal monthly agreement. An employer requiring labour sends a Tyndal or Kanganani to India, giving him an advance to pay expenses, and the man returns with the coolies, and in due course repays the advance. By what agreement the coolies are bound to the Kanganani, who has to recover their passage money from them, is not known, the employer refraining from any interference with details.

Necessity of contracts.

367. Such a system has many advantages to the employer. It is, however, at present inapplicable to the Malay Peninsula for several reasons, notably the excessive scarcity of labour. Without some stronger hold, such as can only be obtained by a legal contract, it is probable that Kanganis and coolies would frequently transfer themselves to what they thought the best market rather than to their legitimate employer. Then the distance from India is greater, and the expenses of the journey much heavier, rendering larger advances necessary. Hitherto also the obstructions of the Negapatam recruiters have formed an obstacle to such importation, which has generally failed in consequence. There is also the danger of placing the cooly in the hands of the Kanganani to the extent implied by such an arrangement where it is not known how much the Kanganani recovers from the cooly.

Ceylon system inapplicable.

368. Desirable as it may be to render emigration absolutely free and spontaneous, we see no way of at present accomplishing this end, and it appears to us necessary to sanction a contract of specified length, so as to enable the employer to recover by the labour of the cooly the sum advanced for the expenses of his importation.

Contracts are necessary.

369. Again, many employers argue that some system of contract is indispensable, for unless they can be absolutely certain of having a labour force bound down to them and at command at certain seasons, there is risk of losing an entire crop. Were the supply of labour ample the cogency of this argument would cease, for

Labour force under contract necessary.

377. In the foregoing Chapters we have enumerated what appear to us the Defects summarised.
faults of the system both in India and in the Colony and Native States, and in some
cases indicated remedies. Briefly the defects are the two following:—

Second. Insufficient attractions, as compared with other countries, and those attractions advertised too little.

378. Broadly, two main remedies present themselves; first, to set the machinery Main remedies. of recruiting in India on a footing satisfactory in every respect; and then to render the condition of service in the Straits so attractive as to compete successfully with other countries. The former can be carried out by Government: the latter can be, to a limited extent, enforced by Government, by legislation and inspection, but must always rest mainly in the hands of the employers themselves.

379. To effect improvement in India, the first step is to destroy the existing competition between recruiting firms, and this can only be done by the Government taking the matter into its own hands. For this purpose we recommend the appointment by the Straits Settlements Government of an officer, who might be styled Agent-General for Emigration, to reside in India, and to be responsible for everything connected with recruiting, examination, and shipping of coolies for the Straits.

380. He must be an officer of such standing, socially and officially, as to enable him to deal on equal terms with the higher Indian officials with whom he will necessarily be much brought in contact. He should also, if possible, be well acquainted with Southern India, its people and their languages, and he must command the confidence of the Governments of Madras and the Straits.

38r. Though the Agent-General's active duties will be in India, he should periodically visit the Colony and Native States, to acquaint himself with local requirements, reporting after such visits to the Straits Settlements Government on any points requiring attention.

382. The office of Indian Immigration Agent for the Colony to be unchanged for the present. Probably, after the new system has been for some time in full working order, it will be possible to combine the offices of Agent-General and Indian Immigration Agent, as the Agent-General should then be able to spare enough time to carry out an annual inspection of every estate in the Colony and Native States. For the first few years the Agent-General will have to be almost constantly in India, and these inspections should, therefore, be left as now in the hands of the Indian Immigration Agent.

383. There should be an Assistant Indian Immigration Agent for Singapore, who would also take charge of Malacca; and an Assistant Immigration Agent for each Native State which desires to import statute immigrants.

384. It is indispensable that the Indian Immigration Agent and Assistant Indian Immigration Agents should speak the Tamil language thoroughly well. Without this qualification, their inspections cannot be efficient.

385. The depôt in India to remain on its present footing under charge of Depôts.
a Superintendent; and the Penang depôt to remain as at present.

386. Recruiting to be on the general lines of Mr. MACGREGOR'S Memorandum Recruiting- of 30th August, 1890. (Appendix J). Some valuable suggestions by Captain MENZELL are also appended to this Report (Appendix K). Not having visited India, we cannot advise on the details of this subject, which must be left in the hands of the Agent-General, but the following is the general outline of what we consider desirable.

387. Every possible means must be adopted to give publicity to the conditions of emigration and to the fact that emigrants are required.

Principle on
which to de-
termine pay.

Cost of living.

Analysis of pay lists.

Ordinance rates in Na-tive States.

Rise of pay sometimes deferred.

388. The greatest care must be taken that every emigrant is correctly informed as to the work and terms to which he is going. Recruiters should be furnished with printed hand-bills giving all particulars of the various terms offered. The Tamil forms of contract which coolies will have to sign should include all important particulars and be available for inspection in India.

389. Medical examination should be, so far as possible, made in the recruiting districts to avoid loss on transit to the port of embarkation.

390. Arrangements for transit from India to Penang and States may remain as at present.

391. Private recruiters, the *bonâ fide* servants of employers, should be allowed, provided they obtain licenses through the Agent-General, but for the protection of their employers the coolies recruited by them should also be obliged to pass through the Government depôts.

Emigration to Borneo. 392. As emigration to Sarawak and British North Borneo has been sanctioned by the Government of India, which desires it to be conducted "under the supervision, and to a certain extent through the agency" of the Straits Settlements Government, it may be presumed that the Agent-General will also act for Borneo. Coolies for Borneo will require some supervision on the part of the Indian Immigration Agent in Penang, and for transshipment at Singapore a depôt will doubtless have to be established, which will be best placed under the supervision of the Singapore Assistant Indian Immigration Agent. A letter from Sir E. C. BUCK to the Secretary to the Government of British North Borneo states:—"The Government of India would desire that the agencies employed for recruiting labourers in India and conveying them to Borneo should be subject to the approval of the Straits Government, and that that Government should be placed in a position to assure the Government of India from time to time, by the exercise of such powers of inspection as may be necessary, of the sufficiency of the laws in force in Borneo for the protection of Indian labourers and generally of their satisfactory condition and treatment."

393. We would suggest that the Indian Immigration Agent or one of his Assistants might carry out the inspection thus indicated. The withdrawal from his charge of the depôt in Negapatam, and of occasional other work connected with India, will give him leisure for this duty.

Further requisite changes. 394. With the staff organised as above, recruiting and inspection will be provided for. It remains to consider what steps can be taken to render service in the Straits more attractive than at present. The discontent caused by disappointment due to wrong or insufficient information in India being remedied, the only further important improvements that can be effected are a reduction of the term of contract, an increase of pay, or the non-liability of the cooly for any of the expenses of his introduction. Any or all of these would no doubt be substantial attractions to the immigrant.

395. We have already, in paragraph 361, expressed our view that all that can advantageously be done by law is to lay down a minimum rate of pay such that a cooly doing an average amount of work shall be able to live well and save a small sum; and that such a maximum period of indenture shall be fixed as will secure the cooly's services for no longer than is necessary to recoup the employer for the outlay and risk incurred in importing him.

Sunday pay. 396. The object of the present rule, by which pay is drawn for Sunday if six days' work has been done in the week, is to induce coolies to work steadily. It has only been partially successful and may well be abolished.

Recovery of advances. 397. The present rate of wage does not allow of stoppages to recover debt. It therefore becomes a question whether it should be so raised as to provide a margin for such stoppages, or whether the stoppages should be forbidden. There is much to be said on both sides. The offer of higher pay is likely to attract more recruits, and even after arrival the cooly on the higher pay will probably consider himself better off, though after deducting advances he might not really be so. On the other hand, by landing the cooly free from debt, a strong incentive to desertion is removed, and a chance of discontent is absent, since a man finds himself actually receiving the full amount he earns. On the whole, we think the latter arguments outweigh the former, and advise that the minimum rate be fixed as proposed in the terms of contract laid down in paragraph 390 with the proviso that no advances be recovered from the immigrant. An exception to this proviso may be made in the

case of cash actually advanced to the recruit for his own use. Such advances should obviously be recoverable, but even here a maximum of say \$5 should be fixed.

398. In determining the maximum length of contract, the fact should not be overlooked that sickness among coolies is much greater in the first year than at any subsequent period. The death returns attached to the Annual Reports of the Indian Immigration Agent shew that, during the last six years, the general death-rate for the Colony and Native States calculated for the whole period has been 3.03 per cent. per annum.* This is rather less than the death-rate for George Town, which has been about 3.19 per cent. for 1889 and 1890. The death-rate for indentured immigrants in their first year of service is about 5.75 per cent.; in the second year 2.79; 1.35 in the third; and 0.33 among those of over three years. Reducing the term may therefore somewhat increase the death-rate and sickness, but this effect should be counterbalanced by the better class of cooly we expect to receive, and the beneficial effect of the shorter contract and higher pay.

399. In abolishing the present practice of giving Sunday pay, we do away with the only reward of the steady worker. To supply its place we recommend that seven hundred and twenty days' work or tasks shall represent the contract, and that a man shall be free to leave the estate when he has completed this number. Thus if he works six days in a week, he can finish his contract in two years and one hundred and ten days, and when this becomes generally known, it will be found a powerful incentive to work. An ultimate limit of time of three years should, however, be laid down, beyond which the cooly shall not be detained, whether he has finished seven hundred and twenty days' work or not, except under the conditions already laid down in Chapter XVIII.

400. For convenience, the terms of contract we propose should be laid down by law are summarized below:—

(1) Period of contract not to exceed seven hundred and twenty days' work, or tasks, or a maximum of three years.

This maximum of three years may be extended under the following circumstances and no others, by the number of days endorsed in each case.

- (a) Every day spent in prison, or going to and returning from prison.
- (b) Days spent in going to, attending before, and returning from a Court (as in section 44 (b)).
- (c) Every day absent as a deserter, provided he shall have been convicted of desertion by a Magistrate.
- (d) Days on which he shall have been convicted by a Magistrate of neglect to labour under conditions described in paragraph 353.
- (e) Sickness in hospital as in paragraph 351 in excess of sixty days.
- (f) Frivolous complaints as in section 95.

No detention to be legal unless the number of days is endorsed on the contract; in cases (a), (b), (c) and (d) by a Magistrate, in (e) by a Medical Officer appointed by Government or by the Indian Immigration Agent, and in (f) by the Indian Immigration Agent.

The immigrant to be let go under all circumstances as soon as he has finished his seven hundred and twenty days' work or tasks.

(2) No advances to be recoverable except cash certified by an officer duly authorised by Government to have been actually paid to the immigrant; such advances to be recovered by instalments not exceeding 50 cents in any one month.

(3) Pay to be for actual days worked only.

The minimum rates of pay to be:—

For males over sixteen years old, 14 cents per diem or task for the first four hundred and eighty days' work or tasks.

Sixteen cents per diem or task for the remaining two hundred and forty days' work or tasks.

For women, 10 cents per diem throughout.

The rise from 14 to 16 cents to take place after the completion of four hundred and eighty days' work or tasks, or after the lapse of two years, whichever occurs first.

In case four hundred and eighty days' work shall not have been done, the rise

* Total Number of Arrivals 1884-1889, 18,340.
Deaths 1,666.

Percentage of Deaths to Arrivals, 9.08, but this represents three years, and rate per annum is therefore 3.03.

shall nevertheless be given after two years, which however may be extended by the number of days endorsed on contract for same causes as in 1 (a) to (f).

(4) . Not to be bound to work for more than six days' in one week, or more than six consecutive hours, or more than nine hours in one day.

For extra work otherwise than in the factory, to be paid at the rate of 2 cents an hour.

For extra work in the factory, to be paid 2 cents as at present (section 47).

(5) Redemption as in section 50, but on payment of \$1 for every thirty days or portion of thirty days of the unexpired portion of contract, but under no circumstances to be less than \$12.

(6) Task work to be recognised in contract as already recommended for Chinese.

Changes effected in condition of cooly.

401. By the terms of contract which we have sketched, the following improvements are effected in the condition of the cooly. The number of days' work which he has to perform is reduced from nine hundred and thirty-nine to seven hundred and twenty, while at the same time a fixed period is laid down beyond which he can never be detained unless his contract has been endorsed by a Magistrate or a responsible officer. The steady worker has it in his power to free himself from his contract without working on Sundays, in two years and one hundred and ten days; he can also earn the higher rate of pay in less time than at present. The immigrant will not be required to refund the cost of his passage or any of the expenses of his introduction, and the only advance recoverable from him will be cash certified by a Government officer to have been actually received by the cooly himself. He will be liable to no punishment for neglect to labour so long as he works twenty days a month, whereas at present he is liable for every day less than six in the week; moreover his liability will depend on conviction before a Magistrate instead of as at present being virtually in the hands of the employer. The alteration in the pay will ensure that the average worker shall from the first have sufficient to live well upon. The pay of the best worker has been slightly increased, their reward being found rather in the shorter period after which they will become free to work where they please. The difference in this respect can perhaps be best judged by a comparison of the earnings under the present and proposed systems.

Comparison of present and proposed terms.

402. A cooly doing twenty days' work and earning twenty Sundays' pay per year will, under the present terms, earn as follows:—

First year, two hundred and sixty days at 12 cents =	\$31 20
Second do. do. do., 14 "	= \$36 40
Third do. do. do., 14 "	= \$36 40
	<u>\$104 00</u>

From this a sum is deducted for advances of about ... \$8 00

Total received by cooly, ... \$96 00

Under the proposed terms, such a man will receive:—

First four hundred and eighty days, at 14 cents =	\$67 20
Last two hundred and forty days, at 16 cents =	\$38 40
	<u>\$106 00</u>

From which will be deducted a sum which may be expected not usually to exceed Rs. 2 or 3, say at the most \$2 00

Total received, ... \$104 00

Thus after three years under the proposed system the cooly will be free, and will have received \$104.00, while under the present contract he would only have received \$96, and would still have two hundred and nineteen days' work to make good, which would probably take him eleven months to complete.

403. The pay of the best class of worker will be as follows under the two sets of conditions. Supposing a man to work three hundred and thirteen days in the year, he will have done six hundred and twenty-six days at the end of the second year, leaving

under the proposed terms ninety-four still to accomplish; thus, allowing for Sundays, he will finish his contract in two years and one hundred and ten days.

At this period he will have earned under the present system:—

1st year 365 days @ 12 cents,	... \$43.80
2nd " 365 " 14 "	... 51.10
3rd " 110 " 14 "	... 15.40
	<u>\$110.30</u>
Less advances	8.00
Total received, ...	<u>\$102.30</u>

Under the proposed conditions he will have received \$103.60 as before, only \$1.30 more than under the existing contract, but will be a free man instead of being bound by a contract for two hundred and fifty-five more days.

404. These figures shew that the immigrant under the conditions we propose will be in a materially better position than at present. If he be but an average worker he will at the end of his contract have received more pay than he now does; while the good worker, though he will at the moment of his release have received very little more than he would under existing conditions, will have the advantage that he can for the remainder of the period of three years enjoy the independent position and preferable circumstances of the free labourer, whereas under the present contract he would still be bound to contract conditions and wages.

405. Whether these improved conditions will attract indentured labour to the country in numbers greater than do the present terms can only be ascertained by experience. We think that when they have been long enough in use to become known they should do so, for they are very much fairer to the cooly, and are such that the average or fair worker should at no time be in receipt of less pay than will amply suffice for his support. We consider therefore that they are all that should be insisted upon by the law, and that any further attractions, should they be found necessary, must be offered by the employers themselves.

406. The fact that the cost of introducing each Indian immigrant has been hitherto in excess of and will amount to \$12 and this charge falls wholly on the employer is very often left out of the calculation when estimating the terms on which the employers here obtain their indentured Indian labour. But because the cooly does not receive any part of this money the charge none the less falls on the importer, and in the course of a seven hundred and twenty days' agreement becomes with the cost of hospital expenses an addition of about two cents a day on every cooly's wages. Beyond this charge the importer suffers a very often considerable loss from death, desertion, or expenses of arrest, and no allowance is made for this: but in making a comparison between the wages of free and indentured coolies all these circumstances must be considered. In this connection, too, we may draw attention to the fact that during the last ten years the planters of Province Wellesley have imported at their own expense sixteen thousand two hundred and fifty-one Indian immigrants.

407. A difficult question is the settlement of a minimum rate of wages for the Native States, where the prices of food vary to such an extent that, while on an estate like Gula the prices of provisions are not higher than in Province Wellesley, on other and remoter estates they are greatly in excess of these rates. Under these circumstances the fairest possible arrangement would be to fix one minimum rate of pay throughout the Colony and Native States, and to enact at the same time that the employer should supply the principal articles of food to the coolies at rates laid down by the Government. The difficulties of carrying this out would be considerable, but we think that some attempt might well be made to do it, as the only alternative is to allow matters to remain on their present footing, with an increased wage to all Indian immigrants in the Native States which may very unfairly affect the more accessible estates whilst it may be insufficient to compensate the cooly in remoter localities for the increased cost of provisions. Should it be found impossible to arrange thus for a universal wage, we would recommend that the terms be identical with those we have recommended for the Colony, except in the matter of wages, which in the Native States should be not more than three cents higher in every case than that of the Colony. Power should be reserved for the Government to reduce this excess rate, or remit it entirely, on any estate so favourably situated that the prices of provisions are low.

enough, compared with those ruling in Penang, to justify the minimum rate in force in the Colony. Similar reduction should be made at any estate of which the manager is prepared to supply provisions at Penang rates. The Native States to which we refer are Perak, Selangor, Sungei Ujong, Negri Sembilan and Johor.

CHAPTER XX.

MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING INDIAN LABOUR.

Tamil edition of Ordinance. 408. We think it advisable that Ordinance V of 1884, amended according to our suggestions, should be published in the Tamil language.

Native States inspections. 409. We consider that, in the absence of special reason for more frequent visits in particular cases, the inspections by the Indian Immigration Agent in the Native States might be made once a year instead of twice, as at present ordered.

Alterations suggested in the Ordinance. 410. In addition to such alterations of Ordinance V of 1884 as may be rendered necessary by the adoption of the recommendations already made, we would call attention to the following points:—

Section 25. We think that this section should be amended so as to provide that the cost of redemption of a cooly within a dépôt in the Colony or Native States should be a fixed sum of \$24.

Section 28. Under this clause power should be specifically given to the Indian Immigration Agent or his Assistant to prosecute a man who refuses to enter into a contract or to repay his advances. At present this is held to be the duty of the employer, but as the man has not signed a contract, he has not, strictly speaking, any employer, and the person with whom he has engaged to contract may be in a Native State and unable to prosecute.

Section 33. The penalty of imprisonment should be awarded for this offence. At present a large sum can be received for an immigrant smuggled out of the Colony, and a fine, unless heavier than will usually be inflicted by a Magistrate, is an insufficient deterrent.

Section 39. We recommend that stamp duties be abolished and that all revenue connected with Indian immigration be for the future derived from one source only, namely, the charges for recruiting and for the use of the dépôts in India and in the Colony.

Section 52. To give the Indian Immigration Agent full power to prevent the revival of the system mentioned in paragraph 338, the following alteration should be made in the last part of this section. For the words "clauses (a) (b) and (c)" read "clauses (a) (b) (c) and (d)."

Returns. 411. It is desirable that quarterly returns of discharges should be rendered to the Indian Immigration Agent by all employers, and that some returns which are now voluntarily rendered by most employers should be made compulsory. We therefore recommend that section 64 of Ordinance V of 1884 be so amended that the Governor shall have power to prescribe such returns as he may deem necessary, monthly or otherwise.

Tamil lodging-houses. 412. We think that, to assist the Indian Immigration Agent in enforcing sections 31-33 of the Ordinance, it might be laid down that licenses for lodging-houses for Tamils should only be issued with the approval of the Indian Immigration Agent, and should be withdrawn should he be satisfied that they are being used as dépôts for emigrants.

Record of tasks performed should be posted. 413. It would be of advantage if arrangements could be made for posting up monthly, on a board or otherwise, in a position where it would be readily accessible to all immigrants, the exact number of days or tasks that each cooly has worked in the last month, and since the beginning of his contract.

Negapatam subsidy. 414. It has been suggested to us that it would be an advantage if under the Negapatam steamer contract, the Governments contributing to the subsidy were entitled to a certain fixed number of passages yearly, in addition to being, as at present, entitled to a reduction in the cost of passage. It is urged that whatever may be the advantages to the Colony, from and to the ports of which these steamers run, the Native States do not receive a fair equivalent for their respective contributions.

415. We think it would be a great advantage to the labour supply generally, and especially to the Native States, if the contract could be so modified as to allow each contributing State the right to bring over a certain number of passengers free, without additional payment, and perhaps a certain number without other charge than the cost of rations on board ship (Rs. 2 per head), when space is available. It is clear to us that a great deal would be gained if the numbers now imported by private individuals could be supplemented by immigrants introduced by the Government: and, if the subsidy, or a part of it took the form of a guaranteed payment for the right to a certain number of passages, we think it would be a decided improvement on the present conditions.

PART IV.

GENERAL.

CHAPTER XXI.

MISCELLANEOUS POINTS REQUIRING ATTENTION.

416. There are some points which we have not dealt with in the preceding Chapters, as they apply to all nationalities and hence are better considered separately.

417. One of these is medical attendance, which might be put in some respects Medical on a better footing. On large estates the present arrangements would work well if attendance. qualified apothecaries could in all cases be obtained, but this is not the case with small establishments, which can ill afford the expenses of a hospital and attendant. Even if the provision of these be enforced the result can rarely be satisfactory; the hospital attendant will be necessarily on a low salary and of an inferior class, the rarely-used medicines will deteriorate, and the whole establishment will in fact be regarded by its proprietor as an unnecessary and costly burden.

418. A suggestion in the following terms was made by the Resident Councillor of Malacca, Mr. HERVEY, in discussing the draft Chinese Agricultural Labourers' Ordinance.

"I am disposed to think it better that Government should undertake the medical attendance, appointing a dresser where required, to be paid by the employer, and supplying the medicines at cost price. The employer might pay the salary to Government, who could pay the dresser; this would guarantee a better class of dresser, and better attendance, and the employer would gain in getting the medicines cost price, against having to pay a rather better salary for the dresser than he might otherwise have to do."

We think that a system somewhat on these lines might be adopted with great advantage for all nationalities, and the following is the general outline which we would suggest for consideration.

419. Any number of employers of less than (say) one hundred men each may, with the previous sanction of Government, provide a joint hospital common to them all; the size to be based on the total number of coolies employed by all the estates concerned. Such hospitals to be of the class required by the present rules for estate hospitals, and the qualifications of their medical officers regulated accordingly.

420. Employers of one hundred contract coolies or over to provide their own hospitals under present rules.

421. Estates employing fifty contract coolies or over, and under one hundred, as at present to provide first class hospitals if more than five miles by road from a Government hospital or first class joint hospital; or second class hospitals if within such distance.

422. Employers of under fifty contract coolies to provide first class hospitals (as at present) if more than five miles from a Government or first class joint hospital; or to provide second class hospitals if more than two miles or less than five (by road) from a first class joint hospital or Government hospital; but they need provide no hospital if within two miles of a Government hospital or joint hospital of either class.

423. No hospital to contain less than four beds, and a minimum floor and space to be provided.

424. The number of estates using a joint hospital shall not be too great for its medical officer to be able to attend a muster of the coolies on each estate at least once a week, and this he shall be bound to do.

425. Every hospital which is not in charge of a qualified apothecary or dresser shall be under the supervision of a fully qualified medical officer who shall visit it periodically.

426. Every such medical officer shall be appointed and paid by Government from general revenue, and shall be the servant of Government. All the estates served shall contribute in proportion to the number of contract Indian and Chinese coolies employed on such estates, subject to a maximum payment per cooly, which might be fixed at twenty-five cents per annum.

427. The apothecary or dresser in charge of a joint hospital to be always a Government servant appointed and paid by Government, his salary being recovered from the contributories. Medicines and other necessities also to be supplied by the Government at the expense of contributories.

428. The qualification of every apothecary or dresser in charge of a private hospital must be certified by a duly authorised Government medical officer, and the Governor shall have power, on cause being shewn, to require the removal of any such officer, and, should he deem it necessary, to appoint a medical officer in his place, whose salary shall be paid by the employer.

429. The Governor to have power at any time to appoint a medical officer should the employer not do so after being required in writing to make such appointment.

430. These proposals should not interfere with any special arrangement sanctioned by Government by which adjacent estates should maintain a common hospital.

Medical attendance for free coolies.

431. Employers of free labour should be permitted to share in hospitals, attendance, and so forth, on the same terms as others, should they desire to do so. We think it advisable that all employers of large numbers of free labourers should be held responsible for the proper medical treatment of their coolies, and the Government might have power to compel an employer, whose men are working at more than five miles from a Government or joint hospital to which he contributes, to provide such hospital or other means of medical treatment as may seem reasonable, under a penalty for neglect. In all cases where such an employer's labourers are treated in a Government hospital the employer should be responsible for the hospital charges of his men.

Cost of inspection should be borne by Government.

432. It should be understood that in the foregoing recommendations regarding the expenses to be borne by employers we allude only to expenses which may fairly be classed as medical attendance. We consider that the Government should defray all expenses of medical inspection of estates, and should pay such a proportion of the salaries of Colonial Surgeons or other inspecting medical officers as will cover these duties; but the estate should pay for its own medical attendance, and when the same individual is employed both as inspecting officer and medical attendant the total expenses of his employment should be divided between Government and employer in such proportion as will fairly represent the two duties.

Every class of labour should be inspected alike.

433. Wherever in the foregoing Chapters we have advocated Government inspection or other supervision, we intend that it should apply to all classes of employment in which coolies are employed in large gangs. Thus mining and contractor's works would be included as well as agricultural labour.

Knowledge of languages.

434. We have already drawn attention to the importance of managers and their assistants being acquainted with the language of their coolies of whatever nationality they may be. Attention to this point will go further to check oppression by tyndals, and thus popularize estates, than almost any other precaution that can be taken.

Sunday labour.

435. Several employers are of opinion that Sunday labour should be prohibited by law. There can be no dispute as to the necessity of one day of rest in the week, but it is urged that to prescribe which day this shall be might cause inconvenience and loss, and that the coolies employed not being Christians, there is no reason why they should rest on Sunday more than any other day. We think that, if only for the sake of the overseers, it is desirable that Sunday should be the day observed, and this is now the practice on most estates; but seeing that no law regarding Sunday labour is in force in the Colony or Native States for any other class of labour, we do not recom-

mend its introduction. If at any future time a general law on the subject be introduced, there appears no reason why it should not be extended to the cooly class, whatever their employment.

436. Both with Chinese and Indian coolies, there is risk that the man originally recruited may not be eventually delivered to the employer, but that another may be substituted. A simple check which would enable such substitution to be detected with absolute certainty is to take a print of one or both of the man's thumbs when he is first examined on recruitment. On arrival in the Straits another print would be taken and a glance at the two would shew whether he was the original man or not, since the thumbs of two men are hardly or never similar. Check on substitution.

437. We have so far only considered the three sources of labour supply at present in use, namely, China, Java and Southern India. Our attention has been drawn to the possibility of obtaining coolies from Japan and Northern India. Other sources of labour.

438. As regards Japan, we have no definite information, nor is any recommendation possible without a visit to the country. Japan.

439. Northern India is already extensively drawn upon by British and Foreign Colonies. In addition to St. Lucia and the lesser West Indian Islands, there are emigration agencies at Calcutta, for Demerara, Natal, Trinidad, Jamaica, Grenada, Fiji and Surinam; while until 1888, in which year emigration to the French Colonies was prohibited by the Government of India, Guadeloupe and Martinique also obtained labour from the same source. Thus we should have to face great competition in starting a recruiting agency in the North of India, and further difficulties are indicated in the following extract from a letter (No. 24 E) dated 5th January, 1891, from Sir E. C. BUCK to the Secretary to the Government of British North Borneo:—

"Apart from the difficulty of procuring suitable agricultural emigrants from the Mussulman classes of the Northern Provinces, the Government of India foresee serious objections to recruitment on the Straits system being extended beyond the limits of the Madras Presidency. The people of that Presidency alone are in the habit of emigrating to the Malayan region, and are familiar to the officials of the Straits Settlements, under whose general supervision recruits will be obtained. Emigration from other provinces of India to countries beyond the sea proceeds exclusively under Act XXI of 1883; the introduction into them of free recruitment would be objectionable, and the transport of labourers from the Punjab or the North-Western Provinces through Madras ports to Borneo would be attended by practical difficulties. His Excellency the Governor-General in Council desires, therefore, that labour emigration to Borneo should, at any rate for the present, be confined to the Madras Presidency, and conducted exclusively from the Port of Negapatam, from which emigration to the Straits Settlements proceeds."

440. These difficulties could be faced in case of necessity, but it does not seem desirable to extend our recruiting ground beyond the Madras Presidency until we find that every effort fails to procure sufficient labour from that source, which we have no reason to suppose will be the case for at all events a long time to come.

441. It would be of advantage if pay were issued weekly instead of monthly as at present. This would render it less easy for the improvident to be without the means of purchasing necessities. On the other hand, the fact that the coolies had been paid up to date might tend to encourage desertion. The pay books need not be made up on each occasion, as an instalment on account could be given at the weekly payment. We do not, however, think it desirable for the present to enforce any change in the existing practice of monthly payments. Weekly pay.

442. There is a widespread system of labour employment on the co-operative system in the Native States, and with this system we do not think it well to interfere. It is confined exclusively to mining, and the principle of it is that the labourers are partners of the adventure, risking their labour for a possible gain, while the advancer who finds the necessary funds for the undertaking risks his money. Co-operative system.

443. It has been suggested that the law regarding Indian and Chinese labourers might be combined in a single Ordinance. We do not think that there is any advantage to be gained by this change for the present, and as it would present serious difficulties, we do not recommend that it be considered. Amalgamation of Indian and Chinese Ordinances.

444. With reference to section 13 of Ordinance III of 1877, we are of opinion that the words "to serve any other person whether within or without the Colony" should be altered to "to serve any other person whether within or without the Colony or any other place". Alteration of Ordinance.

omitted in the 4th and 5th lines. Until recently the Court held that it was necessary to prove there was actually another employer, and although this decision has since been overruled, it appears to us that it should be sufficient to prove "that the person knowingly seduced or attempted to seduce from his service or employment a labourer bound under a written contract of service for a period of not less than one month" in order to obtain a conviction. We are further of opinion that this section should be so amended that a person convicted of a second offence under its provisions should be imprisoned, without the option of a fine, for a period which may extend to six months, in addition to the same fine as for the first offence.

Discharge tickets.

445. A suggestion has been made to us for the introduction of a system of discharge tickets. Taking into consideration the large free population and the great facilities that exist for landing on and leaving the various Settlements of the Colony, we think that such a system would be found impracticable. Such an arrangement has been introduced amongst the Chinese in some of the Native States, and works well there, where the geographical and other circumstances are widely different.

CHAPTER XXII.

GENERAL.

446. We have hitherto treated Chinese, Javanese and Tamils separately, and have not indicated any preference for either. Nor have we discussed what share Government, representing the community in general, may fairly be expected to take in introducing and working the arrangements we have recommended.

447. This consideration brings us to the question of the objects with which labour is introduced.

Objects of introducing labour.

448. Broadly, there are two main objects—immediate benefit by an increased production with the consequent improved revenue from whatever source derived; and ulterior benefit by the establishment of a settled population and the resulting encouragement of permanent industries. The first may be trusted to take care of itself and left to the individuals interested in it, who will reap the gains at once. The second may not be directly or immediately remunerative and is a legitimate object for Government care and expenditure. The first object is sufficiently met by a flow of coolies who come and labour for a while and pass on. The second necessitates the import of wives and families, as well as grants of land and similar encouragement.

449. We are here speaking of the Colony and Native States considered as a whole, and for the present we use the term Government in a general sense, and not as indicating the Government of the Colony or any particular Native State.

Classes of production.

450. We have two classes of product, mineral and agricultural, which seem adapted to the two classes of labour.

451. Mineral, represented by tin, is unstable. Its producers cannot remain in the same locality, but must move from place to place. Moreover, there is in the background a possibility of the exhaustion of supply and collapse of the industry. This alone would render it an unsuitable occupation for settlers. Such an industry seems best carried out by Chinese, who always come here with the fixed intention of returning to China, do not settle, and are well adapted for the work. Every facility and encouragement should be given them to come. They are good workers and indirectly contribute largely to the revenue, though on the other hand they are inclined to be disorderly, cost more in police and supervision, and give more trouble.

452. The other class of production is agricultural, consisting mainly of sugar, tapioca, gambier, and pepper, while coffee is likely to become important as well. These industries form the real future of the country. In agricultural work also the Chinaman does well, but he does not bring women, and the supply of coolies requires to be constantly maintained by fresh importations. The Tamil on the other hand will bring his wife and family, and if encouraged will settle permanently. Moreover, he is a British subject, accustomed to British rule, is well-behaved and docile.

Javanese.

453. Javanese could also be made into permanent settlers.

Government share in immigration.

454. Government may do a great deal in encouraging Chinese, Tamil and Javanese settlers, provided they are accompanied by their wives and families, as it is to such immigration that we must chiefly look for a settled agricultural population.

455. One Government duty in every case is the protection of immigrants and the Government may well bear the whole cost of this in consideration of the direct and indirect benefits conferred on the community.

456. Beyond this, Government may undertake to put immigration on such a footing that importers shall not pay more than a fair price for their labour. In the case of a fleeting population the expenses of the necessary measures should be recovered from the importers, but with permanent settlers, of whatever nationality, a part of the cost may fall also on the Government.

457. The actual expenses of importation, such as passage, maintenance, and so on, should not generally be borne by Government except in the case of labourers for Government works, or of permanent colonists.

458. A step towards establishing a fixed population would be to insist on a certain proportion of women to men being brought over by every importer. The Indian Government obliges Mauritius to take twenty-five per cent. and every other Colony forty per cent. of women, and this rule is rigorously carried out. We might, without enforcing any such rule as the above, undertake that an employer who imports more than, say, twenty-five per cent. of women, shall be entitled to passages at the expense of Government for all in excess of twenty-five per cent. up to a maximum of fifty per cent. in all. Such an undertaking, if coupled with facilities for obtaining land on easy terms after the expiration of contracts, would go far to encourage settlement.

459. But Government can go further and import families as colonists, as was done by Perak in 1886. In that year twenty-four Tamil families were imported and given allotments near Telok Anson on terms given in detail in the evidence (2918). The experiment was too small to have a fair trial, and was expensive, but were it repeated on a large scale under efficient supervision, there would be a good probability of success. It is important for any such scheme that the land selected should be near a town, for Tamils dislike isolation; and that the immigrants should be provided with work by which to earn a living for the first few years during which they cannot sustain themselves by cultivation alone.

460. A similar experiment with Chinese families might, we think, be tried, with at least an equal chance of succeeding.

461. One great complaint of planters is the competition for labour to carry out Government works. It is pointed out that contractors can afford to pay any wages necessary, since they cover themselves by a margin of profit in the prices they charge and can thus invariably outbid the planters, whose estates are often suddenly drained of men when any large work is started in their vicinity. Planters complain that the Government contractors very seldom on these occasions import their own coolies, and at most but a small proportion, while they trust to obtaining a supply in the open market, which, under present circumstances, is recruited largely from estates. In fact, "open market" is a mere phrase, the demand for labour being so great that there is really no such thing. This is a grievance which has increased rapidly owing to the growth of public works, which can be roughly seen from Appendix L, shewing the whole expenditure in the Colony and Native States on public works for the last ten years.

462. The suggested remedy, which we consider a good one, is that Government should make it a condition of all large contracts that the contractor shall import a proportion of his labour, whether Chinese or Tamil. This would have the double advantage of preventing the draining of estates and introducing more labour into the country.

463. So far we have treated the Governments of the Colony and Native States as though they were one, but the circumstances are very different.

464. The Colonial Government appears to have incurred a net expenditure in 1889 of about \$20,000, which included \$10,000 contributed to the subsidy of the Negapatam steamers. During eleven months of 1890, the expenses were about \$15,000, of which nearly \$9,000 was for the subsidy. In each year the Native States together contributed \$20,000 more towards the subsidy, and paid the expenses of their own Assistant Agents, as well as an allowance to the Indian Immigration Agent. The whole cost of the subsidy is not fairly debitable to immigration, since the cheap passages it provides are much used by traders, boatmen and others, and it further ensures regular communication, thus greatly improving the mail service not only with India but with Europe.

465. Beyond the payment of the subsidy and expenses of the Indian Immigration Department, nothing has been done by the Colonial Government to directly encourage immigration.

466. The Colonial Government if standing alone would be but little called upon to aid. In Demerara one-third of the expense of importation is borne by the general revenue, but in that Colony the sugar interest is a vital one. In the Straits Settlements the case is different, for in 1881, out of a total population of 423,384, agriculturists numbered only 78,372, of whom 33,993 were Chinese and Tamils, the remainder being chiefly Malays engaged in paddy planting. These figures are from the census returns of that year, and the subsequent increase is not known, but probably the proportions have not much changed. Although the agriculturist contributes to the revenue, yet the Straits Settlements is not essentially an agricultural Colony. The interests of the Colonial Government are, however, largely bound up with those of the Native States, and, therefore, the Colonial Government may go further than if it stood by itself. It might fairly, in addition to its present expenditure, pay the whole salary of the Agent-General in India, leaving only the depôt and other expenses to be recovered from importers.

467. It has been suggested that, in addition to importing labour for new works, the Colonial Government should introduce a proportion of the number of coolies it now permanently employs, none of whom it has hitherto imported. We recognize, however, that the Government already contributes a considerable sum towards the expenses of immigration and we have recommended an increase of this contribution in the salary of the Agent-General, and we do not therefore think that any further expenses on this account should be borne by the Government.

Native States Governments. 468. The case of the Native States is very different to that of the Colony. They have large tracts of country untouched, and it is of the first importance to them to develop planting, which can only be done by importing labour. No expenditure on their part can be too great if it result in establishing a settled agricultural population. We have already indicated what Government can do, but these States might go beyond what we have yet suggested, and import large numbers of coolies regardless of whether they settle or not. The various States should combine, or those that import will lose coolies to those that do not.

Municipalities. 469. The Municipalities are employers on a considerable scale, and might well be called upon to import a portion of their permanent labour force.

Transit of coolies for other countries through the Straits Settlements. 470. In all our proposals, a large share of the work which we have recommended should be undertaken will be for the benefit of other countries. The Chinese depôts will be used by Borneo and Sumatra coolies and the Tamil recruiting and other arrangements by Borneo. The expenses incurred for each coolie passing through the depôts for any of these countries should be recovered in every case by a fee so calculated that the whole cost will be shared by the countries concerned. But it may be asked whether it is not a mistake thus to assist our rivals. Possibly for the immediate present it may be so, but whether we assist them or not, these rising countries will get their labour somehow, as is sufficiently shewn by the establishment of direct Deli immigration, and the only result of declining our aid would probably be to drive the coolie trade into other channels. This alone might be of little consequence, but direct coolie traffic from India or China to our neighbours means direct steamers, with a corresponding loss to the Colony, and this would cause appreciable injury to our general trade without producing any counteracting advantage.

Conclusion. 471. In conclusion we would repeat what we have already pointed out. There is no royal road to plentiful and cheap labour. What the community, represented by Government, can do is to eliminate cheating, illegitimate profits, misrepresentation, and every such bar to immigration; by inspection to ensure that the Straits shall offer an attractive field for labour; and to encourage, by grants of land or other means, our immigrant population to remain here instead of being birds of passage: but beyond this the matter is in the hands of those interested. We have other countries to compete against, and if we are to induce labourers to come here in large numbers and to remain as settlers, employers must make their service such as first to attract and then to retain the labour they desire.

M. A. CAMERON, Captain, R.E.
J. M. VERMONT.
J. Y. KENNEDY.
F. A. SWETTENHAM.
F. POWELL.
A. M. MACGREGOR.
DAVID COMRIE.
THOS. H. HILL.
JOHN TURNER.
EDMUND A. B. BROWN.
KOH BOO ANN.
W. E. HOOPER.

Penang, 7th March, 1891.

RIDER BY THE PROTECTOR OF CHINESE.

1. I regret to have to add anything to this voluminous report which has already reached gigantic proportions, but as my own opinion in one respect—that of Government Chinese Immigration—differs very materially from the conclusions arrived at by the other members, I trust a few remarks will not be considered out of place.

Chinese Immigration Ordinance.

2. At the time the Commission began sitting the working of the Chinese Immigration Ordinance had been put out of joint by a decision of the Supreme Court as to the meaning of "unpaid passenger" and a considerable decrease in the numbers of labouring immigrants was the most probable result.

3. The depôt-keepers in Singapore and Penang both presented petitions to His Excellency the Governor asking that the law might be put on its old footing and stating that they had communicated with Hongkong and China to stop the depôts there, of which they were agents, from sending further "credit-ticket" passengers.

4. The situation was grave and received the careful consideration of the Commission who soon passed unanimous resolutions both in Singapore and Penang to the effect that it was advisable to at once amend the law to what was formerly intended. This was accordingly done, and the Chinese Immigration Amendment Ordinance (I of 1891) passed.

5. No examination depôt (except for Hailam junks) has under the Ordinance yet been established in Singapore, the examination of the men being carried on in a rough and ready manner on board ship or at the wharves to which the vessels go, while the women with some trouble are sent to the Protectorate in gharries.

6. The Commission now proposes that ships in Singapore shall anchor in the roads and discharge their passengers into tongkangs which will take them to the examination depôt, in fact follow the course now adopted in Penang.

7. While this has to be done in Penang as there are no wharves alongside which ships can be moored, and little inconvenience is felt as vessels anchor close to the examination depôt, yet I think that as regards Singapore it would be much more satisfactory for all parties concerned if Government could have their own wharf with an examination depôt attached, at which all immigrant vessels could land their Chinese passengers before proceeding to their proper berths. A Government emigration examination depôt is to be established in Hongkong under the new Ordinance.

Government Chinese Immigration.

8. The necessity for the Government to undertake the supply of labour for the Colony, Native States, Sumatra, Borneo and neighbouring Dutch islands does not seem to be at all apparent, and the proposed scheme, in my opinion, has inherent defects which should prevent its being adopted except perhaps in a purely experimental manner and without upsetting existing arrangements.

9. Most Chinese coolies who engage to work in the Colony and States do so chiefly for tin-mining in the Protected Native States, for sugar planting in Province Wellesley and Trans-Krian, and for tapioca planting in Malacca.

10. In Malacca the supply is plentiful, being conveyed there by Hailam junks, and the cost to the employer for the *Sin-Khek's* first year's work is from \$22 to \$26, to which about \$30 must be added for food. This can hardly be considered excessive.

11. The usual rate for mining in the Native States is \$42 for the first year, out of which \$22 is recoverable from the coolie, so that with a commission of \$6 to the *Khek-Thau* (Evidence 530) and \$30 for food the cost would be \$56, which may be considered moderate.

12. If the statistics for the last few years of the two chief Protected States are

examined it will be found that the following number of *Sin-Khek* contracts were made in the Colony for each:—

	Perak.	Selangor.
1886,	5,276	7,522
1887,	7,459	9,255
1888,	4,564	9,653
1889,	1,782	2,870
1890,	1,442	1,351

shewing a decrease from 16,714 in 1887 to 2,793 in 1890.

13. In my report for 1889 I had to notice an exodus of coolies from Klang owing, as I believed, to the fall in the price of tin, and I cannot but come to the conclusion that the decrease during the last two years in the number of contracts for those States is due not so much to the difficulty in importing labour as to the same cause.

14. It was stated before the Commission by a depôt-keeper (Evidence 577) well acquainted with Selangor that the price of tin there in 1887 was \$60 a pikul and in 1890 only \$30.

15. Under the above circumstances, presuming that my conclusions are correct, it seems to me to be unnecessary when labour can still be obtained at a moderate rate that the Government should interfere.

16. With regard to the Province Wellesley and Trans-Krian sugar estates the case is somewhat different. Here cheap labour is a necessity, owing to the low price of sugar and the large expenses for machinery necessary to carry on the cultivation, and there is no doubt that, were it not for the high commission and advance paid by Sumatra and Borneo for coolies, many more would engage for these estates.

17. The cost of the cooly cannot, however, be considered abnormal, as good Te-chius, the class most sought after, can be obtained for \$40, out of which \$19.50 is recoverable from the labourer, thus making the expenditure of the planter, including the food of his coolie, for a year's work about \$50.

18. The new scheme, presuming that it could be carried out, I now purpose to shew will act in a way to reduce the supply of labour for the Colony and Native States, and to increase and cheapen that for Sumatra and Borneo, but, before going further, I would point out that the information acquired by the Commission regarding the details of the system of recruiting by the China and Hongkong depôts, as well as the laws that govern emigration, is of a meagre description and obtained at second hand, and that it is a bold course to assume, when the evidence is so incomplete, that a scheme more or less on the lines of the present Indian Immigration will necessarily suit Chinese and successfully supplant the long established system under which private enterprise has hitherto supplied Chinese labour to this part of the world.

19. It is proposed to do away with the present receiving depôts, licensed in the Colony, ignore the Hongkong and China private depôts which send us our coolies, and in their place to put Government depôts which are to do all the recruiting and receiving for the Colony, Native States and neighbouring British and Dutch possessions.

20. As regards the licensed depôts here no doubt their licenses could be taken away, but this would not prevent unlicensed depôts from existing, which would house coolies as before from Hongkong and China, the cooly merely being taught to say on his departure and arrival that he is paying for his own passage.

21. The licensed depôts being done away with, neither the depôt-keepers nor their numerous staff would have any motive for reporting unlicensed depôts for receiving "credit ticket" passengers in contravention of the Ordinance, and, even should cases occur, the importer and his agents, considering the large profit to be made, would be willing to run the risk of punishment in this happy land where case after case and Ordinance after Ordinance is upset on some legal technicality.

22. The first result of the scheme if undertaken now would, in my opinion, be the establishment of a number of unlicensed depôts in the Straits without any Government inspection or control.

23. It is not intended to do away with the detention of immigrants, nor is there any period fixed, as at present, after which a cooly can leave the depôt; they are not to be allowed to walk through the town from the ship to a receiving depôt some distance away as now, or even from the depôt to the office, in fact the chief recollection of the Colony which a labourer who contracts to work outside of it will carry away will be a closed door and a "high corrugated iron fence" which a paternal Government has erected for his incarceration.

24. The immigrants, it is recommended, should make contracts in the Colony and not in China, a recommendation in which I cordially agree, as I think all should have a choice as to their destination after learning on arrival as much as they can of the different terms of labour.

25. They would thus arrive here owing the cost of their importation, and could be redeemed by the payment of this and such extra fee as might be decided upon.

26. At present any immigrant can be redeemed by any person without contract by the payment of his passage money—a custom much disliked by the depôt-keepers who lose their commission—and the Government would, I presume, hardly care to do away with a concession of so much benefit to the immigrant and which in justice he should be allowed.

27. Immigrants would accordingly reach the Colony free to choose their own field of labour or be redeemed without contract provided that the expenses of their importation were recovered by Government and the depôts would presumably be free of access to all employers of labour, whether in or out of the Colony, or their agents, who would have the right of speech with the coolies.

28. An attempt has been made in the report to calculate the expenses of importation, which has been put at \$16 (\$12 passage and \$4 depôt fee), a moderate figure, and if all planters could obtain a sufficient supply of labour at this rate it would be of the greatest advantage.

29. It must be remembered, however, that Sumatra and Borneo tobacco planters can afford to and do give large prices for coolies, and that in all their contracts the cooly gets a considerable advance in cash, a custom which does not obtain in the Colony or Native States.

30. If the initial cost were reduced, these employers could give very much larger cash advances, which few immigrants could resist, and the result would, in my opinion, be that the bulk and pick of them would leave the Colony and the supply for the Settlements and Native States be still further curtailed.

31. The Commission has now been sitting for some months, and has made an exhaustive inquiry into the depôt system as it exists in the Colony, all classes of witnesses being examined, the result of its deliberations being that the supposed defects and abuses are "more sentimental than real."

32. The system may, therefore, be considered practically good, the chief defect, in my own opinion, being the high price charged for coolies to the tobacco estates in Sumatra and Borneo, which does not, however, directly affect the Colony.

33. Theoretically no doubt immigration under the direct conduct of the Government would be more satisfactory, but before this can be established even as an experiment extensive and searching inquiry will have to be made in Hongkong, Swatow and Hoihow; the consent of the Chinese Government obtained to allow credit-ticket passengers to leave the country; and the cordial co-operation of the Hongkong Government assured.

Crimping Ordinance.

34. Two amendments to this Ordinance would, I think, be of advantage.

35. At present coolies frequently make contracts receiving advances to work outside of the limits of the Colony, and on the first opportunity, which comes sometimes in a few days, abscond and return here, but under the law as it now stands the people who engaged them are not able to prosecute as they would be if the offence were committed in the Colony. It would be exceedingly useful if such men, who are always willing to re-engage on the same terms, could be tried and punished here, and a proper provision for such trial put in the Ordinance.

36. Another point which was not of much importance when the Ordinance was passed has come into considerable prominence of late years, *i. e.*, the passage of coolies through the Colony who have made contracts at a place outside of the Colony to work in another place also outside of the Colony, but happen to touch in Singapore as there are no direct steamers, thus Javanese, &c. leave Java under contract to work in Sumatra and Chinese Sumatra to work in North Borneo. These men often have to wait some days in Singapore for a steamer, and are kept in private depôts as to which this department has no right of entry or control. All such depôts should, in my opinion, be licensed and subjected to the ordinary rules of sanitation and inspection.

Inspection of Estates.

37. This is a matter which has long been advocated by all Government Officers well acquainted with the management of Chinese estates, and the Commission has gathered a quantity of evidence which strengthens the view that all such estates should be visited by Chinese-speaking officials and a Colonial Surgeon. The Chinese Agricultural Labourers Bill was drafted a good long time ago, and the sooner it is put in force the better.

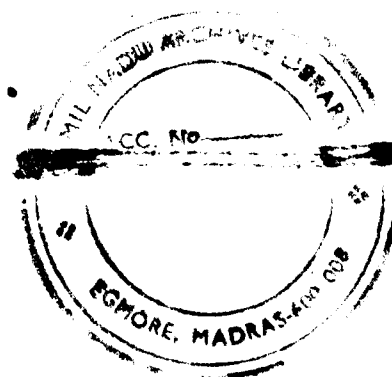
Javanese Labour.

38. This class of labour has greatly increased of late years and its management should be put on some definite footing, such as in the present Chinese Immigration Ordinance. The consent of the Netherlands India Government is necessary to the immigration, and there would probably be little trouble in obtaining it if it were confined to British Colonies and Protected Native States in which there is a British Resident.

F. POWELL,
Protector of Chinese, S. S.

Singapore, 19th March, 1891.





APPENDIX A.
EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE LABOUR COMMISSION OF 1890.

THIRD MEETING

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 27TH, 1890, AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
J. M. B. VERMONT.
FRANCIS POWELL, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.

1. *Mr. Thomas Heslop Hill*, of Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE, stated:—I have been 13 years in the Straits Settlements, and was for 10 years previously in Ceylon. I have also had interests in Southern India. My connection with labour is in planting and contracting, which have brought me into direct contact with Chinese, Tamil, Javanese, Boyanese and Malay labourers. Mr. T.H. Hill.
27th October.

2. Do you consider the present supply of Tamil Indentured labour defective and in what respects?—Yes, I consider it defective in its irregularity.

3. To what causes do you attribute this defect?—I attribute it to the fact that the wants of the employers are not properly represented in India; in other words, to the want of a recruiting agency and of protection to the men whom I have sent over to recruit in villages where my name is known. One man, whom I have sent many times to the coast, has been victimised by the professional recruiters, and has lost coolies in consequence of small technical difficulties which he encountered at the Indian Immigration Agency on this side.

4. What do you understand by "want of protection"?—Professional recruiters misrepresent the case to the coolies, and tell them that they will be shipped off to other places than those specified, that their castes will be broken, etc. The man KANDASAMI referred to was on one occasion falsely accused of poisoning a woman and thrown into prison.

5. Are you speaking from personal experience of these facts?—I have been assured of them by all agents sent over by me, but have not been to India personally to recruit since I have been in the Straits Settlements.

6. What class of and how many agents have you sent?—Usually native men, and on one occasion a European, all men well known to me, and some connected in India. I have sent them five or six times to the coast during the past few years.

7. Are you satisfied with the physique of the immigrants you receive?—No, but there has been a distinct improvement of late. They are, generally speaking, a very poor class of people, who have suffered for many years from the want of good food.

[At this point Mr. Hill's examination was concluded.]

Mr. D. W.
Paterson.
27th October.

8. Mr. D. W. Paterson, of Messrs. GUTHRIE & Co., stated:—I am Shipping Clerk to Messrs. GUTHRIE & Co., and have charge of the firm's coolie business. I can only speak as an import and export agent of labour. My experience in my present post is about 17 months and about 3 years altogether in the Straits. I have had no similar experience in any other Colony. We are also Agents for the Shan line of steamers (Messrs. BRADLEY & Co., Swatow).

9. Do you make any distinction between the importation of Chinese indentured and unindentured labour?—None.

10. Do you consider the supply of Chinese labour satisfactory?—No, far from it; one great defect is that the brokers are men of a low class.

11. Can you get as many labourers as you want?—We find a difficulty in doing so. About fifteen months ago, I endeavoured to get coolies in batches of 100 at a time, but could only obtain 30 to 40.

12. Are the men satisfactory as coolies?—No, not physically. About eight months ago only 15 out of a batch of 74 could be accepted on medical inspection, mainly in consequence of their debilitated condition. They are very frequently diseased. I have seen 50 per cent. suffering from venereal disease. Other diseases are prevalent also, which I do not think can be ascribed to sea-sickness on the voyage down. As a class they seem to suffer from want of good food.

13. What is the process of obtaining coolies?—The employer specifies to us the number and race of the coolies he requires, and we arrange—verbally—with the local broker as to price. He undertakes to deliver the men on board a steamer named by us, in which they will travel to their destination.

14. Does the broker supply you from coolies already in Singapore, or does he send an order to China on receipt of your demand, and get them down specially for you?—The coolies are always in Singapore at the time.

15. What is the usual price?—It varies considerably; for Te-chius we pay the broker \$85 to \$90 (inclusive of passage money), and for lower classes, such as Khehs, Hailams, Macaos, &c. about \$50. This is a very fair average price.

16. Having arranged with the broker, what follows?—I accompany the Medical Officer to the depôt, and we select such coolies as seem suitable. I receive the photograph of each in duplicate, and send one copy to the Protectorate, retaining the other myself. The broker comes to our office and receives a small advance, say \$5 per man; this is a matter of arrangement. On the day of the ship's sailing, a contract is signed by us as agents for the employers, and is handed to the broker in our office together with \$30 per head advances for the coolies, and \$1 per head as stamp fees. The broker goes to the Protectorate, where the contract is signed and advances are given to the coolies, who sign on the contract as receipt, and the contract thus signed is then brought back to our office. I go on board the ship and check each coolie by his photograph as he comes on board. Watchmen accompany the coolies to the estates. The accounts with the broker are adjusted next day, and this ends the transaction. The duties of the watchmen are solely to prevent the coolies' escape until they arrive at their destination, and to see them safely delivered to the planter or his representative. They are always Chinamen.

17. What contracts are made in this transaction?—One General Contract signed by us as Agents, by the Protector of Chinese, and by each coolie, which sets forth the terms of labour, number of working days, &c. Also, a translation of this contract in Chinese, stamped by us and signed by the Protectorate and the coolie, is given to each coolie, who retains it. The broker signs nothing.

18. Do you employ any one to guard the coolies and prevent the exchange of coolies taking place after your selection?—No.

19. Do you think such changes do occur?—Frequently.

20. Can you give any instances?—Early in the year out of 100 coolies sent on board the *Hong Ann*, I rejected 8 as having been changed. Other cases have occurred within my own experience. In such cases the broker refunds the money.

I do not consider this contingency a serious defect in the system. 80 to 85 of the coolies selected actually go on board ship, but the full number is never complete. Mr. D. W. Paterson. 27th October.

21. What do you consider to be the defects in the system apart from those stated?—I think the price is excessive.

22. What are your total expenses per coolie?—The broker receives as commission \$55, the coolie \$30 advance, the fee for medical examination is 75 cents, and the stamp for contract is \$1. The total sum is thus \$86.75, plus the passage money from Singapore to destination. A coolie's passage to Borneo is about \$7.

23. What is the actual amount of passage money per coolie by the Shan line?—\$5.50 from Swatow, and about \$6.50, I believe, from Amoy.

24. Do you consider the broker's charges reasonable?—No, I consider them excessive.

25. Can you say at all how much of the \$55 received by the broker goes into his own pocket?—The broker must pay a substantial share to his partner in China; this sum and the expense of the coolies' keep in Singapore are paid by him. I will endeavour to ascertain from our agents in Swatow what commission is paid to the broker there by the Singapore partner.

26. How has the recent decision of the Court affected your coolie business?—The number of available coolies in the depôts has diminished; a poorer class have been shipped; and the price per coolie has risen about \$10 to \$15. I consider these defects directly due to that decision.

27. How many coolies have been shipped by your firm within your experience?—I will furnish the Commission with a return.

28. Have you any business with coolies not under contract?—None.

29. Is there any special season for importing coolies?—The majority come down between December and April. I believe this is due to causes in China.

30. Further questioned.—We send our Chinese coolies only to Borneo. There is a difference of from \$10 to \$15 in the price of *Sin-Khehs* over that of *Lau-Khehs*. My recruiters are SIAN CHIN LOK, BUN HIN LONG, BUN TEK HIN, WONG AH TIAM, TEO KAY HEE. We do no importing.

31. Have you sustained any losses on the advances which you make to the brokers?—No, we always keep on the right side.

32. Who supplies the watchmen previously referred to?—They are supplied by outside men. We have a man who generally procures them for us, and often travels in the ship himself.

[The witness then undertook to ascertain from RUSSELL & Co., of Hongkong, and BRADLEY & Co., of Swatow, whether they had experienced any obstruction in obtaining labourers at their respective ports.]

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

R. P. G.

FOURTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 1890, AT 10.30. A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).

J. M. B. VERMONT.

FRANCIS POWELL, Esquire.

The examination of Mr. D. W. PATERSON, Shipping Clerk to Messrs. GUTHRIE & Co., was resumed.

33. Are men ever brought down from China with their passages unpaid?—In the case of men from Hoi-how the passages, or a large part of them, are paid by brokers in Singapore after the ship's arrival. One month's credit is usually allowed. Mr. D. W. Paterson. 28th October.

Mr. D. W.
Paterson.
28th October.

34. Whom do you hold responsible for the recovery of the money?—Our agents in Hoi-how always advise us that they hold good security. There has never been any difficulty. Our business is entirely with coolies to work on tobacco estates. The usual wages of a Mandor are \$12, the advance made is \$40, the usual deduction to repay advances is \$4 per month. The usual term of a Mandor's contract is 12 months.

35. Do you take any steps to ascertain that coolies actually receive their advances?—We only know that it is paid to them at the Protectorate, but we have nothing to do with it.

36. Have you known any cases of such advances being afterwards taken from them by the brokers?—Coolies have occasionally complained to that effect, but I have never been able to bring any case home.

36a. We hear of the same coolies being passed to different depôts.

36b. Have you known cases?—I have known the same batch of unhealthy coolies passed round from depôt to depôt for inspection, and rejected each time by the Medical Officer and myself as unfit.

37. Can you suggest any remedy for the grievances you have mentioned?—I would like to see the whole immigration system in the hands of the Government, both here and in China, the two Governments working together. I think also that there should be power to detain men in depôts as formerly. There should be a penalty inflicted on the broker who substitutes a different class of coolie to that which they are represented to be. At present, if 100 Te-chius are asked for, 80 per cent. are invariably Khehs, Hailams, or other inferior coolies.

38. In such cases do you pay for them at the higher rate of brokerage?—No, at the market rate of inferior coolies.

39. What class of men do the planters prefer?—Te-chiu and Hai-lok-hong, as being agricultural labourers.

40. Can you inform us about the death-rate in Borneo?—I can procure a return so far as our own men are concerned.

40a. Have you any other grievances?—At present, if a man leaves the Colony under contract, then absconds and returns here, he can neither be punished nor sent back to the estate; nothing can be done to him, except to sue him for debt, which is useless. This is a serious grievance, which calls imperatively for a remedy.

JAVANESE AND MALAYS.

40b. We engage Javanese, Malays, Boyanese, Banjerese, Kelantan, Tringganu and Klang men, for Borneo, Deli, Assahan, &c. Their work consists of felling jungle, building *bangsals*, cutting drains, and similar work. I will furnish a return of the numbers we have sent.

41. Have you difficulty in procuring sufficient?—At times, yes, to that country. We can't get enough for Borneo, as the Dutch Government prevents emigration: there is also difficulty in getting enough for Sumatra, although the Dutch Government do not interfere; the number of those who are willing to come is insufficient, as they can find employment in their own country. The men, as a rule, are satisfactory, only 2 or 3 per cent. being rejected.

42. What is the cost of importation?—For Banjerese and Boyans the brokerage is from \$5 to \$6 for Sumatra: the advance varies from \$16 for an eight months' agreement to \$24 for twelve months. 30 cents per man for depôt hire, stamp for contract 25 cents, passage money say to Assahan, \$4. Total, from \$26.55 to \$34.55, of which the employer recovers only the advance. Javanese are slightly cheaper. For Borneo the brokerage is \$11, the advance is \$18 to \$36 (for an eight to eighteen months' agreement); passage money \$7, and other details are the same as for Sumatra. The advance is recoverable, and the terms of contract vary from eight to of high first cost. Coolies prefer a short term. The wages entered in the contract are \$8 for Sumatra, \$9 for Borneo; but in Sumatra task work, I believe, prevails to some extent.

42a. The process of engaging coolies is as follows:—They are brought to our office by the broker and inspected by myself without a Medical Officer. The broker-age is then agreed on, and the remainder of the process is similar to the Chinese system, except that no photographs are taken.

42b. I think the system satisfactory, except that the brokerage is too high. I do not see how it can be lowered as long as the supply remains insufficient to meet the demand. Mr. D. W. Paterson. 28th October.

43. What is the merchants' usual commission?—Anything from \$1 to \$5 per man; as a rule it does not exceed \$2.

43a. The Dutch Government make no difficulty as regards coolies for Sumatra, but will not let them go to Borneo at all. Consequently coolies for Borneo are shipped as free coolies to Singapore, and are there engaged for Borneo. Thus, if coolies abscond in Singapore, the loss falls on the Singapore Agents, who have no redress. I can only suggest an agreement with the Dutch Government as a remedy.

44. Have you any experience in the exportation of other nationalities?—We send Japanese, Malays and Manilamen to Western Australia as pearl fishers. We pick them up in Singapore as free men, and ship them under contract. They receive advances of three months' wages at \$12, and their passage money is \$40. The brokerage is \$3 paid to the Shipping Office Syrang. The number sent this year has been about 400. They go down on a two years' contract.

45. Mr. J. Holloway, Clerk to Messrs. PATERSON, SIMONS & Co., states:—I have seven months' experience of the coolie import and export trade, and no experience previously. Our business is mostly with mining coolies for Pahang. I have no connection with any steamship agency that brings them down from China, and procure our coolies solely from brokers here, and they are all sent under contract to Pahang: we also send men picked up here, free, independently of the brokers. Mr. J. Holloway. 28th October.

45a. When we receive an indent from Pahang we apply to a local broker and arrange the price. We next examine the coolies with a Medical Officer at the depôts, and receive their photographs, &c. The contract is then made out, and I accompany the broker to the Protectorate, and see it signed by the coolies. I tell the broker what time he must ship them, then go on board and check them with the photograph as they arrive. We put no watchmen on board, and the coolies are met at Kuantan by the Companies' Agents.

46. What is the total cost of a coolie landed in Pahang?—The men are nearly all Hok-kiens and Khehs, with a few Macaos. The brokerage, including photographs and stamp fees, is about \$17. An advance of \$16 is made to the coolie. The doctor's fee is 75 cents, and the passage money to Kuantan \$3. Out of this total of \$36.75, the advance of \$16 is recoverable. The brokerage is paid after the coolies are on board, and no previous advance is made. The coolie receives not a cent of his advance, though the actual passage money is often less than half the sum. Practically no attempts are made to change the coolies.

47. Do you think the system satisfactory?—It is too expensive, though it works well if one is willing to pay the money. I see no other objection.

48. Are you satisfied with the physique of the men?—No, it is not good. About 25 per cent. are often unsuitable, owing to debility and disease; about 30 per cent. of the rejected suffer from venereal disease.

48a. We have no difficulty in procuring a sufficient number.

49. Can you suggest any plan for reducing the brokerage, by Government action or otherwise?—I would advocate the establishment of a Government depôt here and a Government Agency in China; also that Government should advance the passage money, to be ultimately recovered from the Singapore Agents.

50. Has the recent decision of the Court affected the supply of labour?—I have not had sufficient previous experience to say.

51. What is the usual term of your contracts?—One year. I would suggest that, instead of monthly wages, there should be power in the contracts for employer and coolie to agree on terms of task work without the contract being in any way invalidated.

52. What is your business as regards free coolies?—All are for mining in Pahang, under the Companies. We do no importing, and employ no brokers, but

Mr. J. Hol-
loway, 28th
October.

agents of the firm, paid by commission, collect the coolies, who are under no restraint. The coolies are, if possible, brought to the Protectorate on the day of sailing, and there sign a one month's contract. When first engaged the advance made is usually about \$5, not given in cash, but in the shape of outfit purchased in the presence of the coolie with his approval. A further sum in cash making altogether \$9 is given at the time of signing at the Protectorate, when the coolie signs as having received the whole advance, although he is not yet actually in possession of his outfit, which forms a part of it. Thus the coolie is under but little temptation to abscond. The coolies are then, if possible, taken at once on board.

The total expenses per head are:—

Advance, ...	\$9.00
To Agent, ...	1.50
Passage money, ...	3.00
Total, ...	\$13.50

of which the \$9 are recoverable.

53. Do you lose many men?—Very few, scarcely 2 out of 500.

54. What wages do you pay?—To ordinary coolies \$12 to \$13 per month.

55. Do you consider the system satisfactory?—It would be so if there were any place where one could always lay one's hand on them; at present there is a difficulty in communication between employer and employed.

55a. Our men have occasionally been arrested for crimping who have merely engaged men who were willing to go. Any payment of advance or passage money renders them liable to this. I think that no restriction should be placed on such men.

56. Is there any practical difficulty in the way of avoiding this treatment by taking men to the Protectorate?—Only that some refuse to go: I cannot say why, but it is so. But for this I should prefer such an arrangement. Our object in only making a monthly contract is that men may be given contract work when they arrive instead of being bound to monthly wages.

JAVANESE COOLIES.

57. Our business consists in the importation of men from Java for building houses, *bangsals*, coolie lines, and for making ditches at the mines in Pahang. We have not yet imported any direct, but are now for the first time attempting to do so from Java. We applied to the Dutch Government three months ago for permission, and received it, but we have not yet got men. When they arrive I must place them with a broker, as I have no other quarters for them.

58. There is great difficulty in procuring them through brokers, and the prices are exorbitant, owing to the scarcity of men.

59. The total cost per head is as follows:—An advance of 3 months' wages at \$9 or \$10 for a 12 months' contract; brokerage, \$6 or \$7 (till quite recently \$10); passage money, \$3; doctor's fee, 75 cents; total, about \$40.75; of which the advance is recoverable by the employer. The cost of these men is increased by the fact that one man in every 10 or 15 is a Mandor, whose pay is \$15, with advances to correspond, and whose only work is to supervise the others.

60. The men are not of such good physique as formerly, the majority being small and weak.

61. The term of contract is 12 months.

62. The great difficulty is the high rate of wages and brokerage, due to the scarcity of Javanese labourers. I can only suggest, as a remedy, an agreement with the Dutch Government which would tend to increase the numbers, and I would also do away with brokerage by establishing a Government Agency.

63. The difference between the system in force with the Chinese and that with the Javanese is that the last-named receive all advances at the Protectorate, but I believe that it is all taken away afterwards; this cannot be prevented.

64. A few men have been lost after receiving their advances.

65. What will be the total cost to you per head of the men you propose to import?—Including advances, from 50 to 60 guilders (\$25 to \$30) including everything. This is made up as follows:—

Advances, ...	\$18
Brokerage, ...	5 (about.)
Passage to Singapore and fees, ...	5
Do. to Pahang, ...	3
Total, ...	\$31

66. This is for a two years' contract at \$8 per month. We get Banjerese at about the same rate.

67. There is a greater difficulty now than formerly in obtaining sufficient free men. The brokers are mostly Javanese or Malays.

68. About 25 per cent. of the new lot we are now getting out will be women, whom we hope it will not be necessary to put under contract to work. We wish simply to pay their passage and let them accompany their husbands entirely free, but we are afraid that the men will insist on their signing contracts for the sake of the pay.

69. We shall give each man a plot of land.

70. Do you think the depôt system fair to the coolies?—I think they get very little of their advances, but do not believe they are actually ill-treated.

KLINGS.

71. We once tried to procure some Klings, but they would not work in Pahang under \$15 per month, and proved most unsatisfactory in every way.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 P. M.

MEETING REASSEMBLED AT 2.30 P. M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esq., C. M. G.
FRANCIS POWELL, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.

72. *Kho Joo Chia*, Chop BAN TEK HENG, a Depôt-keeper, was called, and stated:—I obtain most of my coolies from Swatow, and a few from Hongkong. I have clients in Swatow; their chops are SENG HOAT and HOK KHI. I myself am only agent for those depôts. My license dates from four years ago.

Kho Joo Chia.
28th October.

73. I receive only credit-ticket passengers. From the Swatow depôts I receive *Sin-Khehs* only, and the supply depends on the Swatow firms. I never pay for coolies before they arrive. As to possible absconders during the voyage or in Singapore, if I wish to please the Swatow man I pay the loss myself; otherwise not; I am not obliged to do so. I pay about \$20 per man. We never order any specified numbers of coolies from Swatow; as many as can be procured there are sent down on speculation.

74. The *Sin-Khehs* on arrival state themselves where they wish to go to. If coolies wish to go to places where they are not required, and cannot be persuaded to go elsewhere, they have to be released after ten days, and the Singapore agent loses his money. I have had such cases this year, and lost about \$20 per head; the cases are not entered in my books.

75. For coolies to Deli I receive \$80 per head if a Te-chiu or Hai-lok-hong, and for a Kheh \$40 to \$60. I advance \$15 to the coolie, and pay \$20 as commission to the *Kheh-Thau*. There are further expenses, such as a commission of \$5 to the Swatow depôt, \$1 for stamps, \$3 passage money, \$2 to watchman, 75 cents to the doctor, and \$2 miscellaneous expenditure. My own profit is about \$10.

76. I very seldom have dealings in Kheh coolies: they yield no profit.

77. The coolies from Swatow are partly persuaded to come by recruiters, and come down entirely of their own accord.

78. The Johor trade does not pay.

Kho Joo
Chia. 28th
October.

79. I remember a Swatow Dépôt-keeper being beheaded about two years ago for keeping a dépôt, which is illegal. If parents of coolies complain to the Swatow authorities that their son has gone away through a certain dépôt, that dépôt must write to Singapore and have him recovered and sent back, otherwise the Dépôt-keepers will get into trouble. If no complaint is made, no steps are taken by the authorities. I have sent back about ten in this way during my experience.

80. Before coolies leave Swatow the English Consul or some authority goes on board the ship and asks the coolies if they are willing to go: those who say 'no' may return on shore.

81. The Mandarin's subordinates can be bribed sometimes to prevent parents from complaining.

82. I charge the *Kheh-Thau* 10 cents per day for food in the case of Deli coolies, but nothing for others. Most of my coolies go to Sumatra; where the earnings of many of them exceed \$100 per annum.

83. When I worked as a coolie in Sumatra I received cash advances of \$4 per month; the account was settled at the end of the year, when I received a further sum of money. Working hard I earned \$70 to \$80 my first year, and over \$100 my second; I was then made a Tindal, and as such received \$30 to \$40 per month. I worked as Tindal for 7 or 8 years, and then returned to China, taking with me some \$2,000 or \$3,000.

84. Coolies who have had relatives in Deli usually prefer to go there, on the latter's recommendation.

85. If a lazy man goes to Deli he gets into debt, and he is kept on the estate to work off his debt, but I have never known a man kept for longer than five years. The men generally leave the place after about two years, having worked off their debts. Some are allowed by the *Tau-Khehs* to leave after three years although in debt, and some run away. Fifty per cent. of *Kheh* men fail to work off their debt in one year, and half of these again the second year. Of *Te-chius*, about 10 per cent. fail to do so in their first year, but none exceed two years.

86. Coolies at Deli must have a pass in order to leave one estate for another or to leave the country, and this pass is endorsed by the Capitan China. Those who run away are aided by friendly shopkeepers who procure them their pass, and some come to Singapore. The shopkeepers give security that the coolie has no debts, but if the coolie is afterwards found to owe money the shopkeeper will be held responsible. The shopkeeper receives no reward for thus standing security, but generally does it because he is of the same tribe.

87. The escaped coolies gamble, engage women, &c. till they have no money, and then go to some other estate and make a contract there.

88. For *Lau-Khehs* I get from \$50 to \$65, \$50 for a *Kheh* man, and \$65 for *Teh-chiu*. The *Lau-Khehs* are old hands and are therefore more apt to run away and therefore their price is less than that of *Sin-Khehs*. A *Te-chiu Lau-Kheh* gets about \$55, of which \$30 are paid at the Protectorate and the balance at my dépôt. This balance does not appear in the accounts, and is never recovered from the coolie. If the *Lau-Kheh* goes to the godown by himself he will not be accepted, for fear of his absconding; business is therefore done through brokers. If a *Lau-Kheh* runs away I must refund the \$30 to the godown, and can do nothing to the coolie. Some always run away. I take no part of his advance away from the *Lau-Kheh*. The societies give me no assistance in keeping the coolies, but I receive help from the *Tai-Jin*.

89. I am a *Gee Hin* headman.

90. Coolies whom no one will accept on account of their inferiority are sometimes redeemed by their relatives, and if this is not done I dispose of them to shopkeepers or others for whatever price I can get, when they make a contract with the shopkeepers who has redeemed them.

91. I cannot always meet the demands of the merchants for coolies. I have not sufficient at present. I have written to Swatow, but cannot obtain men.

92. I have never heard of obstruction by the Swatow authorities in the matter of recruiting coolies.

The meeting adjourned at 4.30 p. m.

R. P. G.

FIFTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire., C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.

Tiu Kia Hi, Dépôt-keeper, is examined, and in answer to questions states (through interpreter):— *Tiu Kia Hi*
29th October.

93. I have two dépôts—one for *Sin-Khehs* and one for *Lau-Khehs*. My chop is YONG SIANG MUI.

94. I get my *Teh-chiu Sin-Khehs* from Swatow. I have no establishment of my own there, but am agent in Singapore for four Swatow firms (chops KOCH LIU HONG, BOAN HAH, YONG JU CHIANG and YONG SUN SENG). The Swatow firms recruit the coolies and send them down to me to dispose of.

95. I send coolies to Assahan and Deli.

96. From the merchants here I get at present \$80 for a *Sin-Kheh*. Of this sum I pay \$5 to the Swatow people as commission, \$40 to the *Kheh-Thau*, and \$15 to the *Sin-Kheh* as advance; further, \$1 for stamp fee, \$3 for passage money, 75 cents to the doctor, and 40 cents for photographs. For coolies going to Deli, I must pay an additional \$2 for extra expenses. When the *Sin-Khehs* arrive from China, I must also pay for the boat hire, and \$2 to the watchmen.

97. My profit is about \$10 per man.

98. I have had 600 or 700 coolies this year, of whom 350 went to Penang, 100 or 200 were redeemed by gambier shop-keepers, and more than 100 went to Deli.

99. I make a profit of 60 or 70 cents per head on coolies for Penang. They are not consigned to me, and only remain a couple of days in my dépôt while changing steamers. I charge \$3 as their passage money to Penang, and out of this have to pay \$1.60 for their ticket, besides their boat and gharry hire amounting to about 70 cents. At Penang the coolies go to Kwong Ju Hong's dépôt. I have not included my Singapore expenses, such as those of house rent and the upkeep of the dépôt.

100. I send *Lau-Khehs* mostly to Sandakan, where I sell them to firms. For a *Kheh* man I get \$50, and for a *Teh-chiu* or *Hai-lok-ho* \$70 to \$75. *Lau-Khehs* receive \$30 in presence of the Protector, and want \$35 afterwards; if they do not receive it they refuse to go. Only the \$80 paid at the Protectorate is recoverable from them.

101. I make a profit of about \$10 on each *Lau-Kheh*. I sometimes lose money if they run away.

102. Most *Lau-Khehs* come voluntarily to my dépôt on arrival. I once sent for *Lau-Khehs* to Deli, but was swindled; my emissary got \$100 advance from me and never returned.

103. Some *Lau-Khehs* live in the dépôt, but of the others I know nothing. When they come to the dépôt they ask for a loan of about \$2 to buy food, &c. I never give more than this at a time, though some get as much as \$15 from us in small instalments of 70 to 80 cents.

104. Other Dépôt-keepers take them to brothels, but I never do so.

105. The bill which they run up with us may amount to \$12 or \$15, then they make a contract and receive \$30 more before the Protector. There is nothing to prevent their running away. After signing the contract my people go out with the *Lau-Khehs* as friends. Many run away, and then I lose money. This year I have lost out of some 150 or 160 *Lau-Khehs* about 50 men, representing a loss of about \$200; these men had not yet signed contract. More than 20 more ran away after the contract was signed. More than 100 signed contracts.

Tiun Kia Hi,
29th October.

106. I have repaid to Messrs. GUTHRIE & Co. more than \$1,800 this year for run-aways. The firm applies to me for coolies, and I then go and arrange about the price. The first payment of \$30 is made to me at the Protectorate when the contract is signed, and the coolie receives the whole sum. If the *Lau-Kheh* runs away I must refund the money to the merchant.

107. In the case of the \$1,800, the *Lau-Khehs* ran away at Sandakan.

108. The second advance is made at my depôt after the *Lau-Khehs* have signed the contract.

109. I sent watchmen with the coolies to Sandakan formerly, because I then undertook to deliver the coolies at the estate. Since I lost the \$1,800 I have only undertaken to deliver the men on board the ship, so that I need not repay the merchants if the coolies abscond after going on board. I made this arrangement some three or four months ago.

110. The coolies in question ran away at the wharf at Sandakan; there were too many of them for the watchman to guard them properly. The authorities did not aid me to recover them. I have heard that one or two returned to Singapore, but have not myself seen any. I heard that some ran away to Kudat. The watchman was only paid \$2 per man, so it was not worth his while to apply to the authorities; it would have been too expensive. The watchman returned to Singapore, but died a few days later.

111. I made no effort to recover the runaways. How could I do so in a country so far off?

112. When a *Lau-Kheh* comes to the depôt and asks for a loan, I give him a small book for accounts. I have no security for the loans; if the *Lau-Kheh* is known to us we pay him more, and if not we lend him less. His conscience is our only security.

113. No one accompanies the *Lau-Kheh*. Sometimes my *Kheh-Thau* brings one or two to my depôt. If I think a man's appearance honest I advance a loan, otherwise not.

114. I engage no men outside, but my own people sometimes go out and bring men in. To some men we make no loan. If we never advanced money no *Lau-Khehs* would come to us at all, so we are obliged to risk losses.

115. I have lost about 20 *Sin-Khehs* out of 600 this year, about \$30 on each man = \$600. They ran away from the depôt at various times during the year. They hid in other houses and it was impossible to recover them.

116. There have been men who have tried to escape on the steamer's arrival, and I have arrested them.

117. Since the recent Court decision I dare not carry on my business as formerly. Since that decision about 10 men out of 200 have run away, but as soon as all the coolies get to know that they can leave the depôt, I fear they will all leave it. There is nothing to prevent their doing so. I have not myself raised the price for *Sin-Khehs*, but I cannot speak for others.

118. If I were not owed so much money by the Swatow depôts I would cease my business, otherwise, if it were not for the recent decision, I would willingly continue as before.

119. We apply to the Swatow depôts for coolies, but do not specify any particular number. When the *Sin-Khehs* are sent from Swatow, the Swatow firms draw against me in Singapore, and I honour the bill as soon as the coolies arrive. They charge me \$30 to \$60 per man. Besides the payment for the *Sin-Khehs* I advance capital to the Swatow men in order that they may carry on the business. They owe me now from \$13,000 to \$14,000, solely in connection with this business. This includes the money I advanced as capital and the payments made by me to the *Kheh-Thaus*.

120. In stating that they owe me \$13,000 to \$14,000 I mean money advanced

to the *Kheh-Thaus* and lost on coolies who have absconded, been redeemed, &c., and which I never expect to recover.

Tiun Kia Hi,
29th October.

121. There are many recruiters in Swatow. When they get men for Deli they (the recruiters) go to the depôt and get the tickets, and arrange with the depôt-keeper to draw against us at the rate of \$40 per man. On arriving in Singapore, if the coolies do actually go to Deli we lose no money, but if they go elsewhere, we do.

122. The *Sin-Khehs* don't know that we have no power to detain them. If they did know it all the dishonest ones would run away. If the *Sin-Khehs* communicate with relatives on the way to the depôt they will get to know it and will walk away: I cannot hinder them.

123. The \$40 paid by me to the *Kheh-Thau* includes all expenses in China.

124. If a notice of the recent Court decision is put up in the depôt all the *Sin-Khehs* will leave, and I must give up the business.

125. I have heard of obstruction in connection with the recruiting of coolies in Swatow; one must bribe the Mandarin's subordinates, and the bribe comes out of the \$40.

126. *Sin-Khehs'* parents sometimes cause difficulties by saying that their sons have been taken away on false pretences, and then the Mandarins arrest and behead the *Kheh-Thaus*: one man—KHAI SIU—was beheaded two years ago.

127. The parents ask for their sons to be sent back; I have sent back 10 this year, and some years 3 or 4.

128. I have sent men back to China this year from Assahan.

129. I lose money on such men, but the *Kheh-Thau* gives me another man in exchange for them; the loss to me is in their transport expenses and in the advance of \$15 to the new man, which I do not recover. I pay no commission on the new man, nor the usual \$40 to the *Kheh-Thau*.

130. If the man is not recovered, the *Kheh-Thau* in China is arrested. If the *Sin-Kheh* has run away and is lost, the *Kheh-Thau* must pay \$300 or \$400 to the parents. Only this year a man named GEK SIOW (Chop GEK HAH) sent a batch of *Sin-Khehs* to Singapore, who left here for Sumatra. A complaint was made by parents of two of them, but the sons could not be found. The parents of one of them consented to receive \$300 as compensation; the parents of the other refused.

131. GEK SIOW had already paid \$150 when, hearing that the other case could not be "squared," he ran away and escaped, or he would have been arrested.

132. If a man who is wanted by parents in this way dies, the *Tau-Kheh* must compensate the parents, otherwise his only chance is to run away.

133. Chinese are allowed to leave China openly, and an intending emigrant need not pay any fee to any one; in fact, the authorities favour emigration in view of the over-populated state of the country.

134. In some cases the parents are paid \$10 to \$15 to allow their sons to go, and if the *Kheh-Thau* attempts to recoup this sum from the coolie, the coolie refuses.

135. Out of the \$30 paid to the coolie when the contract is signed, \$15 are deducted for passage money, in the Protector's presence. The coolie thus actually receives \$15 cash, and I must take the risk of his absconding; I can arrest him if he attempts to do so after signing the contract.

136. During the last two or three years the Dutch have established direct immigration from China to Deli.

137. I am a Straits-born man. I once was a *Kang-Chu* (i.e., had a riverside gambier plantation) in Singapore. I have never worked as a coolie.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

R. P. G.

SIXTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31st, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT :

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.

Mr. J. E. Romenij, Assistant to Messrs. MANSFIELD & Co., gave evidence as follows :—

Mr. J. E. Romenij. 31st October. 138. I am in charge of the coolie business of the firm. My experience extends over seven years, partly in Singapore and partly in Penang. I had no previous connection with labour.

139. I engage Chinese coolies solely for Sumatra and Borneo, but import no men myself. I did so formerly independently of the brokers, but the difficulties thrown in my way by the latter compelled me to give it up.

140. The coolies I engage are only for tobacco planting. For Deli I principally get Te-chius. Hailams are not engaged. I have sent some Te-chius to Borneo, but they are now very unwilling to go, and lately principally Khehs are sent. The reason of their preference for Deli is that the place is well known to them and recommended by the brokers, and, owing to Borneo not yet having such a good name in Singapore, the brokers do not seem to care about working for that country, and prefer Deli because they have been working for Deli so many years and know every estate and Tyndal there and are consequently not afraid of coolies absconding. Also when a man has to be redeemed, as is often the case with Te-chius, they can easily find him.

141. Some Hai-lok-hongs go to Borneo, but only *Lau-Khehs* (old hands) from Deli. They are particularly engaged for some old Deli head Tyndals who were banished at the time from Deli, but escaped in Hongkong and are since employed in Borneo. These men have still considerable influence amongst their old *kongsis* in Deli, and manage to engage occasionally some batches of their old coolies.

142. The examination of coolies is done by an experienced European Medical Doctor, who compares the coolies with their photographs, and notes any personal marks, etc. on the backs of the photographs.

143. In the case of coolies going to Borneo the broker's responsibility ends as soon as the coolies are put on board. Coolies for Borneo are in our charge, but at the planters' risk until delivered at port of destination. We prevent them from going on board until the last moment, keeping them in boats alongside meantime, in order to be able to check them properly to prevent substitution. Only the broker's headmen are allowed to go on board, but no one else connected with the depôt or broker is allowed on board on any pretence. I find that very little cheating is attempted. It used formerly to be largely carried on, but with increased experience we can prevent it, and now very few complaints are made. Photographs of the coolies are also sent to Deli to aid in identifying them there.

144. The prices paid depend on the tribe of the coolie, *e. g.*, For Hai-lok-hongs (*Lau-Khehs*) delivered on board ship for Borneo, we pay from \$75 to \$80.

145. For Te-chius for Deli we pay \$85 to \$88, delivered on the estate. When the Deli planters are short of coolies from Swatow from the direct emigration, they apply to Singapore and pay \$85 per man. This is the sum fixed by the Planters' Association, and includes everything; of this the broker receives about \$80, and the balance covers the passage by our steamers and miscellaneous expenses.

146. About three years ago Deli planters paid \$50 for Te-chius, but competition raised the rates, and the planters refused to yield, sending over *Kheh-Thaus* of their own to recruit in China, and these men brought down coolies. But the brokers

seeing that this was interfering with their business offered the recruiters higher rates, with the result that the coolies passed into the brokers' hands on the way through. This system was consequently abandoned. The planters made no advances to their *Kheh-Thaus*. The latter principally worked it with the amount of their earnings and with some small advances paid to the coolies by the O. S. S. Co.'s Agent in Swatow on shipment of the coolies. Mr. J. E. Romenij. 31st October.

147. We used to pay advances of \$30 to coolies going to Deli, and \$6 for his travelling expenses as well. The planter further paid the *Kheh-Thau* \$10 to \$15. The planters spoilt their own game by competing among themselves. In 1884-85 the cost was \$70 per man, but the planters combined and agreed to pay only \$50, and this continued for about a year and a half, and then the price rose to \$70, \$100, and even \$125 two years ago, owing to the competition which arose among the planters themselves owing to the increase in tobacco planting. The sum was an increase of brokerage pure and simple. The prices dropped, when the planters started direct emigration, from \$125 to the present price of \$80 or \$85. They were driven to this step by the high prices prevailing, as the brokers' combination proved to be too powerful for the planters to fight against here.

148. When a Deli coolie who has been a *Sin-Kheh* comes back to Singapore he generally makes for his old depôt, and uses it as an hotel.

149. We have tried to make use of planters' *Kheh-Thaus* and old Tyndals from Deli as brokers here, but they were beaten off by the Singapore brokers; besides, the coolie business necessitates large advances, and as there is no security and we have no hold over them, it is preferable to work with reliable brokers of this port. The *kongsis* of the Singapore brokers, also, exercised pressure on the outside brokers who tried to compete with them.

150. I think direct traffic from China to Deli is most desirable for the Deli planters.

151. We engage no *Lau-Khehs* for Deli in Singapore, their quality and tribe are not such as are required by the planters. Penang is a better *Lau-Kheh* market. They are mostly engaged for places on the coast, whence they cannot easily escape, and seldom for Deli, because they would run away, as the estates are too close together.

152. The *Sin-Khehs* offered for Borneo are all Khehs and very bad, so that only a small percentage can be accepted. For very good Khehs we pay the broker about \$60 to \$65, but only for the very best men of this tribe. Sometimes we only pay \$45 to \$50. In addition we pay the passage money, and put watchmen on board. The planters pay us the brokers' price plus about \$10, and this includes everything.

153. Hai-lok-hongs for Borneo cost us \$75 to \$80 plus \$10 expenses. They are mostly all old Deli *Lau-Khehs*. They receive advances of \$30 to \$40 extra, in addition to the \$30 for which they sign, making a total of about \$60 to \$70. The broker only clears about \$10.

154. The Deli planters have lately refused Khehs, and this tribe is only accepted in Borneo because no others can be had. Te-chius and Hai-lok-hongs work better.

155. The greatest demand in Deli is from September to March; at other seasons the demand is sometimes nil. The time of demand in Borneo is almost the same. Most arrivals from China take place at the close of the paddy harvest, which to some extent fits in with the time of the greatest demand.

156. The contract forms for Sumatra and Borneo are identical. The term of contract is never longer than three years. We use only the Protectorate forms. The planters in Deli and Borneo always adhere to the contract terms; I consider them quite satisfactory.

157. Coolies in Borneo have hitherto had little chance to save, the estate being new, but really good Deli coolies can save from \$150 to \$250 in one year, clear, which would amount to \$750 in three years, but most of the coolies leave

Mr. J. E. Romenij. 31st October.

with their first year's earnings, and only re-engage themselves when they have spent their money. Gambling absorbs most of their earnings.

158. If the estate is new the men are likely to have to work longer before they can save any money, but on estates already flourishing they are able to make their money sooner and often clear out at once.

159. I will try to furnish the Commission with returns of the numbers of coolies who have actually joined the estates and worked off at the end of the first or second year.

160. Generally speaking I am satisfied with the present system; at least, I can suggest no better one, but the brokers are unsatisfactory, and should be improved. I doubt, however, whether Chinese of a better class would undertake this kind of work. To get coolies down at all one must employ Chinamen.

161. Officially we make no enquiries as to whether men are brought down by brokers under false pretences, but I believe they often come down with all kinds of intentions, meaning to follow various pursuits, and on arrival are persuaded by the brokers to work on the estates.

162. Lately I have had men of good physique, but formerly this was not always the case. We have not had so much occasion to reject men as before. We accept good *Sin-Khehs* provided they are not diseased: anæmia and heart disease prevail largely among them, but not much venereal. Generally speaking *Khehs* are miserable specimens. *Hai-lok-hongs* are good, but very scarce.

163. The higher death-rate in Borneo may be partly due to the fact that *Khehs* are a weaker tribe than *Hai-lok-hongs* and *Te-chius*, combined with the natural causes of death common to newly opened countries.

164. We cannot get nearly enough men. I had an order for 500 *Te-chius* for Deli two months ago, and so far have only been able to send about 180, and yet I believe I have got almost all who have come down in that time; the estate was a favourite one, too, particularly for *Te-chius*. I have never known the supply other than short. Eight months ago the demand was so great that I have seen planters and *Tyndals* go themselves to the depôt and select men almost wholesale whom we had refused to take. All kinds and classes were accepted. The supply is too small at some seasons, and at others there is no demand. If the supply could be spread over the whole year and arrangements made for the employers to receive their men in batches as they come down instead of all at one time, I believe the supply would not be insufficient.

165. Three years ago the Chinese authorities obstructed emigration in Swatow and beheaded the *Kheh-Thaus* sent up by the Deli planters. I have not heard of any such cases lately. On some occasions the opposition of the Chinese authorities was so strong that our agents in China, in order not to encourage the emigration against the will of the Government, hesitated in paying the usual advances to the *Kheh-Thaus*.

166. In the case of *Te-chius* engaged by us, immigration to the Straits has decreased during the last twelve or eighteen months. I think this is due to the direct emigration to Deli.

167. The *Khehs* have fallen off in quality.

168. I know of no local grievance to hinder immigration.

169. I do not think the brokerage excessive, though high, and I see no way of reducing it unless there is less demand. Deli planters, I hear, pay more than \$100 for coolies imported direct.

170. As a reason why the brokers could at one time supply *Te-chius* at \$50, whilst they cannot possibly do so now and have to ask considerably higher rates, I can give the following explanation:—About three years ago there was a Chinese firm called *Ee Kee Hong*, which made a business of chartering passengers' room on board steamers from Swatow to Singapore. In order at any time to fill up the space they did recruiting on a large scale, and were responsible to the Chinese

Government for the men exported. The coolies on arrival at Singapore were sold to brokers for merely the price of the passage money, with expenses, and a small commission of \$3 a head. Total about \$17, which was recovered from the advance made to the coolie by the broker, so the latter could easily sell the coolies at about \$50 per head and still make a profit of \$10 to \$15. Now, owing to continual difficulties with cases of kidnapping, &c. the *Ee Kee Hong* has been compelled by Chinese official influence to give up their business, and the difference in the cost of the coolie goes into the pocket of independent recruiters and brokers in China, who now have to do, at great expense and great risks, the business which was formerly done by *Ee Kee Hong*. I do not think the Singapore brokers make anything more now the price is \$80 than they did when it was \$50, as they have to pay \$30 or \$35 commission on every good coolie to the *Kheh-Thau* or broker in China, the latter drawing on the brokers in Singapore for the cost of every coolie-shipment.

171. It would be an advantage to both coolie and employer if the cash advance were done away with; mining coolies for Klang get none. One must pay in advance to induce coolies to go to Borneo, but it is not necessary for the Malay Peninsula; in Klang, however, they work under a Chinese employer, which may account for this, as, no doubt, they prefer Chinese to European employers.

172. I have known coolies refuse to sail because their advance had been taken away, although the Protector had already told them not to trust it to anybody; and if coolies will throw their money away, or spend it, or leave it in the hands of brokers, we cannot prevent them. Brokers undoubtedly do squeeze the coolies, but yet I think that as long as the coolies remain under debt to the brokers or under contract advance from the employers, the brokers stand in more need of protection from the coolie than *vice versa*. The coolie needs no further protection; he gets well attended to in the depôt.

173. We do not lose many coolies after making advances; if a man runs away the loss falls on the broker, or if the man has escaped before being taken over by us, which is done on board ship for Borneo, and on the estate for Deli.

174. If a man escapes in Borneo and is found in Singapore we have no remedy against him except to sue him for debt, which is useless. There is no legal power to arrest or punish him; what I do is to put him on board the first steamer and send him back to his estate.

175. The watchmen we employ are mostly Malays and one or two Chinese who are able to speak the coolies' dialect.

176. If coolies abscond at Labuan they cannot be recovered, as we get no assistance from the authorities. They do not often escape there now, as we get the Captains of the steamers to look after them and supply watchmen ourselves.

177. I believe that broker's assistants often instigate the coolies to abscond and aid them in doing so, and then share the profits with them. Boats are sometimes kept waiting at Tanjong Katong to pick up the fugitives, and this could only be done by the brokers, and not by the coolies.

178. I have found no difficulties in connection with the Crimping Ordinance.

179. I do not think the Government could run the immigration satisfactorily, but it would certainly be desirable if it could be managed in the same way as the *Ee Kee Hong* used to do it.

180. No Deli planter belonging to the Association may import coolies by himself, but must do it through the Planters' Committee.

181. The recent Court decision affects the brokers, and will no doubt also affect the merchants; the immigration has already decreased in consequence, but brokerage has not yet risen, though it might do so. In my opinion the law should stand as formerly and the brokers be allowed to keep the coolies in their depôts for some time.

Mr. J. E. Romenij. 31st October. 182. We have nothing to do with importing women; they are never indented for, though the planters would welcome them. No one has ever tried to import them, or encouraged the attempt.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING RE-ASSEMBLED
IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
AT 3 P. M.

PRESENT :

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.

Mr. R. J. Gunn. 31st October. Mr. R. J. Gunn, of Messrs. A. L. JOHNSTON & Co., was called, and in answer to questions stated :—

183. I have been in charge of the coolie business of the firm since 1885, and for ten years previously was a planter in Deli. We do no importing ourselves, but act as agents. Our business is with all kinds of coolies, but only for Sumatra and Borneo, not for the Malay Peninsula.

184. For Sumatra the coolies are all Te-chius and Hai-lok-hongs, and for Borneo all Khehs.

185. We have never made any attempt at importation.

186. Our coolies are mostly for Borneo; the brokers' responsibility with them ends as soon as they are put on board.

187. Our contract forms all come from the Protectorate; I think the terms of contract quite satisfactory; but it should be stated on the contract, by the Protector, which are cheap and which expensive coolies, to prevent the one kind being substituted for the other; and any attempt at substitution should be made penal.

188. A hardworking coolie can save \$75, both in his first and second year, clear; many do this and leave. On the best estates about 75 per cent. clear off their debts in the course of the first year, while on the worst estates perhaps only 10 per cent. will do so. I should say that 40 per cent. was a fair average of men who do this.

189. The second year the percentage of those remaining who clear themselves is less, for the coolies always deteriorate and take to opium. If a coolie does not clear himself the first year he does not often do it at all, and is kept on for an indefinite time, usually till he dies. I have known men to remain in debt for ten years.

190. The advance made is \$30, and the coolie receives \$40 or \$50 during the year, which he spends, so that \$70 or \$80 has to be cleared off before the coolie can begin to save. If the coolie is a really good one he can earn \$150 in a year, by selling his tobacco crop.

191. If disputes arise between coolie and planter they can appeal to the Controller, who will name two neighbouring planters as adjudicators.

192. All the coolies who come down here want to go to Sumatra. The class of coolie is yearly growing worse at present; we get large numbers of boys, small and emaciated, and no agriculturalists. This is due to the supply being far too small for the demand. Moreover, *Sin-Khehs* now smoke opium, which formerly was not the case—say ten years ago.

193. I consider the present system unsatisfactory as regards the China end. The remedy must begin there, and I would suggest a Government Emigration Depot at Swatow to improve the physique of the men sent down.

194. Great opposition would of course be encountered from the brokers, and the entire support of the Chinese Government would be essential. Mr. R. J. Gunn. 31st October.

195. The depot system here is very good, but of course if a Government Depot were established in China, the same would have to be done here.

196. At present the Protectorate satisfies all requirements.

197. I do not consider the rate of brokerage exorbitant.

198. I have never found difficulty in procuring enough coolies, as we do not export a great number.

199. For Deli, where coolies are well paid, the supply is good, but not for the underpaid Straits Settlements. The supply of coolies is simply a question of pay.

200. I have never heard of any obstructions made by the Chinese authorities to emigration, nor do I know of any local grievances which should hinder immigrants from coming here.

201. The prices for coolies are very variable; it was the high price charged by the Singapore brokers which brought about direct immigration to Deli.

202. I have often heard from coolies that their advances were taken away from them by the brokers; this is done by extortion and can only be practised on *Sin-Khehs*, but it is not a really serious grievance.

203. I always accompany coolies to the Protectorate myself. I do not think that much substitution goes on, and the planters never complain of any to me.

204. It is quite an exceptional case if I lose a coolie after he has signed his contract.

205. Substitution was very bad until the introduction of the photograph system stopped it, about eight years ago.

206. I pay the coolies' passages on behalf of the planter who orders them.

207. Many coolies have absconded at Labuan and the local Government will not aid in their recovery. The escapes, however, are fewer now, because we get the Captain to look after the coolies himself.

208. I do not think that the brokers instigate the men to escape at Labuan, as the difficulty of getting them back here would be too great. The coolies seldom try to abscond at this end; I have not known such a case for two years. When once the men have actually sailed any loss is paid by the planters, though we take the precaution of putting watchmen on board to accompany the coolies to the estate.

209. The recent decision has not affected my business at all, but I think there should be power to detain a man whose passage, &c. has been paid for him until he has signed a contract. There is now nothing to prevent coolies from selling themselves without the broker's aid.

210. The direct importation to Deli has not affected my business in any way.

211. I have only sent about 200 men to Borneo this year.

212. Chinese women go direct to Borneo from China. The British North Borneo Government encouraged the idea and imported 600 women about twenty-five months ago, all Khehs. The Khehs make better settlers than other races.

213. I do not think the planters would encourage the influx of women, as they are always the cause of quarrels among the men. They are of no use on tobacco estates, except for sorting, and could only work for three months in the year, which is insufficient even to pay for their keep and passage money: a different class of coolie-house would have to be built, too, and extra expense entailed in attaps and building materials.

Mr. E. J. Gunn. 31st October. 214. The Chinese constantly remit money to their relatives at home, not by the letter shops, but by returning friends.

215. The system of discharge tickets was instituted in Deli some time previous to the year 1875, and proved highly satisfactory there, but I do not think it necessary or even possible here where there is such a large free population.

JAVANESE.

216. I have had fair experience with Javanese going to Borneo as road workers, builders, &c., but not for planting.

217. The men come here as free labourers, without advances, and apply to the broker to find them employment.

218. A number of Kelantan men came over here two years ago, but all turned out badly.

219. I never imported any labour, but have always procured it locally.

220. The Malay brokers are the worst class of all the brokers. They make small advances to Malays, and when the debt amounts to \$5 or \$6 the brokers make them sign contracts.

221. I have heard of the forcible imprisonment of newcomers by the Malay brokers and of their making them sign contracts to clear off their debt. The Malays are a very ignorant class of people, and these brokers should be strictly looked after. A staff of Malays should be kept at the Protectorate to look after the interests of their poor countrymen and supervise the brokers' proceedings.

222. I use the general Chinese form of contract, only altering it according as the term is a long or short one.

223. The men like a longer term, the employers a shorter one. Contracts made here are always kept to in Sumatra and recognised by the Dutch law. No fresh contract is made on arrival in Sumatra.

224. The terms of contract are always adhered to.

225. Javanese are well paid. Some get \$8, and live on \$3; they always save.

226. After eight months Boyanese always left with a sum of \$40 or \$50; they all work off their debts. They are most satisfactory people.

227. Javanese are not quite so good. The natives' condition in Java is one of poverty; they would gladly leave, but the Dutch Government prevents emigration. If brokers went there they could get any number of natives, but no recruiting is allowed, although voluntary emigration is not forbidden.

228. I think extreme poverty in Java has ruined the physique of the men.

229. The cost of Java labourers is about \$32, made up as follows:—

Three months' advance,	...	...	...	\$24
Passage to Deli,	...	...	...	3
Stamp,	...	...	...	1
Brokerage,	...	...	...	3 to \$5

This is only my approximate recollection of one year ago.

230. The men run away a good deal here, and the brokers lose if the men escape before going on board. After that the risk is the planters'.

231. Women go at the rate of about 10 per cent.; they simply go with their husbands and make what they can.

232. The discharge tickets in Sumatra are the same as with the Chinese.

The meeting adjourned at 4.30 p.m.

R. P. G.

SEVENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1st, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.

Mr. J. E. Romenij's examination was continued:—

233. The witness desired, before continuing his evidence, to correct a misstatement which had appeared in the papers in connection with a portion of his evidence of the previous day. He had said that he ascribed the high death-rate among the coolies in Borneo not so much to their inferior physique on arrival as to the fact that Borneo was a newly-opened country, where the mortality must of necessity be higher at first; the death-rate, moreover, was already beginning to diminish. According to reports from several planters, the state of health on their estates had lately been most satisfactory.

234. The reason, too, why coolies in Borneo have been unable hitherto to save much money was that the country was as yet so little developed. As time went on their chances of saving would become quite equal to those of their neighbours in Deli.

EVIDENCE.

235. The placards of the recent Court decision now posted up in all the depôts have so scared the brokers that they have written to the Swatow firms to send only a limited number of coolies, to prevent any risk.

236. No firm will think it safe to make any heavy advances on account of coolie shipment unless the brokers are allowed to have strong hold over the coolies, particularly after the men are under advances.

237. I have known large batches of Hailams to arrive here and go straight on to Deli to some particular estates with their Head Tyndal, without coming into contact with brokers at all. They sometimes come to us for their passage tickets in case the Tyndal was short of funds. This is done by confidence on both sides, and the contracts are, I believe, made on their arrival at the estates.

238. I have never heard of any coolies coming down alone to look for work.

239. Owing to the excessive expense of chartering steamers, the expenses of direct importation to Deli have so far been very high, at one time reaching \$120 per man, but they are now, I believe, decreasing, owing to the larger numbers arriving, who fill the steamers and thus reduce the cost.

240. I know no details of the Deli Planters' Association except that coolies may only be got through the Committee, to prevent any competition; the Association planters have privileges, too, which are not enjoyed by non-members. The Association is in no way connected with Government, but it is officially recognised by the Government.

241. There are no natives in Deli other than Chinese to do the tobacco planting, so when sufficient coolies cannot be had the effect is that the cultivation is less than would otherwise be the case. In Dutch Borneo, where Dyaks are often used for tobacco planting, the case is different, and if enough Chinese do not come Dyaks can be called in.

242. I remember Mr. VAN DEN HONERT's visit here some five years ago, when the brokers agreed—verbally—to supply coolies at \$50.

243. I remember also the disturbance early last year on board the *China*, when the Captain had the *Kheh-Thaus* locked up to protect them from the men's

Mr. J. E.
Romenij, 1st
November.

violence. According to the men's statement, they had been given to understand in Hongkong that the above-named steamer *China* was going to Deli *via* Singapore, but were in reality shipped direct for Deli; they discovered the fraud in time and were all landed in Singapore, and released; the passages of most had been paid. Contracts for such coolies imported direct are made in Deli itself; they cannot be made in China. The Hongkong authorities refused to move in the matter, although the *Kheh-Thaus* were detained here for the purpose of being sent to Hongkong to investigate the matter; it was, in my opinion, all a swindle by the Hongkong brokers. The watchmen were not the regular *Kheh-Thaus*, but were simply watchmen specially shipped for the job. The ship had been chartered to take the coolies to Deli.

244. In the case of the *Kiel*, the men, as far as I can learn, were *bond fide* coolies recruited for Deli and prompted by Singapore brokers to come to Singapore. It was not a *bond fide* mutiny, and the coolies had really no grievance. It was simply a try on their part to be landed in Singapore. As soon as they were overpowered by the watchmen they kept quiet. On arrival in Deli they made no further difficulties.

MALAYS AND JAVANESE.

245. We do very little business in Malays; it is mostly with Javanese, Banjerese and a certain number of Dyaks, but we do no importing ourselves. We ship them chiefly to Borneo, but some also to Deli. Our chief business is in Javanese and Banjerese for Borneo. Very few Javanese are engaged here for Sumatra; their contract is made in Java and they merely pass through.

246. Last year until the year before many Banjerese were engaged in Singapore for Sumatra, but after arrival on the estates large numbers ran away, and the planters now prefer to make contracts with the headmen in Deli and let them get their own men. Banjerese prove to work more satisfactorily in that way than under direct contract with the planters. At present a good many men are going over, but chiefly all free coolies.

247. During the last three years only men went, but of late large batches of women have followed them. Once the men have gone the Dutch Government do not seem to mind the women following them.

248. Penang Malays go direct to Langkat as shed-builders, &c.

249. Ours is simply a shipping business. We have a depôt at Tanjong Pagar, where we quarter coolies on arrival at the employer's expense, and we see them re-shipped for Deli; we make no profit on this, but do it on account of our steamers.

250. Boyans for Deli are used only as house and shed-builders, jungle-cutters, &c.; they are good and steady workmen and very seldom run away. They work for monthly wages.

251. The Javanese in our Tanjong Pagar depôt never come in contact with brokers; we get them through European firms in Java. Most of them come from middle Java (Solo), but these are of inferior quality. The contracts are made with the agent for three years at \$6 to \$7 a month, and they get advances of \$30 to \$35 guilders (= \$16 to \$17).

252. Delivered in Singapore they cost about \$25, and about \$30 delivered in Deli. The brokerage in Java is very small in comparison with the brokerage paid in the Straits.

253. The Javanese take their women with them, who are useful on the estates; they are under contract on the estates for sorting and picking tobacco, and other light work, &c., and get wages and advances like the men, but at lower rates.

254. After their agreements are expired the men can get grants of land from the estate owners and may work it, but it does not belong to them. I can say nothing about the conditions.

255. We had a shipment of 200 men two years ago for Klang; they came from Solo *via* Samarang, and were an average class of coolie, though rather rowdy. The

Javanese from West Java are thought satisfactory, at all events far better than Mr. J. E. Solomen. This is the only case I know of in which we engaged men for Klang. Romenij, 1st November.

256. Javanese for Borneo are recruited here through the brokers; they are mostly picked up here and on the neighbouring estates and are simply coolies discharged from estates here or in Deli.

257. For Borneo, wages have risen to \$9. A four months' advance is now made for an eighteen months' contract, and a 3 months' advance for contracts of one year. The brokerage is \$10; the depôt fee and stamp cost 50 or 60 cents. The cost per man delivered on board is about \$37, and in addition there are \$5 to \$7 passage money to Borneo.

258. The brokers only import a few men in consequence of the prohibition of the Dutch Government; this also accounts for the bad class of coolie that come here.

259. I have heard that the brokers get men by impressing them almost forcibly on the jetties, but never had such a case reported to me.

260. No men are sent to Borneo against their will. Before starting for Borneo the men must go before the Dutch Consul, and he ascertains whether they are going voluntarily or not. This is only done for the sake of interpretation; I do not think the Dutch Consul gets a fee for this, at least not from us. They are then sent with a letter from the Dutch Consul to the Protectorate, certifying that the examination has been made. It may occur that different men are substituted at the Protectorate, but there is nothing to prevent this. The contract is explained to them at the Protectorate, and the men know therefore quite well what the terms of the contract are and that the advances are their own. The brokers must deliver them on board.

261. We only occasionally engage Banjerese for Deli, and also some Boyans, engaged in Singapore.

262. Hajis amongst the coolies are not liked on estates, as they are too troublesome, and spoil the other coolies.

263. The cost of Boyans is the same as for Banjerese; the wages are \$8 a month, the brokerage \$3 to \$5.

264. Very few Boyans have been engaged for Borneo, only Banjerese; the terms are as usual.

265. Kelantans and Tringganus went in good numbers to Borneo, but employers have lately refused them as being lazy and not fit to work under contract with European employers.

266. Dyaks sometimes come to Singapore and try to earn a living in the interior of the Peninsula. If they do not succeed they return here without funds and are ultimately disposed of for work in Borneo. Some estates in Borneo refuse Dyaks, because they cannot be recovered if they should run away.

267. I would think it of great advantage to the estates in the different neighbouring countries if Javanese emigration to the Straits were made quite free.

268. Banjerese, Javanese and Boyans are preferred to any other native coolies on the estates.

269. I would give the brokers more hold over men who have signed their contracts; at present they have none. Before they have signed contracts there is no risk for the brokers, but after the men have received advances the brokers should be allowed to keep them in their depôts until shipment. The brokers now lose a good deal through runaways, which puts them into debt with the European estates' agent; emigrations consequently not encouraged.

270. The Crimping Ordinance gives me no trouble.

271. To my knowledge I have never engaged Hajis newly returned from Mecca.

KLINGS.

Mr. J. E. Romenij. 1st November. 272. I know that the Deli and Borneo planters want large numbers, but of course cannot get them. I would like to see all restrictions removed.

273. I know the Klings are very useful at drain and road-making, but I have no experience of Kling labour. There are large numbers in Sumatra, brought over at the time under false pretences.

274. I have known men who have lived for years in Sumatra come here, and be refused permission to return even on production of their old certificate.

The meeting adjourned at 1.15 P. M.

R. P. G.

EIGHTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD, AT 11 A. M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (President).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.

Chin Fui Lan. 3rd November. 275. *Chin Fui Lan*, Chop KWONG NGIEN LUNG, was examined and stated:— I am a *Sin-Kheh* Depôt-keeper and Broker. I have done business for five years, mostly with Cantonese and Khehs, but also with some Hai-lok-hongs from Hongkong and a few Te-chius from Swatow.

276. All the Hai-lok-hongs go to Deli for tobacco planting, and almost all the Te-chius.

277. The remainder of the Te-chius either go to Penang for sugar planting, or to Johor for gambier planting.

278. About half of the Cantonese and Khehs go also to Deli, usually *via* Penang, where I have also a depôt. The rest go to the Native States, everywhere where wanted for tin mining, or to Johor for gambier planting.

279. No Te-chius go to the Native States to mine, but the men of other tribes who go there are all for tin mining; none except some Cantonese go for planting.

280. I am only the agent of the China firms in Swatow and Hongkong.

281. The Hongkong Chops are HAP SENG CHONG, YUN YUN CHEN, KONG SUN GOI, WA THAI CHAN, SANG KONG YUN, SUN SENG CHAN. The Swatow chops are FUK KI and YAU YIN.

282. These are licensed by Government, but only as lodging house-keepers.

283. They send us all the men they get, and we can always sell them. I have now written to tell the Swatow firms not to send any more since the notice was put up in the depôts that any *Sin-Kheh* was at liberty to leave it. Every kind of coolie emigration is now stopped, so far as I am concerned.

284. Some other depôt-keepers have done the same. There was no consultation among us. SIN KONG CHONG has done so.

285. The supply of *Sin-Khehs* has not at any time been large enough. Some *Sin-Khehs* are brought to the Hongkong depôts by friends, and some come alone. Their emigration is always entirely voluntary.

286. The Hongkong firms have no recruiters, all the *Sin-Khehs* come voluntarily. They are not Hongkong men, but come from China for the purpose.

287. They are kept in lodging houses in Hongkong, but are not in any way restrained. They are induced by poverty to emigrate, as a consequence of the representations of their friends who have made money here and gone back to China. Chin Fui Lan. 3rd November.

288. All Cantonese and Khehs get an advance of \$10 in the lodging house in Hongkong. Hai-lok-hongs get \$28. They either send it back to their friends or keep it for themselves. All Hai-lok-hongs are brought by their fathers or brothers, who receive the \$28, giving the *Sin-Khehs* some of it.

289. The coolie is charged in the depôt at Hongkong about 11 cents a day for food, &c., which he pays from his advance.

290. For Cantonese and Khehs, if for mining purposes I pay to the Hongkong firms about \$28, and if for Johor gambier planting from \$23 to \$29. I generally sell them to the employers for \$1 more than I give, which represents my profit.

291. I can never make more than \$3 or \$4 profit. The expenses of the Hongkong firms are about as follows:—

Advance to <i>Sin-Kheh</i> ,	...	10.00
Passage to Singapore,	...	7.00
Payment to <i>Kheh-Thau</i> ,	...	2.00
Expenses in Singapore for opium, &c. paid by me on account of the Hongkong firm, say,	...	0.50
		<u>\$19.50</u>

292. The difference between this and the sum I pay represents their profit.

293. The coolies while in lodging houses in Hongkong are charged 8 canda-reens (about 11 cents) a day for food, &c.

294. No further advances are made at the Protectorate for gambier and tin mining coolies, so that \$24 to \$30 represents the whole cost to the employer. Of this he recovers \$16 from the *Sin-Kheh*.

295. This is done by stopping from his wages during the first year. The contract rate of wages is \$30 per annum, and of this \$14, or about \$1 per month, is given him in cash.

296. Thus the actual cost of a *Sin-Kheh* at the end of his first year is about \$38.

297. Formerly *Sin-Khehs* wanted an advance in Hongkong of \$14 or \$15, and we paid \$30; now they only want \$10 advance, and we pay only about \$25.

298. If the *Sin-Khehs* go to the depôt in Hongkong by themselves they get their whole advance in cash, but if brought by friends the friends get the advance and give what they please to the *Sin-Kheh*, perhaps about \$2.

299. For every Cantonese or Kheh *Sin-Kheh* delivered on an estate in Deli I get \$47 or more. I send many of them *via* Penang, where I have a depôt, but I pay for the coolies myself in Singapore, whether they go to Deli *via* Penang or direct.

300. Of the money I receive I pay to Hongkong, if the men's passages have been taken to Singapore, \$25; I advance the *Sin-Kheh* \$14 (\$30 total, less \$16 for passage money); the passage to Deli costs \$2½; and the wages of the *Ah-Kheh* (man who looks after coolies), railway fare, &c., about \$2. The coolie also costs me a small sum in the depôt, for which I do not charge him.

301. My profit on coolies for Deli is only about \$2 per man.

Chin Fui Lan.
3rd Novem-
ber.

302. The \$25 I pay to Hongkong is made up about as follows:—

Advance to <i>Sin-Kheh</i> ,	\$10
Passage,	7
<i>Kheh-Thau</i> ,	2
Profit,	6
Total...	\$25

303. If the passage of the *Sin-Kheh* is taken to Penang from Hongkong, I pay \$27½ instead of \$25.

304. All these prices vary slightly.

305. If the *Sin-Kheh* goes *via* Penang, \$19.50 is charged as passage money, and the coolie only gets \$10.50. I send them where I think I can sell them best.

306. For Hai-lok-hongs for Deli I pay the Hongkong firm \$54. The Hongkong firm's advance to the *Sin-Khehs* is \$28, the passage money is \$7, and the *Kheh-Thau* gets \$2, the Hongkong firm's profit is about \$20.

307. I make \$8 profit; \$14 is advanced to the *Sin-Kheh*; the passage to Deli, doctor's fee, &c. amount to \$7 or \$8.

308. I sell the coolies sometimes for \$80 to \$83, delivered on the estate in Deli.

309. I remit the money by telegraph one day after the arrival of the coolies. I pay only for those who are landed at Singapore at the wharf; if men run away afterwards I must pay \$20 per man; this is done by arrangement with the firm.

310. If men run away after they have made contracts I must pay the whole \$54, but, if before signing the contracts, I pay only \$20.

311. I deal in Singapore with Messrs. BEHN, MEYER & Co., MANSFIELD & Co. and GUTHRIE & Co. I also sell *Sin-Khehs* to Klang tin-miners direct, as well as to a local Chinese firm (chop KWONG HANG).

312. From Europeans I always get the money immediately after the sale of the coolies; in the case of KWONG HANG I must send the coolies to the estate and the money is paid me on their arrival. As for the tin-miners, some pay ready money, and some on credit. I take no interest for credit given, and the debts sometimes run for two years. I have sometimes lost money on these credit sales.

313. I agree to this arrangement because the *Sin-Khehs* that I sell to the Chinese tin-miners are weak and bad, and unless the miners buy them no one else will. Hence only the dregs of the market go to the mines.

314. The wages of coolies tobacco planting in Deli are paid twice a month, and depend upon the quality of the tobacco.

315. *Khehs* and Cantonese can generally save from \$50 to \$70 a year, but only about \$30 in their first year. Some save nothing the first year, and some save nothing for several years, if they are gamblers, opium smokers, &c.

316. A *Sin-Kheh* tin mining in Klang saves nothing his first year, after that he is not considered as a *Sin-Kheh* and gets \$7 to \$8 a month. I have known men save \$80 to \$100 in their second year: most of them save \$30 to \$40.

317. Cantonese and *Khehs* for Johor gambier planting save nothing their first year. The next year their wages are \$8 to \$10, and they save about the same as tin-miners.

318. If an employer knows that a *Sin-Kheh* is honest he gives him a plantation, on condition that all gambier and pepper produced is to be sold to the *Kheh-Thau* at a fixed rate, and the *Sin-Kheh* can make about the same as in tin mining.

319. But for the first three years he can only make about \$200, afterwards he can make a great deal, sometimes even \$1,000 a year. This is not often done, but many can go on making \$200 a year.

320. About one-half return to China after several years, taking back usually \$100 to \$200.

321. Some Hai-lok-hongs on arrival here refuse to go as tobacco planters, so the Hongkong men must make larger profits on the rest; some stay here and some go away as gambier planters.

322. I was in Hongkong for more than ten years as a sundry-shopkeeper and learnt all these details there. The Hongkong men sent me here as their agent.

323. I have lost about 200 *Khehs* this year before they had signed contracts; some escaped, and some were discharged by the Protector. For those who ran away I paid \$20, for those discharged \$10, and for those returned to Hongkong nothing.

324. About 4,000 *Sin-Khehs* of all kinds have been to my depôts this year; 200 or 300 went to Sandakan, 150 to Deli, 500 to Klang, 500 to Pahang, 300 to Siak for tin, 400 to Johor for gambier, and the rest to Penang.

325. Till last month my employes sold necessities to the coolies in the depôt, but now the things are got in shops as we cannot retain the coolies in the depôt.

326. If men come to me too ill for any work at all they are sent back to China.

327. The men prefer tin mining, because there are only a few *Khehs* and Cantonese in Deli and most of their friends and relations are miners in Klang.

328. In China they have generally been farmers and planters.

329. There is a prejudice against Deli, because once it was reported in China to be unhealthy.

330. Hai-lok-hongs go in for tobacco; many have been to Deli in that capacity, and Deli has a good name with them.

331. Of the Te-chius, half go to Penang as sugar-cane planters and the rest to Johor; they prefer tobacco planting.

332. They will agree to go anywhere for work if they cannot get work in the places they prefer.

333. If they refuse to go their relations must redeem them, and if not we must let them go after ten days.

334. I have never had a case of parents demanding the return of their sons to China.

335. The Chinese Government never obstructs the emigration of Cantonese and *Khehs*.

336. In Hongkong all *Sin-Khehs* must state to the Master Attendant that they have paid their own passage; if they say that others have paid, they may not come. They are always told by the recruiters what to say.

337. I have no dealings with *Lau-Khehs*.

338. I have never worked as a coolie nor as a Mandor.

339. I would like the new rule to be held in abeyance for the next two months, to give me time to collect my accounts and to return my license.

340. I have no other complaints to make.

341. If the price of tin rises the price of *Sin-Khehs* also rises.

342. I think that direct importation to the Native States would be very hard to arrange; I have never thought of attempting it.

Chin Fui Lan.
3rd Novem-
ber.

343. I do not find that the coolies' physique has altered either way lately.
344. The number of mining coolies has increased during the last two years.
The meeting adjourned at 4 p. m.

R. P. G.

NINTH MEETING.
HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
W. E. HOOPER, Esquire.

Mr. G. Reimer.
4th Novem-
ber.

Mr. G. Reimer, of Messrs. RAUTENBERG, SCHMIDT & Co., Merchants, Cecil Street, Singapore, was examined, and in reply to the President stated:—

345. I am not now exactly in charge of the coolie business of the firm, but I superintend it, and was formerly in charge. The gentleman who has had direct charge for the last year or two has just gone to Europe. I have been more or less connected with it for nine years.

346. We are Agents for a number of tobacco estates in Deli and other places on the coast of Sumatra, and we engage coolies for these estates, but do no business for Borneo, only for Deli and other places in Sumatra.

CHINESE.

347. We do not import Chinese coolies.

348. We are not Agents for any line of steamers that bring coolies down.

349. As a rule we do not engage any Chinese except Te-chius and Hai-lok-hongs, but sometimes we take a certain proportion of Khehs.

350. No *Lau-Khehs* are engaged by us; the whole business is with *Sin-Khehs*.

351. Some years ago we had Hailams, Macaos and other kinds mixed up without our knowledge and consent. The fact is we have not of late engaged many Chinese coolies; we could not get them just now.

352. About five weeks ago we wished to engage Chinese, but could not get any. Before that time we could not get as many as we wanted. Last year also the supply was rather short. As long as I can remember, we have seldom been able to get as many as we wanted.

353. I can give a return shewing the numbers we have got for this and last year.

354. We get our coolies in the same way as other firms do—by going to the depôt with a medical officer and choosing the coolies. I have not been doing that myself of late, though I did it formerly.

355. We always send a European to inspect the coolies.

356. We pay the brokers for Te-chius for Sumatra \$75 to \$90. That means delivery on the estate. We make no distinction between these and Hai-lok-hongs. Khehs are from \$20 to \$30 less, or about from \$50 to \$60. We do not take many Khehs.

357. We pay about \$33 when the coolie leaves here, and the balance when he arrives on the estate. It is all paid to the broker.

358. If the coolie absconds in Singapore after signing the contract, the loss falls on the broker. I have seldom seen a case of absconding here, but it takes place afterwards in Deli. They do not abscond between here and Deli, but at Deli itself before being handed over to the estate. In such a case the broker bears the loss, not the firm.

359. If we were sending over 100 men and only 95 turned up on board the ship, then the broker would refund the advance.

360. We never tried importing coolies in order to save the brokerage. I do not think it would be practicable to keep it in our own hands, as so many difficulties would arise that it would probably be impossible to carry it out.

361. Some of our friends in Deli have sent old hands to China to engage coolies, and they have got them and paid their passage to Singapore, where they have been got hold of by brokers and all the advances have been lost. The men were in the hands of the brokers here and said they would not go to Deli. That was about six months ago. They nearly all come through Singapore.

362. There are no direct steamers from China to Deli except those under charter of the Planters' Association, which only take their own coolies.

363. Our firm has nothing directly to do with the Planters' Association, but some of our friends in Deli are members of it. It is in competition with the Singapore brokers.

364. We always use the printed forms of contract supplied by the Protectorate. We have never had any hint that changes either in the terms or rates of the form are desirable. We are satisfied with the terms.

365. Our main difficulty is that we cannot get enough coolies.

366. I think the reason why there are not enough to be had now is that the demand is greater. There are tenfold the number of plantations now.

367. I think the reasons why the supply has not kept pace with the demand are not on this side; they must be in China, but I cannot say what they are.

368. The coolies make as much money as they can expect.

369. The Planters' Association has direct steamers from Amoy and Swatow to Deli, and they go to great expense yet they cannot get nearly as many as they want. The steamers come down sometimes with about half the number wanted.

370. I have not heard that ill-treatment on the estates keeps the coolies away.

371. I have not always been satisfied with the physique and strength of the coolies. It is not so very difficult to get coolies of good physique for Deli itself, but if they are engaged for other estates which have not a good name, in a new district, it is almost impossible to get strong coolies, and one must take what one can get. The coolies on the whole appear as good as ever they did. I have noticed no falling off.

372. I cannot suggest any way by which the cost—\$80 or \$90—could be reduced. I do not think it could be reduced under the present circumstances.

373. The prices were higher before.

374. Some one must do the business, and the brokers are the class of men best suited for it; others could probably not be got to do it. The brokers are not in favour with their countrymen.

375. I do not think brokers make excessive profits; they have many losses. I should say that between \$10 and \$20 a head of profit are made by the brokers. This is only a guess, I cannot say exactly.

376. I know that coolies have at times refused to sail, but I cannot say whether this was because the advance they received had been afterwards taken away from them. We never actually had a case where this was proved to have been done, but I think it is, though I have never myself met with a case.

Mr. G. Reimer. 4th November.

377. Sometimes the coolies made difficulties when on board, but they always ended by sailing.

378. I do not think that the men are often changed after they have been inspected in the depôt and different men brought. This has ceased since the coolies have been photographed, but before that the brokers changed as many as they could.

379. Once a man came to me and told me that he was regularly employed by a broker to go as a coolie and then was changed. I have not heard of this for a long time past. I could not get the man now.

380. In former years when doctors here had inspected the coolies and certified them to be in good health, I have known of half of them having been found sick on arrival at the estate, so that they must have been changed. The system of photographing the coolies came into use about five or six years ago.

381. The firms take no responsibility themselves for losses of coolies; the brokers are wholly responsible.

382. I have had no experience of China nor knowledge of what the proceedings are there.

383. We have no connection with the direct steamers between China and Sumatra.

384. I am aware of the recent decision of the Court regarding the keeping of coolies in the depôts. I think that that has something to do with the scarcity now, as the business of the coolie brokers is made more difficult.

385. This is the time of the year when there is a great demand for Sumatra. We have orders for *Sin-Khehs*, but for the last few weeks have not been able to get any. I do not know whether other firms have been getting any.

386. In engaging coolies we have a certain discretion as to price. If the prices go too high we might make enquiry of the estate owners. Our friends in Sumatra enquire about the prices before giving an order, because they have the choice of engaging coolies in Penang, or even in Deli itself, where they can get *Lau-Khehs*; some prefer them. We would telegraph to Deli first before engaging coolies, if the price rose to \$95.

387. There are many *Lau-Khehs* in Deli at the time of the year when the crop is over and the coolies discharged. Some people prefer them altogether, and take none but *Lau-Khehs* to work, particularly where they cannot get good *Sin-Khehs* from Singapore.

388. When the direct line of steamers from Swatow to Deli started, they got such a small number of coolies that it did not affect our firm at all.

389. I have never seen women with the *Sin-Khehs*.

390. I know nothing about the grants of land to coolies on the estates, and I do not think this is done.

391. I have had no experience myself on estates.

392. The only thing that I can suggest as likely to do good would be a Government depôt for the coolies, where they could be kept, but if that is not done the brokers ought to be protected. If they advance money to the coolie at present they have no hold upon them. The broker loses his money if the coolie refuses to engage himself for work.

393. I do not think that if the coolies were detained for ten days it would be sufficient, but there ought to be a limit, as the coolie might not be strong enough to be engaged within a certain time; I would give them perhaps a month.

394. With that alteration the present arrangement would do well enough, as far as the employers are concerned.

395. I do not know how the coolie fares. I cannot say definitely whether the coolie wants more protection against the broker. I know of no particular instances

where the coolies have been robbed by the brokers, though it is generally held that the coolies are squeezed. The whole work ought not to be left to the brokers, who are a set of rascals.

Mr. G. Reimer. 4th November.

396. It is impossible for me to say how a depôt in China would answer.

397. The Government might have a great deal more trouble to get the coolies to work than the brokers have. It is a business which, to a certain extent, must be left to the brokers, who are the only class of people that can manage the coolies and "persuade" them to go.

JAVANESE.

398. We do business with Javanese coolies. We get Javanese, Banjerese and Boyanese, but no others. We do not get any Kelantans or Peninsula men. All these are for Sumatra and Klang, and go to all the ports.—Deli, Assahan and elsewhere.

399. Boyanese are engaged for the building of houses and sheds, and the Banjerese are engaged either for building or field work. Javanese are used for field work generally.

400. The Javanese engaged here get \$7 per month wages, and Boyanese and Banjerese \$8 per month, otherwise the terms of contract are the same.

401. The Javanese gets two or three months' advance according to the length of his contract, or say \$14, which is paid to him at the Protectorate. The brokerage is \$3, and the passage money is paid. The broker must send them on board, so he has a certain responsibility as regards their safe delivery on the estate. The passage costs \$3, and another \$1 or \$2 for stamp fee, &c. This, with some small outlays and the \$14 advance makes about \$22 in all. Then a man is sent over with them to take care of them on the voyage to the estate, who gets his passage and \$10 for the whole job.

402. The cost of Boyanese and Banjerese is slightly more in the proportion of their wages, because they are advanced a little more; their brokerage and expenses are all the same.

403. The estates sometimes send over Mandors to select their coolies here, and in that case the responsibility of the broker ceases.

404. I have not heard that there has been trouble with the Banjerese.

405. The Javanese engaged in Java come here for trans-shipment only. They are either engaged here or in Java. A contract is made in Java with them for three years to work on a certain estate in Deli, and the Dutch authorities see that they really reach that estate. We simply see them landed, put in a depôt, and re-shipped. The broker here has nothing to do with that.

406. Our coolies are put in the depôt of Messrs. MANSFIELD & Co., on the wharf.

407. It is certainly cheaper to engage them from here. It costs, for a man contracted for in Java and passed through here, above \$33. He gets an advance in Java of 30 guilders, and the passage and expenses as far as Singapore are about 25 guilders, or altogether, with a few extra charges, \$33, against \$22 if he is engaged here.

408. We always prefer to engage them here if we can get good coolies.

409. When engaged here through the brokers we take them to the Dutch Consul, and they afterwards, like the Chinese, go to the Protectorate. If engaged in Java for Sumatra they are not taken here to the Dutch Consul-General.

410. *By Mr. Hooper*:—In former years it was not customary to send them to the Consul.

411. *By the President*:—I cannot say what a Javanese or Boyanese can save in the first year. I have seen a man come with a cheque for \$100, but I do not know anything more definite about it.

Mr. G. Reimer, 4th November.

412. Sometimes there is a difficulty in getting them here, and in that case we write to Java, where we can generally get as many as we want. The difficulty of getting them here is not greater now than formerly.

413. I do not think there is any excessive charge that can be done away with. I have no complaints against the present system.

414. There are no complaints about the men being changed. We very seldom lose any through their absconding in Java after they have signed the contract. They do not want to run away; they have confidence in the man in charge. Formerly they absconded in Singapore.

415. The coolies engaged here are procured through the brokers.

416. Every batch of fifteen or twenty coolies is accompanied by a Mandor, who receives \$12 a month wages. He is employed solely in looking after the coolies and gets them to work.

417. There is no direct route between Java and Sumatra; they all touch at Singapore.

418. Women come up with the gangs, and they also are engaged in Java. There are not many women with the men engaged here, even if they have come straight from Java.

419. Sometimes we pay the passage of women accompanying their husbands without any contract being signed.

420. About 30 per cent. of the total number of coolies engaged by us in Java are contract women.

421. I have not heard of a man getting land to settle on when his contract is finished.

422. *By Mr. Hooper:*—On the whole the Javanese system is satisfactory.

423. I have not found that the brokers here try to induce coolies contracted for in Java to leave; they cannot get at them.

424. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I do not think the Chinese brokers make any specially large profits. I knew a broker who was reputed to be rich, but when his license was taken away, he could not pay \$50, which we had advanced to him. Some six years ago we advanced about \$500 to a broker for coolies and could not get a cent back.

425. *By the President:*—I suppose all the brokers squeeze to get as much as they can. I do not know any instance of the coolies being cheated.

426. I think the coolie does not know much about why his money is taken away; it is my opinion that it is taken away, but I have never seen it done.

427. The planters in Deli would like to get Klings, but of course cannot do so.

The meeting adjourned at 12.30 P. M.

A. S.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
SINGAPORE, AT 3 P.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.

Major W. R. Grey, 4th November.

Major W. R. Grey, Inspector of Prisons, in reply to the President stated as follows:—

428. The paper* which I submit contains the scale of diet in the prison here. Scale A is for all long-sentenced prisoners and for all men with sentences of from three to six months. For the first six months, for three days in the week these prisoners receive scale B, and scale A for four days in the week. Where the sentence is three months or less, B scale only is followed. After the first six months, all prisoners go to the higher grade, and scale A is used. Major W. R. Grey, 4th November.

429. The only distinction made to suit the different nationalities is that goat's flesh instead of pork or beef is given to those who want it.

430. Scale C is punishment diet for men who have to live in the cells—solitary confinement. They have to do no work and do not even get exercise, unless recommended by the doctor.

431. Scales D and E apply only to Europeans.

432. There is no difference made in the diet of men doing the different classes of labour.

433. The cost of the diets per day is—for scale A, 8½ cents; scale B, 3½ cents. The only extra is wood, which costs about ¼ cent per diem.

434. On Dr. ROWELL's recommendation, about five years ago, 8 oz. of rice were taken away from the diet and 4½ oz. of flour substituted, as several men were ill, some had died, and 20 in the hospital were suffering. There has not been a single case of beri-beri since the flour was brought in. The change increased the cost by about half a cent.

435. The food is supplied by contract, and as a rule the lowest tender is accepted.

436. The man who has been selected to supply the prison does everything well and is a responsible man and to be relied on.

* SCALE OF DIET FOR PRISONERS.

Scale A.

Ordinary Diet for Native Prisoners.

Rice, 14 oz. daily, including 6 oz. for Congee at 6 A.M.	Dholl, 2 oz. daily
Fresh Meat (<i>including bone</i>), 6 oz. daily [Goat for Indians; Beef for Malays; and Pork alternately for Chinese.]	Coco-nut Oil, 1 oz. daily. [for Chinese, Indians and Malays.]
Salt Fish (<i>including bone</i>), 4 oz. daily.	Curry Stuff, 1 oz. daily.
Vegetables, 7 oz. daily.	Salt, 1 oz. daily.
Beans, 5 oz. daily.	Wheat Flour, 4½ oz. daily.

Scale B.

Penal Diet for Native Prisoners.*

Wheat Flour, 4½ oz. daily.	Vegetables, 4 oz. daily.
Beans, 5 oz. daily.	Salt and Pepper, ½ oz. daily.
Rice, 20 oz. daily.	Curry Stuff, 1 oz. daily.

* This scale of diet is to be adopted for all Native Prisoners sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for periods of three months and under: it is also to be adopted for three days in each week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) during the first six months of their sentence:—(a) for all short sentenced prisoners with sentence of more than three months; (b) for all revenue grade prisoners with sentences of more than three months; and (c) for all lower grade prisoners. It will come into force for prisoners sentenced from and after the 1st July, 1890.

Scale C.

Punishment Diet for Native Prisoners.

Rice, 18 oz. daily.	Salt, 1 oz. daily.
Beans, 6 oz. daily.	Flour, 4½ oz. daily.

NOTE:—This Scale is the Reduced Diet referred to in No. 115 of the Prison Rules.

NOTE.—The beans (Native Prisoners' Diets) should be soaked for several hours in cold water, generally 12 hours will be sufficient, then washed and boiled till they are quite soft, and then smashed up in a mortar to the consistency of a thick pasty mass. The boiling to proper consistence generally takes 6 hours. This paste should be placed in a tub, and the rice added by degrees, and the two ingredients stirred together till they are thoroughly, evenly, and intimately blended, the beans imparting a bluish tint to the rice. Sometimes the mixture will appear too dry, but a little more of the liquid part of the diets will remove this.

Major W. R. Grey, 4th November— 437. I do not think it is a high contract, but at the same time I am quite satisfied that the contractor is making money; if he was not, he would not go on.

438. At one time fish with meat every seventh day was given to men sentenced to two years. When cholera broke out in the middle of 1888 the beef was given up. I did not notice any change in the prisoners when the beef was taken away.

439. Almost without exception every healthy man puts on flesh. I attribute that to regular hours, and the absence of dissipation more than to the food.

440. Men who have been underfed for years increase rapidly—18lb or 20lb in three or four weeks.

441. I cannot say that a man who has recently arrived in the Colony improves more rapidly than an old hand, or the reverse.

442. I know it is a medical idea that men longer imprisoned will require more sustenance than men outside.

443. The probable results in the case of one man imprisoned for one year and of another for ten would be that, for the first week or so the man for ten years would suffer a good deal, but as a general thing at the end of six months it will be found that they are very much about the same. They will both have improved in condition, anything perhaps the short service man more.

444. The hardest work is that for the first six months; during that period the prisoners break stones in the cells, and do the treadmill also for one hour a day. Unquestionably stone-breaking is the hardest work.

445. Work hours are from 6 to $\frac{1}{4}$ past 10, and from $\frac{1}{4}$ past 11 to 4. This is divided between the treadmill and stone-breaking.

446. The granite here is the hardest known, and the labour is therefore exceedingly hard and painful.

447. There is only one hour on the treadmill for long sentenced prisoners, but men of short sentence do much more, as they have to pump water for the Lunatic Asylum.

448. A man is supposed to break five cubic feet of stone in the day, besides his treadmill. When I came it was 4 cubic feet, and there was no treadmill then.

449. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I do not do anything with opium smokers. A man occasionally lies down and cries, and is sent to the doctor. The doctor sends him back again. Next day he is a little better, and after a time forgets all about it. I have only once seen a man in the hospital smoking opium. This was more than twelve years ago. I have never heard of a man being very ill because he was deprived of opium, but if so no doubt the doctor would give some substitute. I think I can safely say that none of the men have been allowed opium since the move to the new prison, but of course the doctor does not tell me all that he does.

450. *By the President*:—The most wonderful worker I ever saw was a Kling. The Chinese, of course, are the best workers as a whole.

451. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I have seen this man digging when he did not know he was observed, and at every changkol stroke he would bring up something like 10 or 14 lbs of earth from a deep trench. I watched him till I was tired of looking at him.

452. A good Malay will do as much as any of them. This one Kling stood out above them all, he beat earth with a rammer in each hand. I have no difficulty in making them work.

453. *By the President*:—The Chinese, as a rule, are the most troublesome. We have had some Klings, excellent workers, but on the whole the Chinese are the best.

454. The Klings, as a rule, alter least in condition, but it depends on the individual. The Chinese and the Malays shew more muscle, and the Klings do

not shew improvement so much as the other, though they may be as well in health and stronger. Major W. R. Grey, 4th November.

455. Those men who went out of doors doing earthwork were better in health than the others.

456. The food is weighed and given over to the Superintendent of the cook-house, a trustworthy native Warder, and afterwards divided and sent round.

457. There is little waste. The majority of the men finish everything. Some of them complain they have not enough.

458. An epidemic of beri-beri seemed coming on in 1885 at the time the flour was substituted, but since then there has not been a single case.

459. The majority of prisoners are Hok-kiens. The numbers will be found to be in proportion to the population.

460. I cannot say what food a free man takes. Probably few of them limit themselves to their meals of the prison diet.

The meeting adjourned at 3.30 p.m.

A. S.

Major Grey writes the following, dated 5th November, to supplement his evidence:—

461. "The prisoners who are at work receive 6 oz. of Rice in Congee at 6 A.M. This out of 14 oz. leaves 8 oz. to be divided equally for the two meals—at 10.20 A.M. and at 4.30 P.M.—at each of which they get one half of the remainder of the day's ration."

462. "Men on B scale get 6 oz. in the early morning and 7 oz. at each of the other times of eating."

462A. "I must correct a false statement made yesterday;—when prisoners of two years' sentence were on a fish diet they were given meat every seventh day."

TENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.

Dr. M. F. Simon, Acting Principal Civil Medical Officer, Straits Settlements, in reply to questions put by the President, stated as follows:—
Dr. M. F. Simon, 5th November.

463. I have had fifteen years' service in the Straits Settlements. I know the scales of diet for prisoners. I think that the wheat flour is better for them than the beans, which are troublesome to cook and, as I think, are of little use in warding off beri-beri.

464. The five ounces of beans might be cut off and a little more rice given. One and a quarter pounds of rice is enough. It expands considerably when cooked. No other change ought to be made in the scales.

465. I do not think that the quantity could be reduced very well. It is a good diet. If it were reduced the result would probably be that the men would get ill and would not be in such good condition.

Dr. M. F.
Simon. 5th
November.

466. In localities where it can easily be obtained of good quality I would give fresh fish on alternate days, instead of always salt fish.

467. More fresh fish would have to be given than salt, I should say six ounces of fresh fish against four ounces of salt.

468. Since flour has been substituted for part of the rice, no case of beri-beri has occurred in the gaol. I do not say I attribute the absence of beri-beri wholly to the flour, but I think it prevents the men from taking beri-beri so readily. I have no doubt there are many things which affect the disease, for instance, overcrowding and dampness. At the time beri-beri was prevalent no other change was made which might account for the diminution of the disease; I believe the flour is the cause. It was considered then that the patients wanted more sustaining food.

469. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—To treat a beri-beri patient with flour would not cure him, it only acts by keeping the constitution up.

470. *By the President*:—I have been in charge of the gaol since I have been in Singapore. I have been almost continuously in medical attendance since 1881.

471. The change from rice to flour was made on Dr. ROWELL's recommendation. The beans were introduced with the same idea in 1882, but they had not the same effect.

472. Before the cholera came I think there was fresh meat and fresh fish on alternate days, but when it came I had some doubt about the fish being good and so we stopped it. The fish had nothing to do with causing cholera.

473. I dare say many of the prisoners get better food than they would outside.

474. I agree with Major GREY that they improve in condition; probably this is partly because they get their food more regularly and have no dissipation, and partly because they get better food.

475. I believe it is a fact that men in confinement under long sentences require more sustenance than men on free labour. I have not had any direct evidence of this.

476. I have not noticed whether the condition of a man undergoing one year's imprisonment differs at the end of six months from that of a man sentenced to ten years.

477. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—Prisoners get worse diet at first. I do not think it would do to keep a man for a long time on scale B, which consists only of wheat flour and beans, though it does very well for three months.

478. I have never given opium to an opium smoker. The sudden stoppage never hurts him in the least. We may give him a mixture that we have for stomach-ache, but there is no opium in it. We give them congee, but that is putting them on hospital diet, required rather for other causes. We go by their bodily condition. I think they suffer from nerves. There is nothing whatever in the theory that an opium smoker must be given opium.

479. There are comparatively few opium smokers that suffer at all and complain of sickness. I fancy they are the bigger smokers, who have done little else but smoke chandu.

480. *By the President*:—I think it is better to give both meat and fish each day as is done in the diet scale, than to give them on alternate days.

481. I think it would affect a coolie's health were he not to get the various condiments, such as salt, dholl and curry stuffs. Little points like these do affect their strength.

482. It would be an advantage for estate coolies were the employers to give out the whole lot instead of only rice.

483. I cannot give an opinion as to whether the *Sin-Kheh* on an estate Mr. M. F. should be put on the same diet as the old hand who has been some years in the Straits. Simon. 5th
November.

484. There is no reason for varying the food of the Chinese and Klings, except for caste prejudices. The Chinaman is brought up on pork, and the Kling on rice and dholl. I dare say the fact of their being used to the special food in their own country may render it necessary for them, and it may be more than mere prejudice.

485. Even if it be the case that the Tamil gets no meat in his native country, if he did not get it in the gaol I do not think he would turn out as well.

486. If a man were under a long contract on wages that he did not think sufficient, the discontent at the prospect of such service would affect his health, not through his stomach but through his brain. If he were dissatisfied he would fall sick.

487. This would not be counteracted by better food; his stomach could not compensate his brain. There would be no way of putting him right except by satisfying him somehow.

488. I have had experience in inspecting estate coolies. The day's work in the gaol is six or seven hours stone breaking and one or two hours treadmill. I cannot say how this compares in point of severity with the work on an estate. I think the food given in Scale A would be enough for any reasonable labour. Supposing the work on the estates was lighter I do not think the scale could be safely reduced.

489. Scale B could not be considered a permanent diet, certainly not for over a year.

490. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—It is a generous scale. It would be very difficult to draw up a scale for outside workmen exactly sufficient. I daresay were everything in it slightly diminished it would still be sufficient.

491. I cannot tell whether a native provides himself with meat every day, but if the work is lighter you could perhaps knock it off in that way; occasionally, they could go without meat two days a week.

492. Where a man who is his own master provides for himself, I do not think he would provide himself with a scale as generous as that. Such men eat very little meat, but on the other hand their food is very varied.

493. I cannot tell if the small agriculturist who feeds himself ever takes meat. I know he has fish always and vegetables which he grows himself.

494. It would be very difficult to deal out varied diets of that sort in gaol so you must make a slightly more generous diet than they will be satisfied with, if you undertake to feed them entirely.

495. I do not think if the meat were left out that any quantity of rice could be substituted for it and the man kept as well. I think 1½ lbs. of rice would always be sufficient as rice. A man could not eat more.

496. *By the President*:—If a man were doing heavy work with no meat I believe it would affect his health. I have had no experience of men working without it.

497. I think the times of feeding and the distribution would affect the value of the diet. It would be better to give two meals a day rather than one big one.

498. I believe the general hours for feeding in the gaol—about 10 o'clock in the morning and 4 in the afternoon—to be the proper hours.

499. In the gaol they have congee the first thing in the morning. I do not know anything about the outside men, and I could not say whether the want of something then would cause their health to deteriorate.

500. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I am not acquainted with the diet given in the hospitals in Province Wellesley where estate coolies are housed. I think it is a

Dr. M. F. good thing for a man to have congee or something before he goes to work. It must be beneficial.
Simon. 5th November.

501. *By the President* :—The exact hours of meals are not of great importance, but the time ought not to be earlier than nine or later than four.

502. I have never enquired into the feeding of estate coolies. Fish or meat is a part of the daily diet of the hospital. If a man has never had meat in his own country still it is desirable he should have it here. [Read part of a statement by the Superintendent of the Government Plantations, Perak, made at the meeting of employers at Taiping, on 6th September, 1890 :—

“Length of contract and rate of wages in his opinion have no effect on coolies’ health. The full wage for a month is \$4.20 the first year, and an ordinary coolie can easily earn \$3. Food consists of rice (20-30 chupaks a month), salt fish, curry stuff, peas or beans and onions, and, with soap and oil, can all be got for

\$1.30	to	\$2.00	a month
Add 0.37	clothing	0.37	do.
“ 0.67	{ advance	0.67	do.
	{ deducted		
\$2.34		\$3.04	

503. *By Mr. Swettenham* :—I think meat should be put in that diet. The difference between that amount and this at 8½ cents a day is accounted for by the meat.

504. I think the change of climate to men coming here from India and China, and the new kind of work would affect the diet. A man should have slightly better food in consequence. I think it is a trying thing for a man to come from a country where there are changes of seasons to this country. I would make a change by giving him meat, as a stronger diet.

505. I am speaking now of Chinese and Tamils who come from their own countries and get better food here. That is not my opinion in regard to Europeans. The Chinese and Tamils have fully as much heat in their own countries as there is here, though they have a change to a reasonably cold season. Europeans come only to the heat, which has a different effect on them. None of the remarks I have made apply to Europeans.

506. Moreover, Europeans cannot do so much physical work out here as they do at home and yet keep in the same health. Europeans get run down and they cannot get better food here unless stimulants are used; the bread and meat procurable here are not so good, whereas the coolie can get better.

507. *By the President* :—Sometimes a man who has been habitually underfed for a long time can never be picked up into a good condition. No amount of good food or regular hours will do so. I know of such cases from my own experience in the hospital.

508. It is possible that a man may come to an estate having come over in that state, and that the employer could do nothing to improve him even though he did no work and was in every way well treated.

509. It is impossible for a sea voyage of six or ten days to affect a man permanently. He might be temporarily upset and require treatment, or a few days’ rest, but I do not think it is possible that any average man’s constitution could be permanently hurt by it.

510. If he were neglected when he got on the estate while still suffering from the voyage it might permanently affect him. Some care is required after a sea voyage.

511. I have been to estates and inspected the coolies. Many were men of good physique, but there were also on all the estates a lot of men that should not have come.

512. The condition of such statute men, not free labourers, I attribute mainly to their not being agricultural labourers at all, and therefore not fitted for the work.

513. I have seen a few men arrived from India. Some were able-bodied, and some not. I should not attribute that to anything that happened on the voyage.
Dr. M. F. Simon. 5th November.

514. I have never been on board the steamers they are sent by.

515. A great deal depends on the right sort of men being chosen in their own country. I mean men accustomed to that sort of work.

516. I once recommended that on one estate some thirty men should be let go, or cease work, because they were evidently unfitted for the work, partly I suppose from fretting because they were at work which they were not accustomed to. They were weavers, cattle-herds, and bullock-drivers.

517. If a man had been deceived by the recruiter it would most undoubtedly affect his health.

518. If a weaver or similar man took to agricultural work by his own desire it would not hurt him.

519. I have not seen any insane people come over as coolies.

520. I have inspected estates, and recommended that a good many should be sent to India, chiefly on the ground of their unfitness for field labour. These men you see on all estates. They are miserable fellows who have legs like pencils, baggy knees, and pot bellies.

521. These sort of men are in a way able-bodied. They have not just arrived, but may have been a year and a half or two years on the estate. When they arrived it is possible they may have been strong, able-bodied men and got into that condition on the estate, though they had never done any work, or they may have arrived like that. Their appearance does not necessarily imply that they have been treated badly.

Wong Sin Heng, a Dépôt-keeper, Chop NAM CHIANG THAI, examined by the President (through interpreter Ho SIAK KWAN) stated as follows :—
Wong Sin Heng. 5th November.

522. I am a Dépôt-keeper. I send *Sin-Yehs* to Klang. I have been at that trade in Singapore for seven or eight years. I came from China to start a dépôt. I was a lodging house-keeper in Hongkong before.

523. All my *Sin-Khehs* are Fui-Chius (Khehs), and are sent to Klang. They all go to tin mines there.

524. About 500 have come down since January last.

525. I am not the owner of the dépôt, but am the agent here. The real owner is in Hongkong.

526. I get all my coolies through our own dépôts in Hongkong, where the owner has two lodging-houses—chops HAN CHI THONG and SAN YU KE.

527. I never sell my *Sin-Khehs*, but the *Kheh-Thau* pays me \$18 for every *Sin-Kheh*.

528. Out of this \$18, about \$2 must be paid for passage money from the native place of the *Sin-Kheh* to Hongkong. The board and lodging at Hongkong would cost about \$1.50. The passage from Hongkong to Singapore costs \$7, and from here to Klang \$2. Board and lodging here costs \$1.50. Then there is 25 cents for the doctor, \$1 for a baju and a pair of trowsers, and \$1 for board and lodging at Klang. The profit is about \$2.

529. That is the whole of the money that passes through the hands of the dépôt-keeper. I get no more money from any one else.

530. The *Kheh-Thau* sells the coolie in Klang. He gets \$24 or \$25; the difference goes into his own pocket.

531. The *Kheh-Thau* has no expenses.

Wong Sin
Heng. 5th
November.

532. Seldom more than 10 *Sin-Khehs* are brought at a time. They are collected by the *Kheh-Thau* and brought to our depôts in Hongkong.

533. The *Kheh-Thaus* are not employed by us at all. They have been miners who go back to China and bring down their own relations.

534. The *Kheh-Thau* does not employ any men in China to collect coolies. He simply tells his friends and relations.

535. The \$18 is paid after the coolies are sold in Klang. They are sold to a certain shop in Klang, which must pay us the \$18.

536. We have two agents in Klang who collect the money.

537. Coolies have run away, but very few run away before being sold; if they run away at all it is after they are sold.

538. If they run away before they are sold the loss must be borne by the *Kheh-Thau*, who has to pay us the \$18, or a proportionate part of it if they have not yet arrived at Klang.

539. From the time they leave China to the time they are sold, the *Kheh-Thau* is in charge of the coolies. We have no risks at all.

540. I do no buying or selling myself, but only do business as above.

541. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I have never lost anything by the coolies dying or running away.

542. *By the President*:—The *Kheh-Thau* sells them himself in Klang to Chinese mining towkays.

543. The buyers very seldom pay ready money. I have to wait for my money about three or four months and sometimes five or six.

544. We do not get paid by the *Kheh-Thau* himself, but by the miner. Supposing two *Sin-Khehs* are sold to a firm in Selangor, I get my \$36 from the firm, and it is the *Kheh-Thau's* business to get his money as he can.

545. The *Kheh-Thau* is generally a miner. He does not go constantly up and down after he has sold his lot. He generally goes to China for business of his own and on the way back brings some of his people with him.

546. The *Kheh-Thaus* while they are waiting to sell the coolies in Klang keep them in the shop where my agents are. It is not a depôt, only a lodging-house. It depends upon the *Kheh-Thau* whether the *Sin-Khehs* are obliged to lodge there or not. If the *Kheh-Thau* wishes to do so he may shut the coolies up.

547. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—The contract with the coolies is made in Singapore before they are sold. It is made with the *Kheh-Thau*, who represents the employer.

548. The *Sin-Khehs* receive no advances in the Protectorate.

549. The *Kheh-Thau* does not actually employ the coolies, but hands them over to somebody else. No fresh contract is made.

550. *By the President*:—I have lost money in cases where the shop in Klang has failed. That has been pretty often, too.

551. The chop Tong-Hong in Klang was the last. That firm owed us \$60 or \$70, and failed about a week ago. There are many other firms which owe us money. I can get nothing of that from the *Kheh-Thau*.

552. Even if European and Chinese firms paid ready money we could not sell cheaper.

553. The *Kheh-Thaus* never lose money by the *Sin-Khehs*. They always get their share of money from the chops very early, and in cases where they cannot get the money they take things from the shop on credit, so they never risk any money at all.

554. There is a notice put up in my depôt that *Sin-Khehs* are at liberty to leave. This makes very little difficulty with us. My *Sin-Khehs* do not wish to run away, as they are all some relations of the *Kheh-Thau*, and are anxious to go and make money.

555. None have run away since I have had the depôt.

556. The *Sin-Khehs* are taken outside by the *Kheh-Thau* when they want to buy anything. I do not sell them any goods.

557. I do not charge the *Sin-Kheh* anything for food.

558. The *Sin-Khehs* receive no advance either in Hongkong or anywhere else.

559. They receive \$12 from the employer during the year for which they have to work.

560. Very few men come down sick and unfit to work. We have never had any.

561. The coolie does not get anything more at the end of the year.

562. If he works during the two hours that are given for rest, he is allowed to sell the tin to his employer. In some cases they make 20 cents in those two hours and they get \$2 or \$3 extra a month.

563. They are fed and housed by the employers. The \$48 a year is the most a man could make, and this they can save if they do not smoke opium or gamble.

564. About 30 or 40 per cent. save this sum.

565. When the men have done their year's work, some continue to work and others go back to China.

566. About 80 per cent. elect to continue to work. They are then given \$5 a month with food. They can also make extra in the same way as *Sin-Khehs*. Most of them are opium smokers, so very few save as much as \$8 a month, but they generally save something, perhaps \$10 or \$20 a year. Some work for another three or four years, and then go back with \$20 or \$30, or sometimes with \$100 or \$200.

567. Their intention when they come here invariably is to go back to China when they have made enough money.

568. After they have gone to China, almost all of them come back here when they have spent their money.

569. If they are very poor they will come again as *Sin-Khehs*, otherwise they pay their own passage.

570. If they come as *Sin-Khehs* they go through the same process as they did the first time, and receive the same pay.

571. Some of the coolies can get \$7 or \$8 if they stay on and are very good workmen, otherwise they always go on getting the same pay as in the second year. The men who come down now are as good as they used to be, generally strong and healthy. They have been doing farm work in China before coming here. They are not men who have been unable to get food.

572. I have never heard of any obstructions made by the Chinese Government to these men coming down. As far as the Te-chius are concerned, the Mandarins like them to come to another place, but they do nothing to help them to come.

573. There are no difficulties experienced in Hongkong in connection with this business.

574. No difficulties arise in consequence of men saying they are sent against their will.

575. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—The largest number of coolies came down from

Wong Sin Heng, 5th November. China in 1887. They have fallen off each year since. In that year over 1,000 came to us, against 500 now.

576. I attribute the decreasing numbers to the price of tin in Klang having fallen, so not so much money can be made. That is the only reason I know of.

577. In 1887 tin was at \$60 a pikul, while this year it sells for \$30 only.

578. When money is plentiful there are plenty of coolies. There are now great difficulties in Singapore about money.

579. There was a great famine in China a short time ago. None of our coolies came from the famine district.

580. I know nothing about any other place but Fui-Chiu.

581. It depends upon the tin miners and the *Kheh-Thaus* whether they could get plenty to come if there was plenty of money to pay for coolies. We were getting the same price three years ago as now, but the price the *Kheh-Thau* was getting three years ago was \$40, against \$25 now. Such a large number as 500 coolies could not be got suddenly even if more money were paid.

582. One thousand could not be got the same as formerly because there are less *Te-chius* now.

583. In 1887, when the number was large and the price \$40, the rate of wages was the same. Everything was the same except that we had not to give every *Sin-Kheh* a pair of trousers and a baju.

584. The *Kheh-Thau* got the whole of the difference between the \$25 paid now and the \$40 paid before.

585. *Te-chius* go to tin mining or some similar work. Many of their relations and friends are in Klang. They are satisfied.

586. It would be best if the *Sin-Khehs* were not allowed to go out of the depôts.

587. I do not think the *Kheh-Thaus* will ever sell cheaper than at the present rate, even if ready money were paid for the coolies. It makes no difference whether the buyers pay cash or are given credit.

588. The amount of wages to the *Sin-Kheh* on the contract is \$30 per annum. He gets \$12 cash, which with the \$18 to us makes up the sum.

589. I cannot say whether it would be possible to recruit a number of men in China and have them sent down direct to the Native States without calling at Singapore.

The meeting adjourned at 1 P.M.

A. S.

ELEVENTH MEETING

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1890, AT 2 P.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
FRANCIS POWELL, Esquire.
W. E. HOOPER, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.

Count C. A. de Geloos, 11th November. Count C. A. de Geloos D'Elsloo, Managing Director of the London Borneo Tobacco Company, Marudu Bay, Kudat, British North Borneo, on being examined by the President, deposed as follows:—

590. I am employed in British North Borneo by one Dutch Company—the Borneo Tabak Maatschappij—and one English Company—the London Borneo Tobacco Company. The former works one estate, and the latter three. I am a Director of the Maatschappij, and Managing Director of the London Borneo Company.

591. We employ Chinese labour for the greater part.

592. It is of great importance to us to get a good class of coolies, which up to now we have had difficulty in obtaining. We have had a very inferior sort of labour, and through that the results we might have fairly reckoned upon have not been obtained.

593. We have lost many coolies, owing to their having arrived in a very bad state of health, and thus been unable to stand any work.

594. In one case our Doctor declared that if 50 per cent. of the coolies had been sent to the South of France they would not have been able to live more than six months. So, how could it be expected that they could do work in a new country, such as clearing the jungle and pretty heavy work for two or three months.

595. We have got our coolies for the greater part from Singapore, but also some from Hongkong, who were a very bad class of men.

596. It would certainly be advantageous if the Government could do something to facilitate the emigration of a better class of men. If the Government were to take in hand the emigration of Chinese to the exclusion of the brokers, I believe it would facilitate matters, and tobacco companies would perhaps be able to pay to the coolies a higher amount than they are doing now, if we were to do without the brokerage.

597. We have had to pay up to \$105 for a man, of which the man only gets \$30 advance, the remainder going entirely into the hands of the brokers, and we have got bad men at such a price.

598. If the contracts were made between the planters and the coolies, and we had to do with the Government only, the brokers being entirely done away with, and there was a Government depôt here, it would be of greater advantage to the coolie as well as the planter.

599. I have been twice in China.

600. I do not know whether the Chinese officials obstruct the supply in any way, but to the emigration of free labour, I do not think the officials would make any objection.

601. Up to now they seem to object to the emigration of contract labour.

602. We have tried to get coolies from Swatow, as they are doing in Sumatra, and have been in correspondence with firms in Hongkong about it. Nearly three years ago I was in Hongkong and spoke to the Governor, Sir G. Wm. DesVœux, about it; then I went to Swatow, where I was told free labour was allowed, but none under contract.

603. They do not allow us to pay the passage of the coolie, he must pay it himself. The coolies sent get the \$8 passage money from Hongkong to Borneo, so there must be a grant somehow.

604. As far as I know, coolies for Sumatra do not make a contract till their arrival, and if they then object they can return to China.

605. The Chinese officials do not favour Sumatra against Borneo. What has been got for Sumatra could, if the British authorities would take it in hand, be got as easily for Borneo.

606. We tried in Hongkong nearly three years ago to engage coolies for the Borneo Tobacco Company without employing brokers. I offered \$25 advance, of which \$12½ was to be a present, and only \$12½ to be entered on their account. They seemed to be very pleased and accepted it. I engaged about ninety men, and I paid

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each man the half of the advance as a present, the other half to be given on board ship. When the time came I only got about twenty men, and those I had never seen, some lame and some blind, and many had never received the money. We lost \$12½ per man. That was in Macao and Canton. The men were to go through Hongkong.

607. I tried a second time without giving any advance, but promising it on a certain day in Hongkong, but though many promised to come, none turned up.

608. I then went to a broker in Hongkong, and in ten days I had about one hundred coolies. I paid to each man \$30 advance, this was through the broker, and included in this price was \$25 which the men had each to receive.

609. On arrival in British North Borneo they complained to the Resident that they had not received anything at all, yet they had signed the contract and had acknowledged they had received \$25. The large number obtained was entirely owing to the brokers.

610. If the Government were to establish a depôt in China, the brokers would certainly do their utmost to prevent its success, and would not spare any money in bribing the Chinese officials, if by doing so they could attain their object.

611. We find difficulty in getting sufficient labour, and the men we do get are very bad indeed. We have the greatest difficulty in getting the kind of men we want; out of 100 men in the case I am speaking of not 10 per cent. were of the class of men we wanted. We got a lot of cooks, tailors, and shop-keepers, whom it was perfectly impossible to expect could do field work.

612. There are many suitable men wanting to come. I suppose the brokers can get inferior men easier, and they get paid for them just the same.

613. The broker deceives the men, saying if the man were a cook "then you will do the cooking," and to the tailor "you will have nothing else to do but tailoring," and so on.

614. I do not think higher prices paid to the broker would bring a better class of men. When one pays to the broker \$75 besides the advances, or \$105 in all, I do not think by paying a few dollars more you will get a better man. I am speaking about Hongkong and Singapore now.

615. Last year we had nearly 100 coolies at \$105, and some at \$85. I mean *Sin-Khehs*. *Lau-Khehs* generally cost \$65.

616. We want, if we can get them, *Te-chius* and *Hai-lok-hongs*, but we have to do with *Khehs*, and we have even a difficulty in getting these. About 90 per cent. are *Macaos*. We have not been able to get any *Hai-lok-hongs* or *Te-chius* in Singapore, and though I have tried to get them in Hongkong, I have never got one.

617. *Khehs* cost \$85 and \$65 according to the market rates. We have paid as low as \$63.

618. From Hongkong the cheapest we have got was at \$60 a man, and we write to our agents in Hongkong and they engage coolies for us, who are passed before the Protectorate and sent down. In Hongkong there is not so much care taken as in Singapore. I have generally got better coolies from Singapore than from Hongkong. I got about 153 men from Hongkong, and it was about that lot the Doctor made the above remarks.

619. The brokerage at present is exorbitant, and the advantage to planters and coolies would be great if the Government took it in hand.

620. I have no other suggestion to make.

621. I cannot speak Chinese.

JAVANESE AND MALAYS.

622. We also employ Javanese and Malays. We get these from Singapore and a few from Java. It is forbidden by the Dutch Government to export them, but they come to Singapore of their own accord and thence go to Borneo.

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ber.

623. I find them satisfactory, and am now on my way to Java to try and obtain permission to export coolies.

624. Before it was forbidden we could get coolies direct from Java to British North Borneo.

625. I want more of them than I can get. There are many men wanting to come. We have several of our coolies there now who want to return, but experience difficulties in Java.

626. I have been in Java for twenty years from 1867, and know that there are men wanting to come. There is no difficulty there beyond such as is raised by the Dutch Government. If we could get permission we would send our own men there to recruit.

627. There are no complaints about the brokerage, which is very reasonable.

628. We do not always get a good class of men, but they are fairly good. Perhaps not so good as could be got direct from Java.

629. A Java man gets three months' advance at \$8 a month, that is \$24; about \$12 brokerage is given, and the passage to Borneo, or between \$30 and \$36 in all. That is a pretty fair price for good men.

630. We get them under contract here in Singapore for one year.

631. When it was allowed, and they were exported direct from Java, they were under a three years' contract.

632. The difference between the two periods enables a man to get out of his debts. The first year, if he is a tolerably good man, he can get out of his debts. At the end of the year he begins to know his work, so he is able to earn much more wages than his contract entitled him to. By changing or coming back here and re-engaging he gets a much higher advance on hand, while if he keeps on the estate he generally gets one month's advance only. His month's wages are just the same.

633. They can make from \$10 to \$5 by extra work. Some of our coolies have gone back to Java with between \$100 and \$200 at the end of three years. Any fair worker can save. He can live very well on our estates at 10 cents for his food, then he gets fresh meat every fortnight or three times a month. At \$6 a month he can always save 13 cents a day, and if he has much task work his wages would run from \$10 to \$15 a month.

634. It would not do to do away with Chinese altogether and get Javanese, nor to entirely do away with Javanese. Both have quite different work to do.

635. A few bring up women with them, and these are under contract at 10 cents a day. They are also allowed to come not under contract, but they prefer the contract as they get an advance.

636. We would encourage them in any case. With women the coolie has a snug home.

637. We have not tried any system of settling by giving them land at the expiry of their contract. It would not help us at all to keep them then. The only way is by making them as snug as possible on the estate, giving them from time to time a feast and some presents, so that when the contract is over, the men will renew it.

638. Many of our men do renew their contracts. I do not think it would be a good plan if, at the end of three years, he got a plot of land and was allowed to live on it, because he has expenses to meet before he can get anything from the land.

639. If on the estate a man finds himself at home, he may stay on without any contract at all, at the end of his term. Several are doing so on our estate, receiving monthly payments.

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ber.

640. The Chinese never bring women with them. I have tried in Hongkong to get married people with families, but have not succeeded.

641. I have been in Borneo since 1886. We have a very high death-rate among the coolies. Of the 153 coolies I got from Hongkong, we lost a little over half in six months.

642. Of these, one coolie died on the day he arrived, and two died before they ever saw the estate.

643. The men came to an estate already cleared, and were sent to work in the sheds sorting tobacco.

644. We have had many coolies coming directly from Singapore and Hongkong, and when they arrived they had to be put on board one of our tongkangs and marched straight to the hospital without having done a stroke of work.

645. The Javanese have a small death-rate. Last year we had over eight hundred, and lost eight men in the whole year.

646. The *Sin-Khehs* are engaged on contract in Singapore. I think the contract forms are satisfactory.

647. We have estate hospitals, and a Doctor who formerly was in the Dutch army, who is in charge and attends each day. We had three hospitals at the time, for dysentery, fever and wounds respectively. Sometimes a coolie slightly unwell works on and takes no care of himself and thus becomes in such a bad state that he is useless and the Doctor can do nothing with him. The Doctor used to visit on pay-days—twice a month, and compelled those suffering to go to hospital, but the coolies objected, and we were compelled to give it up.

648. The Resident at Kudat said we could not force those suffering from fever to go to hospital.

649. We are obliged by the coolie regulations there to have hospitals and medical attendance.

650. The paying of the men is done by Europeans and in the presence of the Manager. The Assistants meet at the Manager's house and pay them there.

651. We once sent a man whom we thought we could trust to China to get men for us, but he kept the money given to him and never returned.

652. If the country were a little older and coolies went home with a little money and induced their friends to come over, it would be easier.

653. Up to now there are several coolies that have left the estate with profits up to \$100 at the end of the second year. We have had coolies who received an advance of \$30 and arrived at the estate with nearly the whole amount. These have given the money to be kept for them, instead of getting a new advance, and they make good profits.

654. In the case of others the advance is spent, and the day they go on the estate they ask for a new advance to get food.

655. A good many in the beginning deserted. Some have managed to go to Singapore, some have died in the jungle, and some have been brought back to the estate from the interior. Several have reached Labuan and Brunei, and there they have stayed, and we have not been able to get them back again.

656. *By Mr. Hooper:*—I did not know that if the contract was signed in Singapore they could be re-arrested in Labuan or Brunei.

657. *By the President:*—I think three years is a proper time for a contract. This period should not be shortened, but it is long enough. If the rate of wages were raised and the time shortened I do not think more men would present themselves to the brokers.

658. The coolie is treated most fairly. If he plants on ground not suitable, or if, through no fault of his own, the plants died, or in case of anything else not due to him, he is credited at the highest rate paid.

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ber.

659. If we could get better men and if there was not so high brokerage, it would be advantageous to pay even higher than now.

660. The Chinaman does not like to be cheated by the European, but seems rather to like it from his own countrymen. Offering the broker a higher rate would not get a better man. The *Sin-Khehs* do not understand what the rates mean, and only go by what the brokers tell them.

661. At the London Borneo estates the men have not yet finished their contract. Several will get out of debt, and I have heard we will keep the greater part of them.

662. At the Borneo Tabak Maatschappij all have re-engaged, except the men we would not have.

663. Our estates are subject to Government inspection, sometimes two or three times a month. I do not think there is any objection to such inspection, nor is there much advantage in it.

664. The total number of *Sin-Khehs* and *Lau-Khehs* is about 1,200 or 1,300 on the four estates. There are about 250 on the estate of the Borneo Maatschappij, and about 950 on the three estates of the London Borneo.

665. Ranu is the estate of the Borneo Maatschappij, and Bandan, Borneo and Tandeh belong to the London Borneo.

666. One of the estates of the London Borneo has been opened two years, and the others one year. Ranu has been opened since 1886.

667. *By Mr. Powell:*—There are no Chinese-owned estates in Borneo. There are Hakkas settled who get from the Government a piece of land, on which they plant, mostly vegetables, and sometimes a little coffee. It is just the same as in Deli.

668. The Government have nothing to do with bringing immigrants to British North Borneo from China. They have direct immigration for people wishing to settle themselves in Borneo, and they offer a certain acreage to them. They do not import coolies.

669. When the planter goes to Hongkong he signs the contract. The photographs of the men are sent by the Protector of Chinese and under the photograph it is written that the Protector certifies that the terms of the contract which the coolie has signed have been explained and that he has received his advance. I do not know whether the contract is signed before the Registrar-General (Protector). The certificate is not on the contract, but on the photograph of the man. On the contract form there is nothing except what our agent in Hongkong writes, to the effect that the man has signed and received an advance. The man receives his advance on board the steamer.

670. I do not know whether the brokers in Hongkong are licensed or not. I went to several of them when I was there myself.

671. The Registrar-General there allowed me to bring the Chinese to his office, but said he had nothing to do with the brokers.

672. *By the President:*—I do not think there is any ill-treatment and robbery on the part of the brokers which would deter men from coming. I have heard that after a coolie has received his advance he pays part of it, and sometimes the whole, back again to the broker, because the broker persuades him he has not received sufficient from the employer. All the coolies I have got from Hongkong say they gave all their advance to the broker. I do not think the broker would take it from him by force, or any actual ill-treatment.

673. *Mr. A. Blydenstein*, Manager of the Rotterdam Borneo Tabak Maatschappij, British North Borneo, was next examined by the President, and gave evidence as follows:—

Mr. A. Bly-
denstein.
11th Novem-
ber.

Mr. A. Blydenstein.
11th November.
674. I am head manager of three estates, all tobacco. I have been manager for one and a half years. Before I went to Borneo I had been eight years on tobacco estates in Deli.

675. We like Te-chius best.

676. I do not see any use in the Government taking the coolies in hand, except to try and get the Chinese to allow contract labour.

677. I would not recommend that the Government should establish depôts. I do not think they could carry it through, as there would be too much difficulty and trouble. There are always little cases of cheating which the Government could not deal with.

678. I have been in China, and I have heard there is always cheating, and recruits can only be got by their own headmen.

679. I went to Swatow, where the agents did what they could, but the Consul said he could not assist. There is a long correspondence between the Agents and the Consul, and the end of it was that free emigration only was allowed. The Consul said that if the passage of the coolie were paid, he could be forced to make a contract, as, though called "free," it would be really a contract, and the Chinese Government refused to allow that. I shall send you the correspondence.

680. As soon as there is any talk of making a contract, the Consul will have nothing to do with it. The Chinese Government knew very well that when coolies came to Singapore they had to sign a contract.

681. I got a private letter stating that representations were being made at Peking to allow contract labour.

682. We get our men partly through Singapore and partly through Hongkong.

683. We cannot get Hai-lok-hongs and Te-chius from Hongkong, only from Singapore. A few days ago we got 20 who came over. They are *Lau-Khehs* from Singapore, who know everything about the work, and we pay them high advances.

684. We get *Sin-Khehs* also, but mostly Macaos, who, though they look very strong, cannot stand the climate.

685. This year one of our men went home with \$150.

686. Many of the men are diseased and weak. We have a large number of weak men, and we are generally dissatisfied with the class. We could get many of that kind.

687. While we pay \$60 for coolies who are not much worth, we would gladly pay \$90 if the coolies were a good class.

688. I do not think after all the brokers make so very much, because they have a great responsibility. When they bring up 100 men, perhaps only 20 pass, so they lose a great deal on the rest, and must make it up off the 20. I do not think their profits are so very high. They have many losses by men not passing and others running away.

689. When contract labour is allowed by the Chinese, and it is fully explained to the coolies what they are intended to do, I think we would get them cheaper and of a better class too. Notice should be posted stating what they can earn and so on, so that they would know everything before they went. They run away before they know what things are likely to be.

690. I think the firms should do this, and employ in the house Chinese to give the coolies information, and have them protected by the British Consul, who would have to see that every coolie knew what he was going to.

691. *By Mr. Powell:*—I do not know whether there is an English law not allowing the coolies to go under contract. I cannot speak Chinese.

692. The rates are about the same as those stated by the previous witness.

693. *By the President:*—I have tried to get Chinese women, but could not. I could get them of a very low class, but they were too dear. They wanted \$200 each. Mr. A. Blydenstein.
11th November.

694. I know of no Government provision against the export of women.

695. Borneo will never be so good as Deli. There might be a few estates, but I do not think it will ever equal Deli in soil or climate.

696. Now and then we have beri-beri, and many of the coolies desert. I have got about 150 Hongkong men in the last few months, and about 80 deserted.

697. We also employ Javanese. I have no difficulty in getting sufficient from Singapore, all of a very good class.

698. There are no women, so they do not stay, but go away when the contract is finished.

699. I have asked the Governor-General to allow us to import women.

700. It may be that I get sufficient because I pay \$9 a month, whereas many employers only pay \$8.

701. They come from Deli to Singapore. We get them through Messrs. MANSFIELD & Co.

702. It would benefit us if the Dutch restrictions were withdrawn, as we could then get women, and the men would stay on.

703. *By Mr. Hooper:*—If we got the consent of the Dutch Government I do not think there would be sufficient steamers to bring them direct. They would have to come through Singapore.

704. *By the President:*—I have been in Java twice. I know there are large numbers of men, who would like to come, but cannot get away.

The meeting adjourned at 4.0 p.m.

A. S.

TWELFTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
FRANCIS POWELL, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
W. E. HOOPER, Esquire.

Mr. C. G. Paterson, Partner in Messrs. PATERSON, SIMONS & Co., was examined by the President, and stated as follows:— Mr. C. G. Paterson.
13th November.

705. I am a Partner in the firm of Messrs. PATERSON, SIMONS & Co., and we arrange for supplying coolies to mines in Pahang.

706. I have seen the evidence of Mr. HOLLOWAY, and I quite confirm it.

707. I have no amendment to suggest to the printed Protectorate form of contract. I think it is satisfactory.

708. It is adhered to, only that sometimes we find it better to pay the men a certain sum for every day's work, quite up to that stated in the contract.

709. We could get more coolies if it were not for the Crimping Ordinance. Our own men could engage coolies in Singapore perfectly willing to come, but if any

Mr. C. G. advance is given to enable them to come without going before the Protectorate they become liable under the Crimping Ordinance.

Paterson.
13th Novem-
ber.

710. It is a pity they cannot go, if willing, to any part of British territory. Some men object to go before the Protectorate; I do not know why. Perhaps the recruiters object to take them.

711. We have had sometimes fifty men before the Protectorate to sign, and five or six refused to sign at the last minute. They were perfectly willing to come up, but would not sign.

712. I have not read the Ordinance sufficiently well to suggest any improvement, but it ought to be amended so as to give power to give advances to a willing man. We would take no guarantee, but risk the advance.

713. In these circumstances advances would not be nearly so much as now, because the greater part of the advance, I take it, goes into the hands of the broker.

714. In all cases I think one month's wages would be sufficient advance. I am speaking of *Lau-Khehs*.

715. The principal difficulty now with regard to *Sin-Khehs* is the late ruling of the Chief Justice that a *Sin-Kheh* can go anywhere he likes, and naturally the brokers will not bring them down. We were trying for 100 coolies last week, and now the broker cannot guarantee us 20 in consequence of this decision.

716. If a coolie has had advances and he is told he can go away of course he will, and secure the advance.

717. It would be best either to put things back as they were, or have a Government depôt, but still have power to keep them for ten days, which, I think, would be long enough.

718. In the last fortnight we have not got enough men.

719. Before that we have generally been able to get enough, though not always as good as we would like.

720. I do not consider it a standing grievance that the supply is short. By paying brokerage we always got them, but it would be a good thing if there were a fixed price—a legal brokerage varied for the different places, but at a fair rate.

721. I should think the Singapore broker gets fully two-thirds of anything that the coolie gets.

722. I cannot say with certainty what the broker makes, because I do not know the expenses he incurs. What I judge by is that when the coolie sails he does not have much money.

723. Once I saw the coolies hand their advances over to the broker, and when they were put on board the steamer they would not go, because the broker had not turned up with their money. It was our own steamer, so we kept her till we got the broker on board. I do not know how much he gave them back.

724. I do not say this happens in all cases.

725. I cannot say what the coolie is actually deprived of, but I am quite certain he does not get all his money back.

726. I have not proved this in any way, except in the case above-mentioned.

727. I believe the money is taken for passage, advances and what he has had in the depôt. I should think it is persuaded out of him, but not robbed from him by force.

728. Considering the risks the brokers run and the men they lose, I still think they make an excessive profit. It is difficult to say why I think it excessive, but we know what we have paid for the men, and we know how very little the coolie has of it.

729. Even if the men get all the nominal advances, I think the brokers get quite enough. We pay \$33 for *Sin-Khehs*, including the advances and doctor's fees—\$33.75 in all, without the passage. Of course these prices vary.

Mr. C. G.
Paterson.
13th Novem-
ber.

730. I cannot say how much the coolie costs the broker.

731. We have occasionally seen whether the coolies had their money on board, but it is not a regular thing. This was more in the case of *Lau-Khehs*, and the money has been paid them on board. We could do this better if we could recruit men willing to come away. We could then make our own terms, and have no *Sin-Khehs* at all, only free labour.

732. We have never been able to try, but I do not think there would be any difficulty in getting men if "The Crimping Ordinance" were not in force.

733. The physique of the men is, as a rule, fair.

734. At the medical examination I cannot say what percentage are rejected. The men we get are about the same as they have always been.

735. I do not know what percentage of men brokers have lost after signing contracts, when they had to refund to us.

736. I have had no experience in China.

737. I was not interested in procuring coolies when direct importation to Deli was started, so I cannot say what effect it had.

738. We have made no attempt to get women down from China. They have not been asked for by the mines. There would be no objection to their coming down, employers would be glad to pay their passage down and be prepared to house them, and give them a small plot of land if necessary to make a garden.

739. There should be Government depôts for *Lau-Khehs* also, so as to do away with the brokers. At such depôts they could go and stay if they wished to work.

740. If a Government depôt for the *Sin-Khehs* could be worked, I think it would be a good thing, but there would be more difficulty on account of the opposition of the brokers. If this Government could arrange with the Chinese Government for the importation of men, a depôt in China would also be wanted.

741. I can give no suggestion as to the management of a *Lau-Kheh* depôt. It would have to be tried before finding that out. If men went there and said they wanted work I think employers would be glad to take them at once.

742. *By Mr. Hill:*—With regard to labour in the Native States generally I think the Government should certainly import their own labour. So far it has only been imported by planters and miners, and as soon as the coolie's time is up, he often leaves the employer who originally brought him down at heavy expense, and goes to Government employ. That is, of course, more noticeable with Klings imported from India.

743. The coolies who go over to Government in this way are strong men, as by the survival of the fittest the weak have dropped off. The Government can offer higher wages than can be given by the planters, so it is only natural that the men should go.

744. I have found that to be my experience on our estates. If we get our coolies at say 20 cents the Government give them say 30 if not 40. I would not go into figures, but think the Government pay more than the estates do.

745. *By the President:*—I am speaking from a general impression when I say the planters and miners import the greater portion of the coolies. I have not consulted any returns shewing the number of indentured immigrants and the number of free passengers.

746. I think we could always get coolies to work on estates cheaper if it were not for the Government wanting so many men. I cannot give any reason why; I am only speaking now from conversations I have had with our planting managers,

Mr. C. G. Paterson. 13th November. not from figures. I have not ascertained exactly what the Government do pay; it varies considerably, of course.

747. It seems the general opinion that the Government rate of wages is higher than estate labour.

748. It would be a very good thing if you could make an agreement with the Netherlands India Government to have coolies come here without our having to apply to the Consul-General, and if there was a standing agreement it would be better. We have applied for coolies and have not had difficulty in obtaining permission, so far as the Consul-General here is concerned. He has on the only occasion we have applied to him promised us his assistance in obtaining the permission of his Government.

749. The difficulty is one of delay.

750. Permission, I think, depends altogether upon the recommendation of the Consul-General here, and he would base that on the reported healthiness of the place, and how he thought the men would be treated.

751. I dare say there might be difficulty in getting a very large number, but for moderate quantities I do not think there would be a difficulty in getting any number.

752. I do not know Java. I cannot say whether there are men wanting to come.

753. We are trying the experiment of granting land at the Quantan Mines in Pahang. There will have to be a nominal rental, and the men will have it practically free as long as they choose to remain there and cultivate it. There will be no conditions as to the time in which it should be cultivated. Immediately when they go up they can build their houses on land given to them, live on it, and pay nothing for it beyond the rental above-mentioned.

754. There should be no deduction of wages, the sole object being to get men to settle and cultivate. There are Chinese gardens there now. There are no Javanese cultivating gardens there yet.

755. There is a scanty supply of Javanese at present, but I think it is not due to any objection connected with the depôts, but because they are not allowed to leave Java.

756. I agree with Mr. HOLLOWAY's evidence about the Javanese, as well as his figures and the other things he said.

757. I have no other suggestion regarding any supply from other sources.

Mr. W. E. Hooper. 13th November. 758. Mr. W. E. Hooper, Partner in the Firm of Messrs. A. L. JOHNSTON & Co., examined by the President, stated as follows:—

759. I have read the proofs of Mr. GUNN's evidence. There are no points in it with which I disagree. It represents our case. I agree with his opinions as well as his facts and figures regarding Chinese labour.

760. I have no difficulties which I wish to lay before the Commission, either as to supply or cost, but simply the complaints of the Managers of the estates, as to the class of labour and the quantity not being forthcoming.

761. I have not sent men to China, or in any special way tried to get men. Our only efforts to obtain them have been made through the brokers, and were not successful. We do not do very much in the coolie business. We have found difficulties by the men being substituted. One case arose when we, as agents of the Sarawak Government, sent over coolies engaged by men sent over from Sarawak. There was afterwards great complaint that several had to be taken to the hospital right away. This was about three years ago. We are not now agents for the Sarawak Government. I was on board myself and saw the men leave. They were all right then, but others must have been hidden on board by the brokers, for there were cripples and blind men taken off at the other end.

762. I have never been able to prove anything against the brokers.

Mr. W. E. Hooper. 13th November. 763. I have no suggestion other than what has already been stated regarding increasing the supply.

764. I am rather in favour of the Government having depôts instead of it being entirely in the hands of the brokers. Their opposition would be very strong at first. There is so much dirty work connected with it, and bribery, especially in China, that Government would find it very difficult to carry it out.

765. I do not know whether the difficulties here could not be overcome, and I have no experience to enable me to know what the difficulties in China might be.

766. I think it is the best remedy that could be devised.

767. If the Government thought the difficulties were too great, or had any other objections, there is nothing short of that I could suggest, except that the Government should be more severe on the brokers when they come across a case where men have been substituted; also in cases where we sign on men and many run away. There ought to be some punishment over and above simply refunding the money.

768. No doubt the broker is often let in by the coolies. I think if there was a Government depôt there would not be the same facilities.

769. I know a broker can be taken before the Protectorate in cases of substitution, and runs the risk of getting his license cancelled, but it is very seldom done, so long as he refunds the money. It is very difficult to get evidence.

770. I admit that the matter is entirely in our own hands.

771. It is only my general impression that the profits are exorbitant. I have tried to ascertain from the brokers, and they have justified their charges by expenses which I had no means of checking.

772. By Mr. Hill:—I think headmen should be allowed to come down from the estates to engage men without being forced to go to the licensed brokers.

773. We are not employers of labour, and we have not heard complaints regarding the want of power to compel men who have received advances to work them off. I would prefer not to express an opinion.

774. By the President:—I hear there are many men in Java anxious to come up, but the Dutch Government would not allow contracts.

775. Very good men would perhaps be willing to come, but the difficulty and delay of getting special permission is what bars that.

776. The men from the centre of Java are the best class.

777. We have had very little trouble with men that do come. They generally come with their own headmen, and they seem to have control over them so that they do not run away.

778. The brokers have tried to get them away by frightening them with reports. Brokers should be punished severely for doing this. I am speaking of free men who want to follow the Mandore, but perhaps have to wait two or three days for a steamer. There are always cases.

779. The loss falls on the firm or planting company who sends the Mandore down. If the men have signed a contract before the Protectorate and got an advance, the broker can be punished, but not otherwise.

780. By Mr. Powell:—There ought to be some law by which men can be detained in depôts like the Chinese. Men come from Deli and Java with their passages paid, so there ought to be such a law as a security to the people who have paid their passage.

Mr. F. Withöft. 13th November.

Mr. F. Withöft, of Messrs. BEHN, MEYER & Co., examined by the President, stated:—

781. I have been in charge of the coolie business of Messrs. BEHN, MEYER & Co. for the last three years. I have had no experience before that time.

782. I cannot speak Chinese, only Malay.

783. We engage labourers generally for Deli and Assahan in Sumatra for tobacco estates, and a few for Borneo.

784. We pay for Hai-lok-hongs and Te-chius about \$85 at present, delivered on the estate. If we cannot get them we take Khehs and pay \$30 less.

785. For Borneo we pay for the former \$85 free on board.

786. We never import from China direct, but we tried it once by giving advances to the brokers, but it did not work very well. We had our advances guaranteed by another Chinaman. We did it with Singapore brokers, without the intervention of the Swatow and Hongkong brokers. *Kheh-Thaus* were sent to China to get coolies, but afterwards the broker bolted and the Chinaman who guaranteed payment lost much money by it.

787. Our purpose was to get more men down to meet our demands. We then discontinued it.

788. We now engage our coolies through brokers the same as everybody else.

789. On the occasion I spoke of we offered the same price to the broker as we pay here, our only intention was to get them cheaper. That was in December, 1888, to January, 1889.

790. We make no alterations in the terms of contract, but use it just as printed.

791. We generally find difficulty in getting as many coolies as we want. We cannot get coolies now, for instance. We can get a few lots of four or five, but not nearly enough.

792. It is much worse than it has been. I think the reason is the position taken up by the Chief Justice.

793. Previous to that we could not always get as many as we wanted all at once, chiefly from October to February. We can always close contracts with the brokers, and they deliver weekly so many; by waiting we can always get them.

794. Before this decision was given we had no difficulties in particular, only the coolie brokers tried to cheat.

795. I once went to the depôt and got seventy coolies. Afterwards the photographs could not be recognised. I went to the broker and made him take them back and give other men. He admitted he had changed them.

796. The brokers always admit they substitute a few, and one cannot do anything about it with the present system. I think the only thing would be that the Government should have a depôt here where all coolies could be taken, photographed and properly examined by a medical officer.

797. *By Mr. Hooper:*—It is not to our advantage that the license should be taken from the brokers. If there has been substitution, we have made them advances, and were the licenses taken away, they would run away with the money.

798. We have never been successful in getting them punished.

799. *By the President:*—I think it would at least improve things if the brokers were allowed to keep the *Sin-Khehs* for ten days. Now the brokers have wired to Hongkong not to send more men down, and there are few *Sin-Khehs* to be got in Singapore.

800. The cost of the coolie is always according to the supply and demand, and I think nothing can be done to reduce it. Mr. F. Withöft. 13th November.

801. I believe the brokers make enormous profits at the present price, but at \$70 they do not. That is as low as it can be done, with fair profits to the brokers.

802. To establish a Government depôt would probably reduce the cost, and there would be better control over the coolies. I do not see how it would be possible to do away with the brokers altogether.

803. Government would have great difficulties, just as the Deli planters have. At present each coolie to Deli, from Swatow, by chartered boats, costs the planter about \$120. These boats' losses are heavy and these must be paid on the prices given for the coolies.

804. Every steamer brings from 100 to 200 tons of cargo direct from Swatow to Deli, and they always get 100 or 150 coolies as passengers. Then they go back by Singapore or Penang, taking passengers and cargo, and making always a pretty good load from here or Bangkok, where they do fairly well.

805. It is the cost of the steamers that makes the cost of the coolie so high. The high price the Deli planters pay is not so much owing to trouble with the brokers.

806. The planters always send their old hands over to China, who go to the country and tell their friends about Deli, taking coolies back with them. They do not meet with excessive opposition.

807. I believe the Government could carry it through if they took it in hand. I do not suggest it.

808. *By Mr. Powell:*—Passage money for a coolie from Swatow is, I believe, \$6, and other expenses for brokerage and commission and charges in Swatow would come to about \$30, I should think. But as the emigration steamers lose very heavily, and as some of the coolies die or are to be returned, the proper cost of a coolie direct from Swatow delivered on the estate in Deli averages about \$120, whilst the actual price in Singapore is only \$85.

809. *By the President:*—The coolies generally have very few dollars when they go on board. I have seen them on board the Borneo steamers with nearly nothing, and yet they have received \$30 advance.

810. I do not know if we, as agents, could take care of the money and give it them on board. The coolie-brokers would not come back, and we should not get coolies at all then. We have never tried it.

811. We sent about 400 *Lau-Kheh* Hai-lok-hongs and Te-chius to Borneo last year, and afterwards the people in Borneo said they were not of these tribes and they refused to pay. We got our money back.

812. The Chinese Protectorate here should guarantee that the men were of the tribe the broker stated them to be. I think the Protectorate might enlarge their staff and undertake that duty.

813. If other firms agreed to pay so much per head for having this guaranteed, we would do so also.

814. I have not been in China.

815. When direct steamers to Deli were started, the price was at that time \$120, it went down to \$95 when direct emigration began, and afterwards to \$85, and as low as \$70. It then went up to \$85.

816. I think fewer men came here after direct emigration was started. Formerly it was just as difficult as at present to get men, and the brokers raised the prices from time to time before the direct emigration.

817. We have sent very few coolies to Deli since the direct steamers started. They do not want very many at present, as they get them direct.

Mr. F. Wi-
thoff. 13th
November.

818. We never make any efforts to get Chinese women.

819. From the 1st of January of this year till the 5th instant, we have made contracts with 1,646 Chinese, of whom 539 were *Lau-Khehs* for British North Borneo, and the remainder 1,207 *Sin-Khehs* for Sumatra, chiefly Assahan and coast districts.

820. *By Mr. Hill:*—If the Government were to take the importation of coolies into their own hands and were determined to make a success of it I think it would be more desirable than the present system, even although there were great difficulties in the beginning.

821. I think then the coolies would be less liable to have misrepresentations held out; there is now much cheating work going on among the brokers, and the *Kheh-Thaus* who are going to China are telling all sorts of lies.

822. We are engaging Javanese labour for Siak, Deli and Assahan on a rather large scale. We are making direct contracts in Java and here.

823. The difficulty is that a contract made in Java is of no value here. I think that ought to be altered.

824. There is generally no difficulty in getting the men to Deli, but if there were a man among the lot who would intimidate them at all and they would not go, then the whole advance would be lost. We have no power to enforce that contract here.

825. To prevent that we have a depôt of our own in charge of an old Deli man, who is licensed by the Chinese Protectorate, and he takes care of all the men from the first. He gives them their food and takes them on to the steamer. We have never had any complaints about this.

826. I cannot say whether they are locked up or not. I have been there several times myself and they were quite free. He has no instructions to lock them up.

827. We never lose a man.

828. The only difficulty was with the Chinese who were engaged in Sourabaya; they came to Singapore *en route* and refused to go on, and said the contract was not any good. We then made an additional contract here and paid them more and they went on. We have only had one case.

829. *By Mr. Powell:*—There was a little trouble with a batch of coolies the other day. They had come on the boat from Java, several men and women. Out of them four men and four women had coupled on board. The men had signed for Deli and the women for Assahan, and they made some row, as the men wanted the women to go to Deli to be their wives. The Dutch Consul arranged it at once, and the men were sent on to Deli and taken to the plantations by the police there.

830. We have no difficulties in engaging coolies here for Sumatra. We have sent some Javanese to British North Borneo, on the same terms as to Sumatra, except that the brokerage is higher. To British North Borneo, it is \$10, and to Sumatra, only \$3. The wages in Sumatra are \$7, and in British North Borneo \$9.

831. The men do not want to go to Borneo, and the coolie broker repays himself for all the extra trouble of persuading them and giving them a sarong to induce them to go. The brokerage to Borneo will always be higher, but it should not be so high as now.

832. I have lost men sent to British North Borneo, but not to Deli. I have lost them in Labuan generally when coaling there. You cannot claim them there. They run away and do what they like. I have lost perhaps 20 or 30 out of 400 men.

833. At present there are a great many Javanese and Banjarese. The men are satisfactory.

834. I think the Dutch Government ought to allow advances to be made to coolies going to British North Borneo, but I have no strong opinion about it, as I have not found difficulty in getting enough men.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

A. S.

THIRTEENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
W. E. HOOPER, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.

• *Mr. W. W. Bailey*, examined by the President, deposed as follows:—

Mr. W. W.
Bailey. 14th
November.

835. I am a planter. I am a shareholder of the Pengerang Planting Company, Johor Lama, having estates at Pengerang, Big Hill, and Venture for coffee, and of the Pengerang Sago Estate.

836. I was actually in charge, and had the whole thing to do. I also held a Government contract on the Selangor Railway in 1885.

837. I have had to do with numbers of other estates. I have been about ten years in the Native States. Before that I had been for five years a planter in Ceylon. I have employed chiefly Tamils on the estates. On the Selangor Railway I had about two thousand Chinese, seven hundred Tamils, and five hundred Javanese. The Planting Company have now about one hundred Tamil men.

838. On the sago estate more men are employed in the making of the estate, few men are employed after that.

839. The man on the estate is a Ceylon man and understands Tamil. Our men are all free labourers. On the Railway they were all free. I have not employed indentured labour myself.

840. I can speak Tamil.

841. The men come to us, as a rule, and ask to be engaged. That holds good still.

842. I have given up planting in the Straits Settlements on account of the high price of labour. After getting one hundred and fifty or two hundred men from India and training them, they go to the Public Works under Government. They arrive in a wretched condition and almost useless; after they are nice and fat they go away, for five or six cents more, as soon as the contract is over.

843. That is the reason why I have not imported men.

844. In Selangor free labour up to four hundred or five hundred men is being imported constantly. I take what I can get on the spot.

845. We have been fearfully short of labour. The difficulty is to get it at a fair price. If you give as high prices as the Government you can get better men, but you cannot afford to do that.

846. I think they prefer estate labour to Government work, because on estates they have a settled place to live and their gardens and all that, but Government pay higher than we can afford to give.

847. The Selangor Railway work is contract work, and I gave the men employed on it prices I cannot allow on an estate.

848. When on the Railway work I was still short of men, and did what I could to get more labour.

849. Free labourers on the estate get 22 cents a day, and good picked men that understand the work 24 cents. Some men get as low as 20 cents, but hardly any under that.

Mr. W. W. Bailey. 14th November. 850. They work six days in the week, and supply all their own food. We house them and give them firewood, and medical attendance, but we do not send for a doctor unless it is something serious. We have never had to send for a doctor to them.

851. They get nothing else; no allowance. There are several men who jointly receive gardens.

852. On the estate we keep no Apothecary nor Dresser. If I had a very large number I would. We have a separate house which we use for a hospital. If a Doctor is sent for he is paid by the estate.

853. A man loses his pay if he is sick in any ordinary way, but if he has received wounds in working he is paid.

854. The wages are always paid by the Superintendent. I did it myself when I was there. It was not done by a subordinate.

855. We allow them Kling festival days, and, if according to agreement, they draw their pay. There are no regular holidays that I know of.

856. I do not know whether we are subject to Government inspection. I do not think there should be Government inspection for free labour, as it would be a waste of money. Every Superintendent ought to know about giving medicine, unless it is something very serious, when he can get a doctor. Every young planter in Ceylon knows how to treat simple cases.

857. *By Mr. Hill:*—If Government insisted I should rather like it, it would help me to keep the lines clean.

858. I think the Public Works here are running ahead so fast that they employ nearly all the labour, and planting cannot go on.

859. *By the President:*—I have now got Javanese who have been on the estate for about eight years. All cultivate gardens of their own.

860. It is very desirable to give land to the Tamils to make them settle. I have advocated the Government importing men with their families. I could not give every man a garden on most estates. As a rule, there is not enough land to give each a piece.

861. I do not restrict the number of women that come. In the picking season I would prefer women to come. I would house them well.

862. I am always able to find women enough work to live upon, at least to half the number there are of men. I am speaking of coffee picking, which women do faster for half the money, but you could not give women contract, or other hard work.

863. At present not a fifth of the whole are women. In Ceylon it is an ordinary thing to have half the number women, and I have seen three-fourths of them women.

864. I would pay the passages of the men's wives from India.

865. It costs a coolie on our estate about \$2 a month to live. We would have to give more, but I am sure it costs the coolie no more.

866. I supply him with rice if he wants it cheaper than he can buy it. Formerly if I found that the man selling the rice was cheating, I got it myself from Singapore, and gave it out at cost price, in order to bring down the man's prices, and then, when he was at my mercy, I fixed a price for him at sell at.

867. I should think the shop-keeper does overcharge in condiments, but as the price is small it makes very little difference in the price of the quantity bought.

868. I do not understand what has been done in India now, and I do not know whether the Government have a man representing them in India to try and help us. I know there is a tremendous difficulty in recruiting labour. I have never done it myself. There is great difficulty in recruiting good coolies and getting strong men. They are a lot of miserable coolies in the hands of a lot of brokers in the recruiting place.

869. I think the Government ought to have a well-paid man there. He should look after sending free men over as well as indentured men.

870. We have not got the facilities here for sending trustworthy men over from the estate that we have in Ceylon. There they sign for the money, give as security perhaps 500 men on the place, and bring us good men.

871. Wages here are higher than in Ceylon, and rice is cheaper. The Tamil coolie is a king over here, still they are never so bright looking or well dressed as on the estates in Ceylon. I think their continued rushing about seeking for work at every new place and their not staying any length of time account for it.

872. The number of planters in Ceylon swamp all the contracts. When you have 3,000 planters getting 500 or 600 men each every year they do not care if the coolies go to contract work, in fact the planters themselves are often the contractors for railways running through their estates.

873. I think the smallness of the planting community is the cause of the scarcity of labour.

874. I do not see how planting can be started unless the Government do something. It has been shewn that planters have tried their best already.

875. I think the Government should give a good *bonus* to men who import free labour, or that they should themselves import a fixed amount of labour each year.

876. Contracts are now eating up all the labour of the country and stopping the planting enterprise, because the country is going ahead so quickly that there is not enough labour for the public works.

877. On the Selangor Railway there were monthly agreements, and to pick men doing drainage and finishing off I paid as much as 35 cents a day. The Tamils are not good men in contract work because they only make enough to give them food and drink. They would make not more than 30 cents a day.

878. I have known Chinese to make \$1 a day.

879. I cannot say what Tamils average through the year. It is always the case with Tamils that if they make better wages they work for fewer days.

880. That we are not established is the cause of the difficulties. I think there is nothing in the conditions of the country or climate against ordinary agriculture.

881. For coffee cultivation there is the want of high land, or rather it is not yet opened up.

882. The general country here is finer than Ceylon as an agricultural country. It is solely the want of labour, due to the want of Government assistance. No planter can possibly start here, get his own men, and import his own labour, knowing that after a year or so, and after being thoroughly trained and healthy, they go on to some public works under the Government.

883. In Ceylon the coolies are under their own headmen, who have some control over them that we never have. I do not know any reason why the same system should not be tried here. I prefer the Ceylon system of monthly agreements. We never had any trouble in Ceylon; the men were like a regiment of soldiers, and knew what to do, because labour was established.

884. There are several associations in Ceylon. District Associations in the first place, then a General Assembly to which we sent one or two men up, besides that, any man who attempted to raise wages would be set upon by all the other planters.

Mr. W. W. Bailey. 14th November. There is a planter's price—33 rupee-cents a day was the highest the best coolie got for ordinary labour, and no Sundays.

885. *By Mr. Hill:*—I would not extend my estates or open new ones in the present labour condition. I have got 2,000 acres of land in Selangor, but I cannot go on, because I know that it is impossible to get labour, so as to do it at a profit.

886. If the Government were to make some provision for the supply of a large proportion of the labour that they use, I think that planting could then be carried on very advantageously. On the estates in Ceylon most of the men were family men related to one another, and if a man had been with us two or three years and said he had friends on the coast, and he wished an advanced of 30 or 40 rupees, I would always give it, and if he died the relations would contract it off.

887. If a coolie here were making 40 cents a day instead of 22 or 23 cents he would make about the same amount of money by working fewer days.

888. *By the President:*—I consider the reasonable pay of the labourer should be about 20 cents a day all round. That is a fair rate for both sides, not more than a good man ought to get and save money on.

889. The Ceylon rates are less than these.

890. I certainly consider the pay of every man should be high enough to enable him to save money.

891. *By Mr. Hill:*—At first we might have difficulty in getting them at 20 cents a day, but when well established, we would get plenty at that rate.

892. I do not think the Government do their quota in supplying the quantity of labour they use. I do not think anything of what the Government do to assist. It is a mere trifle.

893. *By the President:*—I do not know what the Government actually do in the way of subsidising steamers, but if it were very much I would know.

894. *By Mr. Hill:*—The unsatisfactory condition of labour was the reason of diverting my attention from planting.

895. *By the President:*—In Ceylon the headmen bring the men over. We do not pay their passage. I think it is paid by the coolie. I have no doubt the headmen get it back.

896. If we send for one hundred coolies I make an advance to the headman, and he pays me every cent back.

897. I prefer the Tamil coolie for ordinary estate work, but for any hard work the Chinese are best.

898. For estate work it is almost the opposite, a Tamil woman will pick double what a Chinaman will pick. Tamils must always be the mainstay of the planters.

899. I have Javanese who received a piece of swamp ground which I drained, and have built their own houses upon it. At first I built them houses, but they built their own after, and now consider the land their own and not mine at all.

900. They are all married men and have been there about seven or eight years, so they practically mean to stay there.

901. I should like to see as many Javanese as possible. They are suited for some kinds of work. I would not actually prefer to employ Javanese instead of Klings. I would like Javanese if we could get plenty of them at as cheap prices as we get Klings for, and the latter could not be got.

902. They have one disadvantage, they do not have the same number of wives and children that the Klings have.

903. The Javanese are paid 22 cents a day, and if they work six days in the week they get paid for Sundays as well.

904. I can not get enough at the price. I could get numbers at a price I can not afford to pay.

905. We tried at one time to get them from the brokers, and I was not pleased with them, I always thought the local broker had more control over them than I had. Then the broker would give them to some other planter and made a trade of this.

906. I gave \$3 a man to the broker.

907. There is not a broker in the place I can trust, and I have nothing to say to them.

908. Javanese are very quiet and work very well.

909. If the Government would get Kanarese labour it would help us. They are great men at masonry, are splendid road-makers, and cutters of stone. I think they are a little more expensive than the ordinary coolie in Ceylon. They would not do for planters, but it would take away a great many Tamils, leaving them to go to the estates. I am sure they are willing to emigrate, and they give no trouble in Ceylon.

910. None of the laws such as the Crimping Ordinance have affected me.

The Hon'ble T. Shelford, a Partner in Messrs. PATERSON, SIMONS & Co., was then examined by the President, and gave evidence as follows:—

911. With regard to Indian labour in connection with our estates in Johor, the difficulties are due almost entirely to the miserable class of coolies sent.

912. We have taken every precaution to obtain good men and we have reason to believe, without any absolute proof however, that these men have been at the last moment substituted. I have seen several weakly men—Tamils—on arrival in Johor sent to hospital, who ought never to have come. I think the substitution is made on board ship before leaving Negapatam.

913. We are in great difficulty for labour. It is upwards of three months since we wrote for coolies, offering 18 cents the first year, and 20 cents the second for a two years contract, and we have not had a man yet. We have written to the best agents in Negapatam—Messrs. ADAMSON, MACTAGGART & Co.—through the Protector of Immigrants in Johor, thinking by that means to get them a little more easily.

914. There is no reason for the delay, except the immense demand from other countries, I imagine. Some while ago I was told “If you want to get 50 coolies you had better indent for 200.”

915. These are the difficulties—not enough men, and those got are not fit for work. I mean a large percentage of them are not, some are.

916. The last batch we received were superior to any we ever got before.

917. I had hoped that the Government appointing their own officer would have met the difficulty, but time has not sufficiently elapsed to shew whether that is so or not.

918. The difficulty is simply one of supply and demand. I think offering higher wages would get them. The coolies are as well able to judge as anybody else whether the wage in Burma is as good as here.

919. *By Mr. Hill:*—When the agreement expires some of them remain on the estate, and the bulk of them elect to return. I do not know what becomes of the rest, I should think they go back to Singapore.

920. *By the President:*—We are now offering 18 cents the first year, and 20 cents the second, as against 14 cents we are paying now. We have not tried a further advance on that.

921. *By Mr. Hill:*—I do not see why coolies should not leave the planters for Government employment, or work where they choose. It is all free labour.

The Hon'ble T. Shelford.
14th November.

The Hon'ble T. Shelford. 14th November. 922. I do not think that the greater portion of the labour in the Straits has been brought over by private employers. I think the greater portion are free men that come to the Colony.

923. It is a difficult question whether the Government are under an obligation to import labour for their own work. I have got no decided opinion on that. Taking the Colony by itself, I do not think there is an obligation on the Government, but when you take in the Native States, it seems a very difficult problem, which I am not prepared for at present.

924. *By the President*:—The Chinese we get are a poor class of men, and the broker's system is the mischief of the whole thing.

925. The matter is entirely in the hands of the brokers, who charge pretty well what they like, there being no check upon them.

926. At the present moment we suffer from the decision of the Court of Appeal. At first it was not generally known, and no difficulty was experienced, but since this is known, we cannot obtain any coolies.

927. One of the brokers told me the other day he had telegraphed to stop coolies coming down. We wanted to send up some coolies on the last voyage of the *Perse* to Kuantan, and had arranged for them to sign on; when we went for them, the decision had become known, and the coolies were all gone.

928. I was at first opposed to Government depôts, as I was afraid it would interfere with the import of coolies, but I have changed that opinion. I now think there should be Government depôts, as I do not see otherwise how improvements could be introduced, but then there may be a difficulty in China.

929. It will be a very difficult matter, I am afraid, with the Chinese Government. The Chinese Mandarins have of late done their best to prevent the men coming down from Amoy and Swatow. I do not speak from absolute authority, but I am prepared to tell you it is so.

930. The only remedy is negotiations with the Chinese Government through our Consuls.

931. I think there ought to be a local Government depôt. I hardly think it would be practicable for Government to take up the broker business, and I do not think there is any necessity for it.

932. The brokers are a bad lot and very unscrupulous, but until recently I had not any difficulty in obtaining such labour as we wanted, provided we paid for it. We are trying to get coolies now, and I believe we shall succeed, but there is a great deal of trouble about it, and we have to pay more.

933. We wrote to Java about two months ago for a certain number of Javanese and desired them to bring their families with them, and the coolies were obtainable, but we have not yet got the permission of the Dutch Government. It was applied for fully two months ago.

934. We have never ourselves applied before. We have got the Javanese here, passing them through the Protectorate.

935. I know of no other source of labour to suggest as being available to supply the Colony.

936. *By Mr. Hill*:—I fear it would be impracticable for the Government to recruit Chinese; they would not get men. If it were done it would do away with the present abuses, but they could not get the men.

937. I think it would be distinctly beneficial if men were to know that at the depôt they could register themselves for certain works and the rate of pay, but it would be necessary, to prevent misrepresentation, that there should be arrangements made also at Swatow. In that case it would have to be entirely in the hands of the Government, and I am doubtful whether that could be worked. I have not unlimited faith in the facilities with which the Government do these things. It depends solely on the Mandarins of the Chinese Government.

938. *By Mr. Hooper*:—If it cannot be arranged with the Chinese I would still recommend a depôt here for the lodging of the coolies. There would be less abuses, because Government would exercise greater supervision. The Hon'ble T. Shelford. 14th November.

939. I have engaged Javanese before the Protectorate, who went to a depôt and two days later they had gone. The brokers would not have such opportunities under Government of substituting men, and the coolies would be better treated.

940. *By the President*:—From a moral point of view it is rather an argument in favour of Government depôts that if men must be detained, such detention is better to take place under the supervision of the Government.

941. Ten days is a limited time. I should not lessen it, and certainly see no reason for lengthening it.

Mr. Theo. Sohst, Partner in the Firm of Messrs. PUTTFARCKEN & Co., gave evidence as follows:— Mr. Theo. Sohst. 14th November.

942. We are interested as agents of estates to a certain extent in the coolie question.

943. We would be very much interested in Tamil labour if we could get Tamils, but we find that nearly impossible.

944. We have tried it through brokers, but they wanted advances before we saw the coolies.

945. Afterwards restrictions were put by the Government, to which M. CHASSE-RIAU, being so near the town, could not agree, such for instance as keeping a doctor on the estate. So we have more or less given it up, and only now and then the question crops up.

946. We have never sent to India for men.

947. As soon as we made conditions that we would only have good men and stated several things, that the brokers should be responsible for advances and so on, we had to give it up. We never got so far as ordering, because we never got any guarantee for the advances made. This was about five years ago.

948. I have never gone into the question sufficiently to recommend any improvement.

949. We engage occasionally Chinese for Deli. It is only a question of prices and then we get them. I have afterwards found the men changed.

950. When we wanted to get them four weeks, we had sometimes to wait three months.

951. I have not given the subject sufficient attention to know how it could be remedied.

952. We only act as agents, and the numbers that pass through our hands are small, about 200 a year, if as many as that.

953. I think that if we had depôts it would prevent changing the coolies, and would put the brokers under some supervision.

954. I have no difficulty in getting Javanese. I wrote to Samarang the other day and got fifteen women and twenty men for Deli.

955. I do not get Javanese for anywhere else. My experience altogether is more or less confined to Deli.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

A. S.

FOURTEENTH MEETING

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
FRANCIS POWELL, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.

Gan Eng
Seng. 17th
November.

Gan Eng Seng, Store-keeper to Messrs. GUTHRIE & Co., stated as follows (through interpreter):—

956. I am contractor for supplying coolies to the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company Limited.

957. I also engage coolies sometimes for Messrs. GUTHRIE & Co.

958. I got my men from Swatow and Amoy independently of the brokers. I send my Mandors to China to bring Hok-kien and Te-chiu coolies down. Sometimes the Mandors employ agents, sometimes they do the recruiting themselves.

959. The men make a written contract in China, and we pay their passage money. The contract is not stamped.

960. In China each man gets \$3, besides other small expenses.

961. We have no security for this money, which is usually given to the coolie on board; it is only given to him on land when security for it is given by the *Sin-Kheh*. This security is verbal only, given by some one who is known to the Mandor.

962. When we distrust men we bring them before the Protector of Chinese, and make them sign a fresh contract on arrival in Singapore.

963. We make our own terms—\$6 per month, plus food and medicine.

964. The contract is generally for six months. When a contract is made for one year we give the coolie a return ticket to China.

965. We only recover the \$3 advance, not the passage money.

966. Hok-kiens make different contracts; they will only work by the day. When we trust a man our Mandor is his security.

967. The men who sign contracts before the Protector of Chinese almost always run away, and in that case the Mandor loses his money, but he recovers double the amount from the *Sin-Kheh's* family in China.

968. Coolies are always running away; we cannot bother the *Tai-Jin* every day, and we only recover a few.

969. Coolies live in the docks, and are quite free from restraint.

970. Not thirty per cent. remain till the end of their six months.

971. When a *Sin-Kheh* comes here he gets small loans from us, and then runs away.

972. We lose much money in this way, and cannot recover it, even if we succeed in catching the man and punishing him. We then make him go on working afterwards.

973. I think if the wages were increased the absconding would diminish, but I cannot afford to increase the wages.

974. I think the Dutch system should be followed. When runaways are caught, they are flogged and imprisoned, as is done at Rhio, Sourabaya and Banjer. The Chinese do not know that the English law is so lenient, if they did they would all run away at once.

Gan Eng
Seng. 17th
November.

975. I get from 500 to 700 coolies a year down from China.

976. My men all work by the month.

977. Sometimes 3,000 to 4,000 are employed at Tanjong Pagar Docks, the number being made up by men hired by the day in Singapore.

978. All the coal coolies at the Tanjong Pagar Docks are engaged by me.

979. We work for the Company by the ton and are paid by the ton.

980. I am only a contractor for discharging cargo.

981. For one ton of coal I get 25 cents, and 13½ cents for one ton of general cargo.

982. All losses fall on me, and I pay the coolies in China as well.

983. When I want extra coolies I send my Mandor into the town and he gets them.

984. If there is much work I pay 60 to 70 cents per man a day.

985. The number of regular men is uncertain; I have now about 400 working by the month, some of them *Sin-Khehs*, and some *Lau-Khehs*.

986. I pay *Lau-Khehs* \$7 to \$9 per month and feed them.

987. Thirty-five cents per day is the general rate for extra men when there is not undue pressure of work.

988. To general cargo coolies we give one meal a day, and to coal coolies three meals, as well as their pay. Three meals cost about 5 or 6 cents. These meals only consist of rice.

989. The extra men are partly *Sin-Khehs* and partly free coolies.

990. I have been in Amoy. It is forbidden there for coolies to leave unless they pay their own passages, but coolies do get away with their passages unpaid. In Swatow it is much the same.

991. I have heard that Pug Tai Jin interferes with emigration in the Canton provinces, I believe on his own authority alone. I have heard he has come back to Swatow.

992. I have no difficulty in getting labour for the docks, but cannot get it for the estates.

993. The coolies prefer dock work, because they can go where they please after the expiry of a few months, and on the estates most of them die, and not one in ten makes as much money as at the docks. Of the few men that I trust scarcely any run away.

994. I have more than one hundred men at present who have been working for nine or ten years with me. They make money here, and return to China, spend it, and return here for more work, and so on from year to year.

995. I get no coolies down for GUTHRIE & Co., but simply aid in arranging matters with the brokers.

996. Only Chinese are employed at the Docks.

997. I would like the law to be made stricter, in order to prevent the coolies from running away, in the way of heavier punishments by the Magistrates. I have prosecuted runaways, but the Magistrate has simply ordered them to return to work, and given them no punishment.

998. I think runaways should be imprisoned when caught and then sent back again to work.

Gan Eng
Seng. 17th
November.

999. A runaway coolie of mine is now hiding near the old market, but when my men attempt to catch him, the market people assault them, because they (the market people) are of the same tribe as the runaway.

1000. My payments to coolies are all done by my Mandors, under my supervision. I see that the men receive their proper pay.

1001. The *Sin-Khehs* agree in China to pay their Mandors one cent a day for every working day; this is independent of the wages the Mandor gets from me.

1002. The medicine given to the *Sin-Khehs* is English or Chinese according to the *Sin-Kheh's* own wishes.

1003. I do not like coolies to die, as I must pay the funeral, and also lose my advance.

1004. I have to keep a regular staff of coolies always on the spot, as the outside coolies are too offhand in their dealings. Otherwise I should use only day labourers, and avoid the loss consequent on the bolting of *Sin-Khehs*.

1005. In my experience I have known of one strike among the men about four years ago. On that occasion I prosecuted the outside men, and some were imprisoned, but none of my own men.

1006. I have done this work for ten years, and had no experience of any kind on estates.

The meeting adjourned at 1 P.M.

R. P. G.

FIFTEENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
D. COMRIE, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire.
KHO BOO ANN, Esquire.

Mr. A. M.
MacGregor.
24th Novem-
ber.

Mr. A. M. MacGregor, Indian Immigration Agent, was examined and stated as follows:—

1007. I was appointed in the Straits Settlements in 1880. I had previously been for sixteen years in Southern India in Government Service.

1008. I speak Tamil and Hindustani, and understand Canarese and Telugu. My duties are all specified in the Ordinance, which refers entirely to the Straits.

1009. My only duty in India is inspection of the depôt at Negapatam.

1010. I have no connection with the recruiting of coolies in India.

1011. I have been several times to India to look into the recruiting system there.

1012. The Straits Settlements Government has no connection with it.

1013. There is only one establishment at Negapatam, and only one Superintendent there, who is a Medical Officer and whose only duty is to inspect the coolies. He does no recruiting.

1014. The Superintendent received instructions, drawn up by me and approved by Government, as to how to conduct the depôt and examine the coolies, but his duties are not in print. Mr. A. M. MacGregor. 24th November.

1015. The Superintendent is not under the Madras Government, though he was appointed with their approval.

1016. Every Statute Emigrant must pass through the depôt. No Statute Emigrants are allowed to come over without inspection.

1017. Recruiting Agents in Negapatam employ Sub-Agents, who again employ recruiters to collect coolies, who are medically inspected by the Superintendent and passed if fit. A man came over recently—a professional beggar—who, though physically fit, was utterly ignorant of labour. He ought not to have been passed.

1018. I believe Mr. HARDAKER carries out his duties to the best of his ability, but he cannot always have the necessary knowledge as to the qualifications of the men for Straits Settlements labour.

1019. It is to the recruiters' interest to send over as many men as possible, irrespective of caste or class.

1020. Messrs. ADAMSON & MACTAGGART, GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co. and VENGDASALAM are the recruiting firms, and send out their sub-agents to the villages. The recruiter, the sub-agent and the recruiting agent must all be paid.

1021. Notices are put up in the depôt at Negapatam telling the coolies all about the conditions of the work here.

1022. The District Magistrates exercise some supervision over the recruiting to prevent crimping, but they cannot regulate the class of men recruited.

1023. The recruiters are all licensed by the District Magistrates, generally at the instance of the recruiting agents.

1024. I do not know the recruiters personally.

1025. It is hard to say whether the coolies really get their advances; I doubt very much if they do, and I believe it goes entirely into the recruiters' hands.

1026. The coolie must state before the Protector at Negapatam that he has received his advance. He is always at liberty to complain, but it is rarely, if ever, done.

1027. The coolies state at Negapatam that they have received their advances, and over here they sometimes tell me they have not.

1028. No maximum of advances is laid down beyond that of \$12 in the Ordinance.

1029. The Superintendent cannot have the requisite knowledge of the castes suitable for Straits Settlements labour. Weavers, toddy-drawers, &c. are useless for work over here. The classes to be rejected are all mentioned in the memorandum I propose to furnish to the Commission.

1030. The weavers were formerly in a majority on the sick list, but very few weavers come over now.

1031. If a man has received advances and then absconds, I believe the recruiters must pay the loss.

1032. The Government is not responsible for losses on men absconding from the depôt.

1033. The coolie is not under strict restraint at Negapatam, and can run away if he wants to, but as he really wants to emigrate he does not often do it.

1034. The men are always fully informed at the depôt what they are going to do, and can then leave if they wish.

1035. The recruiter bears the loss on the rejected men, so it is to his interest to get men who will be passed by the Medical Officer.

Mr. A. M.
MacGregor.
24th Novem-
ber.

1036. The cost of food at the depôt (2 to 3 annas per day) is put down under the heading of "Cost of Maintenance in India."

1037. No case of official obstruction to emigration has ever come to my knowledge, though the small land-holders may sometimes interfere with the recruiting of cool workers on their own estates.

1038. I do not believe Captain JAMES would ever attempt to obstruct emigration.

1039. The recruiters are generally the riff-raff of the country.

1040. I know that they have interfered with private recruiting; as it deprives them of their livelihood.

1041. Mr. HILL's agent was once accused of murder, and it took nearly a year for him to clear himself.

1042. The recruiters could never hold out against Government, though they would naturally resist for a short time.

1043. All recruiters leaving here are supposed to get a letter from me, and the Indian Government would probably refuse them licenses if they did not, but some have gone without letters from me.

1044. Employers seem to forget that their own agents sent from here are liable to spend the money entrusted to them.

1045. A trustworthy man ought to be able to get coolies without any difficulty.

1046. No contracts are now made in India.

1047. I cannot say exactly what is the cost of a coolie landed here; it varies.

1048. The charge was formerly fixed at Rs. 27 per head.

1049. This included passage money (about Rs. 15) food of coolie on board, expenses for bringing him from up-country (about Rs. 3), and the commission to the recruiter, agent and sub-agent (about Rs. 7).

1050. No restriction of any kind is placed by the Madras Government on the emigration of coolies, beyond the conditions insisted upon by the Government of India and laid down in the Straits Settlements Ordinance.

1051. There is an inspector on board each ship to see that the coolies are properly treated; he also fills in the contract forms on board.

1052. The arrangements for the sea voyage are quite satisfactory.

1053. There is no other authorised depôt here except the Government Depôt; but there are several depôts here not acknowledged as such for sending coolies to Deli.

1054. I am investigating a case of crimping now.

1055. These Deli coolies come over as free passengers, and slip away at night on board tongkangs. The detective police are implicated in the case I mentioned.

1056. We cannot get hold of these depôt-keepers, or altogether prevent coolies going there.

1057. All Native States contracts, except those for Selangor and Johor, are made here.

1058. I board all ships from Negapatam myself when I have no assistant.

1059. I muster the coolies on deck. The passengers are then landed and sent through the depôt and warned not to go to Deli.

1060. The contract coolies are then taken to the depôt.

1061. All contracts are completed before the statute coolies leave the depôt, Mr. A. M. MacGregor. 24th November. except those for Selangor and Johor. One hundred men will take less than 48 hours.

1062. They are shut up, and cannot leave the depôt.

1063. Contracts made here are binding in the Native States.

1064. Men going to Singapore are landed here and taken to the depôt. They would land under any circumstances.

1065. The Ordinance form of contract is always adhered to here.

1066. When visiting estates I inspect the buildings, look into the contracts, &c. and ask if they have any complaints to make. They do not make many complaints on the estates, but I think this is largely due to their fear of the Tyndals, who, they say, would beat them afterwards.

1067. I also enquire into the state of accounts, but I make no separate enquiries about these from each coolie.

1068. I formerly enquired into the amount of task work done, in order to prevent any excess, but I have not done so lately.

1069. It is impossible to control the task work; it must be left to the planters; but I am always open to receive any complaints.

1070. I think the task work generally is reasonable.

1071. The hours of work are fixed, and I believe them to be never exceeded.

1072. All deductions of pay must be approved by me. One day is always sufficient for the inspection of an estate.

1073. I cannot say how many indentured coolies complete their contracts.

1074. I can say, from reference to the registers, how many re-engage under agreement after their contracts have expired.

1075. There are no rules framed regulating the entrance of the coolies into the depôt here; they are not necessary.

1076. Eight cents per day is charged here to keep the coolies in the depôt.

1077. All regulations connected with the carrying out of contracts are enforced.

1078. No men are sent back now to India as unfit, owing to the medical inspection at Negapatam being final.

1079. I always have all Deli steamers boarded, but we find very few coolies attempting to go over.

1080. I employ no detectives of my own in this work.

1081. At Singapore there is a Boarding Officer, but I think the system there unsatisfactory.

1082. I cannot say whether coolies get over to Deli without certificates; if I knew, I should certainly take the matter up.

1083. Men who cannot get certificates here tell me openly they will go to Singapore and get them there.

1084. I can suggest no better system than the certificate.

1085. There is no stamp duty on second contracts.

1086. I am always informed by the Superintendent at Negapatam that coolies have got their advance, but the coolies sometimes deny it here. This is because they are tutored by the recruiters at Negapatam what to say.

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ber

1087. Section 54 has been carried out, but the coolies do not like it, although their health is greatly improved by it.

1088. At Malakoff, where this was enforced, the coolies got so fat that they would not work at all.

1089. Section 58.—This is carried out.

1090. Section 59.—No action has been taken in my time under this section.

1091. Section 66.—I visit the estates twice a year, and my assistants also visit them twice yearly, so that they are visited every three months.

1092. Section 74 is always carried out.

1093. Section 68.—No reports under this section have ever been sent to me by the Magistrates.

1094. Section 85.—The employers, I believe, have to pay for the policeman on duty on this work.

1095. Sections 86 and 88.—Nothing has ever been done under these sections to my knowledge.

1096. Section 95.—The book referred to here is merely a private note book.

1097. Very few such complaints have occurred.

1098. Section 97.—Very few convictions have taken place.

1099. No Tamil translation of this Ordinance has been published, and the coolie has no means of knowing the terms of it, except by being told, though the Ordinance has been translated.

1100. I supervise the work of the Assistant Indian Immigration Agents in the Colony and the Native States.

1101. I know nearly the whole of the Madras Presidency, but nothing of Northern India.

1102. The coolies' food in their own country varies in different districts.

1103. In Mysore it consists chiefly of *ragi roti*.

1104. In Tanjore, &c., of *cumboo* and *cholam*.

1105. In rice districts the men live almost entirely on rice.

1106. Pariahs will eat carrion and dead animals, and other classes eat goat or mutton once or twice a week, or whenever they can get it.

1107. Some Natives are vegetarians, but I cannot say what proportion of those who come over here are so.

1108. I should say the majority are meat-eaters.

1109. Any of the coolies here could live on two annas a day in their own country.

1110. The dry grains they eat in India are far better for them and cheaper.

1111. In India a man can always live much cheaper than here.

1112. I think the rupee is equal to about 75 cents in purchasing value here.

1113. I tried to get coolies on some estates here to take the dry grain in place of rice, but they absolutely refused.

1114. By Mr. Swettenham: (in connection with Mr. MacGregor's annual report for 1889):—Of the passengers who arrive here not one-third are labouring coolies.

1115. I consider the number of desertions last year very large indeed.

1116. I cannot explain the fact of Singapore issuing more certificates than Penang.

1117. Section 14.—I think the medical inspection is too strict, in that men on a one-year contract do not require such a strict examination as the three-year men.

1118. I think the examination was formerly too lax, but that it is now carried rather too far; but I do not see how it can be altered if the inspection is left entirely to a Medical Officer.

1119. I have never known of actually insane people nor of incurably diseased arriving here.

1120. I do not remember the case of fourteen people being sent back to India from Selangor as insane.

1121. If a coolie is asked outright whether he has received his money or not, he is just as likely to lie as to tell the truth.

1122. I think an increase in wages is necessary, because if a Statute Immigrant finds another coolie who has passed no medical examination earning 20 cents, where he himself earns only 12, it leads to desertion.

1123. I should like the term of contract to be reduced to one year.

1124. The employers referred to first in section 17 of my Report for 1889 were Messrs. HILL & KATHBORNE.

1125. It would certainly surprise me to find that the 20 cents paid by Mr. HILL made the coolie no better off than a coolie who is paid at the Ordinance rate.

1126. The other employer referred to is Mr. TURNER.

1127. If an employer forced his coolies to work beyond nine hours a day without extra pay I should interfere.

1128. Section 18.—I think the coolies on some estates in the Native States are not well fed.

1129. I do not think it possible to work an estate except on the "lines" system.

1130. Section 19 applies to the entire Peninsula—to the Colony as well as to the Native States.

1131. In saying "treble the wages" I refer to the wages contract coolies on 12 cents per day receive.

1132. I am speaking in this connection chiefly of Government labourers.

1133. The chances of a coolie who goes into hospital in a despairing state ever coming out again are small.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

R. P. G.

Mr. A. M.
MacGregor
24th Novem-
ber

THE MEETING
RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 2.30 P.M.

PRESENT :

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
D. COMRIE, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.

Mr. A. M.
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ber.

Mr. MacGregor's examination was continued.

1134. Mr. SWETTENHAM.—Do you consider that as Indian Immigration Agent you have drawn a fair comparison in paragraph 19 of your last annual report when it is remembered that you have not alluded to the fact that the employer of Statute Indian Immigration has to incur great expense in their behalf for advances he cannot recover, for medical attendance, housing and losses incurred by desertion and death?—Yes, I think it is a fair comparison from the coolie's point of view.

1135. Have you heard that—these expenses taken into consideration—it has been calculated that the coolie receives 26 cents a day pay?—Yes, I have heard so, but this would not affect the coolie.

1136. Men who earn 2 to 4 annas in India get no houses, medicine, &c.

1137. Do you quite realize that a man engaged on one kind of labour can get more than a man on another kind?—Yes, if he is not under indenture.

1138. I should say that if sugar cannot afford to pay 15 cents it would be hard to bind a man down for three years on less wages than he would earn on other work.

1139. I do not know whether coffee can afford to pay larger wages than sugar. If coffee can afford to pay the equivalent of 17 dollar cents in Ceylon, I see no reason why it cannot pay this here.

1140. I think 15 cents a day the smallest fair wage that should be paid, and then provisions should be sold at Penang rates everywhere.

1141. The death-rate is taken from the number of coolies who arrive during the year plus those who remain over from the previous year.

1142. I cannot say what the percentage of deaths amongst free coolies is in the Native States.

1143. I think Indian coolies are very well treated in the Straits Settlements and Native States, and that they are not overworked.

1144. I think the death-rate has been very high amongst Statute Immigrants in the Native States and unsatisfactory.

1145. The sickness amongst the Tamil coolies is possibly, in individual cases, due to imprudence.

1146. I never have understood what attracted the Statute Immigrant to the Straits Settlements.

1147. I think the coolie's natural inclination would, in many cases, be to get rid of his responsibilities by desertion; but I think the feeling of despair I mentioned would influence him more.

1148. I know of no plan for housing men already recruited by private agents while others are being sought for, except the establishment of sub-depôts in each district.

1149. But there would be great difficulties in the way of this at first.

1150. It is possible that a planter wanting to get rid of a sickly coolie would discharge him by "mutual consent."

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ber.

1151. The Straits Settlements Government gets the stamp fee for all contracts made for work in Perak and Sungei Ujong, and will probably do so for Selangor contracts also.

1152. Several cases under section 58 of the Ordinance have been brought before me.

1153. I remember no serious epidemic amongst Straits Settlements coolies. Epidemics are very rare.

1154. An instance of cholera occurred at Prye some time ago.

1155. The Perak Government tried recently to establish a Tamil Colony at Telok Anson. If properly worked I think such a plan quite practicable, but the scheme would have to be carried out in its entirety.

1156. Such a scheme would probably be expensive.

1157. I think such a scheme would not, for many years, affect the labour supply of the Colony to any appreciable extent, unless the coolies were introduced in large numbers. Men cultivating land in the low country would be of no use to planters on the hills.

1158. I question whether a yearly supply of free Immigrants could be introduced with any advantage by Government on the plan of simply paying their passages, as they would be free to go where they pleased on arrival. I doubt if they could be thus obtained.

1159. With regard to the overfed coolies on the Malakoff Estate whom I recently referred to, I cannot say what the cost was to the planter of the cooked rations supplied to them.

1160. By Mr. Comrie :—The examination at the Negapatam depôt takes place at the time of admission.

1161. Substitution in the depôt would be very difficult.

1162. The Superintendent knows each man by sight, and sees them embarked himself.

1163. The loss on coolies brought up from the country villages and rejected by the Medical Officer is borne, I believe, by the recruiters.

1164. The stamp fee on the first contract is \$1; on second contracts there is no fee.

1165. The cost per man, as I have heard, ranges from Rs. 35 to Rs. 42.

1166. By Mr. Hill :—I think the reason why coolies have not taken advantage of the reduced passages is that the system is not advertised sufficiently on the other side.

1167. It is not common for paddy-growers to leave their paddy-fields when their crop is gathered and go to work on the hills. A certain percentage do so.

1168. Mr. Buck at first considered the rate of wages here too low and wished to have it raised to 15 cents.

1169. By Mr. Brown :—Section 33.—No cases of masters of ships being prosecuted for taking coolies to Deli have occurred.

1170. I think it would be gross injustice to do so except in rare instances.

1171. A tongkang captain was recently caught taking over coolies in this way, and was prosecuted. He was fined \$100.

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1172. I think it would be a great improvement if task work were legalized.
1173. A man might be told to do a certain piece of work per week in the way and at the hours he liked best, and be paid according to the work he did.
1174. I think coolies are well treated here.
1175. Several cases have occurred of Tyndals being brought up and punished for beating coolies.
1176. Coolies formerly paid Rs. 15 for their passage, and now pay Rs. 8 under the reduced rates.
1177. The employer recovers less money now from the coolie than formerly; there used to be no legal limit as to the amount.
1178. The employer recovered everything—passage money, commission to agents, &c.
1179. The average advance entered against a coolie just before the Ordinance was about \$12, but when I first came here it was about \$20. I have known as much as \$37 entered in a coolie's contract as advanced.
1180. I have not heard that direct emigration from Negapatam to Deli is now going on. I heard of it once, and reported it to India. If I heard of it occurring I should certainly take steps in the matter.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

R. P. G.

SIXTEENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 25TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
D. COMRIE, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire.

The Hon'ble-
J. M. B. Vermont.
25th November.

The Hon'ble J. M. B. Vermont gave evidence as follows:—

1181. I am a planter in Province Wellesley. I have been connected for forty-five years with Batu Kawan estate, Province Wellesley, and also with the Otaheite estate in Penang.
1182. I am also connected with the Prye estate, Province Wellesley. I plant only sugar.
1183. I speak Tamil moderately well, and a little Chinese: Malay, of course.
1184. I have had experience of Tamil, Malay and Javanese labour.
1185. My Tamil and Chinese labourers are both indentured and free.
1186. The Malays are all free.

[The witness here handed in a return of the coolies at present employed on his estate.]

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1187. I have filled in the series of questions sent to me by the Commission.
1188. I think the labour defective in the supply available.
1189. On my estate I divide the coolies into first and second class men, according to their physique.
1190. I think the men have neither improved nor deteriorated in physique.
1191. In view of the population I think the class of men we get is as good as can be expected.
1192. It is not necessary for a man to have been born an agricultural labourer in order to make a good coolie, he may be a weaver and yet be able to pick leaves off a sugar-cane or pick berries on a coffee estate.
1193. I think the strict medical examination at Negapatam made very little difference in the capacity of the men we get, one way or the other.
1194. MESSRS. BROWN & Co. procure my coolies for me through GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co. I indent for the number I require each year, and they settle the financial details.

[Mr. VERMONT here read a letter from GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co., Negapatam, to himself, explaining that the difficulty of obtaining coolies has been increased by the opening of the Government Depot at Negapatam. Previous to this opening they had several depôts, so that recruits for different employers were kept apart, and only heard the terms explained on which they themselves were to be engaged, and thus remained contented. Now the depot causes the following difficulties. First; that the coolies are examined directly they arrive, when tired from their journey, whereas before they had a few days to "refresh" at the depôts before examination. Therefore too many are rejected. Second; that as all go to one depot, those engaged on less favourable terms become aware that better can be had, and ultimately refuse to sign contracts unless on the better terms, so that those offering lower terms cannot get as many as they want. Hence GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co. wish to return to former system of depôts.]

They add that a private recruiter sent by Mr. VERMONT only brought five coolies to the depot instead of "thirty as he stated," and they add: "We have paid JESUDIAN (the recruiter) Rs. 80 for the 4 coolies, at Rs. 20 per coolie, as we pay our recruiters "here, he has no claim whatever to make to you."]

1195. I consider toddy climbers to be a very useful class of coolie for the Straits Settlements, and have written to my agents in Negapatam accordingly.

[Mr. VERMONT then read letter from GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co. to the Superintendent of the Negapatam Depot stating that Mr. VERMONT writes to them "Toddy-drawers, Maravers, Pallans, and Pariahs, workers in coco-nut groves and palmyra men should be allowed to come at any age except when incapacitated by old age," and asking if he has instructions to allow such people to come.]

Reply from Superintendent of Depot to GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co., that he has received no such instructions.

Letter from Indian Immigration Agent to GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co. calling their attention to the fact that the Superintendent of Depot acts under orders from him and from no one else; that certain classes of men laid down in the Superintendent's instructions will invariably be rejected and that their own interests and that of their employers will be best served by working in harmony with the Superintendent and complying with the regulations. Further that any complaints regarding the system in force should be addressed to him (the Indian Immigration Agent) only.]

1196. I attribute the scarcity of labour entirely to the system in force at Negapatam.

1197. The loss on all rejected coolies falls on the recruiters.

1198. The first man I sent over had no letter from the Indian Immigration Agent, but got his license on the other side all the same, through my agents there.

The Hon'ble
J. M. B. Ver-
mont. 25th
November.

1199. A coolie landed on my estate costs about \$19.41.
1200. The Rs. 20 paid to recruiters in India goes into their own pockets.
[The witness here handed in accounts, marked C.]
1201. The average cost of coolies landed here has varied very much.
1202. I use the regular contract form, and the term is for three years.
1203. We have great difficulty in making the labourers work regularly, so, as an inducement, I give a bonus of one cent per day at the end of 23 days of regular work.
1204. These 23 days include Sundays, on which day no work is done.
1205. A first class man gets no advantage except that he can go home as soon as his task work is finished, and a second class man must work his full nine hours per day.
1206. If a woman works regularly 23 days I give her 10 cents per day instead of the 8 cents laid down by the Ordinance.
1207. I generally run my mill 13 days consecutively, and then stop two days to allow boilers in the mill and flues to cool down.
1208. The men have Sunday entirely to themselves, although the Ordinance allows machinery, &c. to be cleaned on the day of rest. This is done in half a day on Monday. The remaining portion of the day the coolies have to themselves and are paid for it as well as the Sunday; they thus have one and a half complete days to themselves per fortnight, instead of half a day each Sunday.
1209. The average coolie, if steady, can save a great deal of money, but not if he squanders his money in drink and gambling.
1210. We keep no savings bank on the estate, the coolies seem to object to our knowing how much they save; we once made the experiment, but it failed. Many coolies invest their money in cattle and goats or taking a wife to themselves.
1211. Our pay day is always the 15th of the month, as nearly as possible.
1212. The coolies have always full liberty to make any complaints or enquiry as to their pay, and are always satisfied.
1213. A roll call is called daily at 6 A.M., in my presence, by the Tyndals, and there are other calls at 10, 1 and 4 o'clock.
1214. At the morning call every one on the estate is present: the later roll calls in the fields are supervised by the Overseers.
1215. Very few complaints are made by the coolies of false reports of absence being made by the Tyndals, and they are usually unfounded.
1216. A man loses pay for exactly such hours as he is absent from work—half day's work half day's pay.
1217. I determine myself the amount of task work to be done.
1218. The coolies always seem satisfied with it; I reduce it when I think it necessary.
1219. As soon as a coolie finishes his task he goes home; he does not care to do any extra work.
1220. The hours of work are 6 to 11 and 1 to 6; this includes time for going to and coming from work; they always cease work in time to get home before dark.
1221. The coolies are paid for the Sundays, but a man must work for six days before he can get his Sunday free.

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mont. 25th
November.

1222. The fields are laid out in banks, and each man is set a bank to work on.
1223. The coolies have every facility for communication with their friends, both by post and otherwise.
1224. They quite understand that they can remit money and how to do it when they want to.
1225. The pilfering from fruit and vegetable gardens is a very serious matter, and the coolies do not care about planting their plot of ground in consequence.
1226. The punishments are not nearly severe enough for this offence.
1227. I do not limit the number of women to be sent over, but I once remonstrated when 80 per cent. arrived.
1228. I should always be willing to pay the passage of any coolie's wife whom he wished to bring over, and would not compel her to work.
1229. I could give regular work to four hundred women a year in thrashing cane, weeding and other light work.
1230. All women who come over are under contract, I suppose because they cannot otherwise pay their passages.
1231. The Ordinance terms of redemption are not adhered to, and the redemption is always effected on far lower terms than the Immigrants are legally entitled to expect.
1232. We pay the youths according to their worth; if they are good workmen we pay them full wages.
1233. At the present rate of wages at least half the amount can be saved, say \$1.50 a month, if the man wishes to. This is quite a reasonable estimate.
1234. I do not believe a Tamil coolie would work better if his wages were increased: he would for so much shorter hours.
1235. I was once obliged by the Government to serve out cooked rations to the coolies, but the men objected to it, as they had to pay higher for it at the end of the month, and they also like to cook for themselves and handle the money.
1236. The cooked rations was a complete diet, and we charged them 8 cents a day for it.
1237. I consider that the men feed themselves very well from the outset.
1238. If a man comes over here constitutionally weak and sickly it is very unlikely that good feeding will ever cure him.
1239. We issue rice once a fortnight, and I think it would not be any advantage to issue it oftener: the men themselves would object.
1240. I see no object in inspecting the men's rice before issuing the fresh supply.
1241. The hours of meals are at 5.30. A. M., 11 A. M. and at about 8 o'clock in the evening.
1242. New arrivals are always allowed two days free before going to work, to give them time for settling down on the estate.
1243. They usually work regularly for the first month and only work shorter time when they find that no special pressure is put on them.
1244. The new arrivals and old coolies are allowed to mix as they please in their lines and arrange among themselves where they should live.
1245. For the first year the men work badly, but if a man is ever likely to become a good workman he shews it by the end of the first year.

The Hon'ble J. M. B. Vermont, 25th November. 1246. The men fully understand that they will have to make up for any absence from work at the expiry of their contract.

1247. I would give the men as much land as they liked if they cared to cultivate it; they would have to build their own houses. I do not think it would answer well if I built them simple huts myself.

1248. By Mr. Swettenham:—I do not know what are GANAPATHY's profits.

1249. I am prepared to accept any physically fit man quite irrespective of his caste.

1250. I think the present wages ample to supply good food to the coolies.

1251. The contract is not at all too long. It would increase the death-rate if the contract was shorter, as the death-rate is always highest in the first year.

1252. I do not attribute the death-rate and sickness to the length of contract.

1253. I think the coolies are undoubtedly far better in health at the end of their contract than at the beginning.

1254. I attribute the desertions to the great demand for labour, and also to a deliberate intention to desert on the part of the men who come. It is not the rate of wages.

1255. I pay only the minimum rate of wages. The coolie must serve an apprenticeship in life like every one else.

1256. The coolie actually works twenty days a month on an average.

1257. A coolie gets about a chupak of rice a day; they also eat curry stuff, salt and fresh fish, chilies, &c.

1258. They have never complained of the quantity or want of variety of their food.

1259. The coolies grow their own vegetables to a small extent.

1260. I think the Ordinance is satisfactory.

1261. I would prefer that the wages in the third year should be increased rather than that the term of contract should be shortened.

1262. A free Tamil's wages outside my estate in Province Wellesley are 20 to 25 cents a day. I pay men who renew their contracts 16 cents per day: they have the same advantages of a free house, cheap rice, medical comforts and attendance gratis when sick, and certain and regular work as the others.

1263. There is no particular reason why they should re-engage with me instead of going out to work as free coolies.

1264. The Tyndals on my estate are recruited from the coolies themselves; they are paid \$6 to \$10 a month.

1265. Statute Immigrants get \$2 to \$3 a month after deducting rice.

1266. The coolies can now pay off their advances after a few months: formerly they could not, but now they can easily do so by the end of the first year or even in six months.

1267. From 15 to 20 per cent. of time-expired men re-engage.

1268. Sixty-three dollars is the price of redemption for a man, \$30 for a woman; but this is not held to, as I said.

1269. Formerly many coolies went to prison for absence, but it had no deterrent effect.

1270. If a man arrived here with wife and children the woman would have to in work order to supplement her husband's wages so that the family could live.

1271. Any children newly brought over are sent to hospital, where they are put under the care of a matron and looked after at my expense, so the woman is quite free to go out and work. Under these circumstances the present rate of wages is quite sufficient for the coolie to support his family. The Hon'ble J. M. B. Vermont, 25th November.

1272. We never prosecute our women.

1273. I make it a principle to be as lenient as possible to my coolies.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 P.M.

THE MEETING
RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, at 2.30 P. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. Vermont's examination was resumed, and, in answer to questions by Mr. MACGREGOR, he stated:—

1274. The men we get now are not actually bad in point of physique.

1275. I never complained particularly of the physique of the coolies, and never was strongly in favour of the Negapatam dépôt.

1276. I do not see why power should not be given to a Medical Officer to select coolies from a class of native who are not agricultural labourers; it was done formerly.

1277. MESSRS. GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co. certainly say in their letter that they are not in favour of the dépôt.

1278. I am not aware that the Madras Government was strongly against the old dépôt system.

1279. I do not see why a man who has promised to emigrate and received advances to do so should not be compelled to fulfil his promise.

1280. I am not aware that a proposition to that effect was submitted to the Madras Government.

1281. I think that all coolies recruited should be passed provided their constitution is good and they are free from disease.

1282. GANAPATHY PILLAY charges me Rs. 38 to Rs. 40 for every coolie landed here. He pays the recruiter Rs. 20, but he has also several other expenses.

1283. When Mr. TURNER offered his coolies better terms, I was forced to do the same, to a smaller extent; but it was against my inclination. I cannot say whether I got as many coolies as Mr. TURNER at that time.

1284. Second class men are not tasked, because they are not so fitted for the work as the first class men are.

1285. I think children are indifferent as to work in the fields; we gain nothing by them.

1286. I have known complaints made by coolies that they are punished by the Tyndals if they refuse to cut grass, and in a few genuine cases I have punished the Tyndals.

The Hon'ble
J. M. B. Ver-
mont. 25th
November.

1287. I do not see why women should be excused from doing the work they have contracted to do.

1288. The men can plant Indian corn, vegetables, &c.

1289. I would pay a new arrival fresh from the ship the same wages as an indentured coolie: he might do task work.

1290. *By the President:* The coolies get their provisions from shops on the estate and in the village hard by. The shop-keepers pay no rent, on condition that they sell the provisions at the lowest possible rates ruling outside. I believe this is generally done, as no complaints are ever made by the coolies.

TAMIL UNINDENTURED LABOUR.

1291. Time-expired men get an advance of \$5 on an eighteen months' agreement, which they have to repay. Their rates of wages are 16 cents a day throughout the contract, and have the same advantages as the contract men.

1292. I have as many labourers at present as I want. I only introduced the piece work a few months ago.

1293. The men get the same food as contract labourers, and enjoy free medical attendance.

1294. The tasks and working hours are the same as for all classes of coolies; they are paid through a headman, who contracts with them. There are two headmen of this kind on my estate.

1295. Renewed contract men only get a half day free on Sunday, and must work six and a half days for it, but we are not too strict about this; very few turn out.

1296. A "Volunteer" is treated with just the same liberality as an indentured coolie.

1297. I once employed five hundred Javanese, whom I engaged on their return voyage from Mecca. We paid them 8 cents a day, and they lived well on \$1 a month. The advances made were often very high, on one occasion \$80 on a three years' contract. The men were mutually and jointly responsible for one another.

1298. We had to give them up owing to the Dutch law, and the Supreme Court deciding that men could not be made responsible for one another's debt.

1299. I have never made a similar attempt since.

1300. The men are highly satisfactory.

1301. I know Java, and I believe there are numbers of men there willing to come. Men have offered to supply me with coolies at \$5, but I require none at present.

1302. *By Mr. Sweettenham:* The man who received an advance of \$80 could supplement his wages of 8 cents a day by his wife making and selling cakes to the others; this man was a good mechanic and eventually got high wages.

1303. *By Mr. Brown:* No women came with the batch of Javanese mentioned above, except in the one case of the man who received the \$80 advance. The payment of this sum was guaranteed by the whole gang.

Mr. T. H.
Hill. 25th
November.

The examination of *Mr. T. H. Hill*, of Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE, was then resumed. *Mr. Hill* stated:

1304. I speak Tamil and Malay.

1305. On the Sungei Ujong Railway I employ contract and free Tamils, free Chinese, Javanese and local Malays.

1306. I am connected with the Kamuning Estate, Perak, of which I am a

partner; with Batu and Weld's Hill Estates in Selangor, and with the Linsum and S'lian Estates; also Pulau Ubin Estate near Singapore.

Mr. T. H.
Hill. 25th
November.

1307. I also had estates on the hills in Sungei Ujong—360 acres of coffee in bearing—which were abandoned for want of labour. All these estates are under my direct management.

1308. The number of coolies on all the estates is from six hundred to eight hundred.

1309. For coffee planting I much prefer free coolies.

1310. I must employ contract coolies, as I should otherwise be liable at any moment to be left without any labourers at all, owing to the higher wages offered by the Government and Government contractors.

1311. In Ceylon the advance system was more favourable to the introduction of families than is the case here. A coolie will go to the coast in Ceylon and bring back relations and friends from the same district to work on the estate, and I used to advance money to do this; whereas here I am forbidden to make any advance to my men unless under agreement.

1312. I am sure that many coolies here would bring their relations if a system permitting advances were legal.

1313. I paid 20 cents on a one-year agreement for the last lot of coolies I got over.

1314. I had no difficulty in getting them on these terms, though there was some delay.

1315. I have always got as many coolies as I required, though often after a delay of three or four months or more.

1316. I have at present as many men as I want. The average cost of a coolie landed on the estate is \$22 or \$23, of which I recover only \$8 or \$9.

1317. I employ task work as much as possible, with men under contract, but they are paid the same as free coolies according to their worth.

1318. I like to get plenty of women on the estates; there is always work for them and they enter into separate contracts.

1319. I would certainly advance the passage money for the wife of a contract coolie.

1320. The contract coolies bring their wives over very often.

1321. I can always find work for all the women who come over.

1322. I find that the 20-cent coolies are less expense to me than the 14-cent men. They are far more cheerful and consequently more healthy and take less physic and fewer medical comforts.

1323. We never make renewed contracts with coolies: if a coolie stays after the expiry of his contract he stays on a verbal agreement.

1324. I think \$50 to \$60 a reasonable sum for a man to save during his three years' contract.

1325. If a coolie's pay is increased beyond a certain point, I find they work for fewer days.

1326. The plan of supplying cooked food to the coolies is very distasteful to them; on that account I have not tried it.

1327. I do not consider that weak, ailing coolies feed themselves with discretion; good men are best left to themselves. We supervise, as much as possible, the food of men of poor physique.

Mr. T. H.
Hill. 25th
November.

1328. We have lost many men by desertion, due, as I say, to the inducements held out to them from outside. A good deal of actual crimping goes on.

1329. During the last six months the general condition of the coolies has very much improved. I think that the last Immigrants may be considered efficient labourers after about three or four months.

1330. We give the men as much garden land as they care to have, and encourage them to cultivate it.

1331. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—In saying that the coolies have improved of late I am speaking of all my coolies generally.

1332. The European whom I sent to recruit in India did not succeed well. Europeans are unsuited to the work, only a native can do it.

1333. I think 20 cents per day induces some better coolies to come under agreement.

1334. I am sure that in some cases the offer of 20 cents wages induced a superior class of coolie to come, and I think it will have that effect in future.

The meeting adjourned at 4.30 P.M.

R. P. G.

SEVENTEENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 27TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire.

Mr. T. H.
Hill. 27th
November.

The examination of Mr. T. H. HILL, of Messrs. HILL & RATHBOENE, was resumed.

1335. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—The terms I pay my coolies are not so much better than other people's, as they are supposed to be. I raised them because I thought the coolies badly off.

1336. Coolies pay off all advances in their contract term.

1337. I think the coolies live better on 20 cents, and so are in better condition. I attribute the better state of the coolies entirely to the increased wages. They attracted a few men who had been on estates in other countries.

1338. On *outlying estates* I am convinced that long agreements induce a feeling of despair.

1339. I am entirely in favour of having no agreements at all, but I could not afford to make advances whilst my labour is attracted elsewhere by high wages.

1340. The wages for good men in Ceylon used to range from 33 to 40 rupee-cents, and for ordinary men about 33 cents. They are, I believe, reduced now. This did not include Kanganies' or Head Kanganies' pay.

1341. I cannot believe the wages are now only 13 dollar cents, *i. e.*, 30 cents of a rupee for a good, able man.

1342. The wages paid by me as a contractor made no difference to me: I fixed my price on what I thought I should have to pay.

1343. The ordinary rate of wages in the Native States depends on the position of the works and various other circumstances. I get a certain amount of free labour direct from India, by making advances to the coolies on their arrival.

Mr. T. H.
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November.

1344. The ordinary rate of wages varies in the Native States from 25 to 30 cents for contractor's work, to 40 cents for outlying works.

1345. We have larger estates, I think, than any one else in the Native States.

1346. The class of our cultivation enables us at present to pay good wages, but coffee is liable to depreciate in price.

1347. I think coffee should be a successful speculation, but want of labour prevents men from embarking on it.

1348. We have had to abandon estates through this, amounting to 360 acres in full bearing, before Tamil emigration to the Native States was allowed.

1349. I consider that the planters import all the labour, and I hold that the Government should itself import a fair share of the labour it consumes. I believe this would keep down wages to a level which planters could afford to pay, and would also in the long run reduce the cost of Public Works to Government.

1350. I consider the wages now paid by Government most unnecessarily high; they range from 20 to 35 cents a day in different localities.

1351. I think Government would always have to pay about two cents more than the estates, because of house room, gardens and firewood and the many other advantages to be had on the latter.

1352. I think twenty cents would attract plenty of labour from India.

1353. I never re-engaged coolies on contract, and yet I find some men remain on the estate; the number of such men cannot be judged of by the returns of the Indian Immigration Agency, for numbers do remain.

[Mr. MACGREGOR here remarked that his Report referred only to protected coolies.]

1354. I have had coolies who have had to remain with me after the expiry of their three years' contracts to make up for absence from work during their term. I have detained some such men for perhaps seventy days, but never for any serious period of time.

1355. I do not think, speaking generally, that the men are detained in this way on our estates. I am much averse at all times to keeping on discontented coolies.

1356. We have never held too strictly to the letter of the Ordinance on this point.

1357. Our managers have grown more particular lately, but the coolies themselves are far more contented and settled in the country; the estates are now older and in greater favour with the men.

1358. I think that cultivation can never succeed here as long as outside people take the men off the planters' hands as soon as they have got acclimatised, by the offer of higher wages. For the estates in bearing I am entirely dependent on the Tamil coolie, and that is just the class of men from which the Government recruits its own labour supply.

1359. The Government introducing a sufficient supply for its own requirements appears to be the only remedy.

1360. I would sooner the Government imported and I engaged after one, two or three years at 23 cents than be situated as at present.

1361. We employ Malays on miscellaneous task work. They are quite satisfactory and some have worked at intervals for us for many years.

1362. We also employ Javanese brought up from Singapore, at from 23 to 26½ cents. I do not like them much, they are lazy and discontented, though their utility depends greatly on the Mandors.

Mr. T. H.
Hill. 27th
November.

1363. But I think they are excellent men on an estate for certain works, and I should like to see the importation more carefully attended to.

1364. They could never supplant the Tamil in the latter's particular branch of work, such as weeding, gathering and many other works on coffee, tea, cacao, or coco-nut estates. I have tried Chinese, but they failed for various reasons.

1365. By Mr. MacGregor: I sent an order a year ago for five hundred coolies, and they came in fairly rapidly.

1366. I think the present Ordinance satisfactory.

1367. I think all coolies, free or indentured, should be inspected, because in many places the men do not always receive equitable treatment or adequate attention. Therefore, the employer does not do his quota to render the Straits attractive to labour.

1368. I think there is no actual obstruction on the part of the Indian authorities, but much underhand work is done by the subordinates.

1369. I would suggest that an officer of high standing should be appointed in India, and that there should be particulars published of the works and wages for which coolies are required, and there should be men acquainted with the Straits at the depôts to explain what the works are.

1370. The advances made in Ceylon to men sent over to the coast to get coolies are not recovered from the coolie; the Kangani recovers it.

1371. Wages in Ceylon in one sense are not higher than here; but in my time there were no lost advances, &c.

1372. The Immigrants in Ceylon used to come over for no fixed periods, some stayed six months, some six years or more.

1373. Provisions are far cheaper here than in Ceylon. They are cheaper here by at least 10 or 15 per cent. The estates here are more favourably situated. There is no comparison as to facilities of transport. I do not think the primary cost of a coolie is of so much importance: the great object is to get an efficient staff of coolies who know their work, and to be able to retain them.

1374. In Ceylon a medical staff and hospitals are supplied just the same as here.

1375. Free coolies and unindentured are treated just the same on our estates.

1376. Provided a weaver or a *shahna* were physically satisfactory I should be quite willing to accept him, if he knew what he was coming to.

1377. I think an officer who would see that correct representations were made to the coolies more essential than the medical examination. The latter is of course necessary, but is not in itself sufficient.

1378. The exact class of work to be done should be made perfectly clear to the coolie, and then, provided always the men were physically fit, I would put no restriction on the men at all.

1379. Under present circumstances I would not put such powers into the recruiters' hands.

1380. I am certain that if there were a qualified man at the head of the recruiting agency in India and assistance was given to men recruiting for me, I could supply myself with as many men as I want, and if I could do my recruiting in the way my men have been used to without fear of the coolies being afterwards attracted away, a great development of estates would follow.

1381. By Mr. Brown:—I have no objection to Government importing coolies at any wages they think fair, but it seems unjust they should employ so many directly and through contractors, and import none, but tempt our men away at constantly increasing wages.

TAMILS.

1382. I have imported about 2,370 coolies in five years, and probably had 300 or 400 more come from India who have had an advance after arrival.

Mr. T. H.
Hill. 27th
November.

1383. I think the steamer subsidy of little use; it means only the reduced rate of passage money over what it was before the steamers were subsidised. If the \$30,000 were paid for three thousand coolies brought it would be a great improvement.

Mr. Kho Bu Ann was then examined, Mr. SWETTENHAM interpreting.

Mr. Kho Bu
Ann. 27th
November.

1384. I have been a sugar planter for twenty-four years. I have about 1,500 acres, all sugar.

1385. I employ 174 Chinese under contract, and 14 not under contract, 154 Kling men under it, and 41 women and children. I pay them in accordance with the Ordinances in Perak and the Colony.

1386. I also employ free Indians, but no Malays or Javanese.

1387. I cannot get nearly sufficient. I asked in February for three hundred, but could not get one.

1388. I could get no coolies either last year or the year before last. The price asked was too high, Rs. 45 to Rs. 50.

1389. I used to deal with GANAPATHY, but coolies were so bad I left him. I do not mind the wages, but the high initial price.

1390. I sent my Tindal in June last to recruit and he got a certain number, but the licensed recruiters got at the coolies and they would not come. I got about forty men. The Tyndal was a trustworthy man.

1391. I am willing now to pay Rs. 36 to Rs. 38, but cannot get them at the price. The Tyndal said Rs. 33 ought to be sufficient.

1392. The average cost and recovery on each coolie was \$7.97.

1393. I pay the coolies myself, or by my clerk, between the 12th and 17th of each month, always on a Sunday.

1394. I limit the number of women to two in every ten.

1395. I make them all work, unless they are redeemed by the men, whether married or not.

1396. They live in the lines, where they have a quarter to themselves.

1397. I think a three years' agreement quite sufficient, but it should not be reduced, as the man does not know his work on first arrival.

1398. It costs a coolie from \$2.10 to \$2.40 to feed himself.

1399. The men make some money by selling the vegetables they grow in their gardens.

1400. I have never tried the system of issuing cooked rations.

1401. When weakly coolies first arrive I give them light work.

1402. I issue the rice once a week. \$1½ is the average cost of it per coolie per month. It is Bengal rice.

1403. The coolies buy their curry stuffs, &c. both on the estates and at Nibong Tebal. The shop on the estate is kept by a Tamil, and I see that the prices charged are fair.

1404. The average coolie becomes efficient in seven or eight months.

TAMIL FREE LABOUR.

Mr. Kho Bu
Ann. 27th
November.

1405. I get my coolies only from those who come and ask for work. I have got none this year.

1406. Both free and contract coolies get the same treatment in all respects; they are charged nothing for medical attendance.

1407. A man works six and a half days a week and is paid for seven.

1408. The contract coolie works six days. On Sunday they clean up, and get paid for the whole day.

1409. The coolies object to inspection, because they lose a day's wages by it.

1410. I think it is of no use and do not like it, because it would mean more cost and trouble to myself.

1411. I do not see why I should give my land to coolies to induce them to come; the Government should give them land.

1412. I dare not do it, as the men would come in large numbers and would work for themselves, not for me.

1413. I have not enough land to do it; it would swamp my estate.

1414. The men, too, would never agree to work at my work and their own at the same time; they would leave mine for theirs.

1415. I offered men land at Sungei Boga, but to induce them to work, as it was a long way off, I said, "You work on my land and I will pay you, but work on your own and I won't;" the men refused, as they said the land would still belong to me and not to them.

1416. I do not think the fact of women being on an estate is any inducement to free coolies to come. The men do not stay on account of the women, when their contract has expired.

1417. The hours of meals are at 12 o'clock, but some task workers prefer to come in at 2 o'clock and feed then. The evening meal is at 8 o'clock. In the morning they take their food out with them.

1418. Good Immigrants work about 24 days a month; bad ones 16 to 17 days a month.

1419. Sometimes the men may work over 20 days and yet get no Sunday pay, as they have not worked for six consecutive days.

1420. The days they do not work must be worked off at the end of the contract.

1421. I have had men for five years under contract; they never get more than 14 cents, no matter how long they stay.

1422. About 50 per cent. of my coolies abscond. Coolies have worked with me and gone away with \$70 to \$80 at the end of three years, saved out of the wages paid them by me.

1423. I have never known coolies earn so much paddy during the paddy season that they require no more rice from me during the whole year.

1424. I have written down all the remarks I wish to offer.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 2.30 P. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire.

Mr. J. Turner, General Manager of the Penang Sugar Estates Co., gave evidence as follows:—
Mr. J. Turner.
27th November.

1425. I have been in charge since September 1st, 1889, and was not previously in the Colony.

1426. The estates are Caledonia, comprising Victoria, Krian, Byram and Golden Grove (lately abandoned). The estate was abandoned owing chiefly to the unsatisfactory labour supply. The estate has got some of the best sugar land in the Colony. The deficiency of labour is more in the quality than the quantity of the coolies, and in the difficulty of keeping them, owing to the higher wages offered by unscrupulous employers who do not import their own labour.

1427. The estates are all sugar.

1428. I was fifteen years in Demerara and one year in Brazil, always in connection with sugar.

1429. We employ Tamils, free and indentured; Chinese, all free; and indentured Javanese: also a few Malays.

TAMIL INDENTURED LABOUR.

1430. The whole system is bad, the price for labour of all kinds is excessive; both the primary cost and the expense of keeping the men are too high.

1431. Half the people who come over here have never had any experience of agricultural labour.

1432. They are the people who fill up our hospitals.

1433. It is only a few months ago that the Colonial Surgeon, Province Wellesley, showed me a list of forty-one coolies whom he considered permanently unfit for work, and of that number only two had been agriculturalists in India.

1434. I suspect that misrepresentations are made to the coolies in India, but I cannot assert that it is the case.

1435. I am only getting coolies now to keep up the capital already invested. I do not believe that the coolies' dissatisfaction and consequent sickness is in any way due to the fact of higher wages being given outside, but solely because the wrong class of men is brought over here.

1436. Unless the recruiting system is reformed matters cannot be improved.

1437. I get my coolies through ADAMSON MACTAGGART & Co. and GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co. in Negapatam, and BEST & Co. in Madras.

1438. I have offered the Ordinance rates, and we land them on the estate even free of the money advanced in India: also we give them \$1 on arrival here to buy cooking utensils, &c. (for which no deduction is made from pay), and the first month's rice free.

1439. I have not offered higher wages.

1440. I have as many men now as I actually require, but not as many as I should like to see.

1441. I sent a Tyndal to recruit in India, but he failed, through the interference of the recruiters over there.

Mr. J.
Turner.
27th Novem-
ber.

1442. The cost to us of landing coolies is \$20 to \$21, of which we recover nothing; this is exclusive of the \$1 bonus.

1443. Our contract is for three years.

1444. A coolie gets the pay of a free coolie at the end of his three years, however many days he has to make up.

1445. The men are always paid in the presence of a European.

1446. The men can always make any complaint about their pay; they often do it, but are always satisfied ultimately.

1447. I should like to see the payment made weekly, not monthly.

1448. At present the names of the coolies are being taken down by Europeans as far as possible.

1449. The men always receive their pay themselves.

1450. Seven to eight hours is the average day's work.

1451. It is task work, and varies according to the soil and the state of the weather. Very few complaints are made.

1452. The men turn out at 6 A.M., and they can come home when they please, either for the meal at 11 o'clock, or, if they take their rice to the field, when their work is finished, say at 2 o'clock.

1453. The men have every facility for communicating with their friends.

1454. I should like to see a Government Savings Bank established.

1455. I put no limit on the number of women imported. It is far better for themselves that they should have to work: they are far healthier.

1456. There is a place on the estate where the women can leave their children when they go to work.

1457. I can always find suitable work for women up to about 50 per cent.

1458. They come under contract for three years on Ordinance terms.

1459. I think sickness a "reasonable excuse" for a man not working.

1460. I find that the Tamils do not care to work any longer for higher wages; they prefer holidays to pay.

1461. The effect of task work not only makes the men work better, but also it improves the 'morale' of the coolies.

1462. Seven to eight cents a day is the average cost of a coolie's food; this includes rice, fowl or goat (once a week), curry, vegetables, fish, &c. They can always catch fish for themselves. I consider this diet quite sufficient.

1463. I pay \$3.25 per bag (=84 chupaks) of rice this average being taken over five years. Each man gets a chupak a day; it is issued daily to a great portion of the men. It is Bengal rice.

1464. I have seen the cooked rations system in force at Demerara, but it was unsatisfactory in every way.

1465. I am not satisfied with the way the men feed themselves.

1466. There are shops on the estate, but I think the system most unsatisfactory. I have an alternative system in view, which is not yet working.

1467. The men can get as much garden land as they like; I would insist only on their working five days in the week on the estate, if they agree to settle in this way.

1468. The thieving that goes on is a most serious difficulty in this connection. It ought most certainly to be stopped.

Mr. J.
Turner.
27th Novem-
ber.

TAMIL FREE LABOURERS.

1469. These coolies are paid 18 to 20 cents, and I supply them with rice if they wish it. They have the same advantage as the contract men as regards medical attendance, quarters, &c.

1470. There is a resident qualified Doctor on the estate who has the entire charge of the coolies' health; he attends the morning muster at 5.45, looks after the dieting of patients in hospital and the sanitary condition of the dwellings.

1471. I know the men save money, and keep cattle, goats, &c.

1472. The free coolies' hours of work are the same as the contract men's.

1473. Very few men have taken up my offer of grants of land, owing, I believe, to the thieving.

1474. The free coolies' women do not work.

1475. Their regular meal is taken when they come in from work.

JAVANESE.

1476. We have 250 on the estate, got through agents direct from Java, with the permission of the Dutch Government. There was very little difficulty or delay in getting them. They all came about the same time, the last lot about two months ago.

1477. The men get 30 guilders and the women 20 guilders advance paid to them in Java, and afterwards recovered by us. The other expenses amount to about \$20, none of which we recover. The men are landed free except for the advance.

1478. The men do not work on Sundays and are not paid for that day.

1479. The contract is for three years, and they get a free return passage at the end of their time.

1480. The women get twelve cents a day.

1481. The work is all task work, and we would gladly pay the men for extra work, but they would not do it. They are very lazy, and the women work better than the men.

1482. They enjoy the same privileges as other coolies.

1483. They buy their rice from the estates at the usual rate, but they do not feed themselves well.

1484. They prefer to have Bengal rice.

1485. They are not, in many cases, agricultural labourers; there is not much to choose between the Javanese and the Tamil labourer—the latter is perhaps the best.

1486. I belong to the Planters' Association in Province Wellesley.

1487. I have no experience of India or China.

1488. In British Guiana planters were formerly often short of labour, but lately there has been no scarcity. The men are settled there, and the rising race are a fine set of men.

1489. The class of men imported there is superior to those we get here. I attribute this to the better system of recruiting.

1490. The planters prefer Calcutta men. I prefer them myself, they are more reliable.

Mr. J.
Turner.
27th Novem-
ber.

1491. The 5/ a week rule was never kept to, coolies often got more and often less than that sum. A man there can live on 3/ a week.

1492. The desertions there were inconsiderable compared with the amount of desertion going on here.

1493. By a law recently passed in British Guiana the Government bears the whole cost of the importation of non-Asiatics, including cost of recruiting, &c.

1494. As regards Asiatic Immigration there the whole system, including recruiting, passage, medical attendance, &c. is worked through Government and paid for as follows:—One-third of the entire cost is paid by the employer receiving the coolies, and payment is distributed over five years with interest at 6 per cent. One-third is raised from a land tax. The remaining third is paid from the general revenue of the Colony. There is no regular inspection of free coolies there, though the houses are inspected.

1495. I think the inspection of the Tamil coolies very necessary, and the men themselves have no objection.

1496. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I know no details about the system of payment for recruited coolies, but I feel sure the amount is excessive.

1497. I would be willing now to take 1,000 coolies within six months at 12, 14 and 16 cents if I got them at a less initial cost and with reasonable aid from Government, such as free medical attendance, and provided I had some guarantee against the men being attracted away by outside inducements.

1498. In the present unsatisfactory state of labour I cannot afford to do this.

1499. I do not think the length of the contract term is any cause of worry to a genuine agricultural labourer who knows what he has come here to do.

1500. I have had the advantages which are offered on my estates advertised in India and have found no difficulty in getting all the coolies I want, in fact, more than I want.

1501. Sugar planters could never think of getting men on a one-year contract at 20 cents: it would be ruin.

1502. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—I do consider that making the coolie a present of his advances on arrival is equivalent to giving higher wages. It certainly makes him more contented if no deductions are made from his pay.

1503. There are certain classes of extra work which the Tamil coolie can be induced to do to some extent.

1504. I think it would be an advantage to give no Sunday work or Sunday pay.

1505. There should be no Sunday work at all.

1506. The cost of importation of a Netherlands India coolie to the Demerara planter is, I think, \$50. The balance comes from the land tax and from general revenue.

1507. *By Mr. Brown:*—There are certain Government works going on in British Guiana, but not to such an extent as here.

1508. The coolie labour in Demerara only represents one half of the labour employed there.

1509. We never experienced any serious difficulty there in connection with task work.

1510. It was customary there to give discharge certificates.

1511. I think the system should be universal.

1512. I think tickets should be always given to coolies who leave the estates temporarily: it is invariably done in Demerara.

The meeting adjourned at 4.30 p. m.

R. P. G.

EIGHTEENTH MEETING

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG,
ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH, 1890, AT 11 A. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire.

Mr. F. A. Swettenham, British Resident, Perak, was examined and stated as follows:—

Mr. F. A.
Swettenham.
28th Novem-
ber.

1513. I have been twenty years in the Straits.

1514. I speak Malay and a little Chinese; no Tamil. My experience of agricultural labour was gained from six months' residence as Magistrate in Province Wellesley, and eight years as British Resident in Selangor and Perak.

1515. I do not think the present minimum rate of wages too low; it compares badly with the wages of the free Tamil labourer; it is about half. I should say 25 to 30 cents was the average wage for free labour in the Native States: this is for the harder class of labour.

1516. I think the contract coolie inferior to the free man: it is a case of the survival of the fittest.

1517. If you compare all the conditions existing between the two classes of coolie, I think the wages are almost equal, from the employer's point of view.

1518. From the coolie's point of view the difference is considerable, because the free man can live as he likes, and the indentured man takes no account of hospital and other expenses incurred on his behalf.

1519. I think that in the Native States the minimum rate of wages is not adhered to. In Perak they are paid considerably more, except on the Gula estate, where the majority of coolies are paid in accordance with the minimum rates permitted by law.

1520. I think 14 and 16 cents a fair wage, but it should be increased in the third year.

1521. The free coolie is paid at too high a rate; twenty-five cents should be the maximum; a fair labourer should live well and save money on this.

1522. I attribute the high rate of wages paid to the competition which exists.

1523. I do not think that sugar cultivation should be allowed to die out; it succeeded formerly, and only threatens to fail now owing to the defects in the labour supply. The Government should encourage all kinds of agricultural labour without undue partiality to any one class of cultivation.

1524. Persons willing to invest money in the Native States should be encouraged. We are holding out inducements now in the way of grants of land on easy terms, and we have spent large sums on roads to open up the country, but this will not bring in capital for agriculture unless the labour supply is improved.

1525. We have several times advanced money to agriculturalists in this way, and I think it quite legitimate. I mean by this that it is sometimes expedient, but by no means the duty of Government to do so: it is the duty of Government, in my opinion, to do all it can to provide a reasonable labour supply.

1526. The Government have employed Statute Indian Immigrants on two estates in Perak. They succeeded in producing what they wanted, but the experi-

Mr. F. A. Swettenham. 28th November. ment was not a financial success. We paid the men 42 cents a day for some time.

1527. The expenditure on this scheme was, roughly, \$100,000, and the return from the estates perhaps \$10,000.

1528. One of these estates was opened by a private individual, who lost heavily on it; the Sultan then took it over and also lost; the Government then took it up, but failed likewise, and then gave it up to Sir GRAEME ELPHINSTONE.

1529. I argue from this that labour was too expensive at that time for any private individual to stand the cost.

1530. The Government also employed Statute Immigrants as road-coolies in Selangor in 1887. I never saw such a feeble, sickly set of men and women in my life.

1531. The Assistant Indian Immigration Agent remonstrated with the agents in India who sent the men, and was told practically that the class of coolie which was not considered good enough for the Colony was believed to be good enough for the Native States.

1532. These men worked badly, were always deserting, and proved so sickly and incapable that when only about 150 were left, we attempted to transfer them to the private estates in Selangor; some went, but the others, about 95 in number, refused; they all absconded the same night and were never recovered. About 180 came over originally.

1533. Thirty cents is the Government wage to free coolies. The men get only their "lines" free in addition to their wages.

1534. I think the system of payment followed by the contractors undoubtedly draws the agricultural labourers off the estates.

1535. I consider the death-rate of coolies in Perak last year very low; I am sure the death-rate for the whole State is not so low as that for Statute Immigrants.

1536. On the suggestion of Sir E. Buck the Government voted \$10,000 for the importation of coolies from the North-West Provinces, but the project was abandoned owing to the expense and the inability to get the class of men required.

[Mr. SWETTENHAM undertook to furnish the Commission with details of the correspondence on the subject.]

1537. I think the Government should import free Tamil labourers, and make no restrictions, only fixing a standard rate of wages. If the effect was to reduce the present rate of wages to a reasonable figure it might then be stopped.

1538. Any scheme of colonization should be directly controlled by Government. The scheme is perfectly feasible, and would pay the Government to carry out.

1539. There are, I think, about 5 to 6,000 Tamil coolies now in Perak.

1540. The defects of our present labour supply are the scarcity of numbers, the bad physique of the men (which is now improving), and the excessive initial cost.

1541. The coolies imported by Perak in 1885 cost Rs. 32 each, but the expenses of the officer who went for them were heavy.

1542. The Perak Government pays \$11,000 yearly subsidy to the Negapatam line of steamers.

1543. I cannot say what return the Government gets for this expenditure beyond the extra mail service every fortnight, as I do not find that the system attracts any more coolies over, and I think the experiment has been tried sufficiently long to shew whether it is ever likely to do so.

1544. By a return I have had prepared I find that each Statute Indian Immigrant introduced into Selangor during the first six months of this year has cost that Government \$250.

1545. Selangor contributes \$7,000 a year out of the total of \$30,000 paid as subsidy.

1546. Perak pays \$11,000 a year, and each Statute Immigrant this year has cost \$27. Mr. F. A. Swettenham. 28th November.

1547. As the number of Statute Immigrants appears to be falling off, the cost per head is increasing and has grown as follows:—

In the Colony from \$2.65 in 1887 to \$8.06 in 1890.

„ Perak „	\$7.87	„	\$27	„
„ Selangor „	\$6.16	„	\$250	„

Under these circumstances I would rather see the money spent on passages even for perfectly free immigrants.

1548. The Colonial Government takes fees for contracts to work in Perak, in my opinion a most unjustifiable proceeding.

1549. Eight to eleven cents a day is the average cost of living to an unindentured coolie; it varies on the different estates.

1550. I do not think it possible to dispense with the contract system: I do not regard it as an evil.

1551. There are no Tamil coolies now engaged in mining: they have been tried but were a failure.

1552. I have every reason for believing that the Tamil coolies are well treated on the estates.

1553. I think inspection very necessary for the contract coolie, but the free man is well able to take care of himself: sanitary inspection is all that he requires.

1554. I attribute the sickness of the Tamil coolies to their bad physical state on arrival, to the unwholesome stuff they insist upon eating, and to the fact of their being unused to and unprepared for the condition of their work here; not to the length of their contracts or the rate of wages.

MALAYS.

1555. Malays are very useful labourers, but unreliable in attendance.

JAVANESE.

1556. The Selangor Government introduced about two hundred of these labourers from Singapore in 1886 or 1887, for road-making, but they were a failure; most of them absconded, and they were all very bad characters.

1557. They are easy to deal with, but must be allowed to work in their own way. Their importation should be encouraged.

1558. *By Mr. Vermont:*—I do not admit that the Perak labourers are taken from Province Wellesley or elsewhere; the Perak planters import their own labourers. I do not think that more Tamils run away from Province Wellesley to Perak than from Perak to Province Wellesley. Two thousand five hundred Statute Immigrants have been introduced into Perak in only the last three years.

1559. I have never heard of Tamil coolies being employed on mining work in Perak.

1560. I think the Javanese very good agriculturalists.

1561. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—If a Statute coolie makes a contract on those terms, I think he should receive a lower rate of wages in his third year than the free coolie. I believe the Tamil coolies imported by the Selangor Government were under the charge of a European officer. I know a riot occurred, but no details of it.

1562. I do not see any reason why the Ceylon system should be adopted.

1563. I think that if we can get coolies to come here on contract at very low wages we could also get them to come here on no contract at all, with better wages but without advances.

Mr. F. A. Swettenham. 28th November.

1564. The plan is certainly worth trying.

1565. I am not in favour of introducing the ticket system for Tamils in the Colony; I have had experience of the difficulties connected with it.

1566. I believe the inducements we could offer in Perak to non-contract imported coolies are sufficient to keep the men in the State; I would like to see the money spent on subsidising the steamers spent on passages; at present we get no return for the subsidy.

1567. *By Mr. Turner:*—Free coolies are not employed in agriculture because agriculture could not afford it. The competition which has caused the present high rate of wages comes from the Government and the Government contractors.

1568. If the labour supply were assured, I am convinced there would be no difficulty in opening up the country by cultivation, and that I consider of the highest importance.

1569. The Government have offered to advance money on good security to Chinese employers for introducing fresh Chinese labour into the country. I think it might do the same in the case of Tamils.

1570. I do not regard land given by the Government as good security.

1571. I have had no complaint from coolies who in their own country were agricultural labourers.

1572. *By Mr. Brown:*—Our Public Works are done by Chinese labour: the road-making by Tamils.

1573. I think there is just ground of complaint against the Government in connection with their present system of procuring labour.

1574. Both the Tamil colonies started in Perak have proved successful. The men are merely small cultivators of gardens and paddy on their own account. Such schemes will not practically improve the labour supply for many years, whereas the plan I propose will do so at once.

1575. The experiment has already been tried of establishing a Javanese colony, and it has been a success. The great difficulty is the risk; large sums must be advanced to the headman, and there is practically no security for this. The cost of importation is also large, and there is no guarantee of the men remaining in the Straits longer than they choose.

1576. A Tamil colony under the management of an experienced man would have much better chances of success as regards permanence than a Javanese colony.

1577. The death-rate of all Tamil Immigrants in the State in 1889 was about 10 per cent.

1578. I think some radical change should be made in the recruiting system. I am prepared to say later in what direction.

Mr. E. A. B. Brown. 28th November.

Mr. E. A. B. Brown, Manager of Prye Estate, stated as follows:—

1579. I have been Manager on this estate nine years, and over eleven years on the estate altogether. I am occupied solely with sugar cultivation.

1580. I speak only Malay.

1581. I employ both classes of Chinese and Tamil labour and a few Malays, but no Javanese.

1582. I think both the quality and quantity of the labour unsatisfactory; the cost of importation is too high.

1583. I think the wrong class of men are brought over.

1584. The men's health this year has much improved; it is now as good as can be expected. It is much better now than it was ten years ago.

1585. I have had constant complaints of the misrepresentations made to the men in India. Mr. E. A. B. Brown. 28th November.

1586. I have not had enough coolies this year, though I have offered the same terms as Mr. TURNER, except the one month's rice gratis.

1587. I have asked for 450 this year, and have only got 200 odd.

1588. I sent over Tyndals to recruit in India formerly, but they failed; I think I should succeed better now, with the help of the Government depôt.

1589. I pay my contract coolies at the Ordinance rate.

1590. Payment is made once a month, about the 15th, by myself or one of my European Assistants.

1591. All my coolies are employed on task work, as a rule.

1592. The free coolies are now employed on contract work in the fields. They do not care for it much, but I think they will take to it more when accustomed to it.

1593. The task is a fixed task, never increased, but sometimes lightened in accordance with the weather and condition of the soil.

1594. I think a basis of task work should be introduced into the contract.

1595. There is no savings bank arrangement on my estate.

1596. There are postal facilities on the estate for the coolies.

1597. I put no restriction on the number of women who come over. I prefer to have them in the lines, and that they should not work; the more women there are, the better.

1598. They come under contract and I pay their passages.

1599. If a woman does not work her husband must pay \$1 a month for her to repay my expenses in connection with her importation.

1600. A good many women purchase their freedom, but not many men. I would never charge more than \$35.

1601. Many coolies do not care about earning more than a certain amount, and if they get higher wages they only work less hours.

1602. I pay my coolies double wages for Sunday work. If a man works seven days a week, he is paid for eight.

1603. I supply Bengal rice. A coolie can live well on 8 cents a day.

1604. I give cooked rations to weakly coolies and find it satisfactory, as the weakest men are always those who won't cook their food sufficiently for themselves. They are generally the laziest workers.

1605. I charge 8 cents a day for cooked rations—just what it costs me.

1606. The hours of meals are 10 A. M. and 4.30 P. M. for my hospital.

1607. I issue the rice monthly, and it is optional for the free coolie to buy it from me or not.

1608. I supervise the shops on the estate regularly, and keep a check on the charges made.

TAMIL FREE LABOUR.

1609. Most of my free coolies are old coolies re-engaged. The supply is irregular.

1610. The contract is verbal and for one month, and the pay, if a man works twenty-six days a month or more is 20 cents a day, otherwise it is 16 cents a day.

Mr. E. A. B. Brown. 28th November. 1611. The free man has just the same advantages as the Statute coolie if he desires them.

1612. The free men working on contract are paid for the work they do; extra pay for extra work if they care to earn it.

1613. I think Government inspection, within limits, is an advantage.

1614. I give my coolies garden land and a cow-house free.

1615. This plan certainly assists in inducing the people to stay. I have not the least objection to the free women working, but not many apply for it.

1616. I employ Malays in building work; they are fairly satisfactory.

1617. I have had a school on the estate for the last fourteen to fifteen years. The education is not compulsory.

1618. I am Secretary to the Province Wellesley Planters' Association. It was instituted some nine years ago to further the interests of planters, and defrays the expenses of any test case in that connection. I cannot say that it has been found of any practical use so far.

1619. I think some system on the lines of Mr. MacGREGOR's scheme absolutely necessary to the welfare of the Colony. I think his scheme a good one. I would supplement it by enabling recruiters from here to go to India and engage coolies for the Straits according to the system embodied in this form of ticket. [Handed in.]

1620. *By Mr. Vermont*:—I think the Government inspection of free coolies would be an advantage to both coolie and employer.

1621. *By Mr. Turner*:—The whole of the Prye estate is capable of sugar cultivation, and with a sufficient labour supply the cultivation would probably be doubled.

1622. About twenty or thirty of my coolies have cattle, bought from their earnings.

The meeting adjourned at 2 P. M.

R. P. G.

NINETEENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 2ND, AT 2.30 P. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

The Hon'ble A. M. Skinner. 2nd December. *The Hon'ble A. M. Skinner*, Resident Councillor, Penang, was examined, and stated as follows:—

1623. I do not consider that we now obtain adequate advantages for the \$30,000 subsidy paid for the steamers from Negapatam.

1624. I should like this sum to include postage facilities, but I think the arrangement a very beneficial one as regards immigration generally.

1625. I do not consider the present Ordinance satisfactory; some Indian authorities, including Sir E. Buck and Col. Fischer, considered it unnecessary when it was first passed.

1626. I think the Labour Contracts Ordinance would be sufficient now, except

that the term of contract might be allowed for as much as two years instead of one. There should also be an Ordinance to deal with labour generally.

The Hon'ble A. M. Skinner. 2nd December.

1627. Registration of contracts is certainly necessary, either in India or here.

1628. I consider that recruiting can well be in the hands of the Government, and the recruiters Government officials.

1629. The Government should cover any losses on rejected coolies by a charge in the way of fees.

1630. I have no reason at all for thinking that the coolies are now ill-treated on any of the estates.

1631. I do not think it desirable that the Indian Immigration Agent should supervise the payment of free coolies.

1632. I think it time to mould our system on similar lines to those in force in Ceylon and Burma.

1633. One Ordinance could well apply to all nationalities of estate coolies.

1634. I think a system of discharge ticket is quite workable in the Straits, though there would be a danger of its falling into disuse.

1635. In my opinion Penang should be an emporium of labour as of trade; and with that idea in view I should not consider crimping an undesirable thing.

[Mr. SKINNER undertook to furnish the Commission with a return of the estate coolie prisoners at present in gaol in Penang.]

1636. *By Mr. Vermont*:—In saying that I do not consider the so-called "crimping" restrictions desirable I am referring to the absolute exclusion of all Indians of the labourer class from Kedah, Mykah, Sumatra, &c. I think there is no need for any officer to possess such arbitrary powers in any British Colony as are thrown on the Indian Immigration Agent.

1637. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I do not consider that the \$30,000 paid annually to the line of steamers can in any way be called a postal subsidy.

1638. I should like to see the passages of all intending immigrants employed on any class of agricultural labour paid at the cheap rate. I consider it the duty of Government to assist in procuring an adequate labour supply.

1639. I think nearly all details in the terms of contracts might very well be left to the employer and the coolie themselves.

1640. I think the discharge ticket system would in practice encounter very great difficulties in this Colony.

1641. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—I see no advantage in restrictions being placed in the way of coolie emigration from here to Sumatra. I consider that the Colony would benefit by an increased stream of emigration which would then pass through Penang, and would more than recoup itself for any losses it might incur by coolies going over at first.

1642. *By Mr. Brown*:—I think the Government has done much hitherto as regards immigration in subsidising the steamers: I believe this has added to the labour supply.

1643. I think it would be just for Government to import its own labour supply, unless it undertook the management of the entire recruiting system.

1644. I think that no assistance can be expected from the Chinese Government as regards emigration from China.

Captain Menzell. 2nd December. Captain Menzell, Manager of Messrs. HUTTENBACH LIEBERT & Co.'s Shipping business in Penang, stated as follows:—

1645. I was formerly Captain of the *Meanatchy* (S.), and of several other steamers, before the Government gave the subsidy.

1646. In 1885-1886, I considered the class of Immigrants very good. I observed this mostly while I was in the *Castle Eden* (S.)

1647. I have been Superintendent of the Negapatam Line of Steamers since 1st July, 1886.

1648. I have taken some interest in watching the recruiting. I resided for four months in GANAPATHY PILLAY & Co.'s Office towards the end of 1886, on behalf of my Company's business.

[The witness here handed in a statement of remarks on what he considers imperfections of the recruiting system in India as far as the Straits Emigration is concerned, and a scheme for its improvement based on his own observations.]

1649. Sir E. BUCK travelled with me when he came over here, and had every opportunity of making enquiries among the coolies on board, which he utilized fully.

1650. It is my firm opinion that a really earnest and experienced officer would succeed in remedying all complaints at present existing in the system, if the management of the entire recruiting business were placed in his hands.

1651. I consider the medical examination in India far too strict.

1652. By Mr. Turner:—Most of the coolies from the Straits to India were in good condition and well clothed, but when coming over here I have known many cases where they came on board without even the amount of clothing required by decency.

Dr. J. H. McClosky. 2nd December. Dr. J. H. McClosky, Colonial Surgeon, Province Wellesley, stated as follows:—

1653. I have been in Province Wellesley twelve years, and talk Tamil. I was for four years in Madras and about one and a half years in Netherlands India.

1654. My duties are only to inspect the hospitals.

1655. The non-agriculturalists are the most sickly class of coolie—weavers, toddy-drawers, &c. They are unprepared for the work they are expected to do, and fall sick in consequence.

1656. I think the estates quite healthy, and ascribe the high mortality entirely to the cause mentioned above.

1657. The water supply on the estates is good.

1658. The death-rate rose high in 1882 owing to the drought.

[Dr. McClosky undertook to furnish the Commission with a statement of the space prescribed by law for each bed in hospital.]

1659. The estate managers are always ready to make any alterations recommended by me.

1660. I think the newly arrived coolie can be trusted to feed himself properly.

1661. Good working men never come into hospital.

1662. I do not think that much importance, from a medical point of view, attaches to the hours of meals.

1663. The men who die of debility are those who come over quite unfitted for the work. Their digestive and nervous systems get disordered, and they die off.

1664. The Chinese are, as a rule, men of poor physique, but I only come into contact with them casually.

1665. By Mr. Swettenham:—I think that if a man is not an agricultural

labourer in his own country it does not matter how good his physique or how thoroughly his work has been explained to him he is still likely to become disgusted and take permanently to the hospital. An agricultural labourer of very poor physique will do better.

1666. By Mr. MacGregor:—I have heard that some coolies have eaten raw rice and made themselves ill in consequence.

1667. I have known men come into hospital and die there of despair.

1668. By Mr. Brown:—I think the recruiting system in India a rotten one, from my own observations there.

1669. Men used to be substituted there after the medical inspection, but that is impossible now.

1670. By Mr. Vermont:—The same cases of debility and despair occurred among the native Indian troops formerly stationed in Penang as among the coolies now.

The meeting adjourned at 4.45 p.m.

R. P. G.

TWENTIETH MEETING.
HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 3RD, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (Secretary).

Mr. J. K. Birch, Senior Magistrate, Penang, gave evidence as follows:—

Mr. J. K. Birch. 3rd December.

1671. I was Magistrate for six years in Province Wellesley, from 1882 to 1888, and was brought largely into contact with the estates there.

1672. My experience is only such as I gained on the Bench.

1673. I think the Tamil coolies are remarkably well treated on the estates.

1674. Nearly all the cases which came before me were brought by the employer against the coolie; the coolies scarcely ever bring complaints against the planters. 99 per cent. of the cases were for neglect of work, or other breach of contract.

1675. The general rule is for cases to be sent up on the day of trial.

1676. Police officers are forbidden to receive such prisoners except on the day of trial.

1677. The Ordinance is satisfactory, in my opinion, as such and as it is worked at present. But I think that any Ordinance is unnecessary for either coolie or employer.

1678. Complaints of the pay being too low are very rare.

1679. Complaints are generally against a Tyndal for not crediting the coolie with his full amount of work, and for ill-treatment generally.

1680. The coolies are very inconsistent in their statements.

1681. Deserters very commonly give the excuse of bad treatment in hospital, but my own experience does not bear the statement out at all.

Mr. J. K.
Birch. 3rd
December.

1682. Many coolies certainly dislike going to hospital.

1683. The men also often say that the work given them to do is not what they expected, or are accustomed to, but they will add as often as not that they had been told to say they were agricultural labourers by the recruiting agents in India, when it was not the case.

1684. Chinese are usually charged before me with desertion.

1685. The universal excuse given is that of ill-treatment by their Tyndals.

1686. Certain classes of coolies, mostly those employed in shops, complain of being put to work to which they are unaccustomed or for which they have no inclination, and which they did not think they would have to do.

1687. I think Government inspection is desirable on estates where Chinese coolies are employed, but no further Government control is required beyond that and the present system.

1688. *By Mr. Vermont:*—As long as the present contract system continues some Government control in the shape of an Ordinance is necessary.

1689. For the present I think the present Ordinance gives the employer powers to harass his coolies if he chooses to do so, in the way of bringing them up before the Magistrate on every trivial occasion. It is, however, never done, and, therefore, I consider the present Ordinance satisfactory.

1690. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—Complaints of non-payment of the proper wages are very few. Tamils never complain to me that their wages are insufficient to procure them proper food.

1691. I think a more frequent and thorough inspection of the Chinese coolie lines desirable.

1692. The Chinese complain far more seldom than the Tamils.

1693. *By Mr. Turner:*—The Tamil coolie's nature is such that he will not do more than a certain amount of work, and no amount of prosecution will make him.

1694. I do not think they are much influenced by the prospect of imprisonment one way or the other.

1695. *By Mr. Brown:*—A good number of cases have been brought up by the Indian Immigration Agent on behalf of the coolies. They were almost always against Tyndals or time-keepers, and the majority were discharged.

1696. No case has come to my knowledge of a coolie wishing to make a well-founded complaint and not being able to do so.

1697. The majority of complaints brought forward by coolies are made on the occasions when they are being prosecuted themselves by their employers.

Mr. D. Logan.
3rd Decem-
ber.

Mr. D. Logan, Solicitor-General, Penang, gave evidence as follows:—

1698. I am the owner of about 12,000 acres of paddy and kampong land in Province Wellesley, and 2,000 acres in Penang of fruit cultivation. I have owned this land about 20 years.

1699. I employ principally free Tamil labour, and some free Chinese.

1700. I have employed no Tamil indentured labour since 1878. I gave it up chiefly because I had no reliable manager, and through fear of the confusion likely to be caused by the Indian Immigration Agent's visits in my absence.

1701. I employ Chinese because I cannot get enough of Tamils; I prefer the latter.

1702. I pay them \$5 a month for six and a half days' work a week.

1703. I provide them with attaps for houses, garden ground, &c. A large pro-
portion of my Province Tamils were born on the estate. Mr. D.
Logan. 3rd
December.

1704. Every man, married or not, has a house to himself and all are practically paid alike.

1705. I have about sixty Tamils in my employ in the Province.

1706. I think Government inspection not only unnecessary but objectionable.

1707. A discharge ticket system, from a general point of view, is undesirable and unworkable. It is an interference with the coolies' liberty.

1708. The men in my employ have a full use of their land while they are with me and I do not think a title to the land after a certain time would attract any more men to the estate; they would only sell the land.

1709. I am not in favour of women working on the estates, but I would not hinder them doing so if it was their own wish.

1710. A coolie ought to live well on \$2.25 a month; this should include all necessary food and luxuries as well, such as vegetables, fresh fish, meat three times a week, toddy, &c.

1711. I ascribe the scarcity of labour largely to the great demand in Sumatra.

1712. I believe the Tamils are attracted elsewhere by the higher wages offered.

1713. I can only suggest the increase of facilities for coming over, such as offering free passages.

1714. I have about 100 Chinese at Bertam, and 30 in Penang in my employ.

1715. I find the Klings more satisfactory in their work.

1716. The Chinese get 21 cents a day and a house where they all live together; but I do not send them to hospital free. If a man is sick through his own fault, I send him to the Pauper Hospital, and stop the charges out of his pay.

1717. The men work irregularly, and are paid by the day's work.

1718. They are employed on task work, from 6 to 11 and from 1 to 6 o'clock, but the work is usually finished before the limit of time specified.

1719. I cannot get as many Chinese as I would like. No women come with the Chinese, but I have only taken to employing Chinese labour during the last two or three years.

1720. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I would not interfere with the coolie's going to Deli, if the Indian Government agreed to it.

1721. I do not believe a Tamil would colonize and settle if the Government gave him land.

1722. I do not know how many coolies go to the Native States in a year.

1723. I did not know that the Negapatam steamers were at present coming over half empty in spite of the attractions offered by Sumatra and the Native States.

1724. I think the reason why coolies do not come over in large numbers is the interference of the Government Agent on the Indian coast.

1725. I think any man should be passed, no matter what his caste may be, who is not physically unfit for work.

1726. *By Mr. Turner:*—I do not think the coolie in Sumatra gets nearly as much value for his money as he does here, notwithstanding the higher rate of wages there.

1727. I think \$4 a month is quite sufficient for a man to support a wife upon.

Mr. D.
Logan, 3rd
December.

1728. *By Mr. Brown:*—I consider the line of steamers from Negapatam a great advantage to the Colony.

1729. The Government and Municipality should both import their own labour in my opinion.

1730. I think that the effect of free emigration to Sumatra would be to increase ultimately the labour supply of the Straits.

1731. If the present Ordinance had not been passed I should have continued to import Tamil labour, though I do not think there is anything in it to frighten the coolies away from here.

1732. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I would prefer to see a shorter term of contract than three years.

1733. I do not think 12 cents for the first six months too low, but the wages should be raised to 14 cents for the rest of the year, and 15 cents for the second year. I would make the term of contract two years instead of three.

1734. From the coolies' point of view I think a man should be free as soon as he has paid off all his advances, but it is not so from the planters' point of view; the planters' risks are too great.

1735. If Government were to pay a part of the advances made on account of the coolie, as it ought to do, then the coolie should be free on paying off his advances.

Mr. F. W.
Kelly, 3rd
December.

Mr. F. W. KELLY, Superintendent of Revenue Survey, Straits Settlements, stated, in regard to a previous communication made to the Commissioners:—

1736. Bhuians are cultivators of paddy and wheat in their own country (Hazaribagh, in North Bengal).

1737. There would be no difficulty in getting large numbers at \$7 a month: they would require advances.

1738. They are not a class of men who would settle down here with their families.

1739. The Bhuians are low-caste people, with few or no prejudices.

1740. *By Mr. Turner:*—There would be no difficulty in recruiting a few as an experiment, and no material increase in the cost.

The meeting adjourned at 1 P. M.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 2.30 P. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. R. Ray,
3rd Decem-
ber.

Mr. R. Ray, Assistant Manager of Prye Sugar Estate, stated:—

1741. I have been Manager of Golden Grove Estate, Province Wellesley, for four years, and connected with sugar estates for twelve years.

1742. Contract coolies often leave the estates to work outside; they make more money outside.

1743. The rate of wages on the estates is sufficient for a coolie to live on; Mr. R. Ray. some save money besides. 3rd Decem-ber.

1744. Free coolies often keep cattle, &c., after the expiry of their contract.

1745. The average number of days on which coolies work per month is from 20 to 25.

1746. I think coolies should work half the day on Sundays.

1747. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—Free coolies are paid 16 cents on the estate, on an average.

1748. *By the President:*—Indentured coolies work outside in their spare hours during the paddy harvest, and on miscellaneous work. An instance of this occurred in Golden Grove six months ago.

1749. When caught we charge such men before the Police with being absent from work; they are fined from 20 to 50 cents.

1750. *By Mr. Brown:*—The absentees are most numerous during the paddy season.

1751. *By the President:*—Any absence from work on the part of a man who complains of sickness must be made up at the end of his contract, unless he is provided with a medical certificate.

1752. *By Mr. Turner:*—The paddy workers get 25 to 30 cents a day according to the work done; they are paid in paddy, which they usually sell.

The meeting adjourned at 3.15 P. M.

R. P. G.

TWENTY-FIRST MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 4TH, 1890, AT 11 A. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Lim Leng Cheak stated in examination (Mr. SWETTENHAM interpreting):—

Lim Leng
Cheak, 4th
December.

1753. I am an estate owner. I have 2,000 acres under tapioca cultivation at Kulim. I employ Tamils, Chinese, Javanese and Patanis, about 1,000 altogether, all free men.

1754. I get my Tamils at Kulim itself, when they apply.

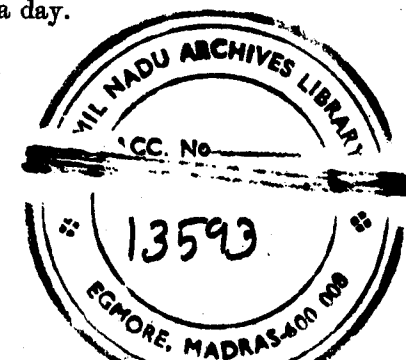
1755. I take only the best coolies.

1756. They come and go; they usually go away for a time after pay day, for different estates.

1757. I pay them monthly, through the Tyndal, a Chinaman.

1758. I make advances from time to time in goods from the shop, which is kept by one of my own men, and stop the value of the goods from the coolies' wages at the end of the month.

1759. I pay the Klings 20 cents a day.



Lim Leng Cheak. 4th December.

1760. I pay them Sundays also, if they work six days a week. I give them houses free. I pay them for their New Year's Day holiday.

1761. I give sick coolies medicine; there is a hospital there, belonging to the Kedah Government, in charge of a native apothecary; it is about one and a half miles from the estate.

1762. I pay the men's expenses while in the hospital, and once I sent a man to the Penang hospital.

1763. When necessary I also pay transport expenses.

1764. Women and children work too; women get 11 cents for field work, and 15 cents in the cooking houses. Children get 8 to 10 cents.

1765. The women work eight to nine hours; sometimes they work from morning till night, and then I pay them one and a half days' wages.

1766. Nine hours a day is the field work for a woman—from 6 to 10.30 A. M. and from 1 to 5.30 P. M.

1767. Some of my coolies eat before going out, and some have their food sent out to them in the fields.

1768. Sometimes Tamils stay as long as two years with me.

1769. I employ no recruiters: my own coolies find men for me when I want them. Plenty can always be found.

1770. I am the only employer in the neighbourhood.

1771. The average number of working days is twenty per month.

1772. I sell the rice at 15½ to 16 cents a gantang; my gantang is rather smaller than the Government measure.

1773. I pay 5 cents per bag for transport as far as Bukit Mertajam, and bring it on from there in my own empty tapioca carts. My cart goes down one day with tapioca and comes back next day with four bags of rice: the cart costs me 60 cents a day. I sell the rice at 20 cents a bag more than its price in Penang.

1774. The ordinary market price of rice at Kulim is 40 per cent. higher than what I charge my coolies.

1775. I always give the coolies Bengal rice.

1776. I do not look to see whether my coolies have certificates, nor do I know of any law against my employing Tamils in Kedah.

CHINESE.

1777. I employ over 200 Te-chius, 20 to 30 Hailams, and 20 to 30 Hok-kiens.

1778. I prefer Te-chius; they work best.

1779. Sometimes I can get enough, sometimes not.

1780. I have enough at present.

1781. When coolies have been paid they go away and tell others, and they come and replace them. I never recruit.

1782. I make no contracts, because contract coolies run away with their advances.

1783. I pay them on the first day of the Chinese moon.

1784. If I took men on contract, I should pay them less wages, but I prefer not to make contracts.

1785. I pay \$5 to \$6 a month, not more, but I supply the food gratis.

Lim Leng Cheak. 4th December.

1786. The food costs me about \$2 per head, including rice. Part of this sum I give them in rice and oil, and occasionally fish, and the rest I give them in money.

1787. I pay wages twice a month, according to the work done, but I always give the food whether a man works or not.

1788. The Tamils find their own food.

1789. The hours of work for Chinese are the same as for Tamils.

1790. They work either at task work or by the hour.

1791. A man can earn more by task work, if he likes to do more than his task.

1792. They generally prefer task work. About half the men do extra work to earn more money, the remainder prefer to go home when they have finished a day's task.

1793. They get one or two days' holiday at the New Year; no other holidays.

1794. I give no presents because my estate is not paying.

1795. None of the men have wives, I suppose because they cannot afford to keep them.

1796. Many of the small cultivators are married, and better off; they sell me their tapioca.

1797. They are mostly men who have saved money on my estate and settled down there.

1798. I make advances to such men when they work on my land.

1799. Te-chiu women never come now: Cantonese and Macao women do.

1800. I think Te-chiu women would come, but the Chinese Government would not allow them.

1801. It would be a very good thing if they did come.

1802. I have never imported any Chinese.

1803. I have got some from the Penang depôt under contract.

1804. On a large estate it is better to have men under contract, especially where there is machinery; otherwise they may run off at any moment.

JAVANESE.

1805. I employ over one hundred.

1806. They come to me and apply for work.

1807. They are all free.

1808. I pay them \$7 to \$8 a month, and give no food.

1809. They are fairly satisfactory.

1810. I must keep several nationalities on my estate, so that if some strike I can fall back on the others.

1811. They work nine hours a day, at miscellaneous out-door work.

1812. A few have wives.

1813. Teh women do not work.

PATANIS.

Lam Leng
Cheak. 4th
December.

1814. I think the labour supply too small.
1815. The Javanese are rather lazy and irregular in their work.
1816. I work them under a Javanese and a Chinese Mandor. A Javanese Mandor alone would not make them work.
1817. I pay all my coolies myself.
1818. There is no special work for each nationality, except that in the mill only Klings are used.
1819. I employ over 100.
1820. They were looking for jungle produce in my neighbourhood, and seeing Javanese coming in to work they followed their example.
1821. They work better than Javanese, but get the same wages.
1822. More are always coming in; only 4 or 5 came at first.
1823. They none of them remain longer than four or five months.
1824. They have very few women.
1825. They have their own fields and houses and wives, but just come here to pick up a little money.
1826. I would like to have my estate inspected.
1827. I would prefer to have Statute Immigrants; they are cheaper.
1828. The present rate of wages is higher than I can afford to pay.
1829. I pay Malays advances, and take paddy from them as a set off.
1830. Most of my Tamils return to India, very few stay.
1831. The Raja of Edie is going to send down 1,000 Achinese for pepper planting at Kwala Bordoh.
1832. My coolies are very healthy; the water is very good.
1833. I keep no account of the deaths that occur. There is very little sickness among my men.
- Mr. P. Stevens gave evidence as follows:—
1834. I am Manager of Glugor Estate, which includes Sungei Nibong.
1835. The estate work consists of coco-nut and paddy cultivation; the area is about 6,000 orlongs.
1836. I have been ten years on the estate.
1837. I was for a short time in Deli.
1838. I speak Malay and a little Tamil, but no Chinese.
1839. I employ a few Tamils—about 40—not under contract.
1840. I employ only a few Chinese and no Malays.
1841. The paddy is all rented out to Malays and Chinese.
1842. I have as many labourers as I want.
1843. I pay Tamils 20 cents a day, and I give seven days' pay for six days' work.

Mr. P.
Stevens.
4th Decem-
ber.

1844. They get their "lines" free, but no medical attendance.
1845. There are a large number of Kling women who do not work, except in their own gardens.
1846. Some men have been with us many years, but the rate of pay is uniform for all.
1847. Last year the coolies were paid \$5.50, and \$5 the year before; I raised the rate because of the scarcity of labour.
1848. They find their own food.
1849. I have never employed contract labour; the number of contract men is too few.
1850. I can get picked labour for the present rate of pay.
1851. The best men work from 22 to 24 days a month; 20 days is the average.
1852. They work from 6 to 10.30 A.M. and from 1 to 5.30 P.M.
1853. They work only by the day.
1854. By Mr. Brown:—The coco-nut collecting is all done by contract, at seven cents per 100 nuts.
1855. The coolies are all under two headmen.
1856. There has never been any difficulty in the collecting work; I have used the nut-gatherers as coolies and always found them satisfactory.
1857. The grass-cutters get half the profits on each load. They are all Tamils.
- Mr. A. E. Kindersley, Municipal Engineer, Penang, gave evidence as follows:—
1858. The Public Works employ 215 Kling road-coolies at 20 cents a day; they are never paid for Sundays.
1859. We employ 138 scavenger coolies at 16 to 17 cents; they work 7 days a week.
1860. We have never employed contract coolies.
1861. The road coolies have "lines," the scavengers have none.
1862. We can always get enough.
1863. The coolies, I believe, pay their own hospital expenses.
1864. They get only one day's holiday a year, for which they are paid.
1865. They find their own food.
1866. The road-coolies work from 6 to 11 A.M. and from 1.30 to 5 P.M. They turn out at 6 o'clock and cease work at 11.30.
1867. The scavengers begin work at 4.30 A.M. and cease at about 9 o'clock. They work in the afternoon from 2 to 4.30.
1868. We pay a contractor for Chinese coolies for sewer-work, &c. The rate is 30 cents per man.
1869. By Mr. Swettenham:—Thirty cents is the average market rate of wages paid for the men for an odd job for a day or two.
1870. I think this a fair wage for one day's work, but for any length of time, say a month, it is high.
1871. I could always get men for a year's work at 20 cents.

Mr. P. Ste-
vens. 4th
December.

Mr. A. E.
Kindersley.
4th Decem-
ber.

Mr. A. E. Kindersley.
4th December.

1872. *By Mr. MacGregor* :—I do not think our town road-coolies do much outside work.

1873. The present hours of work have been in force since 1888. When the work permits of it we stop work at 11 A.M.

1874. *By Mr. Brown* :—The scavengers work very regularly.

Mr. J. H. Callcott.
4th December.

Mr. J. H. Callcott, Acting Deputy Colonial Engineer, stated as follows :—The Public Works Department employ over 800 coolies, nearly all Tamil road-coolies.

1875. The rates are 20 cents for an ordinary coolie, 22 cents for a head coolie, and 26 cents for coolies on the hill.

1876. We can always get a sufficient number.

1877. Almost all have “lines” provided.

1878. The men are admitted free to hospital, but only exceptional cases go there.

1879. They are only paid for working days.

1880. They only get the Government holidays, *i.e.* about two days in the year.

1881. I have been twenty-five years in the Straits.

1882. Government has never imported any coolies nor used contract coolies within my experience.

1883. I see no necessity for Government inspection of free coolies on the estates.

1884. I speak Tamil.

1885. Complaints occasionally occur of misrepresentation having been made to coolies in India.

1886. No complaints are made of ill-treatment on the estates, except that the gangers, Tyndals and such men are at times unkind to them.

1887. We usually pay 25 to 27 cents to Chinese coolies, but we employ only a few, for building, &c., and only through contractors.

1888. About 10 per cent. of the road-coolies have wives.

1889. In Penang the cost of food to a coolie is about 8 to 10 cents; they live fairly well on this.

1890. The price is much the same in Province Wellesley.

1891. *By Mr. Swettenham* :—We get our coolies, so to speak, from the streets.

1892. Some coolies, perhaps 100 of all that we employ, came over originally as estate coolies.

1893. Our work is not more easy or more severe than estate work.

1894. We make no advances to coolies, and lose nothing on those who leave.

1895. We have not paid more than 20 cents a day for many years.

1896. I think 20 cents a very fair daily wage.

1897. *By Mr. MacGregor* :—Ten cents ought to include everything in the coolie's cost of living; this would not cover his clothing, and other expenses not included in the ordinary daily food.

1898. It is probable that I should know it if a man employed by the Public Works Department were a deserter from the estates.

1899. *By Mr. Brown* :—The cost of the Tamil's clothing would not be much. Mr. J. H. Callcott, 4th December.

1900. Te-chius are largely employed here for building purposes, and when they can be got.

1901. Some Te-chius are also bricklayers.

1902. *By the President* :—The Tamil road-coolies come and go a good deal, but some remain more or less permanently.

1903. We have a large number of old hands.

1904. *By Mr. Turner* :—When we want coolies we inform the Gangers and others in Penang and the Province, and they tell those in want of work to come to us for work; we can always get enough.

1905. *By Mr. Swettenham* :—I notice no difference in the present labour supply compared with recent years.

The meeting adjourned at 1.45 P.M.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 3 P.M.

PRESENT :

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

The examination of Mr. E. A. B. BROWN, Manager of the Prye Estate, Province Wellesley, was resumed as follows :— Mr. E. A. B. Brown 4th December.

1906. I prefer Te-chius to other tribes, and only take the others when I cannot get Te-chius.

1907. Te-chius are much better workers and more easily managed.

1908. Our contract is for 360 full days' work. The men are free as soon as the work is done. They sometimes finish their contract in 200 days.

1909. The coolie's food costs us about 8 cents a day.

1910. Until this year I advanced money to the headman, and he fed the coolies.

1911. This year I supply all the food to the Kongsis myself, direct.

1912. I give the men houses free.

1913. There has been much difficulty in getting enough coolies, especially during the last three years.

1914. The average cost of the hospital, calculated over 8 or 10 years, is 1 cent a day per man on the estate.

1915. The hospital is free, but a Chinese coolie has to pay 8 cents a day if in hospital more than thirty days in a year.

1916. We use a special form of contract, drawn up by Mr. PICKERING some years ago.

[The Witness undertook to furnish a copy of the form referred to.]

1917. Very little supervision is kept over the coolies' accounts.

- Mr. E. A. B. Brown, 4th December.
1918. Payment is not made in the presence of a European, but is left entirely to the head Kongsì man.
1919. No deductions are made, except for the actual cash advances.
1920. The work is superintended by Europeans.
1921. I have introduced the system recently that an account of all the work done by each individual *Sin-Kheh* in the year is kept by a European daily.
1922. The men are paid, when practicable, by piece work.
1923. They can earn extra pay by extra work.
1924. The men we get now are inferior both in quality and quantity.
1925. I attribute this to the numbers who go over to Deli; they are all the best men.
1926. I can get *Te-chius* landed on the estate for \$40 to \$42.
1927. I get very few *Khehs*.
1928. About two years ago I employed a few *Hok-kiens*, but they were dear and very unsatisfactory.
1929. I get men from the *depôt* through my agent, and pay the *depôt*-keeper direct as a rule.
1930. By the terms of our contract I can only recover \$19.50 of the \$40 paid to the *depôt*-keeper.
1931. I would like to see every man paid according to the work he does, and that their food should be guaranteed, at the rate of, say, 10 cents a day.
1932. I think a radical reform of the whole recruiting system must be made before a better class of coolie can be looked for.
1933. Some men on my estate have been there as long as I can remember, as market gardeners.
1934. I have let land to Chinese at 10 cents an orlong for sugar cultivation: the coolie must grow and cut the canes, and I pay him according to the quality of his produce.
1935. He is under contract. I make him an advance of \$3 monthly which is stopped when I pay him for his canes.
1936. I employ about 100 Chinese free coolies of various tribes, but I cannot state the nationalities.
1937. The men find their own food.
1938. I would like to do away with the native headmen altogether, and have a European Assistant acquainted with the language.
1939. I am trying at present to procure some old coolies in Penang.
1940. There are no women on the estate. I wish there were.
1941. I think the Chinese are occasionally ill-treated on the estates by the *Tyndals*, &c., and that Government inspection might improve matters.
1942. I once employed a few Javanese, but the experiment was not a success.
1943. The desertions among Chinese are less frequent now than formerly; I believe the headmen were largely responsible for those which used to occur.
1944. If we had an unlimited labour supply I would prefer free labour; but at present the contract system is a necessity.

- Mr. E. A. B. Brown, 4th December.
1945. I prefer Tamils to Chinese.
1946. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I would like the Chinese coolie to be bound by contract for one year, and that he should remain in the Colony for three years longer. But I do not think this is practicable at present.
1947. I know of no case of an employer turning off a sick contract coolie, and reclaiming him again when he has recovered.
1948. In case of desertion a warrant is taken out for the deserter's arrest, if he is out of the Settlement.
1949. There was no inspection of Chinese on estates in Province Wellesley previous to last year.
1950. There is no legalised inspection at present. I think inspection is highly necessary.
1951. I do not find fault with the coolies' work except through the headmen.
1952. Each coolie has his own contract in Chinese; the Manager has also a contract written in English and Chinese on which the names of all the gang appear. He has also a contract with the headman for establishing a Kongsì, containing a schedule of the rates at which the work is to be paid for, but there are no means of knowing the way in which matters are arranged between the coolie and the headman.
- The meeting adjourned at 4.15 P. M.
- R. P. G.
- TWENTY-SECOND MEETING.
- HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 5TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.
- PRESENT:
- Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).
- Mr. A. STEWART, manager of Byram Estate, Province Wellesley, was examined as follows:—
- Mr. A. Stewart, 5th December.
1953. *By Mr. Brown*:—I have been on the estate for three years and three months.
1954. I was five years in Demerara, and was also for three years in Brazil, but we employed no Tamil labour there.
1955. I think the labour supply defective in its irregularity, which I ascribe to the faulty recruiting system in India.
1956. I have sent recruiters over three times; on the last occasion they brought over 27 recruits out of 40 that they had brought to the *depôt* in India. On the two previous occasions they had failed to bring any men at all.
1957. This was previous to the establishment of the Government *depôt* at Negapatam.
1958. We get the men now through agents there, but this method is unsatisfactory.

Mr. A. Stewart. 5th December. 1959. I would like to see a Government official in charge of the whole system, but I would not abolish the dépôt.

1960. I have given up recovering advances this year and there is now less difficulty in getting enough men.

1961. The quality of the Immigrants is unsatisfactory, but it has improved since the establishment of the Government dépôt.

1962. Our contract coolies are paid for Sundays if they work for the other six days of the week.

1963. If a man works five days a week and not on the Sunday, the absent day is added to his contract, but not the Sunday in that week.

1964. I would do away with Sunday labour on account of the coolies' health; it matters little on which day of the week the holiday is taken, but I think Sunday preferable.

1965. Our indentured women are obliged to work if they are able to.

1966. I prefer that all the women should work, but would like to see women on the estates in any case, whether they work or not.

1967. We let our Immigrants cultivate gardens, though it sometimes interferes with their regular work. 20 to 23 days is the average number for a coolie to work in a month.

1968. Good men would work all the month through.

1969. It is the good men who cultivate gardens, though all the coolies can get the land if they want it. The lazy ones never take garden land.

1970. Very few of our statute coolies re-engage.

1971. We offer them 18 to 20 cents a day; the contracts are only verbal; we never make written contracts for such men.

1972. We have had much loss through crimping.

1973. As a remedy I would simplify the Crimping Ordinance; it is difficult to get convictions against the men as it stands at present; it is too hard to prove the cases.

JAVANESE.

1974. We employ 250 Javanese on the estate; the first lot arrived in July last.

1975. I am not at all satisfied with the work so far; the men are very lazy.

1976. I have employed them in different kinds of work, but they are only satisfactory in cutting jungle.

1977. We pay the men 20 cents per task, and the women 12 cents for thrashing canes. The women work better than the men.

1978. The task for women is 1,200 feet. They always finish this, and I consider it a fair task for them.

1979. We give the Javanese houses, and supply them with rice at cost price.

1980. The contracts were made in Java in the presence of the Resident, and re-signed here before the Protectorate.

1981. We had the permission of the Dutch Government to import the men.

1982. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I am in favour of a system of discharge tickets for time-expired men.

1983. I think that such a scheme is quite practicable in this Colony, and that it could be done without interfering with the liberty of the subject.

1984. I see no reason why the necessary powers should not be put into the hands of native constables; I have seen it done in Demerara on the same scale. Mr. A. Stewart. 5th December.

1985. The system should apply to men and women without distinction.

1986. More than 25 per cent. of our Javanese are women.

1987. The majority of the coolies come from Soloh, but Soloh men are the worst kind.

1988. The contract is for three years for both men and women.

1989. The children are looked after by a paid nurse on the estate while the mothers go out to work.

1990. *By the President:*—The 27 Kling coolies brought over were taken to Golden Grove Estate, so I cannot say of what quality they were.

1991. I speak a little Tamil, Hindostani and Malay.

1992. I would pay separately for Sunday labour; each coolie should be allowed to work or not as he chose.

1993. It is not often necessary to call men out on Sunday.

1994. Complaints of garden-pilfering are sometimes brought before me, but I do not think the evil is a serious one.

1995. A good number of the men work every day in the month.

1996. I have known men save \$50 to \$60 during their three years, and some remit money home as well.

1997. *By Mr. Turner:*—A few of our indentured coolies have cattle.

1998. About 60 per cent. of our actual working coolies save money.

1999. *By Mr. Vermont:*—I have noticed that the drunkenness is greater and the desertions more numerous on Sundays than on week days, but in spite of this I would abolish Sunday labour.

2000. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I think it would be advantageous for all the employers in the Straits that the discharge ticket system should be enforced.

Mr. C. de Mornay, manager and part proprietor of Malakoff Estate, gave evidence as follows:— Mr. C. de Mornay. 5th December.

2001. *By the President:*—I have been on the estate since 1875.

2002. Previous to joining Malakoff Estate I was from 1870 to 1873 on Alma Estate, Province Wellesley, and from 1873 to 1875 I planted tobacco in Sumatra.

2003. The cultivation is tapioca, coco-nut, and pepper.

2004. I speak Malay, some Tamil and a very little Chinese.

2005. I employ at present contract and free Tamils—the greater part of whom are re-indentured.

2006. I have 237 Statute Immigrant coolies; 191 re-indentured; 84 Statute women; 68 women not under contract; 42 children.

2007. I have 117 Chinese—20 under contract and the rest free coolies.

2008. We generally employ Chinese for one kind of work—banking—at Malakoff, for the rest of the field work we employ only Tamils.

2009. The Chinese cannot compete with them on heavy ground.

2010. If I could be sure of keeping them I would only employ free coolies.

Mr. C. de
Mornay, 5th
December.

2011. We cannot keep men unless they are under contract.
2012. We have indented this year for 150 coolies, but could get none at all.
2013. I think the scarcity of supply due to the high prices paid elsewhere, and also to the scarcity of labour in the recruiting grounds: there is not such a surplus population as we think.
2014. The terms we offered the agents were Rs. 35 a head.
2015. When we found that other employers were offering higher wages we telegraphed to our agents to do the same.
2016. I pay my coolies myself.
2017. Eight hours a day are our hours of field labour.
2018. Women in the works get 13 cents for 9 hours' labour.
2019. Coolies would not work longer hours on field work to earn more money.
2020. They work from 6 to 2 o'clock, including an hour for meals.
2021. Coolies are paid on Sundays if they work six days a week.
2022. If a man turns out for Sunday cleaning, &c., he gets half a day's pay even though he has not worked six days in the week.
2023. If Sunday labour were not prohibited I consider a man should not be liable to prosecution for neglecting to work if he had not been absent more than four days, *i. e.*, I would allow him to take any four days in the month for rest in lieu of the enforced idleness on Sunday as at present.
2024. The Overseers could get leave by applying for it.
2025. Coolies do not care for Savings Banks; they either lend their savings out among themselves, or invest it in jewellery, cattle, &c., or remit it to their friends in India.
2026. We restrict the number of women imported to 20 per cent. But on our estate altogether they number more than one-third of the people living in the estate.
2027. I should soon have more women than men on the estate if I did not restrict the importation to 20 per cent. as they do not desert, and remain on the estate working as free coolies after their contracts are finished.
2028. We make all contract women work.
2029. I can generally find work for the women I have got at present: I have quite as many as I want.
2030. I think three years is sufficient as a term of contract, but I do not think it too long.
2031. Most men pay off their advances in from 9 to 12 months.
2032. My coolies generally have from 30 to 90 days to make up at the expiry of their contract if they have not deserted during the term of contract.
2033. We always make our men go to hospital if we find them shirking work on account of sickness.
2034. The present minimum rate of wages is, I consider, satisfactory.
2035. A coolie can live comfortably on the present rate.
2036. I would not advise that the minimum rate be raised above the present rate.
2037. I joined Malakoff in 1875. The coolies were in a wretched state of health and discontented. The operations of the 1876 Protection Ordinance made

them more so. The coolies received in 1877 (the first lot under the Ordinance, 238 in number) were a wretched, famine-stricken lot, many almost skeletons. Naturally the death-rate was very heavy, amounting to 17 per cent. Mr. C. de
Mornay, 5th
December.

2038. However, instead of improving on the ample supply of rice advanced them (2 gantangs per week), they became worse and worse. I determined to give them cooked rations and commenced to do so in January, 1878.

2039. At one time I had over 300 men being fed in this way. I gave them rice, vegetables and salt fish, curry with a little dhol in it, and charged them seven cents per day. The coolies became as fat as pigs but were very discontented and did little work. I think I could have worked the system better as regards the work, if I had received a little more assistance from the Magistrates in punishing coolies who would not try to work; but instead of that when, I brought a clear case against a strong fat, coolie for not working he was generally convicted, cautioned and discharged.

2040. The coolies did not like the system at all and tried to force me to give it up, but I continued the system for eleven months, gradually allowing those coolies who seemed willing to work to get their rations of raw rice as usual, but always putting back a coolie who began to look thin on to cooked food.

2041. I thus gradually taught them to see that it was to their advantage to feed themselves properly. The experiment was quite successful as regards the improvement in health of the coolies, and I have never had any trouble since from excessively high death-rate. I would not recommend any one to institute the cooked food rations unless they could find no other way of reducing the death-rate, as it is exceedingly troublesome, and the coolies are very discontented and grumble much at the price charged for the food.

2042. Malakoff Estate was not selected by Government for the trial, nor was the system enforced. I commenced it myself without consulting the Protector of Immigrants and left it off as soon as it had fulfilled its object.

2043. Malakoff Estate has now a death-rate of 1.09 per cent. for the past three years, and probably under one per cent. if it was taken for five years, as last year was the most unhealthy we have experienced for some years back, the percentage being 1.76.

2044. Seven cents covered the whole cost of the food, but as the coolies' appetite increased it was not sufficient. As long as they ate only a chupak of rice a day 7 cents was quite sufficient.

2045. I never supply more than one chupak of rice a day per man to Indentured Immigrants, and I believe this to be sufficient.

2046. The rice is given out as a daily ration, not in larger quantities, at that rate.

2047. This system is troublesome to the managers, but the coolies do not object to it.

2048. The rice is dealt out by a native Krani who is in attendance all day from 7 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

2049. Most coolies take it.

2050. For five years 18 cents per gantang has been the average price charged by me for specially imported rice. This includes 1 cent per gantang for transport from Penang to the estate. I do not supervise the shops on the estate, the great competition among them makes it unnecessary.

2051. I do not think higher wages or shorter contracts would attract better men; the coolies seem so utterly ignorant of what they are going to do or to earn that it would make little or no difference. I would rather increase the wages than shorten the contract.

2052. I should say about 25 per cent. of the men re-engage on one-year contracts.

Mr. C. de Mornay, 5th December. 2053. I pay now 15 cents per day to re-engaged coolies under contract. Formerly I only paid 15 and 13 cents according to the quality of the coolie.

2054. Some men have gone on re-engaging with me for 15 years.

2055. New arrivals whom I suspect of selling their food are put on hospital diet.

2056. I think the present Ordinance satisfactory generally, though I would like to see task work legalized, and I think that both as regards first and second contracts the mode of putting the coolie under contract should be simplified. The present system is very inconvenient.

2057. The Magistrate before whom the contract must be signed is, in the case of Malakoff, 11 miles away.

2058. New contracts cannot be signed until the coolie has received his wages and discharge ticket.

2059. It would be a great advantage if the new contract could be signed within some months before the expiration of the old one, so as to take advantage of the Protector's visit.

2060. I do not think it necessary that the employer should be present at the actual time of signing by the coolie.

2061. I do not think the stamp fee should be charged for free coolies who come to me on their own account and apply for work simply because they have not come down here as Statute Immigrants; I think that under sections 38 and 39 of the Ordinance the stamp fee can only be legally charged on contracts made with Statute Immigrants under advances in India on their arrival.

2062. I think the definition of desertion, section 75 of Ordinance No. V of 1884, is too vague.

2063. I consider the present recruiting system unsatisfactory, and I believe that Mr. MacGregor's system would improve it.

2064. Recruiters should have some remedy against coolies who refuse to sign after promising to do so.

2065. I am losing many men by crimping: I know it is by crimping because I lose all trace of them.

2066. I think the discharge ticket system would check this: it is in force with the Chinese in Deli.

2067. I think Government should import all the labour it requires itself, whether worked directly or indirectly under contractors, as, besides putting an end to the present competition for labour between Government and planters, it would also be for the good of the Colony.

2068. I give men garden land when they want it, but they do not take advantage of this much: I attribute this to the stealing of vegetables that goes on.

2069. I have given free grants of paddy land, but it interfered with the work on the estate.

2070. I should think 17 cents a day a reasonable rate for free labour, but I could never keep the men at that rate. It would pay me to do so if I could get sufficient men to do entirely without indentured Immigrants.

2071. *By Mr. Vermont:*—I am not in favour of free Sundays, and Sunday payment. Disorders are far more frequent on Sundays than on other days.

2072. If a coolie is absent two days a week besides Sunday without good reason, I prosecute him.

2073. The punishments inflicted depend on the length of time a Magistrate has been in the Province: he increases them as time goes on.

2074. I do not remember any case where the full penalty of 50 cents per day was inflicted for absence from work. Mr. C. de Mornay, 5th December.

2075. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—Some of my coolies desert and go to Perak. I have caught men there myself in 1881, and others have returned to the estate from working in Perak after a year or two.

2076. Some coolies run away to Kedah, but not to a great extent.

2077. They go to Perak because the inducement is greater, and in Kedah they are more easily arrested.

2078. We have had several deserters arrested in Perak by warrants, but sometimes the men we sent after them have come back saying they dared not remain, as plots were got up by the native employers of absconded coolies, and by the coolies themselves, to get them into trouble.

2079. I do not think tapioca cultivation more healthy than sugar; tapioca work is much the heavier.

2080. I think the low death-rate on my estate is partially due to its good position.

2081. I do not think a partial Government inspection of free coolies necessary or desirable; it would be good if it were done everywhere.

2082. I do not think a Tamil would quietly submit to ill-treatment; he would leave.

2083. There have been several bankruptcies among my estate shop-keepers, due chiefly to their giving credit.

2084. Free and re-engaged coolies have all the Statute coolies' advantages, but they cost me very little more than their wages, as they seldom go to hospital.

2085. When not under contract, coolies do not work as regularly and do not have as good health, as a rule. They do not apply for medical treatment when they require it.

2086. Time-expired coolies re-engage, and free coolies engage under contract to me on 15 cents a day, because they have friends on the estate, have their own institutions, &c. and live together just as they please. I only allow my own men to live on the estate. I cannot get as many as I want on that wage.

2087. I do not see that the difficulties in the way of working the discharge ticket system here are insuperable, though they would be considerable.

2088. If Government imported all its own labour I do not see that it could be called on to make any special concessions to the planters.

2089. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—I do not think it necessary to give the coolie a copy of his contract; I have known many contracts which have not been made in duplicate.

2090. *By Mr. Turner:*—I imported 471 coolies during the three years on which the death-rate on my estate was calculated. The average number employed during each of those years was 435; in those three years there were 14 deaths.

2091. *By the President:*—A Tyndal of mine who had been to India brought back 11 coolies with him, paying all their expenses; 8 of these applied to me for work under contract and I gave them an advance of \$1 on a one-year contract, at 15 cents a day, but they were considered as Statute Immigrants under first contract, and I had to pay a stamp fee of \$1 on each of their contracts.

2092. I would always be willing to engage such men on these terms, and have done so more than once, but I object to the stamp fee, as I do not consider it a legal charge.

2093. For every such task or half task completed the man is credited with so much time off his contract, and is paid the value as well. For any work done after a full day's task amounting to less than half a day's task the man is paid in cash, but the time is not deducted.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED AT THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 2.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. C. de
Mornay. 5th
December.

The examination of Mr. C. de MORNAY was resumed.

2094. *By the President*:—I employ 117 Chinese, mostly Te-chius.

2095. I pay no Chinese direct.

2096. I have an agent-foreman, who contracts for all my coolies.

2097. I got them formerly from the broker under contract, but they were very sickly and the headman became bankrupt.

2098. There is no written contract with the headman, who is under advances to us.

2099. I give them lines, but I recover all hospital and other expenses from the contractor.

2100. Very few of my Chinese go to hospital.

2101. We have only about 20 Chinese under contract.

2102. The men are generally paid by task work.

2103. There is a fixed task which counts as a full day's work, and which is valued at 24 cents.

2104. The men at Tassek Glugor are all free coolies: they get 20 to 23 cents a day, as well as their food.

2105. The place is in process of being opened up, and is sometimes malarious. The work there is easy but we pay higher wages because of the place being on an out-of-the-way part of the country on the Kedah boundary.

2106. Many Chinese stay on after their year is up, but some go back to China.

2107. *Sin-Khehs* work 10 hours a day on daily work, but free coolies work irregularly, generally about 8 hours a day.

2108. I would not let men ever work less than 7 hours a day.

2109. I have not found any difficulty in getting sufficient coolies. I am speaking only of Malakoff, where not many Chinese are employed; but there undoubtedly is a scarcity of labour.

2110. The supply depends largely on the headmen.

2111. The amount paid per head to the brokers has also much to do with it.

2112. I have never had complaints from my *Sin-Khehs* of their being robbed by the brokers.

2113. The physique of my men is very good, much better than formerly.

2114. I have sometimes advanced money to my headman.

2115. Very few desertions occur: the headman bears any losses incurred by this.

2116. No women come; Te-chiu women are forbidden to leave China.

Mr. C. de
Mornay. 5th
December.

2117. The Chinese coolie's food costs him from 8 to 9 cents a day: they get as much boiled rice as they want, and 20 cents besides once a fortnight.

2118. I do not consider the system satisfactory as I work it. If I employed only Chinese it would be unsatisfactory, as they cannot compete with Klings in the greater part of the field work.

2119. If we could employ coolies on the Sumatra system we could pay almost the same wages as the Deli planters, but the crops here take too long for that, I think.

2120. The one year's contract would also hinder it and we could only work it with free coolies.

2121. I think it a good thing to work the men on task work as much as possible.

2122. Government inspection of the coolies' accounts and food would, I think, be desirable under the present Kongsì system.

2123. I have reason to believe that the coolies are sometimes cheated here, and kept on for an undue length of time.

2124. I have seen no ill-treatment going on on the Chinese estates which have come under my observation.

2125. I pay the headman \$3 an orlong for "banking" on land already in cultivation.

2126. I pay \$10 per orlong for first "changkoling" and \$5 to \$7 for second "changkoling."

2127. For opening new fallow land I pay the men \$14 to \$15.

2128. We never "bank" with Klings if we can help it. Chinese labour is cheaper and better for that class of work.

KLINGS.

2129. New-comers, if good men, can generally be trusted to feed themselves well.

2130. I think it would be impossible to work an estate without contract coolies; there must be a permanent labour staff.

CHINESE.

2131. *By Mr. Powell*:—I debit the headmen with the men's hospital expenses.

2132. *By Mr. Brown*:—The men are, I believe, allowed a certain number of days in hospital each year.

2133. I believe that they are properly credited with them.

KLING.

The witness further stated:—

2134. In 1875 we recovered the whole of the advances from our coolies, and charged them with their hospital fees and the expenses of arresting them, &c. The contract rate at that time was 12 cents.

2135. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I have not read the Indian Immigration Agent's last Annual Report: I have not heard of it.

2136. *By the President*:—The outside rates of wages are much higher now than formerly.

2137. In 1873, I got as many coolies as I wanted at 15 cents a day for garden-
ing, jungle-cutting, &c.

Mr. C. de Mornay. 5th December.

2138. I think that larger nominal wages, and larger stoppages from them would have a very beneficial effect on recruiting in India, enabling us to compete more successfully with demands for other places.

2139. If we had not such heavy incidental expenses we could afford to offer higher wages.

2140. The coolie is always willing to pay the deductions made when he considers them just.

2141. *By Mr. Swettenham* :—I calculate that the 12 cents paid to the coolie in the first year, and 14 cents in the second and third year is equivalent to 20 cents to the employer on account of the heavy incidental expenses he is put to.

2142. The maximum sum earned by an Indentured Statute Immigrant in my service in one month has been \$9.57 for a man, and \$7.59 for a woman, both working on the task system.

2143. I should think the average sum paid to a Statute Immigrant coolie, after deducting rice advance, refund of passage money, &c., would be about 80 cents to \$1 per month the first year, and \$2 the second year.

2144. I do not consider that because a coolie has paid off the whole of his recoverable advances in the first year he is, therefore, entitled to a considerable increase in wages in the second year as, during the first year, the value of his work is seldom equal to the wages paid him.

2145. I consider three years a good contract term.

[At the conclusion of his evidence Mr. DE MORNAY handed in the two tables printed below.*]

The meeting adjourned at 4.30 p. m.

R. P. G.

* COMPARISON BETWEEN WORKING COOLIES ON DAY WAGES AND BY TASK PAYMENT SYSTEM.

From August 1st, 1888, to August 1st, 1889, the coolies worked entirely on day wages. From August 1st, 1889, to August, 1890, the coolies worked partly on day wages and partly on payment by task. The task system was commenced with two gangs of about 50 men each on August 1st, 1888, and on September 1st another gang of about 50 men was added. As the system proved successful, two more gangs were added in December, 1889, and January, 1890.

	1st Year. Day Wages.	2nd Year. Task Payment.
Total Kling Earnings,	\$17,327 29	\$21,373 04
Cost per orlong for Labour,	43 08	43 16
Area planted in Orlongs,	Orlongs 379	Orlongs 477
Manufactured Tapioca,	Pikuls 10,300	Pikuls 13,000
Average Nominal Roll of Coolies,	585.67	538.39
Do. Number of Coolies at work,	371.83	413.46
Do. do. in Hospital,	31.02	23.00
Do. do. in H. M.'s Prisons,	10.67	7.20
Do. do. absent from work,	173.92	94.81

Incidental expenses bringing the cost of Statute Immigrant labour up to about 20 cents, per day.

Deserters not apprehended, ... 1 cent per day.

Deaths, ... 1 " "

Mutual Consent, ... 1 " "

Loss on Advances, &c. not recoverable, ... 1 " "

Sunday Wages, ... 2 " "

Hospital Expenses, ... 1½ " "

Expenses in arresting Deserters and watching Coolies, 1½ " "

Incidental Expenses, ... 6½ cents per day.

Wages, ... 13½ " say, per day.

20 cents total cost of labour per day.

TWENTY-THIRD MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT :

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. F. Powell, Protector of Chinese in the Straits Settlements, gave evidence as follows :—

Mr. F. Powell.
9th December.

2146. I have been connected with Chinese since 1879.

2147. I have held the Acting Appointment of Protector three times, the last occasion being for two years.

2148. I speak Hok-kien, and understand Te-chiu and Cantonese.

2149. My duties are not specifically defined.

2150. We carry on a continual correspondence with the Registrar at Hongkong. He sends us lists of all the passengers on board the steamers which arrive. As regards the men these lists are unreliable.

2151. The Assistant Protector and his subordinates have charge of the inspection of the depôts, and inspect them regularly.

2152. I also pay occasional surprise visits myself.

2153. They look after the sanitation of the depôts, and receive complaints from coolies.

2154. The depôts are also under the control, as regards sanitation, of the Principal Civil Medical Officer, and are constantly inspected by an Apothecary.

2155. Wells are closed up, water laid on, &c. under the directions of the Principal Civil Medical Officer, and an allowance of 20 square feet is enforced for each inhabitant. We issue the licenses in the first instance.

2156. No one may sleep on the ground floor.

2157. No printed rules on the subject exist, as far as I am aware.

[The witness here read an extract from a letter from the Acting Registrar-General, Hongkong, giving the chief points in the new Hongkong Bill.]

2158. Advances are very seldom taken away from coolies, unless the coolie gets some equivalent for his money. I am quite satisfied that there is no serious grievance in this connection.

2159. I think the Chinese estate coolies are too much in the hands of the Tyndals.

2160. I believe them to be both ill-treated and cheated.

2161. I have known cases of the men being beaten and ill-treated.

2162. These facts certainly contributed formerly to increase desertion, but I do not think that it has had any very deterrent effect on immigration at any time.

2163. The Labour Contracts Ordinance does not affect my department to any great extent.

Mr. F. Powell.
9th Decem-
ber.

2164. Our contracts are made under the Chinese Immigration Ordinance.
2165. I think the Labour Contracts Ordinance an unnecessarily long one.
2166. I think the Crimping Ordinance requires amendment as regards coolies who, after making contracts here to work in other Colonies, run away from their employers and return here; we cannot at present punish them in any way.
2167. I think that a Government wharf should be established at Singapore where the men could be examined before proceeding to the other wharf where they are to be landed.
2168. No depôt entirely under Government management has ever been tried.
2169. Fixed limits have been laid down as to the charges allowed to be made in the depôts, but they are never enforced.
2170. Twenty-five cents is the contract fee for the Colony and Native States, and \$1 for outside.
2171. Each depôt has a register of its own, which is kept at the Protectorate. There is also a register kept of all coolies remaining in depôts longer than ten days.
2172. It is to the Depôt-keeper's interest to enter the names of all the coolies whom he takes in.
2173. The Steamship Company has nothing to do with the credit-tickets; it is a private arrangement between the impecunious coolie and the man who buys his passage ticket, by which the former agrees to pay back twice, or sometimes more, the cost of his passage on arrival at his destination.
2174. The Chinese authorities undoubtedly interfere with emigration. The chief obstructor is a man named P'NG TAI JIN, a powerful Mandarin, who detests the foreigner, and punishes the men who are engaged in exporting coolies.
2175. I can only suggest a Government agency at Swatow as a remedy; this would also counteract the direct emigration to Deli. But coolies prefer to go there, as they get a \$15 advance and can earn more money.
2176. No three-year contracts are made, as far as I know.
2177. A *Sin-Khek* is paid \$30 his first year, which is scarcely sufficient, considering he has to pay for his passage, &c., to enable him to clear off his debts; the pay is not adequate.
2178. There should certainly be a Government inspection of all coolies on estates; it would be advantageous for both planters and coolies.
2179. With inspection, I believe matters could be worked quite satisfactorily.
2180. I would like to see an experimental Government depôt in Hongkong and Swatow, through which the importation of coolies could be effected. It would not pay at first, but if sufficiently advertised here and in China, it would, I believe, answer well in the end.
2181. Government depôts would also be necessary here and at Singapore.
2182. I do not think that much ill-treatment of the coolies goes on in the depôts here.
2183. Most of the profit on coolies goes to Hongkong or China.
2184. I do not think it possible for the brokers to make excessive profits; it is simply a question of supply and demand.
2185. There is an Examination Depôt in Penang, but not in Singapore. Immigrants cannot be satisfactorily examined on board a steamer, or at the wharf on the arrival of a vessel.
2186. *By Mr. Vermont:*—I have heard that coolies have sometimes been sent on to Deli who wished to remain in Penang or Singapore.

2187. I think that men for Penang should be allowed to break their journey at Singapore if they please, as they have to pay their own expenses ultimately.

Mr. F. Powell.
9th Decem-
ber.

2188. Squatters here are Khehs. I do not think they are ex-estate coolies.
2189. I do not think the recent Land Ordinance has affected the immigration, though I know of several very hard cases having occurred under it at Balik Pulau.
2190. I do not think that the establishment of a Government depôt at Singapore would seriously affect the shipping of the place.
2191. The maximum of advances was fixed at \$19.50 simply to prevent the coolies from paying too much. It was perhaps rather arbitrary and has no legal authority.
2192. I did not know that Mr. PORTLEY wished to reduce it to \$15.
2193. I think that \$19.50 is quite enough for a man to pay out of a yearly wage of \$30.
2194. *By Mr. Turner:*—The present depôt system certainly stimulates private enterprise. I think it a proper system to be recognised by the British Government.
2195. *By Mr. Kho Bu Ann:*—If there is no special stipulation the contract should come into force on the day on which it is signed; if anything special is required a special stipulation must be made.
2196. If a man is sick for no longer term than thirty days a year, he must be paid for those days, and need not make the time up at the end of his contract. For each day over that time he must pay his employer ten cents, and make the time up when his contract expires.
2197. No deviation from the Ordinance regulations on this point are allowed, owing to an order issued by Sir F. WELD.
2198. *By Mr. Brown:*—I think the establishment of Government depôts would reduce the present nominal cost of \$19.50 considerably.
2199. The brokers at Swatow or Hongkong seldom or never give any cash either to the emigrants or their friends.
2200. The Government would give \$1 or \$2 to the relatives and, besides charging the actual cost of passage money, would have to charge a small commission to cover expenses.

JAVANESE.

2201. I think that Javanese and all imported labour should come under the same regulations as Chinese Immigrants.
2202. They have no recognised protector. The few private depôts which exist at present are under no supervision, and this should be remedied.
2203. Javanese labour ought certainly to be encouraged.
2204. *By Mr. Kho Bu Ann:*—The Protectorate does not refuse to grant contracts to free passengers; but immigrants often declare themselves to be free passengers when it is not the case, and they are sent to the depôt.
- Mr. J. TURNER's examination was resumed.
2205. I employ about 160 Te-chius and 40 Cantonese.
2206. The Cantonese are artisans, and the Te-chius agriculturalists.
2207. The Cantonese are under a headman on contract, through whom they are paid.
2208. I employ only free Chinese labour.

Mr. J. Turner.
9th
December.

Mr. J. Turner.
9th Decem-
ber.

[The witness here handed in a statement to the following effect :—

In October last year the Penang Sugar Estates Company got from Swatow a lot of 150 Chinese coolies on the following terms :—Wages \$7 per month and \$2 for food; \$4 from wages to be paid to relatives in Swatow.

This latter the coolies objected to, and lodged their earnings with a shop-keeper in Nibong Tebal Village for transmission to their relatives.

In course of time letters were handed to the coolies by this shop-keeper purporting to be from their relatives and acknowledging the receipt of the money sent, but advising the coolies to desert. They did so. When it was discovered that these letters were false, a wealthy Chinaman in the Province came forward and offered to pay up for the shop-keeper. This could not be done, as it would have been compounding a felony.

On endeavouring to get the coolies to come forward to assist in prosecuting the shop-keeper I found that not one would give evidence. About 120 of them absconded, and the remaining men were sent back to China having been telegraphed for by our Agents there who said their office had been mobbed and there was likely to be trouble.

Of the second batch of 80 men 20 absconded before we got at the bottom of the shop-keeper's interference. The remaining 60 are now on the estate, and although the term of their agreement is over they are working cheerfully and give no trouble. A third lot of 16 came over about two months ago recruited by two men of the second batch. They are doing well.

These men are under no contract, and came here without the intervention of recruiters or without having to go to any depôt.]

2209. These coolies were imported direct through an English Agent in Swatow. They were satisfactory coolies, on a one-year contract. Only \$7, the actual money paid for their passage, was deducted. I had the first lot about six months, and the second lot, on finding how matters really stood, finished their contract and are still working well on the estate.

2210. If generally adopted the system of direct immigration would, I am convinced, answer well.

2211. I offered these high wages simply to initiate the new plan. They are excessive, but not too much so when the object in view is considered. For the present I am out of pocket by it, but if all the planters would adopt the plan and the Government give assistance the rate could soon be reduced.

2212. The men give no cause for complaint at all, and send large remittances to China each month.

2213. The cost of landing each coolie on the estate is under \$20.

2214. There should certainly be Government inspection on the estates, and it is essential that the Inspector should speak the coolies' language.

2215. I give the men "lines" and medical attendance free.

2216. The hours of work are from 6 A. M. to 2 P. M. for my ordinary coolies.

2217. There should be Government depôts both at the Chinese ports and here.

2218. I am getting as many men as I care to employ at the present rates.

2219. Money and letters are sent by the coolies themselves through the estates' agents.

2220. We have no savings bank; I believe all the savings are sent to China.

2221. I do not supervise the charges of the estate shops; most coolies go to the village for their provisions.

2222. I would prohibit Sunday labour, and limit the weekly holiday to Sunday alone. The only Sunday work would be cleaning up, and emergency work.

2223. By Mr. Vermont:—I have not asked other employers to join me in the system mentioned above, as I knew from their remarks that they would not.

[Mr. BROWN stated here that Mr. QUENTIN HOGG had consulted him on the subject.]

2224. I think that the failure in connection with Chinese labour is largely due to our want of knowledge of the Chinese language.

The Hon'ble J. M. B. Vermont's examination was resumed.

The Hon'ble
J. M. B. Ver-
mont. 9th
December.

2225. I employ Klings for works where greater care is required. They are of no use for opening heavy land.

2226. The Chinese do the "banking," cane-cutting and opening land.

2227. Each race is good at its own kind of work, and both are necessary on an estate.

2228. For opening an estate I would take 400 Chinese to 600 Klings.

2229. All my men, except 114 free Chinese, are under contract. I have 424 Chinese under contract, in order to ensure always having a sufficient number of labourers to rely on.

2230. My men are mostly Te-chiu: they work harder and are better behaved than other tribes.

2231. The term of contract is one year.

2232. The men are all employed on task work, and I find the system works satisfactorily.

2233. There is no distinction made between Khehs and Te-chius.

2234. The Chinese have the same privileges as the Klings.

2235. My *Sin-Kheh* contracts are all made in Penang: the others on the estate.

[Mr. VERMONT handed in a contract which he explained was illegal owing to its not being endorsed by a Magistrate within six weeks after being drawn up, in consequence of his unavoidable absence from the Colony.]

2236. The coolies are paid through a headman.

2237. The accounts are kept in Chinese, and checked by a reliable interpreter, who is himself a Kongsu headman.

2238. I am not in favour of prohibiting Sunday labour: it would lead to more gambling on the estates.

2239. I do not object to the men being allowed to take one day a week, when they please.

2240. I do not muster my coolies: they turn out of their own accord at 6 A.M. and usually complete their task by about 9.30: they go to work again at 1 P.M. and are home by 5 o'clock or earlier.

2241. The supply of labour is very defective.

2242. I attribute this to the large demand in neighbouring countries and the diminished facilities for acquiring land on which to settle: also to obstructions by the Chinese authorities.

2243. A Government depôt in China and an arrangement such as the Dutch Government have in force should be made.

2244. *Lau-Kheh* depôts have proved a great nuisance; they are merely crimping houses for Deli.

2245. Khehs from the hills are the worst class of labourers, being unused to working in the sun.

The Hon'ble
J. M. B. Ver-
mont. 9th
December.

2246. I get my *Sin-Kheh* coolies entirely through the brokers.
2247. I got some men down through BRADLEY & Co. in 1888, but they were kidnapped on the way at Singapore and sent to Deli. I only received 6 out of 40 or 50 men, and lost \$700 by the experiment.
2248. I sent men up to BRADLEY & Co. to bring the men down, but they returned saying they had no control over them at Singapore.
2249. I import no women, as none can be got.
2250. I think the present contract term satisfactory.
2251. The men renew if they are satisfied and I give them a \$14 advance, which I recover.
2252. The Chinese always feed themselves well, at a cost of about 12 cents per day.
2253. The new and old coolies all come under the same schedule as regards treatment and terms.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 P.M.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 1.30 P.M.

PRESENT :

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

The Hon'ble
J. M. B. Ver-
mont. 9th
December.

- Mr. Vermont's* examination was resumed.
2254. The present Ordinance in no way regulates the relations between the employer and the coolie, nor does it define sufficiently the actions of the Protector of Chinese. It is entirely for the depôts.
2255. I have no serious objection to Government inspection, but I do not think it desirable unless Government undertakes the importation of the coolies. The latter would treat the inspection as a joke.
2256. It would also tend to undermine the authority of those in charge of the estates.
2257. Of my free coolies about half are agriculturalists.
2258. The headman gets 12 cents a head per day for the men's food. He receives no wages, but works the Kongsí at 10 per cent. of the men's earnings and pays all expenses, such as the cook, waterman, &c. He receives all the men's wages from me, and deducts what is owing to him.
2259. Every two months I square all accounts with him for the work done, and he then settles with his coolies. When the men come to sign a new contract at the end of their year, I examine the men's account books, which are kept in Chinese.
2260. I have drawn attention to the abuses caused by the *Lau-Kheh* depôts, both by letters to Government and in Council.

The Hon'ble
J. M. B. Ver-
mont. 9th
December.

2261. I am a member of the Planters' Association, and I do not consider it has done any good hitherto; the regulations are not enforced.
2262. I have no knowledge of China.
2263. *By Mr. Brown:*—The men have usually overdrawn their accounts at the end of their year; very few have money owing to them.
2264. Only men who wish to renew their contract come before me then.
2265. I have seen money paid to them on such occasions.
2266. The fact of men being owed money would not cause them to re-engage; the sums owed are too insignificant.
2267. *By Mr. Powell:*—I attribute the defective labour supply to the *Lau-Kheh* depôts, because it is known that *Lau-Khehs* are preferred for Deli.

Mr. Kho Bu Ann's examination was resumed (CHEAM CHEOW HENG interpreting):—

Mr. Kho Bu
Ann. 9th
December.

2268. I employ over 500 Chinese in Province Wellesley and Perak.
2269. I cannot get as many as I want now; formerly I could. The men do not come down now.

2270. I have been sending men to China lately (since last year), but it is too expensive and my men cannot get the coolies, because the Swatow depôt-keepers combine with the *Kheh-Thaus* to prevent coolies coming to Penang.

2271. The Singapore brokers also hinder their coming.
2272. The Chinese Government does not interfere. The men say their passages are paid in order to pass the Mandarins, but they are not really paid.
2273. If the men I send recruit, the brokers go and inform the Mandarin. But my men dare not inform about the brokers, they are too strong.
2274. I think a Government office should be established at Swatow and that contracts should be signed there.

2275. Failing this, the coolies should be received into Government depôts here, and the time of detention fixed at fourteen days, so that their relations may redeem them; after that the planters should be at liberty to redeem them, with the coolies' consent. If not redeemed at the end of fourteen days, and if they then refuse to make a contract they should be imprisoned.

2276. I pay *Sin-Khehs* \$30 the first year and they must refund \$19.50 of this for passage money.

2277. They can save money on the remaining \$10.50, \$5 to \$6 at the most.

2278. I think \$10.50 sufficient for the man to live on and to send money to China the first year.

2279. The sums vary which a Chinaman would consider enough to return to China with.

2280. A man can earn \$100 his second year if he works over contract time, and cultivates on his own account; but the amount depends on the market price of sugar.

2281. I pay the men now \$5 a month their second year if they re-engage, and give them food as well. Formerly I only paid them \$4 without food.

2282. A very good man can earn \$120 to \$130 a year on his sugar crop. The sugar is sold to the *Thau-Kheh* at current prices, and the profit goes to the coolie.

2283. Sometimes I pay the coolies myself, sometimes through my son.

2284. I think Government inspection is a waste of time and a waste of money. The coolies have to stop work for one day in consequence: that is my only objection.

Mr. Kho Bu
Ann. 9th
December.

2285. The coolies dislike the stopping of Sunday labour.

2286. They send money to China through the *Khek-Thaus*, or through their relations: they use the letter shops very little.

2287. The coolie pays 10 cents commission for every dollar he sends to China, and he objects to paying the stamp money both ways. The 10 cents includes the stamp, but another 3 cents is required as well.

2288. If he sends money through the shops 50 cents is paid on every \$10 sent.

2289. The *Khek-Thaus* sometimes run away with the money entrusted to them, but not often.

2290. Te-chiu women may leave China only if they accompany their husbands. Any woman may leave China under these conditions.

2291. Very few Te-chiu women come; they do not care to. They would not come even if I promised them houses to live in, and work. There is no way of persuading them to come; they would not work.

2292. *By Mr. Brown:*—The depôts in Penang are not for any special tribe: they are all mixed up.

2293. I am the head of the Te-chius in Penang, but this does not aid me to get more Te-chiu coolies than other people. I gain nothing by being the headman.

2294. I should have no influence with the Swatow authorities if I were to go there.

2295. I think the establishment of a Government depôt at Swatow would prevent any bad coolies coming down.

2296. I have often known men work off their contracts in less than the stipulated 360 days.

2297. A good man will clear off his advances in one Chinese year.

[Mr. POWELL stated that he had received information from the Chinese Consul at Singapore, that the Chinese Commissioners who visited the Straits three years ago had recommended that immigration from China should be allowed, but that he did not know of any steps having been taken in the matter in China so far.]

The meeting adjourned at 4.15 P. M.

R. P. G.

TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNMENT OFFICES, TAIPING, PERAK,
ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 1890, AT 10 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. W.
Cowan. 10th
December.

Mr. W. Cowan, Acting Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Perak, gave evidence as follows:—

2298. *By the President:*—I was for six years in the Straits Settlements Protectorate, and have been for seven years in Perak.

2299. I speak Hok-kien, Cantonese, Te-chiu, Hoi-how, and Sien-in.

Mr. W.
Cowan. 10th
December.

2300. The immigration has fallen off here during the last three years.

2301. 1,326 contracts for Perak have been made here during the last ten months.

2302. Of these, 382 were by agriculturalists for Krian, the rest were by miners and general labourers.

2303. A much larger number come here as miners not under contract. Less than 10 per cent. of the coolies make *Sin-Kheh* contracts. Some work on the co-operative system. When a mine is worked on that system, the mine-owner gets 10 or 20 per cent. For 10 per cent. he supplies the Kongs with a "Kin-chhia" (water-wheel), Kongs houses and a fixed number of mining implements. For 20 per cent. he supplies a steam-engine, Kongs houses and tools. The mine-owner makes a contract with the advancer, who undertakes to supply all provisions, cash advances, &c. There is a third party to the contract, the contractor, who supplies the coolies.

2304. When a coolie works on the co-operative system he has a share in the mine. If the mine proves profitable, the coolie also makes money. In some of the mines in Kinta—for instance, LEE AH NGUK's mine at Papan—the co-operative coolies made a dollar or over for a "Kung" (a day's work). A coolie on this system can make about 30 cents per Kung from a fairly good mine. On the sale of tin ore, the tribute due to the mine-owner is first paid, then the amount due for provisions and cash supplied by the advancer, and the balance, if any, is put to the credit of the coolie.

2305. The coolies during the 8th moon receive seven-tenths of the wages after the necessary deductions have been made, and the balance, if any, at the end of the 12th moon. On the output of ore, the advancer has a prior claim to its purchase at market rates.

2306. The advancer on the co-operative system takes all risks and gets his profits out of the tin smelting, food, cash advance, etc.

2307. A coolie can make about 30 cents a day, and if the mine is rich like LEE NGUK's of Papan he can make \$1 a day. Sometimes he makes nothing while working on this system.

2308. Most coolies return to China after about two years, taking perhaps \$50 with them. They return here with their friends.

2309. No contracts are made between free coolies and contractor; the advancer and contractor are jointly and severally responsible for the wages of the coolies. The custom is for the men ("Nai-Chiangs") to work for six months, and co-operative coolies for a year; they know that they can be prosecuted if they leave: it is the recognised custom in Perak. They get an advance of \$2 or \$3 on joining the Kongs.

2310. The *Sin-Khehs* sign a contract at the Chinese Protectorate, Penang, or this office.

2311. The coolies' names are put down on the "working board." They produce their discharge tickets before they engage: they are bound solely by the recognised custom of the place.

2312. Not so many desertions as formerly take place; the desertions are not limited to *Sin-Khehs*.

2313. Another class of contract coolies are paid by the work done, \$3.80 to \$4.70 per "chiang" = 30' x 30' x 1½'. Such a man earns about 30 cents a day for excavating.

2314. Money can be got from the advancer at mining rates; he charges 30 per cent. if borrowed during the first two months, 20 per cent. if during third and fourth, and 10 per cent. if during the fifth or sixth month.

2315. The advancer advances the men money during the working of the mine.

2316. 25 to 30 cents is a fair average wage in Perak.

Mr. W. 2317. The Kongsí-Kong coolie is engaged by the advancer on 22 cents or more
Cowan. 10th a day guaranteed, independently of whether the mine pays well or not; he gets his
December. food as well, such as rice, salt, and tea; also his firewood.

2318. The contractor or his representative is responsible for the *Sin-Khehs*.

2319. Mining *Sin-Khehs* are paid \$42 per year of 360 days, of which not more than \$22 is deducted for passage money, and entered in the contract.

2320. Contracts may be made in the Colony (25 cents fee) and registered here (25 cents), or may be made here only (50 cents fee).

2321. The *Sin-Kheh* is provided with food and clothes, in accordance with his contract.

2322. Very few complaints are made here.

2323. A *Sin-Kheh* can always get advances if he wants them.

2324. If a *Sin-Kheh* is in debt at the end of the year he is still bound under contract to his employer, but he is allowed wages at the same rate as an old coolie, i. e., \$3 a month as well as food and clothing.

2325. He is usually in debt after the expiry of his contract, but a good coolie can complete his contract in less time than the 360 days.

2326. Eight hours is the stipulated time for work in the mines. Formerly the men worked six to seven hours.

2327. They are paid 10 cents an hour for every hour afterwards.

2328. *Sin-Khehs* are sometimes allowed to work on the co-operative system, but it is not common now.

2329. For extra work on the co-operative system the extra time worked is credited to the coolie in Kongs. The number of Kongs worked is put up every month outside the Kongsí, and each coolie can check the number of Kongs credited to him.

2330. The present mining labour supply is satisfactory as regards Larút, because no new mines are being opened. Kinta and Krian have not enough.

2331. It has fallen off since 1887, owing to:—

- (1) direct emigration to Borneo and Sumatra;
- (2) the present tightness of the money market;
- (3) the losses sustained by the miners in Kinta;
- (4) the restrictions placed by the Chinese Government on emigration.

2332. I have heard of brokers being decapitated for enticing coolies away from China.

2333. This affects the Te-chius more especially.

2334. The miners are mostly Cantonese, Khehs, and Hok-kiens.

2335. I would suggest the establishment of Government depôts at Amoy for the convenience of the Hok-kiense miners, at Canton for the Cantonese and Kheh miners, and at Swatow for the Krian sugar-cane planters, through which the coolies could be brought direct to Perak, and so the cost of importation be much reduced—from \$22 to \$12 or \$14.

2336. A special depôt should be established for Perak.

2337. All licensed depôts in the Straits should be done away with; the present system is one of disguised slavery.

2338. The men who come down nominally as free passengers are really in debt to the brokers.

2339. The Agents of the Steam-ship Companies in China give the coolie- Mr. W. brokers passage tickets for the number of coolies recruited by them. The Agents Cowan. 10th secure themselves by getting promissory notes from the brokers, payable within a December. certain time or after the disposal of their coolies. The *Sin-Khehs*, on being questioned by the British Consul in China, generally say they are free passengers. They are undoubtedly taught to say so by the brokers, but on their arrival at Singapore and Penang they are kept in licensed depôts till they are redeemed by those who require labour.

2340. Any miner or planter wanting coolies should be able to send in his application to the Protectorate and on arrival of the coolies from China the applicants should be supplied in order of priority.

2341. I have known of many coolies signing contracts at the Chinese Protectorate, Straits Settlements, against their will at the instigation of the brokers.

2342. A steamer should run direct from Swatow or Canton to Penang, and the coolies be transhipped at Penang.

2343. The passage money would be reduced, the coolies more contented, and a better class of men would be obtained.

2344. I estimate the cost would be as follows:—

Passage money from Swatow to Perak, ...	...\$7
Recruiting fees, &c., ...	...\$3
Other expenses, ...	...\$2

2345. The men should be examined by a Mandarin and the Government Emigration Officer before their departure from China as to whether they are leaving of their own free will or not.

2346. I think \$12 to \$14 would be sufficient cost to secure enough coolies.

2347. The loss upon desertions, &c. while in transition to Perak should be borne by the miners and planters proportionately.

2348. *Kheh-Thaus* ought not to be employed at all.

2449. Men employed by Government could take charge of the coolies on the passage.

2350. The Government could meet the expenses by charging an extra 6 or 8 per cent. for the up-keep of the establishments in China.

2351. The cost to the broker at present is not more than \$10 a head on a large batch of coolies brought down. I do not know how his expenses are made up.

2352. The broker's business is a very paying one: I have seen the price of coolies for Sumatra run up by competition from \$40 to \$100 per man.

2353. By Mr. Swettenham:—I know a proposal has been made to establish direct importation from China into Perak, and that the Chinese employers had refused at the last moment to make the experiment.

2354. The employers are afraid of the Chinese authorities, who restrict emigration. I am sure of this, although the two Chinese Commissioners recently sent down here assured me they would advise the Chinese Government to remove all restrictions.

2355. I am sure the Chinese Government would remove all restrictions if the matter were put to them in a favourable light. I have good authority for this belief, viz., that of the two Commissioners, General Wong and Commissioner Tü.

2356. By the President:—The agricultural coolies are paid \$30 a year and their keep, also hospital expenses, &c.; from this, \$19.50 is recoverable for passage money.

2357. The supply is defective owing to the Sumatra demand.

Mr. W.
Cowan. 10th
December.

2358. Mostly Te-chius go to Krian.
2359. When they re-engage they get \$3 to \$4 a month, and food, &c. as before.
2360. The *Lau-Khehs* receive from \$3 to \$3.50 per month with the usual food, &c.
2361. The *Lau-Khehs* working on the Kraumah Kechil system get a small piece of land and sell the sugar produced on it to their employer at market rates and get the profits, less a tribute to the employer depending on the quality of the land.
2362. A buffalo driver gets \$9 a month, a sugar crusher \$11, and a sugar boiler \$15.
2363. There are not many of these kind of men.
2364. On some estates the men are employed on task work, but not on all.
2365. An agricultural *Sin-Khek* can work off his contract before the year is out by working overtime at 10 cents an hour. Very few do this, the majority take longer than their year.
2366. By Mr. Swettenham:—Desertions are frequent among opium smokers and those who have received large advances. They go to Deli and earn higher wages there. They are cramped by the Penang men; I have heard this from coolies myself.
2367. (Q.) Why do not all the coolies go to Sumatra when they can get better terms?—Because Province Wellesley planters were allowed to redeem coolies first. Another reason is that Deli formerly had a bad name for ill-treatment of coolies.
2368. The Krian estates are constantly inspected by the Police, and once a year by my officials.
2369. At Kinta a standing order by the Commandant of the Perak Sikhs compels the inspection of the works there once a week by Inspectors of Police.
2370. By the President:—No contracts are made in Perak for longer than a year.
2371. No ill-treatment of coolies goes on here, either on estates or mines; the men are very well looked after in all ways.
2372. I am allowed by the Labour Law to inspect the coolies, both contract and free. I think inspection of coolies desirable.
2373. I do not consider that the dépôt system was satisfactory at the time when I was in the Protectorate seven years ago. The coolies were forced to contract against their will, and I have known men flogged for refusing to go to Deli. *Lau-Khehs*, too, were kidnapped and placed in the dépôts.
2374. This is far less frequent now than formerly. I am sure the ill-treatment is less now than it used to be.
- [The witness handed in a list of the holidays observed among the coolies].
2375. By Mr. Swettenham:—Misrepresentations are certainly made to the coolies in China; they are completely under the thumb of the brokers, whom they trust more than European officials.
2376. A joint dépôt for the Straits Settlements and the Native States would, I think, be quite workable.
2377. Perak has a good name amongst the coolies; the Emperor of China presented the Cantonese Club with a tablet for their liberality to the China Famine Fund, and I am certain that if the labour question is put before the Chinese authorities in a clear light, all restrictions will be removed.

Mr W. J.
Coates. 10th
December.

- Mr. W. J. COATES, stated as follows:—
2378. I have been Assistant Manager at Kamuning for nearly nine months.
2379. We have 87 men now engaged at 20 cents per day for one year. They arrived during July and on September 1st.

Mr. W. J.
Coates. 10th
December.

2380. We have 60 coolies left on a 3-year contract.
2381. The first lot of the 3 years' agreement are acclimatised and of better health in consequence, but the second lot are a very fine set of men, though there is much sickness among them owing to the change of climate. Of the new lot there have been since their arrival 305 admissions into hospital, and a total of 2,018 amongst them since their arrival, with fever and dysentery.
2382. They were discontented at first, because some were men of higher caste than the rest.
2383. Among these 87 men one is mad, and two are in hospital, all three unable to work.
2384. The madman was mad when he arrived.
2385. The coolies are all satisfied now, with the exception of one man, a clerk.
2386. The men are not all agriculturalists by profession, but they are now working well on the estate all the same. The non-agriculturalists are put to work by themselves. About 80 and 90 percent of the men were agriculturalists.
2387. We supply rice at 23 cents a gantang, i.e., cost price.
2388. We used to get it through a Chetty at \$4.20 a bag of 19 gantangs.
2389. We also supply curry-stuffs, the cost of which averages about \$1 a month. The amount of rice taken varies, but we always supply eight gantangs or more if it is wanted. The average cost of rice is \$1.50 a month to coolies; that would make an average of \$2.50 per month for living.
2390. We are always willing to give the men gardens if they wish for them, and a great number already have them.
2391. The men work about twenty-two days a month on an average.
2392. We have sometimes paid an average of \$1 a head all round, after deducting \$1 for advances and the cost of their food.
2393. We take off no legitimate charges from the coolies.
2394. There is great difficulty in getting enough labour at present.
2395. Our average pay formerly was \$23.80 for coolies, but now we have reduced the price to \$21.01.
2396. We have as many coolies as we want just now.
2397. The coolies usually complete their tasks by 2 o'clock now, but formerly they had to work till 3.30 and 4 o'clock.
2398. The men are not allowed to work overtime.
2399. We got the 20 cents men through the Negapatam Agents.
2400. The women receive 20 cents too, which I consider very unfair.
2401. Six women came with the batch of eighty-seven coolies, and though four of them work badly they get their 20 cents all the same.
2402. There are no shops on the estate; but we are going to build one.
2403. The coolies are not forced to buy any food at all unless they care to.
2404. I have noticed no tendency among them to underfeed themselves.
2405. Our hospital bill amounts to \$36 to \$40 a month: we give them medical attendance free.
2406. We never give cooked rations except in hospital.
2407. The rice issued is Bengal rice.

Mr. W. J. Coates, 10th December. 2408. We pay our free coolies 30 cents, but we cannot keep them at the price, as I think it too high pay.

2409. The married coolies are the only ones who remain: they get gardens and so their vegetables are free.

2410. All our coolies get seven days' pay for six days' actual work.

2411. I am afraid all the 87 coolies will leave us at the end of their year's agreement if they continue to receive only 20 cents when other free coolies and road coolies get 30 cents.

2412. By Mr. MacGregor:—I cannot say what is the caste of the coolies who go to hospital, but they are the non-agriculturalists, or lazy coolies.

2413. I would advocate that a fixed rate of wages should be adopted for all estates if it could be worked.

2414. We have, so far, not caught any men selling their rice outside.

2415. By Mr. Turner:—The coolies are all quite contented on the estate.

2416. I think a two-year contract preferable to a three-year contract, because as soon as the coolies are acclimatised they then leave, and take to road-making, &c., but I hope most will remain if outside wages are not raised above estate wages.

2417. One old woman of the three-year contract, for instance, worked very discontentedly and badly because her advances had not been paid off; directly she paid some off she became a different woman and works well and cheerfully now.

2418. By Mr. Brown:—The contracts of both the one-year and three-year men will expire within a month or two of one another.

Mr. J. F. Cock, 10th December. Mr. J. F. Cock, Superintendent of Government Plantations, Perak, stated as follows:—

2419. By Mr. Swettenham:—I was formerly in charge of a Government Estate here, but it was a failure, principally owing to the exposed position.

2420. I employed Statute Immigrants at 33 cents, but I reduced it to 30 cents.

2421. I think the cost of importation was about \$22 per head including my expenses to India.

2422. I tried to recruit myself, but the private recruiters combined to prevent me. However, I did succeed in a small way. I do not think recruiting could ever be carried on there by Europeans alone as all the coolies go to the local recruiters.

2423. The cost of living on estates is from \$2.40 to \$3 per month, for rice and curry stuffs. This would not include betel-nut or tobacco.

2424. I charged the men 5 cents a chupak for rice, and they took, as a rule, from 24 to 30 chupaks a month.

2425. Eighty to ninety cents a month is a fair average for the cost of a coolie's extras.

2426. I do not interfere with the coolies' feeding arrangements unless they get ill, then I diet them; I believe the cost is about 7 cents a day, all included.

2427. I have never known a coolie to starve himself.

2428. I think the present rate of pay quite sufficient for the coolies.

2429. An extra good coolie earns 26 to 28 days' wages a month, an average coolie not more than 24.

2430. The coolies save nothing their first year.

2431. By Mr. MacGregor:—I have never ascertained the castes of the men who go into hospital.

2432. As a rule, weavers turn out excellent labourers.

Mr. J. F. Cock, 10th December. 2433. Europeans could never recruit in India without the aid of a native recruiter.

2434. By Mr. Swettenham:—Wages are about the same here as in Ceylon.

2435. Thirty to thirty-three rupee-cents is the average Ceylon wage.

2436. The price of provisions is much the same in both countries.

2437. By Mr. Turner:—Medical attendance in Ceylon is carried on under Government; I cannot say if the coolie is charged for it, but the produce is taxed.

2438. The advantages enjoyed by coolies are much the same in both countries.

2439. A coolie cannot support a wife here unless the wife works too. The Government often helped men with big families.

2440. By Mr. Swettenham:—One hundred and ten was, I think, the largest daily outturn of men I employed on Government Estates.

2441. I am paying my free coolies now 30 cents, at the top of the hill; that is the maximum.

2442. The coolies are not under regular inspection.

2443. I think inspection very undesirable; the coolie can take very good care of himself.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED AT 2 P.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.,
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (Secretary).

Mr. R. E. Bruce gave evidence as follows:—

Mr. R. E. Bruce, 10th December. 2444. By Mr. Swettenham:—I was for seven years Consular Constable at Kulug Chow, the port of Hainan.

2445. I used to go on board emigrant steamers with the Consul as Interpreter and to count the coolies.

2446. The headmen get the coolies from the interior; the headmen are on the books of the foreign firms, and so cannot be touched by the mandarins.

2447. They receive an advance of \$3 per man.

2448. They were put on board before daylight of the day on which the steamer sailed. The Consul and I went on board during the morning and asked the men if they were going voluntarily; the men were tutored to say 'yes' and the boat started as soon as possible after the Consul left.

2449. The boats went three or four times a month, carrying about 700 men each trip, and always to Singapore.

Mr. R. E.
Bruce. 10th
December.

2450. The men always say they have paid their passages but it is not the case.
2451. I once had three men released under these circumstances who happened to be known to me. They were in a *Kheh-Thau's* house in town, waiting to be shipped.
2452. The men themselves wished to go, but their parents appealed to me to prevent it.
2453. The principal recruiting firm was Messrs. SCHOMBERG & Co.
2454. The agent is responsible to the steamer and issues tickets to the *Kheh-Thau*, who guarantees payment on his return, giving security to the agent.
2455. When the *Kheh-Thau* goes back he hands over the money to the agent.
2456. I have seen several people who have returned to China (Hainan) from the Straits. They come back very poor, but I cannot say if they remit money or not from the Straits.
2457. Very few, comparatively, of those who go out come back again to China. I do not know what becomes of the rest.
2458. The Hainanese come down here mostly as indoor servants, not as labourers.
2459. The people of the country complain that the men who go away do not return.
2460. Complaints of kidnapping have been made, and the guilty parties handed over to the authorities. The Chinese law punishes kidnappers with decapitation.
2461. The majority of the Hainanese come down under advances, but I do not know how they arrange the debt on arrival at Singapore.
2462. If a *Kheh-Thau* brings down 100 men he can make \$10 a head profit, paying all expenses.
2463. The cost of landing a coolie in Singapore is \$10, of which \$3 is for advance and \$7 for passage money.
2464. Labour could be procured in any quantity from Hainan, if recruiters were sent up there.
2465. By Mr. Turner:—The coolies are all anxious to come down to Singapore owing to false representations made to them.
2466. Hainans are very good workmen and would be excellent for sugar planting.
2467. They plant paddy largely in their own country.
- Ng Ah Siang. 10th December. *Ng Ah Siang*, Cantonese Mining *Sin-Kheh*, under contract, was examined as follows (Mr. Bruce interpreting):—
2468. I came to Perak the 2nd moon of this year.
2469. I know the terms of my contract: it was made here.
2470. I came here to look for money: I was told it was easy to get money here: I think that is the truth. I am quite satisfied.
2471. I have not been told to say this.
2472. I was told I should have to do basket carrying: that is my occupation now. It is not hard work. I work six hours a day, at 40 cents a day.
2473. When provisions are deducted, I get about 30 cents paid.
2474. I know that \$22 will be deducted from the \$42 to be paid to me when the agreement expires.

Ng Ah Siang.
10th Decem-
ber.

2475. I am working on the co-operative system, and the mine is paying well.
2476. The value of a "Kung" is 40 cents.
2477. The accounts have been made up once already since I arrived, and I received \$40 which I sent to China.
2478. I am not married. I am going back to China as soon as my contract ends, i.e., in the 12th moon.
2479. When I was recruited no misrepresentations were made to me to induce me to come. I have heard of this place from other people, my friends.
2480. I was in the depôt at Singapore for 14 days. The depôt-keeper told me Perak was a good country, but he did not force me to come. I came of my own free will.
2481. The depôt-keeper did not ill-treat me, nor try to get me to go to Deli, nor to do anything I did not wish to.
2482. I received \$2 in Hongkong.
2483. My mother sold some pigs and gave me \$10 to come here with.
2484. 20 or 30 of my village people came too: they are all here now except two who are dead.
- Yun Lam, Cantonese, from Hong Fu Chau province, gave the following evidence, Mr. Bruce interpreting:—
2485. I have been here seven or eight months, and am a mining *Sin-Kheh*.
2486. I made my contract at the Chinese Protectorate, Penang.
2487. I do not know the terms of the contract, but I know I must work 360 days. I forget how much I was to earn.
2488. I am not working on the co-operative system.
2489. I am satisfied with my position.
2490. The hours of work are regulated by the flags. [This is an arrangement to ensure that the hours of work are according to State regulations.]
2491. When I left China I meant to come to Perak as a tin-miner.
2492. Yun-Tak brought me here, but he promised to take me to Kinta. He gave nothing to me or to my parents.
2493. The man who redeemed me here paid for my passage.
2494. I embarked at Hongkong. I went into a Penang depôt. I got no money there. I was not told there what I should do.
2495. The man who redeemed me told me to sign the contract.
2496. I have received \$1 wages here in the 8th moon. I am well fed and clothed. I have received in all about \$3.
2497. I have sent no money to China.
2498. At the end of my contract I expect to get \$300 or \$400. This is what I myself think I ought to get; no one told me so.
2499. I have got a copy of the contract, but I cannot read.
2500. I cannot go back to China if I do not get that money.
2501. I shall be quite happy if I only get \$3 to \$4 when I finish my contract.
2502. I expected to have to work here for two or three years when I left China.

2503. In China I was a petty trader.

2504. I am working at the mine now, carrying tin-sand.

2505. No one told me what to say here to-day.

Cheh Wye, Cantonese mining *Sin-Kheh* gave the following evidence (Mr. COWAN interpreting):—

2506. I have been here since the 2nd moon.

2507. I am a co-operative coolie.

2508. I heard of Perak, in China and left to come here; my brother is here.

2509. The mine accounts have been made up once since I came, and I received \$20 to \$30 which I sent to China.

2510. The Towkay has been finding me in food and clothes.

2511. I am quite satisfied.

2512. My brother sent \$100 to \$200 to China before I came down here.

2513. I was an agriculturalist in China.

2514. Many of my friends come here, they think it a good place.

Kong Juan, free coolie working on the Kongsu-Kong system, gave the following evidence (Mr. COWAN interpreting):—

2515. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I have been here four years, working in a mine at Kota.

2516. I get 26 cents a day with rice and firewood, and \$1 a month for vegetables, which is deducted from my wages. The employer gives me a house.

2517. I am quite satisfied.

2518. I work six hours a day.

2519. I have not been back to China since I came.

2520. I have saved about \$5 a month, all deductions made, and I have sent about \$30 a year to China.

2521. I work about 304 days a year.

2522. I am an Assistant Tyndal. I came down as a free coolie, and paid my own passage.

2523. I like being here, because I make money. I am a married man, but it is hard to bring my wife down here. She wants to come, but I would not bring her while I am a coolie, and have to live in the Kongsu house.

2524. I am going to China in the 12th moon, when I get my pay, and shall bring my wife back with me. I shall come back again still as a miner.

2525. I shall try to persuade some friends to come back with me.

Mr. F. St. G. Caulfield, State Engineer, Perak, was examined and stated:—

2526. *By the President*:—I have been here eleven years.

2527. We are employing about 400 Tamils in Larut at present, all free coolies, picked up in the town.

2528. The wages are from 25 to 35 cents a day.

2529. The working hours are, as a rule, from 6 to 2 o'clock, because the men then knock off before the rain which generally falls in the afternoon, but we give them task work whenever we can.

2530. In 1884, we had about 500 free Tamils, mostly time-served men from Mr. F. St. G. estates, at 20 cents in Taiping, but at Kwala Kangsa 35 cents. Even on that pay they would only work a month at a time in Kwala Kangsa, and had to be constantly moved about.

2531. Wages have risen owing to competition among the contractors. On the Selama Road, W. H. TATE & Co. have been paying 35 cents.

2532. Thirty cents a day is the general rate, and at that wage I can get any number of coolies, but not for less.

2533. A coolie gets 50 cents for going up the hill, but then he does not work next day.

2534. They will go to the "Tea Gardens" for 25 cents.

2535. I have never employed Statute coolies.

2536. Our coolies very seldom go to hospital. When they go there injured by an accident the State pays their expenses; if otherwise I do not know what the rule is.

2537. They get nothing given them above the 30 cents, and are not provided with houses.

2538. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—Large numbers of our coolies used to come over from Province Wellesley; I cannot say where they come from now.

2539. If I wanted 400 more coolies, I believe I should have no difficulty in getting them at once. Possibly they would come from Province Wellesley.

2540. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—There is a large resident Tamil population here.

2541. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—If I wanted a very large additional number, say 2,000, I probably could not get them all at once, but I believe that the offer of 30 cents a day would bring this number into the State in a year or less.

2542. I believe that if everybody paid 30 cents large numbers of free coolies would come into the State.

2543. *By Mr. Turner*:—Some contractors, *e. g.*, Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE, have imported coolies themselves: they employed them as free men, but some ran away, and were caught and brought back and made to work as indentured coolies at the enactment rate of pay.

Dr. H. H. Sheppard, State Surgeon, Perak, gave evidence as follows:—

2544. *By the President*:—I have been here ten years as Surgeon.

2545. I have seen the Tamils on all the estates in the country. They used to be very sickly on arrival and for some months afterwards. Their health has improved to some extent during the last twelve months, but still it is not good on arrival.

2546. I examine the coolies individually.

2547. The quantity of food given is sufficient, but there is not sufficient variety. This is especially the case on estates far off the highroad.

2548. The labour on coffee estates is very light.

2549. The sugar labour is harder but not so hard as to make a coolie ill from it.

2550. After a certain time the coolies' health almost always improves on the estates.

2551. I do not know the general death-rate of the State, so cannot compare it with that on estates, but I believe the latter would compare favourably.

2552. The lines and hospitals are all satisfactory on all the estates.

Dr. H. H. Sheppard,
10th Decem-
ber.

Dr. H. H.
Sheppard.
10th Decem-
ber.

2553. The water supply on all estates is very fair now, and has been greatly improved of late.

2554. The death-rate must always be higher on newly opened ground.

2555. I think the wages the coolies receive in the Straits are scarcely sufficient to buy them proper food. A coolie can scarcely live in Taiping on less than 8 cents a day, and 10 cents on the one day in the week on which he eats flesh.

[The witness handed in a statement relative to the cost of the coolies' food.]

2556. A coolie could just live on from 7 to 8 cents a day, ordinary food.

2557. Contract coolies are charged 10 cents a day in the State Hospital, and free coolies 16 cents: Government coolies are charged 10 cents.

2558. I do not think the Tamil coolie's feeding hours—6 A.M. and 2 P.M.—good: but it does not seem to affect him. It is too long for a man to wait till 2 o'clock for his meal: the mid-day meal should be earlier.

2559. The Gaol diet is excessive, but is not so generous as that in force in the Straits; its average cost is 12 cents a day. Details are given in the authorised scale which I hand in.*

2560. I inspect every estate where Immigrants are employed once every three months.

2561. I do not inspect the free coolies.

2562. I think newly-arrived coolies should be dieted: they are in a weak state when they arrive, due, I understand, to the insufficient food issued to them by the recruiters in the depôt in India.

2563. I do not ascribe their weak state as a rule to constitutional defects; still many cases of the latter kind occur.

2564. Cases have occurred of men arriving quite incapacitated for work by natural defects.

2565. *By Mr. Turner:*—Numbers of boys who come to hospital are too young to have ever worked as labourers at all; their ages are often 15 or 16.

2566. I think the abolition of Sunday labour would be an incentive to the coolies to work harder on other days.

2567. *By the President:*—The Khehs are the most unhealthy tribe we have in this country.

* SCALE OF DIETS TO BE SUPPLIED TO NATIVE PRISONERS IN THE TAIPING GAOL.

Congee at 6 a. m.; Morning Meal at 10.30 a. m.; Evening Meal at 4.30 p. m.

Articles of Diet.	Ordinary Diet.	Penal Diet.	Remarks.	Cost stated by Dr. Sheppard.
	Taels Daily.	Taels Daily.		
Rice	18	11		
Salt Fish	4	2		
Vegetables	8	2		
Dholl	1	2		
Oil (Kachang)	4	2		
Salt	4	2		
Tea	4	2		
Firewood	4 lbs.	3 lbs.		
			On the days meat or fresh fish is not given.	7½ cents.
			Five to six packets per diem for 200 men.	2½ cents.

On Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday, morning meal at 10.30 a.m.
Chinese ... 3 Taels fresh Pork per man. 5 cents.
Malays ... 3 " " Beef " 1½ "
Klings ... 3 " " Fish " 2½ "

2568. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—In 1884, there were 900 patients in the hospital, and now there are not more than 300.

2569. I attribute this to the improved sanitary arrangements in the mines.

Loh Ah Pang, mining advancer, gave the following evidence (*Mr. Cowan* interpreting):—

2570. I have been 25 years here.

2571. I employed 400 men in Larut last year and over 100 this year.

2572. Last year, in Kinta, I employed over 200. I cannot get enough coolies.

2573. I formerly employed *Sin-Khehs*, but do not do so now as it costs \$26 to \$27 to redeem them in Penang, which is too much to have to pay.

2574. The \$26 to \$27 is irrespective of contract fees in Penang, depôt fees, passage money, &c.

2575. The total cost is \$29 to \$30 per head landed here.

2576. In addition to this, I find them clothes, food, cash, &c., making up the total yearly cost to about \$70. This also includes an advance of \$6.

2577. According to the contract, the pay of the coolie is \$42, and only \$22 of this is recoverable, but as the actual cost of the coolie is \$30 I deduct this, leaving \$12 for the coolie. From this again is deducted cost of his mosquito curtain, bedding, &c. so that the coolie only actually receives about \$6 cash in the year.

2578. The mine does not pay well enough to cover the cost of *Sin-Khehs*, and I therefore employ co-operative coolies, as they are more profitable.

2579. Coolies prefer to work on the co-operative system. They make \$8 to \$10 per month each, which does not include the cost of their food; that is given in addition.

2580. The mine is not paying this year.

2581. The want of labour is due to the emigration of coolies to Deli: the brokers get a larger commission there.

2582. It costs at least \$3 more to bring coolies down through the Penang depôts than to bring them direct from China. Coming direct from China the coolies should cost \$18 to \$20.

2583. I think direct immigration at this cost is practicable here.

2584. The passage money from Hongkong to Penang is \$10.

2585. The depôt fee in Hongkong is \$2.

2586. The recruiting fees are \$3.

2587. The expenses from Penang to Perak are \$2.

2588. I think the expenses ought not to exceed this.

2589. The passage money from Hongkong to Penang should be paid by the *Kheh-Thau*. He would want \$4 to \$5 profit, making the total cost about \$23.

2590. I used to buy my men from the depôts, but I have not bought any *Sin-Khehs* now for nearly three years.

2591. People here take very few *Sin-Khehs* now. This is due partly to the low price of tin; and partly to the heavy cost of importation.

2592. Formerly men worked on rich soil in the mines, but that is now worked out.

Dr. H. H.
Sheppard.
10th Decem-
ber.

Loh Ah Pang.
10th Decem-
ber.

Loh Ah Pang. 2593. I have no suggestion to offer except that coolies should not be made to enter into contracts in the Penang depôts; that should be done in Perak.

2594. When the coolies arrive here the money could be refunded to the *Kheh-Thau*.

2595. I originally came here as an advancer, from Penang, where I was a trader for two years.

2596. Recruiters in China usually give the *Sin-Kheh's* parents a little money to keep them, and pay the passages.

2597. Misrepresentations were formerly made in China, but very seldom now.

2598. Men used to be sold to Deli who had come down to work here: this does not occur now; the men who did it would be punished.

2599. The Chinese Government does not obstruct emigration.

2600. I am always able to get enough men, as I am well known to the Chinese authorities.

2601. I do not want any more coolies now.

Koo Teng Sui. 2602. *Koo Teng Sui*, Hok-kien mining advancer, gave the following evidence (Mr. Cowan interpreting):—

2602. I have been here eight years.

2603. I have imported coolies myself, but two or three years ago being Agent for Bun Hin & Co. I took over some Sien-iu coolies imported by them. There were 1,000, now distributed about Perak.

2604. They were employed as Nai-Chiang and Kongsu-Kong coolies.

2605. They began to come over five years ago.

2606. They are not a success; they make but little money and, therefore, the passages are difficult to recover, and the coolies also worked badly and deserted from several unprofitable mines.

2607. The cost of their importation was \$15 landed here, and \$13 in Penang; including expenses in Penang, the total cost was \$18.

2608. They eat a great deal and do not work, so the mining employers do not like them.

2609. They were recruited by *Kheh-Thaus* returned to China from Perak, at a time when there was great demand for labour.

2610. The men are so cheap, because they are not sold like the other coolies, and do not pass through the brokers' hands at all.

2611. The brokers would not take them because they are Hok-kiens.

The meeting adjourned at 5 P. M.

R. P. G.

TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 17TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).

The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.

F. POWELL, Esquire.

Mr. O. Haacke. 17th follows:—
December.

2612. By the President:—I have been about two years in charge of the firm's coolie business in Penang.

2613. We engage coolies for the Sumatra tobacco planters.

2614. We get them only through Penang brokers, and do not import at all.

2615. We engage both *Sin-Khehs* and *Lau-Khehs*.

2616. The brokers call at our office each day for orders and the most reliable and solvent broker gets the order.

2617. I very seldom go to the depôts myself. I see the coolies photographed after they have been passed by me and medically inspected, and they then go direct to the Protectorate and sign the contracts, and from there on board the steamers.

2618. The broker delivers the coolies on the estate, and is paid when the manager's receipt is received.

2619. Many coolies run away from the estates, and some return here to make a new contract: we cannot prosecute such men, as the contracts have been broken in Dutch Colonies and no extradition treaty covers this kind of breach of contracts.

2620. For Hai-lok-hong *Sin-Khehs* we pay now \$80 to \$90 for coolies delivered in Sumatra; these are very scarce. We get *Te-chius* also, and occasionally *Khehs*, but they are all hard to get.

2621. For *Khehs* we pay about \$48 to \$50.

2622. Macaos are not wanted.

2623. We use the usual Protectorate form of contract.

2624. We cannot get enough coolies to meet the demand: when we want 1,000 coolies we cannot get more than 400 or 500.

2625. The scarcity of *Lau-Khehs* has only recently been felt here.

2626. *Lau-Khehs* and *Sin-Khehs* are under the same contract.

2627. I think the men are better now physically than they were nine months ago.

2628. *Sin-Khehs* are always of good physique, but *Lau-Khehs* suffer largely from venereal disease.

2629. I have never been able to prove a case of robbery on the part of the brokers.

2630. I noticed a scarcity of *Sin-Khehs* as soon as the direct emigration to Deli began: their price fell at first, but afterwards rose.

2631. I think the coolies are afraid to sign, in China, contracts to go to Deli and prefer to a certain extent to go through broker's houses. These, besides their facilities in advancing to the men in China through their clansmen, appear to enjoy more confidence with the ignorant class of men coming down.

2632. The Sumatra planters' limit is now less for coolies in order to discourage indirect importation (*i.e.*, *via* Singapore and Penang to Deli through brokers). They could of course now acquire hands here considerably cheaper than their direct imports cost them.

2633. I cannot say whether the recent Court decision affected the supply of labour.

2634. We do no business with the Province or the Native States.

2635. I think the law should allow of coolies being prosecuted when they desert in Sumatra: they cannot be punished as it stands at present.

Mr. O.
Haacke. 17th
December.

Mr. O. Haacke. 17th December. 2636. *By Mr. Powell*:—I do not think that this Government should import coolies for Sumatra as well as here. This ought to be left to private enterprise; a fair distribution would always be exceedingly difficult. Deli could, generally speaking, pay far better rates than planters on this side.

2637. Coolies imported direct to Sumatra cost about \$120 to \$140 on an average and their quality has been anything but satisfactory.

2638. The direct supply is not nearly sufficient for the Deli planters' requirements.

Tan Sim Ho. 17th December. TAN SIM HO, sugar planter at Simpang Ampat, Province Wellesley, was examined (NG LIEN HENG interpreting):—

2639. *By Mr. Powell*:—I have over 200 Chinese on my estate, Te-chius, Hok-kiens, Hailams and Hok-chius, 110 or 120 of the last.

2640. Some have been on the estate five and even seven years.

2641. They were brought down by *Lau-Khehs* who went back to China from the estate.

2642. Some have come down this year.

2643. We pay them *Lau-Khek* wages, that is, from \$3.50 to \$4.20 per month.

2644. To bad workers I pay \$2 and \$3.

2645. The *Khek-Thaus* pay the passages down and all expenses.

2646. Some men are paid extra for extra work.

2647. The *Khek-Thau* recovers the passage money in instalments of \$1 a month.

2648. I pay the wages myself.

2649. The men all refuse to sign contracts.

2650. They can leave the estate whenever they like.

2651. The men who say their wages are not paid are wicked men; they would not work; if they are not satisfied they can go.

2652. Some of the coolies are good workers, and some are not; some of them are not agriculturalists in China, they are stone-cutters, carpenters, &c.

2653. We cannot force coolies to go to the depôts if they refuse to do so.

2654. *By Mr. Vermont*:—The men get \$3 to \$4 and their food; the terms are the same as for the old coolies.

2655. The wages are \$30, \$40, and \$45, the difference being due to the various work they are employed on, *e. g.*, boatmen get \$4; leaf strippers get \$2.50; cartmen \$5; milk-men \$5.

2656. The cost of food per man is about \$2.40 a month.

2657. If they work only 20 days they must pay back 5 days' food or the equivalent in money, *i. e.*, 40 cents, but if 25 days, they are fed all through the month.

2658. On holidays they get extra food, free of cost.

2659. If my *Sin-Khehs* are sick I send them to the Government hospital; I used to pay the cost myself, but as they are on the same standard as *Lau-Khehs* now I do not do so.

2660. The *Khek-Thaus* find the advances themselves; I do not advance them the money.

2661. I settle the accounts every month; if I did not the men would not work.

2662. *By Mr. Brown*:—The passage money from Amoy to Penang is \$7. Tan Sim Ho. 17th December.

2663. I pay the wages to the coolies and I deduct the passage money. I keep an account, and the coolies never complain.

2664. The advances are paid off always in the first 8 months.

2665. There is nothing to prevent the coolies leaving before their debt is worked off.

2666. We pay the men according to the number of days' work they do; for half a day's work a man gets half a day's pay.

2667. *By the President*:—There is no specified task to be done each day; the men are paid by the hour.

2668. The hours of work are from 6 till 10.15 a.m., and from 1 till 5.30 p.m.

YAU CHUI TEE, Mandor on TAN SIM HO's estate, was examined as follows (NG LIEN HENG interpreting):— Yau Chui Tee. 17th December.

2669. *By Mr. Powell*:—I came here from China nine years ago. I went to China in the 6th moon of this year and returned here in the 8th moon bringing down more than 30 coolies.

2670. I paid the passage money of 14 of these; the rest paid their own passages.

2671. The coolies refund the money to me.

2672. I agreed in China to pay them \$3.50 a month and that \$1 a month of this should be deducted until the passage money was repaid.

2673. The coolies' expenses on the voyage and from Foochow to Amoy are not included in the passage money, which is \$7.70.

2674. The extra expenses of the passage from Foochow to Amoy amount to rather more than \$1 (about \$1.30) and I recover this from the coolie also.

2675. The men stay with me because they have no money to pay their passage home.

2676. No men go away without paying back the money.

2677. The coolies pay me \$1 as commission, so I get \$10 in all.

2678. The Towkay pays coolies' wages himself each month, and I get my \$1 then.

2679. There are plenty of men in Foochow who would like to come down here, but they have no money for their passages.

2680. *By Mr. Vermont*:—I make no profit on the coolies. I bring them down without charging any commission to the Towkay, because I have been a long time on the estate and he has been kind to me.

2681. The coolies come to me and ask me to bring them down. I did not persuade them to come.

2682. I incur no risk, because the coolies all live in the same village in China as myself.

2683. I was formerly a Tyndal on the estate.

2684. *By Mr. Kho Bu Ann*:—I can trust the men from my own village, but not those from outside: they might run away after getting the money from me.

The meeting adjourned at 1.15 p. m.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED AT THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 2.30 P. M.

PRESENT :

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire, (*Secretary*).

Lye Wat. 17th Decem-ber. *Lye Wat*, proprietor of Valdor Estate, Province Wellesley, was examined (ENG LING HIN interpreting) :—

2685. *By Mr. Powell* :—I have been a planter for seventeen or eighteen years; I was formerly a shop-keeper, and before that I was employed as a *Sin-Kheh* in the shop.

2686. I employ almost entirely Te-chius.

2687. The supply of labour has decreased during the last five years.

2688. I cannot now get as many as I want; I attribute this to the fact that the *Sin-Khehs*, if not redeemed, are released from the depôts after ten days' detention.

2689. Complaints are also made to P'NG TAI JIN by parents of their sons being enticed away, and he punishes men who bring coolies away.

2690. He came down to Te-chiu four or five months ago and the scarcity of labour has increased since then.

2691. Labour is also scarce owing to the *Sin-Khehs* going to Deli instead of to Province Wellesley.

2692. I know the EE KEE depôt, and that they brought down large numbers of unpaid passengers; they do not do this now, because the Chinese law forbids it; if they do so, they are arrested.

2693. The men may come if they pay their own passages.

2694. If enough money were given to the *Kheh-Thaus* to bring men down, plenty would come; but they either run away when they arrive, or are released by the Protector; the risks are too great, and I do not care to incur them.

TAMILS.

2695. I employ Klings because I cannot get Chinese.

2696. They work fairly well, but some run away; on those who run away I lose about as much as I should on Chinese.

2697. I can get as many as I want if I care to pay the money.

2698. I got my last batch of Klings under contract last May.

2699. I paid \$20.50 for each man; I paid this to the agent.

2700. If I could get an unlimited supply of each I would take Chinese for choice; they work better.

2701. I would prefer *Sin-Khehs*, because *Lau-Khehs* are dearer; they want more wages.

2702. The *Lau-Khehs* work well, but they are dishonest.

2703. *By Mr. Kho Bu Ann* :—The *Kheh-Thaus* are not sufficiently paid and

they lose money on bringing men down, but I cannot say whether the want of labour is due more to this cause than to the obstruction in China. Lye Wat. 17th Decem-ber.

2704. When coolies run away the *Kheh-Thau* bears the loss.

2705. *By Mr. Brown* :—I do not know all the items of which the total cost of importation is made up; the price varies, and depends on the individual *Kheh-Thaus*.

Ang Khai, Depôt-keeper, gave the following evidence :—

Ang Khai. 17th Decem-ber.

2706. I have several depôts here; The chops are KONG YAT THAI, KONG YAT THAI CHAN, and KONG JU HONG.

2707. I had four depôts formerly, but now only three, not including one *Lau-Kheh* depôt, chop CHOAN HOAT.

2708. I have been a depôt-keeper for ten years; before that I kept a rice shop.

2709. I was never a *Kheh-Thau*, and was not a depôt-keeper in China. I lived in Hok-kien.

2710. There were once 96 depôts in Hongkong, now there are only 10; this is because they lost so much money there owing to the recent Court decision, which has spoilt the coolie business.

2711. I get now only 40 to 50 *Sin-Khehs* a month.

2712. Most of the coolies are released by the Protectorate, and do not come back again.

2713. The coolies brought here to me pass through the Singapore depôts; I pay the Hongkong depôt-keepers for them.

2714. I get Hai-lok-hongs, Te-chius, Khehs, Macaos, in fact, any that I can get.

2715. I write to China for my coolies, but they all come through Singapore.

2716. For Hai-lok-hongs I pay about \$55 to the Hongkong man; I do not pay the *Kheh-Thaus* myself.

2717. I pay \$1.50 to the Singapore broker, and \$1.20 to the *Kheh-Thau* who brings them down, for his trouble.

2718. I sell them in Deli for about \$70, but then I have an additional expense of \$7.50, as follows, that is \$1 stamp, \$3 passage, doctor 50 cents, photograph 50 cents, \$1.50 for food and railway expense and \$1 to the *Kheh-Thau*.

2719. My profit is \$4.50, but sometimes 4 or 5 coolies run away out of 20. I am speaking now of Te-chius.

2720. For Khehs and Macaos I pay about \$28 in Hongkong: the other expenses are the same as for Te-chius.

2721. I charge the Hongkong Depôt 10 cents a day for the food of all the coolies staying in my depôt here.

2722. I sell them in Deli for \$47.

2723. I make very little profit on these men.

2724. Not many of them run away on the way to Deli.

2725. The Hongkong people pay the loss on any men who run away before they reach my depôt. After that I am responsible.

2726. People for all parts pass through my hands: for Perak, the Province, Penang, &c.

2727. Macaos prefer Perak, Te-chius prefer the Province, Hai-lok-hongs go to Deli, and Khehs to Perak.

Ang Khai.
17th Decem-
ber.

2728. The men may go wherever they like; I do not persuade them to go anywhere against their will.

2729. If I wanted 500 coolies now I could not get them; I should have difficulty in getting over 50 or 100; 3 years ago I could get 1,000 coolies without difficulty.

2730. If the law were amended to what it was a few months ago I could get more coolies.

2731. I get coolies from Swatow; I could be sure of getting enough from there if I wrote up for them.

2732. We are licensed by Government to keep a *Lau-Kheh* depôt. If a man wants work he comes to me and I give an advance. A good many run away afterwards; they go to Deli and plant tobacco. To recover such losses I charge the planters high prices for the coolies I send them.

2733. I spend about \$20 in advances to the *Lau-Kheh*. He makes a contract at the Protectorate.

2734. The passage money and other expenses for a *Lau-Kheh* are \$7.50.

2735. I sell them at \$45 a head.

2736. I am responsible till they are delivered on the estate; but large numbers run away, far more than *Sin-Khehs*.

2737. All *Lau-Khehs* cost me the same.

2738. By Mr. Vermont:—The *Lau-Kheh* spends his \$20 in food, clothing and on brothels.

2739. By Mr. Kho Bu Ann:—Some *Lau-Khehs* come of their own accord to the depôts and some are brought by their friends.

2740. Some of the *Lau-Khehs* tell me they want the advance to pay off their debts, but I do not know what the debts are.

2741. I make the advance in instalments of \$3 and \$4 at a time.

2742. When coolies arrive at Singapore the *Kheh-Thaus* make misrepresentations to them and induce them to remain there.

2743. By Mr. Powell:—I was formerly connected with the *EE KEE* firm, and did a large business in coolies.

2744. The depôt was closed owing to some trouble in China.

2745. I was the manager of the depôt.

2746. The *Sin-Khehs*' parents complained to the Mandarins in China and the depôt there was in consequence closed.

2747. If this Government could arrange for *Kheh-Thaus* to bring coolies down here, plenty of coolies could be got.

2748. Complaints were recently made by the parents of 120 coolies who were being brought down to Penang, but who were enticed away at Singapore and sent off to other places; they wrote home and complained, and owing to this the Mandarins stopped the emigration.

2749. If the Government would protect the coolie depôts at Swatow, many depôts would be opened there. I would be willing to carry on a depôt myself.

2750. I make about the same profit on coolies sent to Province Wellesley as on those sent to Deli.

2751. By Mr. Kho Bu Ann:—I charge \$1 entrance fee to my depôt, and lose money by it. Ang Khai.
17th Decem-
ber.

2752. If relatives or others wish to redeem coolies from the depôt they can do so by paying \$19.50, i.e., the passage money and expenses from China.

The meeting adjourned at 4.45 p. m.

R. P. G.

TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, ON THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 18TH, 1890, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).
F. POWELL, Esquire.
KHO BU ANN, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (Secretary).

Mr. W. EGERTON, Acting Senior District Officer, Province Wellesley, stated as follows:— Mr. W. Egerton.
18th
December.

2753. By the President:—I have been at Butterworth in my present capacity since April, and have twice previously acted as Magistrate in the Province.

2754. I think Tamils are nearly always well treated on the estates here.

2755. The large majority of cases that come before me are brought by the employer against the coolies for neglect to labour.

2756. The usual excuses are sickness and ignorance of the kind of work they have to do.

2757. I believe the latter excuse is often genuine, but as a Magistrate I cannot admit this as an excuse for not working. They do not complain to me of the low rate of pay, but I believe it to be a general cause of dissatisfaction; not many well-founded complaints of bad treatment or stoppages of pay by the Tyndals are made.

2758. I think the term of contract too long; to the coolie three years seems endless.

2759. I see no reason why, if Chinese are brought down on a one year's contract, Tamils should be called upon to serve for three.

2760. I think contracts should be done away with altogether.

2761. The cost of importation should fall in the first instance on Government, and the planters should apply to Government for their coolies.

2762. If Government brought over large numbers of coolies, monthly contracts could be entered into and the expense of bringing them over would be so reduced that the advances would be inconsiderable and the coolies would not have so much inducement to desert; moreover, the cost both to the employer and the Government would be much less.

2763. A coolie could be punished for desertion by imprisonment, but on his release should be a free man, even though he had done no work.

2764. I think the Tamil is quite sufficiently paid. A large number of Indians come over who are quite unfit for estate work.

2765. Government inspection of free Tamil coolies is, I consider, unnecessary except on outlying estates such as Gula. These men can usually take care of them-

Mr. W. Eger- selves, except as regards sanitary arrangements, building, water, &c., but if these
ton. 18th were bad the estate would become unpopular.
December.

2766. The men sometimes say they have worked off a larger period of their contract than the employer's books show, but I think they are generally mistaken.

CHINESE.

2767. Chinese coolies who are brought before me are almost invariably charged with desertion.

2768. They frequently complain of having been beaten, and sometimes say they are afraid to return to the estate after desertion.

2769. I believe Chinese coolies are ill-treated both on European and Chinese estates, though without the European's knowledge; they are often tied up and beaten. This is done by the owners of the Kongsis and their Tyndals. They are not under the eye of the Manager like the Tamils, and are almost entirely at the mercy of the headmen of the Kongsis.

2770. I cannot say whether they are properly paid or not.

2771. As a remedy I would suggest a Government inspection for contract coolies.

2772. The Government officials should also have full powers to inspect any estates or coolies and at all times.

2773. The Chinese coolie can often be detained even though he is not under contract, and the inspection would check any such abuse.

2774. I think the same Ordinance could apply to both Tamil and Chinese coolies.

2775. The prosecutions of coolies are generally conducted by the European Manager or his Assistant.

2776. As far as I know coolies are only brought up for trial on the day of hearing; I do not believe they are kept locked up for any time beforehand, except, of course, in cases of desertion.

2777. I have no experience of China or India.

2778. I do not talk Tamil.

2779. *By Mr. Brown:*—In advocating a short term of contract I am speaking only from the coolie's point of view.

2780. Contracts could, of course, only be done away with if the supply of labour was large and guaranteed at all times.

2781. Chinese coolies frequently do not work off their advance within the year, but I fancy the employers are not over anxious for the coolie to do this. I do not think the system of keeping men for unlimited periods, after their contracts have expired, in order to compel them to work off their advances, is a good one.

Nga Yok. Chop *Siu Siu Long*, Cantonese Depôt-keeper, was examined (CHEAM
18th Decem-
ber. CHEOW HENG interpreting):—

2782. I have one *Sin-Kheh* depôt only.

2783. I get coolies from Hongkong and Swatow, *Te-chius* for plantation work, Cantonese and *Khehs*.

2784. I get very few *Te-chius* now, but a good many Cantonese.

2785. I get *Khehs* and Cantonese for Perak and Deli; about the same number go to each place.

2786. For mining coolies sent to Kinta and Larut, I get \$23 to \$28.

2787. For tobacco planting coolies to Deli I get \$47.50, out of which I pay *Nga Yok* \$10.50 advance to the coolies; doctor's fee, 50 cents; photograph, 50 cents; stamp, 18th Decem-
\$1; passage money, \$1; lodging in Deli, 50 cents; sampan hire, 10 cents; railway ber.
fare, 40 cents; *AN KEH*'s payment, \$1 per coolie; railway fare, 10 cents; total \$15.60.

2788. I have to deliver Deli coolies on the estates, but for coolies sent to Perak I am only responsible until they are put on board here.

TE-CHIUS.

2789. I send all my *Te-chius* to sugar estates in Province Wellesley or Trans-Krian: none go to Deli.

2790. For coolies sent to Province Wellesley I get \$35 at least, out of which I pay the Swatow firm \$30 per man.

2791. If a man is redeemed by his relations I bear half the loss and the Swatow firm the other half.

2792. About 100 coolies are redeemed in a year by relations.

2793. It costs me \$19.50 to bring men down from China.

2794. The passage money is \$8 or \$9.

2795. The supply of coolies has diminished during the last two years.

2796. This is owing to the direct emigration to Deli and to Borneo and to coolies being released by the Protectorate: also to the coolies being at liberty to leave the depôt when they please, or not to enter it at all.

2797. If coolies cannot be detained in depôts no unpaid passengers will come down.

2798. My depôt costs me over \$200 a month.

The rent, including rates and assessment, is	...\$ 80
Food, ...	... 75
Servants' wages, ...	... 85
Total, ...	\$240

2799. I have four houses, registered for 100 men altogether.

2800. I have only 4 men in there to-day: I had 6, but 2 have gone out and I do not know if they will return or not.

2801. I have nothing to do with *Lau-Khehs*.

HENG BENG CHIAN, owner of Junjong Mati sugar estate, Province Wellesley, was examined (CHEAM CHEOW HENG interpreting):—
Heng Beng Chian. 18th December.

2802. *By the President:*—The estate is forty years old, and I myself have worked it for twenty years.

2803. I employ about thirty old Tamil coolies, all free men.

2804. I employ only *Te-chiu* Chinese, at present about 200 *Sin-Khehs* and 96 *Lau-Khehs*.

2805. Last year I had 300 *Sin-Khehs* and about the same number of *Lau-Khehs* as at present.

2806. I employ Tamils because I cannot get enough Chinese.

TAMILS.

2807. I do not send for coolies, they come voluntarily.

Heng Beng
Chian. 18th
December.

2808. I cannot get enough now: I want 160, but cannot procure them.
2809. I pay the Tamils \$5.80 a month without food.
2810. I give them houses.
2811. I have a hospital, under the supervision of Dr. McClosky and a Kling Dresser, who lives there.
2812. I charge them nothing for admission.
2813. If they are very ill they go to the Government hospital: I cannot say how much that costs me, as it varies greatly.
2814. The coolies do not repay me their expenses there.
2815. I am not in favour of abolishing Sunday labour: but I see no necessity for it.
2816. I do not care about Government inspection, one way or the other.
2817. The men are paid for the number of hours' work they do: if they are idle I discharge them.
2818. I pay them \$5.80 a month on the "Kang" system: as soon as a man has done his fixed amount of work he can go.
2819. I work the Klings both on contract and otherwise.
2820. The men can buy rice from me if they want it at the price which I pay for it plus the cost of transport.
2821. The price varies each month.
2822. I do not know why the Tamil labour supply has decreased.
2823. I have only employed them since I could not get enough Chinese.

CHINESE SIN-KHEHS.

2824. These are on the usual one year's contract.
2825. They earn \$30 a year, of which I recover \$19.50.
2826. I cannot get enough of them, owing to the numbers which are released by the Protectorate.
2827. Out of 7 coolies brought down by my *Khsh-Thau* from China this year, 3 were released in Singapore and 2 more on arrival here.
2828. I have been to China. The Mandarins will not allow any unpaid passengers to come down.
2829. The parents and relatives of emigrants are also averse to their coming down here.
2830. The quality of the men has deteriorated; they will not work now; physically they are much the same as before. I get my contract coolies direct from China through my own *Khsh-Thaus*, but they go to the depôts all the same and the brokers do not interfere with them.
2831. Some abscond on the way.
2832. The cost to me per man is \$37 to \$38 landed in Penang, exclusive of fees to the men who bring them down. I pay \$25 to \$29 to the Swatow broker; the depôt-keeper pays the passage money.
2833. I pay to the *Ah-keh* \$8 per man, and about 80 cents for the bill of exchange. I paid on the last occasion \$17 to the two men who brought the coolies (one got \$10 and the other \$7). The stamp fee is 25 cents, the depôt fee is \$1; this is

in addition to the \$37 mentioned above. If a man brings another to the Swatow depôt he gets \$7 or \$8.

Heng Beng
Chian. 18th
December.

2834. The Mandarins' man gets \$1 and the Mandarins' boatmen 50 cents.
2835. The passage to Penang costs \$9.50 to \$10.
2836. The coolie gets \$2 to send to China on his arrival here.
2837. The cost to me of the coolies' food on the estate is about \$2.50 per month for each man.
2838. Out of 10 time-expired *Sin-Khehs* not more than 1 remains with me, and works on without a contract; the others go, some to China, and some to take up cultivation elsewhere on their own account.
2839. I do not care whether my Chinese are inspected or not.
2840. My *Lau-Khehs* are paid from \$3.90 to \$6, without food, per month.
2841. They can go to hospital when they are sick.
2842. They all work on the "Kang" system.
2843. I do not send to the depôts for *Lau-Khehs*; they come of their own accord and ask for work.
2844. I get no Te-chiu women; they are not allowed to come, unless they are traders' wives.
2845. Women always make mischief on an estate. I do not want them.
2846. I would suggest the establishment of a Government depôt at Swatow. If it were properly managed plenty of coolies would come down, and the parents could not object.
2847. The depôt-keepers would not then make their present profits and the coolies could get higher wages.
2848. I know that there are plenty of men who would come down.
2849. The Deli Government have adopted this system with great success.
2850. The coolies for the Straits would only require to get \$15 advance in Swatow while coolies for Deli get \$25. They prefer to come here.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 P.M.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING
RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
PENANG, AT 2.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. W. Evans, Acting Assistant Protector of Chinese, Penang, gave evidence as follows:—

Mr. W. Evans.
18th Decem-
ber.

2851. I have held my present appointment for five months, and have been in the Protectorate at various times for about a year.

Mr. W. Evans.
18th Decem-
ber.

2852. I speak Hok-kien, and understand Te-chiu.

2853. As far as the duties connected with Chinese go, my duties are identical with those of the Protector at Singapore.

2854. The depôts are inspected by the Second Assistant Protector and the Boarding Officer: the Boarding Officer submits his diary to me every week.

2855. They have the supervision of the sanitary arrangements of the depôts, for which the Medical Officer is responsible.

2856. No new depôts have been opened since I took up my present post.

2857. I believe it is the case that advances are, in many cases, taken away from coolies.

2858. I do not get many complaints in this connection, because it is usually done on board the steamer immediately before it sails.

2859. I think the present arrangements for landing and examining coolies are satisfactory on the whole.

2860. A great deal of unlawful detention of the coolies goes on in unlicensed depôts; the men are brought before me, to sign contracts, as coming from a licensed *Lau-Kheh* depôt.

2861. The men are often forced to go to Deli against their will by threats of legal proceedings for debts incurred.

2862. The *Sin-Kheh* depôts were satisfactory, until the recent Court decision was given.

2863. On the arrival of an Immigrant steamer now, the men are brought to the Protectorate, and those who express their willingness to go to licensed depôts are sent there, and the rest are set at liberty.

2864. The Protectorate has no power to close a depôt here without the express sanction of the Governor. I believe that if we could close a licensed depôt when proof was given that it was in collusion with an unlicensed house it would serve as a great check on the abuses I have referred to.

2865. I am informed that coolies often remain on estates much over their contract time.

2866. I have myself found men on an estate who had been there three and even four years, because they had failed to pay off their debt.

2867. I believe that the *Sin-Khehs* are, generally speaking, well treated on the estates, though I have visited one estate where every coolie appeared to have complaints to make. On others, no complaints have been made at all. Their usual complaint is that their day's task is too severe, and that their pay is cut for trivial offences; also that they are detained beyond their contract time.

2868. No complaints of physical ill-treatment have been made to me.

2869. I believe the men allow their debt to run on in sheer ignorance: they are encouraged to do so. The accounts should be balanced regularly, so that each man may know exactly how he stands. With this object I think inspection should be instituted.

2870. *By Mr. Brown:*—The depôt entrance fee is paid to the depôt-keeper: it is debited to the coolie.

2871. For *Sin-Khehs* the fee is \$1, and for *Lau-Khehs* 50 cents.

2872. Not many men have so far availed themselves of the recent Court decision, but the number who do so is now on the increase.

2873. I have no reason for thinking that the coolie's accounts are incorrectly kept, though no doubt many unjust charges are made.

The meeting adjourned at 3.45 p.m.

R. P. G.

TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, PENANG, AT 11 A. M.,
ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19TH, 1890.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. E. A. M. Huisgen, of the Firm of Messrs. FRIEDRICH & Co., Penang, *Mr. E. A. M. Huisgen*.
(signs per pro.,) gave evidence as follows:—
19th Decem-
ber.

2874. *By the President:*—I was in charge of the Deli Agencies and coolie business of the firm for six years.

2875. I do not speak Chinese.

2876. The coolie business of the firm is entirely with Sumatra.

2877. We do no importation.

2878. We get Te-chius and Hai-lok-hongs by preference, but some planters will also accept good Khehs.

2879. We are under an agreement to supply *Sin-Khehs* solely to the Planters Association in Deli, through the Immigration Office in Medan. We may supply *Lau-Khehs* to any one.

2880. There is a limit price for Hai-lok-hongs and Khehs delivered free on the estate, at which we have to engage for the Immigration Office.

2881. When the Association started the prices fell in one or two weeks from \$115 to \$70.

2882. The Planters' Association comprises 90 per cent. of all the planters in Sumatra.

2883. There is very often great difficulty in persuading Hai-lok-hong men to go to an estate if they have set their minds on going to another one.

2884. If possible the examination and photographing of the coolies, the signing of contracts and embarkation on board ship, are done on the same day.

2885. The broker is responsible for all the coolies until they are delivered on the estate. We retain 25 to 40 per cent. of the price agreed upon, and pay it to the broker on his production of the Estate Manager's receipt.

2886. As many as 2,000 coolies a month go to Deli direct.

2887. The recent Court decision has stopped, to a great extent, the emigration from Hongkong to the Straits.

2888. I think that protection of the coolies is carried to excess here.

2889. The brokers have sometimes told me that certain Mandarins have hindered emigration because they do not receive a sufficient *douceur* for each man exported.

2890. When one considers the willingness of the planters to pay large sums for really good coolies, I do not think the present prices excessive.

2891. I do not see how they could be materially reduced under existing circumstances.

Mr. E. A. M.
Huisgen.
19th Decem-
ber.

2892. Some years ago I was assured that first class coolies could be delivered in the Hongkong depôts at \$12 to \$14 per head by country recruiters, but this is certainly not the case now.

2893. Six years ago the price for Hai-lok-hongs was \$53, and for Khehs \$40.

2894. I believe the Hongkong exporters pocket the bulk of the profits.

2895. I believe that if a scheme of Government depôts such as has been suggested were carried out in an enlightened manner, matters would be very much improved; but certain existing measures would have to be abolished, *e. g.*, the recent Court decision.

2896. Not many desertions take place between here and Deli; the number has much decreased of late.

2897. The Secret Societies were formerly a frequent cause of trouble to brokers sending coolies to Deli; the rivalry was very strong among them, and brokers belonging to one society would refuse to send coolies to an estate where the headmen were members of another.

2898. The direct immigration did not affect our business much when it was first started.

2899. It was said that the agents of the Deli Immigration Office used to intercept the coolies up in China on their way to the Hongkong depôts, and bring them to Amoy or Swatow instead.

2900. The Chinese know now that they can earn \$200 to \$300 a year in Deli if they work steadily, and Deli has a very good name in China.

2901. I think the direct immigration to Deli will, in time, practically kill the coolie trade of Penang.

2902. No women ever come down with coolies.

2903. The main reform now needed is the amendment of the law which forbids the detention of *Sin-Khehs* in the depôts; the legal period of detention should be fixed at, say, twenty days; ten days is not long enough. If this were done it would certainly give an impulse to the labour traffic.

2904. *By Mr. Turner:*—It would, I think, be advantageous if the coolies could be passed direct from the steamer into the employers' hands without coming into contact with the brokers at all, in the same way as is done in Deli under the direct immigration system.

The meeting adjourned at 12.20 P. M.

R. P. G.

TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNMENT OFFICES, TELOK ANSON, LOWER PERAK, ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7TH, 1891, AT 11 A. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. J. Ward.
7th January.

Mr. J. Ward, Assistant Engineer, Lower Perak, gave evidence as follows:—

2905. For Departmental work we employ only Tamils, about 85 altogether, and mainly on road-work.

2906. The average rate of wages is 29 cents a day; we pay coolies employed near Telok Anson itself 25 cents, and 30 to 35 cents to men on outlying lands.

Mr. J. Ward.
7th January.

2907. The men are only paid for the number of days' work actually done.

2908. They get lines free if they care to have them, but nothing else.

2909. I have never experienced any difficulty in getting enough labour.

2910. *By Mr. Vermont:*—When ill the men get food and medical attendance free: they are admitted into hospital on production of a certificate that they are Government coolies.

JAVANESE.

2911. I employ a certain number for miscellaneous gardening work, on \$7 per month.

2912. *By Mr. Brown:*—I do not consider the pay given to coolies here in any way excessive.

2913. Coolies living on outlying lands have, I believe, to come to Telok Anson for their food and supplies.

2914. The Government has no competition here in the employment of labour.

2915. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—If I were to pay only 20 cents a day I should certainly have greater difficulty in procuring coolies than at present.

Mr. Noel Denison, Superintendent, Lower Perak, gave evidence as follows:—

Mr. N. Denison.
7th January.

2916. I have been for ten years at Telok Anson.

2917. The Negapatam line of steamers started in 1886. The Resident asked me what use could be made of it, and I suggested a light railway to Tapah and a road to the hills, where the finest soil is to be found. While this scheme was still under consideration, I started the Tamil colony which you have inspected, with the idea of finding employment for the coolies on the railway works.

2918. The original scheme was to bring over 100 families, but only 12 came over at first (in June, 1886). Twelve more families followed in July of the same year.

[Witness here handed in the following statement, originally drawn up by the Indian Immigration Agent, of the terms on which the families were imported:—

“PROPOSED SCHEME FOR INDIAN IMMIGRANTS TO TELOK ANSON.

1. Land to be cleared by Government at an expense (to be recovered from the Immigrant) of not exceeding six dollars an acre.

2. An allotment of 3 acres to be reserved for each family, and land to be reserved for grazing the cattle of the settlers free.

3. No title to be given for the land until it is all under cultivation and all advances repaid. The land to be inalienable and not subject to mortgage or other charge during this period.

4. All expenses incurred under paragraph 1 to be recovered after the first crop.

5. Leases to be for 999 years.

6. No assessment for first year.

7. Not less than one acre to be cultivated in the first year, two acres in the second year, and the whole allotment of three acres in the third year.

8. Rate of assessment 40 cents per acre for the first 30 years, after that subject to revision by Government every 30 years.

Mr. N. Denison. 7th January.

9. Hospital accommodation and medicine to be supplied by Government free.
10. Government to undertake, free of cost, the construction of necessary works of embankment and irrigation, such works to be kept in repair by the villagers.
11. During the time the Immigrants are under advances, when not cultivating their land, they may, on application, be employed by Government at the rates of wages current in the place, but no person who has not cultivated his share of the allotment for that year shall be employed by Government under this clause.”]
2919. The scheme was stopped by Government, and since that time no more coolies have been imported.
2920. The first lot has been very satisfactory.
[Witness here handed in a return shewing that 12 men of the first lot now remain in Telok Anson, 1 is dead, 2 have gone to India (handing over their debts to other men), and 1 has gone to Penang after clearing off his debt. Of the 2nd lot of 12, 3 have gone away and 9 still remain.]
2921. It must always be remembered that the colony was not started as an isolated scheme, but in connection with the railway and line of subsidised steamers from Negapatam.
2922. If such a scheme were carried out on a large scale—say 500 families—I am convinced that it would succeed, inasmuch as it would form a resident population, but under the present conditions there would always be the risk of the men selling their land. I would suggest the following terms:—

(1) A free passage	} Unrecoverable.
(2) Free tools	
(3) 1½ to 2 acres to each man ready cleared; a title to be given only when the debt was cleared off and the land under cultivation	} Recoverable.
(4) Rice on first arrival, until the coolies are a little settled	
2923. The land should be inalienable and not subject to mortgage until all debt was cleared off (this is the same as clause 3 of the previous conditions).
2924. Government should itself endeavour to provide work for the settlers.
2925. The question of advances could be left over for discussion later.
2926. An educated, Tamil-speaking European would be indispensable as Superintendent of the colony, and should have the powers of an Assistant Magistrate: he would have to devote himself exclusively to the colony for some time after his arrival.
2927. The Government have certainly gained indirectly by the present scheme, and the cost would be much less if it were carried out on a larger scale.
2928. The present men were obtained through the Indian Immigration Agent.
2929. When a Kling abandons his plot of land, there is no difficulty in inducing other men to take it up if it is already under cultivation.
2930. We are still recovering our primary expenses, and shall, I think, eventually recover them all.
2931. A large number of Tamils come into the State, chiefly for work at the mines: they are obtained from the open market. I know that a few come from India direct—friends of the colonists. About 10 or 15 of such men came from India last year.
2932. I can always get sufficient labour for ordinary requirements.
2933. I have no experience of Indentured Labour.

2934. I certainly think it the duty of Government to aid in procuring an adequate labour supply, especially in the case of a young colony; it should offer every inducement to facilitate a coolie labour supply, and should give free passages and free grants of land to *bond fide* settlers.

2935. In the present state of the country, no special Government inspection of free coolies is required.

2936. In my opinion the men should be entitled to one day's holiday per week, not necessarily Sunday.

2937. I should say there were 300 to 400 Tamils altogether in Lower Perak, of whom about 200 are in the mines at Tapah, and the remainder here, employed mostly in gardening and similar work.

2938. There is no Chinese coolie labour here.

2939. I think Chinese labour is desirable, but it is doubtful if it could be made to succeed: the men would all go to the mines for the higher wages.

2940. In Lower Perak there are from 1,500 to 2,000 Chinese coolies, employed on miscellaneous work.

2941. The amount of land available for cultivation here is practically unlimited.

2942. As labourers there is very little to choose between Tamils and Chinese: each race is useful for particular work. The Chinese consume more, but the Kling is perhaps more useful generally.

2943. The country is suffering only from want of labour: the climate and soil are both excellent. If there was an adequate labour supply—and provided more roads were made—I have no doubt the country could be rapidly opened up.

2944. *By Mr. Turner:*—The rate of wages paid here now no doubt hinders agricultural development, but if more settlers came the price of labour would fall.

JAVANESE.

2945. They are good settlers when working for themselves, but are lazy as coolies.

KLINGS.

2946. I should be in favour of Government guaranteeing a market for the coolies' produce by providing mills for the tapioca, sugar, &c.

2947. *By Mr. Brown:*—The Chinese boatmen here are under contract: the contracts are mostly made in Penang and registered here, but many are also made here in the first instance. Every *Sin-Kheh* landed here has to pass through the local Protectorate.

2948. The discharge ticket system in force at Larut applies to the whole State. A coolie is liable to punishment if found without a ticket.

2949. I think the system a good one, and it undoubtedly serves as a check on desertion.

2950. It would be difficult to apply it to Klings: they rove about more from place to place, and the plan would be very hard to carry out satisfactorily.

[*Captain Cobb*, Acting Assistant Protector of Chinese, shewed his register of *Sin-Khehs*.

One thousand three hundred and forty-three (1,343) *Sin-Khehs* arrived in 1889, of whom 779 had signed contracts in Penang, and 566 in Telok Anson.

One thousand two hundred and forty-two (1,242) arrived in 1890, of whom 841 signed in Penang, and 401 in Telok Anson.

Nearly all the arrivals were for the mining districts, a small number only being for miscellaneous work in Telok Anson and the vicinity, and for various agricultural employments.

He had been about five months in the Office, but speaks no Chinese.

He has received no complaints of misrepresentation, ill-treatment, &c.]

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

R. P. G.

TWENTY-NINTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNMENT OFFICE, KLANG, ON THURSDAY,
JANUARY 8TH, 1891, AT 10 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. C. H. A.
Turney. 8th
January.

Mr. C. H. A. Turney, Senior District Officer, Klang, gave evidence as follows:—

2951. I have been Assistant Indian Immigration Agent for four years.

2952. I had had a long experience of Tamils previously. I speak Tamil, Hindustani and Telugu.

2953. I am directed to forward returns to the Indian Immigration Agent.

2954. My duties are only such as are defined in the Ordinance.

2955. I wrote to the Recruiting Agents in India about two years ago for coolies, but the Indian Immigration Agent objected, and since then no applications have been received. The coolies on arrival here only undergo a simple medical examination and are then passed on to the estates if fit.

2956. The contracts, by the Resident's instructions, have always been made here.

2957. I have no personal experience of the recruiting system in India, but from my own enquiries and the statements of the coolies themselves, I am convinced that they do not receive more than a third of their proper advances.

2958. False representations are also made to them about the country they are going to, the wages they will receive, and the work they will have to do.

2959. I would suggest, as a remedy, that the entire recruiting should be carried on by Government, from whom also the recruiters should obtain their licenses.

2960. The greatest care should be taken to ensure the true facts of the case being made known to intending recruiters.

2961. I believe the Negapatam depôt will be productive of much good, but it is too early still for me to judge of its effects.

2962. I thoroughly approve of the action taken in closing the private depôts.

2963. Provided a coolie is physically strong, I think his caste makes little difference, but he ought to be informed that out-door work is expected of him before he comes over here. His health would not be affected by his having to do work to which he is unaccustomed, but he would be discontented and work sulkily.

2964. I have never heard that any Madras officials obstruct the emigration at all, nor have I heard of the brokers' ring which is said to exist there.

2965. The price of coolies landed here is \$15 to \$18. The treatment on board ship is, I believe, very good. Mr. C. H. A. Turney. 8th January.

2966. There is a Government depôt here, kept by a high caste Tamil who cooks the coolies' food. The Immigrants are kept there until their contracts are signed, i.e., usually two or three days.

2967. The depôt fee (charged to the employer) is 10 cents a day, and this includes four good meals.

2968. Our contract form is the same as that used in Province Wellesley.

2969. An economical coolie can live on \$2 to \$3 a month in Klang, and this would cover everything: in remote parts the cost of living would be 50 cents more.

2970. I should say that 14 cents was just enough for a healthy coolie to live on, but I do not think it a fair rate: the men are naturally discontented when they see their countrymen close by earning twice or three times the amount.

2971. Twenty cents the first year and 25 cents the second and third years for actual working days is the rate I would suggest should be fixed by Government as the minimum.

2972. The road coolies are paid 25 to 33 cents a day: the majority get 30 cents, and I think this a fair wage.

2973. I visit the estates myself about four times a year, and enquire about the lines, water supply, hospitals, tasks and general treatment of the coolies.

2974. The men are generally let go here at the end of their three years, even if they have not completed their full number of days' work.

2975. They only know their conditions of service from their contracts.

2976. If sufficiently high wages are given, I do not think three years is too long a term.

2977. The employer could still recoup himself even if the wages were increased. The present contract term is more than long enough to enable him to do this; a good coolie would clear off his debt in twelve or eighteen months.

2978. There is no scarcity of labour in this district, and the supply quite equals the demand. It only depends on the wages offered.

2979. I do not think that the agricultural development of the State is at all hindered by want of labour.

2980. Increased immigration here would not bring about a decrease of wages.

2981. By Mr. Vermont:—The men acclimatize very quickly here, and the work requires very little tuition.

2982. The men (unindentured) come here voluntarily, not under advances.

2983. By Mr. MacGregor:—I think it quite possible for non-agriculturalists, such as weavers, dhobies, etc., to do good field work here, but very few come over.

2984. Good coolies work on an average 25 to 28 days a month.

2985. I do not think task work should be legalized, as I doubt its being made to answer satisfactorily, but if it were practicable to arrange a fair system of task work it would no doubt be a good thing.

2986. I would rather see the present wages increased than that the coolies should be landed free of debt.

2987. The same wages should be offered to unacclimatised as to acclimatised men.

2988. By Mr. Turner:—Higher wages would tend to decrease desertion, and the death-rate would be lessened if the coolies were more carefully selected.

Mr. C. H. A. Turney. 8th January. 2989. If good coolies could be secured at lower rates of pay it would of course be desirable.

2990. *By Mr. Brown*:—I would give the coolies hospital free in addition to their 25 cents wages. I do not think it a hardship that the employer should be called on to provide the hospital.

2991. We have once or twice summonsed employers and compelled them to pay for the hospital expenses of sick unindentured coolies.

2992. *By the President*:—It is not usual for me to accompany the Indian Immigration Agent on his visits of inspection.

2993. I think Government inspection of free coolies unnecessary, except as regards their sanitary arrangements.

2994. Contract coolies are, as a rule, well treated on the estates.

CHINESE.

2995. Chinese coolies here are paid 40 to 50 cents a day; their contracts are made at Kwala Lumpur.

Mr. P. Stevenson. 8th January. Mr. P. STEVENSON, Manager of Beverlac and Ebor Estates, stated as follows:—
2996. *By the President*:—Our cultivation is entirely pepper.

2997. We employ only Chinese, all free coolies; we have forty-five at Beverlac and fifteen at Ebor.

2998. I have been two years and ten months on the estates. I had had no previous experience.

2999. When I first arrived 15 Indian contract coolies were working on the estate. I gave them up because I found that Chinese pay better in spite of their higher wages. These Klings received the usual 14 and 15 cents a day.

3000. The Singapore Chinese coolies are better than those obtained in Penang.

3001. The Chinese are under no contract and get no regular advances. The skilled labourers are paid \$12 a month, and ordinary hands \$10.

3002. We give them free kongsi houses and medical attendance, but no hospital.

3003. The Mandor receives the wages for all the coolies from me at the end of the month according to the actual work done, and he distributes them.

3004. We experience no difficulty in getting enough labour, and we can make pepper pay even at the wages which we give. I am quite satisfied with the general state of affairs.

3005. *By Mr. Vermont*:—I make no advances of rice or opium. \$10 a month is the ruling rate of wages in Selangor. I did not know that \$6 was the rate paid in Singapore.

3006. Ten dollars has always been the ruling rate here within my experience.

3007. We have about 45 acres of land under cultivation.

3008. Our land is still in process of being opened up. No dividend has yet been declared.

3009. *By the President*:—At Ebor I employ only Hailams, and at Beverlac Hailams and a few Te-chius.

3010. Hailams are more satisfactory, but the Mandor may engage any tribe at his discretion.

3011. *By Mr. Vermont*:—Our men work on an average 27 to 30 days a month.

3012. The estate is quite healthy.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 A.M.

R. P. G.

THIRTIETH MEETING.

HELD IN THE EUROPEAN WARD OF THE GENERAL HOSPITAL,
KWALA LUMPUR.

ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 9TH, 1891, AT 11 A. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. H. F. BELLAMY, Superintendent, Public Works Department, Selangor, gave Mr. H. F. Bellamy. 9th January. evidence as follows:—

3013. I have held my present post since 1883.

3014. We employ Tamils for up-keep of metalled roads, and Javanese for up-keep of bridle paths.

3015. We employ no contract labour.

3016. The Tamils are paid in Kwala Lumpur 30 cents and get Sunday pay if they work the whole week through. There are no Tamils in Klang employed departmentally.

3017. In Ulu Selangor we pay as much as 32 cents a day.

3018. Twenty-eight cents is the lowest rate we ever paid.

3019. We give our coolies lines free, but not free admission into Government hospitals; any rough doctoring required is done by the Overseers.

3020. The Javanese get the same privileges as the Tamils.

3021. Our Tamils work from 6 a.m. till 2 p.m. without intermission, and Javanese the same.

3022. We have no difficulty in getting enough departmental coolies, but that the contractors find a difficulty is proved by the fact of their contracts not being completed in the specified period.

3023. The present rates have been in force at least eight years; we have never tried to reduce them at Kwala Lumpur.

3024. I was in Selangor when Indian Immigrants were got over in 1887 and 1888 at enactment rates. Nearly 300 men came over, but they were sickly and undisciplined and the whole business was an utter failure. I would never try it again; the men required too much looking after.

3025. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—The coolies were mismanaged in that no European was in charge from the beginning; they were under a Ceylon half-caste on first arrival, and a European was only put over them after repeated applications on my part.

3026. I cannot say if such a system would succeed if the coolies were well treated. Everything depends on the management; good men can get good work out of them.

3027. *By Mr. Hill*:—The rates were certainly not altered in 1885 or 1886.

Mr. H. F. Bellamy. 9th January.

3028. We have no source of labour supply and take no steps to ascertain where our coolies come from: we tell our men to get them.

3029. The medicine for our coolies is supplied by Government and distributed by the Overseers.

3030. I do not think any inspection of the free coolies or their lines is desirable beyond that of their superintending officer.

3031. Indian Immigrants require so much competent supervision that I would prefer acclimatised coolies at 32 cents to new ones at 14.

3032. I believe our Immigrant coolies were a fair sample lot at the time: they were well housed; the houses were surrounded by jungle.

3033. *By Mr. Turner:*—I would not care to express an opinion as to the fairness of Government importing no labour itself and employing only that imported at the expense of others: the subject is beyond my province.

3034. *By Mr. Hill:*—Contractors have imported very little labour into Selangor.

3035. The rates have not increased to any great extent.

3036. The Public Works Department has not, as far as I know, derived any benefit from the subsidy paid to the Negapatam line of steamers.

3037. *By Mr. Brown:*—We employ no Kling bricklayers, carpenters or artificers departmentally because none are to be had: if they were procurable I should most probably engage them.

Mr. F. A. Toynbee. 9th January.

Mr. F. A. Toynbee, Manager and part-proprietor of Hawthornden and Lincoln Estates, gave evidence as follows:—

3038. We cultivate only Liberian coffee.

3039. I have been about two years on the estates since they were first opened in fact.

3040. I had had several years' experience of planting previously, both in the Straits and Sumatra. I have been in the Straits for nearly thirteen years altogether.

3041. I have also had some experience of contractor's work.

3042. I speak Malay and moderate Tamil, but no Chinese.

3043. I employ only Tamil free labour, some 30 men on my two estates; but I am also opening up three more estates for other people on which about 160 coolies are employed.

3044. I find Tamils more reliable and easier to manage than other races.

3045. I have never employed Chinese here except on contract earthworks. I have tried Javanese, but they proved dearer and less satisfactory than the Tamils.

3046. Two years ago the demand for labour was so great in Penang and the Straits Settlements generally that no coolies were obtainable.

3047. I would prefer indentured labour to free, as being cheaper and better organised generally, if a better stamp of coolie came over.

3048. There is no scarcity of labour here except when Government works are being carried on; the free men always run away to Government, but the indentured coolies cannot. If any large Government work is commenced here and my coolies desert, I always know where to look for them.

3049. Large number of men amongst the indentured coolies come over here who have never handled a changkol in their lives and are consequently quite useless as agriculturalists.

3050. Good men would pay us better, as these ignorant coolies are a dead loss to us. Mr. F. A. Toynbee. 9th January.

3051. My men are paid by the day: men 23 cents, women 20 cents, children 10 cents, small children 5 cents.

3052. The coolies find their own food, but I give them lines, medicine and medical attendance free.

3053. I think these wages are high. If more labour came in, I believe the resulting competition would certainly lower the rates.

3054. I should say 18 cents would be a fair wage for free labour, and would be sufficiently high to induce men to come over if such a rate was generally paid in the State.

3055. I give my men Sunday pay if they work the other six days, and I believe this plan encourages men to go out to work.

3056. The working hours are from 6 a.m. till 2 p.m. at one spell.

3057. The men are not actually employed on task work, but I check their work by a task system and cut the wages of the individuals as far as practicable.

3058. I pay a doctor for visiting the coolies \$10 a month per 100, and \$5 for the Europeans: he comes out about twice a month, or as often as sent for.

3059. We do all the rough doctoring ourselves: there is no hospital on the estate, but plenty of accommodation for sick coolies if required. There is very little sickness on the estate, and it has gone on decreasing in proportion as the land was opened up.

3060. I pay the coolies on the 15th of each month, either myself or through my Assistant.

3061. I think we should have the right of turning coolies out on Sunday if we find it necessary, but hitherto no such necessity has arisen. Of course, if a man worked on Sunday he would be entitled to double pay, under the present circumstances.

3062. I have no objection to a Government inspection, but I think it quite unnecessary on European owned estates, though on Native owned estates I believe it necessary.

3063. It would be difficult to originate the discharge ticket system in the Straits, but it would be very desirable if it could be carried out universally, and would certainly answer well. A man leaving the country would have to surrender his ticket, and obtain a new one on re-entering it.

3064. Our women are in a ratio of about 20 per cent. to the men: I put no restriction on the numbers who come over, and would like to see a fair proportion of them.

3065. I give as much garden ground as the coolies want, but I have never made any special grants of land with a view to encourage them to settle.

3066. I make all my women work as a matter of course, but not necessarily on field labour if they prove useful to the estate in other ways.

3067. They themselves prefer to work.

3068. The coolies buy their food themselves in Kwala Lumpur, and usually come in on Sunday for the purpose. I have never enquired into the cost of their food.

3069. The Labour question in Selangor certainly calls for enquiry. As matters stand at present the planters who employ other than indentured coolies have no guarantee against losing all their coolies at a moment's notice as soon as new Public Works begin.

Mr. F. A.
Toynbee. 9th
January.

3070. The Government, contractors and planters should all combine to fix the wages at a certain rate, and pledge themselves not to exceed it, or each import their labour proportionately.

3071. The whole system of recruiting in India has been unsatisfactory hitherto.

3072. The Government should undertake the management of the whole thing in the capacity of agents for the employers here; bearing the initial cost and being re-paid by the planters on receipt of the coolies, as I believe is done for other Colonies.

3073. With the discharge ticket system a coolie should be obliged to give a month's notice at least before leaving.

3074. My chief difficulty is in having no protection against my coolies being enticed away from me by the offer of higher wages outside.

JAVANESE.

3075. Javanese are most unsatisfactory as compared with Klings: they are very lazy and hard to manage. When they work they work well and if they could be procured on the same low rate of wages as the Tamil their immigration should be encouraged: for draining and such like work they are excellent.

3076. I know of no Planters' Association here.

3077. I have no experience of India.

3078. *By Mr. Vermont*:—I think it pays me in the end to give the men their Sunday holiday.

3079. They work 26 or 27 days a month, on an average.

3080. I think my working hours are very lenient: the coolies could very well work another hour each day.

3081. The rate of wages paid locally throughout Selangor is too high: it hinders the agricultural development of the country, and ought to be reduced.

3082. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—I would rather see a two-year than a three-year contract, and would fix the rate of wages in that case at 15 cents the first year and 17 cents the second: that would be a reasonable rate.

3083. I would rather increase the rate of pay than present the men with their advances.

3084. The coolies should, perhaps, be inspected for the sake of their health.

3085. *By Mr. Turner*:—I should be in favour of giving Sunday pay to indentured coolies also.

3086. *By Mr. Hill*:—Wages have much increased during the last seven years owing to the rate of wages paid by Government and the contractors here to their coolies.

3087. Some of my coolies are brought over from the coast by their friends, but I think any attempt to develop this as a scheme would be attended by much risk as long as such coolies can immediately leave me and go over to Government contractors. Such men have brought back their families and relatives, people from the same villages as themselves, and turn out very satisfactory people.

3088. If the men were not enticed away by higher rates outside I would certainly establish a labour centre of my own and collect my labour through my old coolies.

3089. I think 18 cents would be sufficient to induce men both to come over themselves and to bring their friends over with them, but it could not be worked at once and would have to be done by all the employers simultaneously.

3090. The free coolie is much more satisfactory than the indentured man.

Mr. F. A.
Toynbee. 9th
January.

3091. I attribute the fluctuating state of the labour supply to the Government's neglecting to provide an adequate supply of coolies for the public works, so that having urgent works on hand the Government or Government contractors take any coolies they can get.

3092. *By the President*:—The coolie would be more contented on a two-year contract.

3093. With fairly good men, I think the rate of wages I have suggested would be sufficient to recoup the employer, but only on a three years' contract, and the man should get 17 cents during the third year also.

3094. The present rate of wages is not sufficient for a man to live well upon and pay back his debt.

3095. I believe that newly arrived planters would join such an Association as I have referred to.

3096. *By Mr. Hill*:—I would rather employ relatives of my own coolies coming over as free men than indentured Immigrants of the best class I have seen hitherto, because the advances would be made through the Tyndals, who would be responsible and collect the money from the coolies and only bring good estate coolies.

3097. *By Mr. Turner*:—It is very hard for us to have to import and acclimatize the men with the knowledge that we must most likely surrender them to some one else as soon as their contract has expired.

Dr. A. W. SINCLAIR, Residency Surgeon and Medical Officer for Indian Immigrants, Selangor, gave evidence as follows:—

Dr. A. W.
Sinclair. 9th
January.

3098. I have held my present appointment for nine years (in Malaya and Borneo nearly twelve years), and have been Medical Officer for Indian Immigrants since immigration to Selangor was first sanctioned.

3099. I speak no Tamil.

4000. My duties are to inspect the estates once a year with the Indian Immigration Agent, and at such other times as it may be necessary.

4001. My last inspection was made early in 1890.

4002. The Immigrants are medically examined at Klang on first arrival, and do not pass through my hands.

4003. I saw a large proportion of the arrivals in 1890—about 100 altogether. In health and general physique they were better than formerly. In 1887 and 1888 they were a most miserable lot, and nearly all suffered from itch, gonorrhœa and anaemia on their arrival in the estate.

4004. I inspect the lines and enquire into the water-supply as well as examine the men. No regulations exist as to the number of cubic feet to be allowed for each inhabitant of the lines, but the arrangements in this respect are generally satisfactory.

4005. The statement in the Annual Administration Report of Selangor for 1888 to the effect that the mortality was highest in that year among the road-coolies is correct; this was partly due to the fact that they were working in limestone, but chiefly to the filthy way in which they lived and the inferior quality of their food. I inspected the Government Indian Immigration coolies once a week during 1888, and had a hospital and Dresser at their lines at Batu.

4006. The Chinese are much healthier than Klings; they have finer constitutions and feed themselves better.

4007. The Klings here habitually underfeed themselves.

Dr. A. W. Sinclair. 9th January. 4008. *By Mr. Turner:*—More pariahs come into hospital than any other caste, but I cannot say what the reason is.

[Dr. SINCLAIR afterwards forwarded a written statement to the following effect:—Dark-skinned coolies are as a lot very much stronger and healthier, and not so liable to get fever as the light liver-coloured ones. They should all be encouraged to have their own gardens attached to their lines, so as to enable them to grow their own vegetables, and this is what I tried to get them to do at Batu Road lines. It has been done with benefit on Weld's Hill Estate.]

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING RE-ASSEMBLED AT 2.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. W. E. Maxwell. 9th January. Mr. W. E. MAXWELL, C.M.G., British Resident, Selangor, gave evidence as follows:—

4009. I was Magistrate of Province Wellesley in 1874 and 1875, and was a member of the Committee appointed to confer with Mr. E. BUCK and Colonel FISCHER in 1884. The Indian Immigration Ordinance is partly my work.

4010. I have been 26 years in the Straits Settlements.

4011. The Assistant Indian Immigration Agent at Klang is not under the direct orders of the Indian Immigration Agent, S. S., and, while the requests of the latter Officer would receive every attention, the Selangor Officer would receive any instructions through me.

4012. I attribute the decrease of immigration to the planters' preference for free coolies, not to any scarcity of labour.

4013. If it were possible to do so it would certainly be desirable to dispense altogether with any artificial means of procuring labour, such as the contract system.

4014. I have had no complaint about scarcity of labour, except in one instance (from Mr. T. H. HILL), nor do I think that the agricultural development of the country is hampered by the want of it.

4015. I am not aware of any instance in which a planter has been deterred by the dearth or scarcity of labour from taking up land here. I have only received one complaint in this connection, from Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE. I am given to understand by Mr. HILL that at that time their estates were the only ones which were already in full bearing in this State.

4016. Selangor pays \$7,000 annually towards subsidising the Negapatam line of steamers.

4017. I consider the chief advantage which the State receives in return for this expenditure is the securing of direct and regular communication with India.

4018. When I was acting as Resident Councillor in Penang, the impression which I formed was that the subsidized steam service was doing good as regards the labour supply.

4019. I think the subsidy may well be continued on the same lines as at present.

4020. The minimum rate of wages of an indentured coolie should be fixed with some regard to the ruling market rate of labour. Mr. W. E. Maxwell. 9th January.

4021. I think the statutory minimum was fixed in 1884 because 12 cents and 14 cents were the rates then being paid on Province Wellesley estates; they were not based upon any calculation of the cost of a coolie's maintenance.

4022. I would prefer two years as a term of contract; three years is too long to exact as a term of service for the repayment of small advances. It is not at all improbable that it hinders men from coming over.

4023. The abolition of the contract system would not be practicable; the contract is necessary as long as breach of contract is to be regarded as a criminal offence rendering a man liable to fine and imprisonment.

4024. I have no reason for thinking that ill-treatment of coolies goes on in Selangor, except in isolated instances.

4025. A Government inspection, medical and sanitary, of free coolies is necessary, but no other interference: a time-served coolie can look after himself.

4026. There is no reason for prohibiting Sunday labour, but if a man works on Sunday the employer should pay him overtime.

4027. I do not think it advisable that Government should support or assist the importation of Indian labour otherwise than by the subsidy to the steamers now paid and the maintenance of the Negapatam depôt. Coolie importation is better left to the private enterprise of employers.

4028. *By Mr. Vermont:*—The local labour supply is insufficient for extending cultivation. If planting were undertaken on a large scale in Selangor, indentured labour would be a necessity.

4029. The rate of wages here is high, but in a new country high wages have to be given.

4030. I do not admit any obligation on the part of Government to give further aid than is now given in importing labour.

4031. I am not prepared to admit that large numbers of ex-estate coolies are to be found on Government works, but in any case I think ex-estate coolies should be free to carry their labour where they please.

4032. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—I do not think that coolies would be really content or that desertion would be stopped on any wage less than 20 cents at least in Selangor, and in Province Wellesley 15 cents would be the minimum necessary.

4033. Some inspection of free coolies would perhaps be beneficial.

4034. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—Higher wages would act deterrently on desertion, but they would not stop it altogether.

4035. If labour were cheaper and more men could be got more estates might be opened.

4036. I would encourage planting in the Native States by giving loans to approved persons.

4037. There is a large Tamil population here, of whom a small number only are agriculturalists; the majority are employed as cart-drivers, &c.

4038. From the Government point of view I would like to see agriculture taken up here to a much greater extent than at present.

4039. The altered prospects of coffee planting in Ceylon within the last ten years have hindered planting enterprise here, as men who might otherwise have spread their operations eastward lost their capital in Ceylon and went no further.

Mr. W. E.
Maxwell.
9th January.

4040. The 1884 legislation was the consequence of outcries here about the restrictions in India. It was hoped that their removal would increase immigration here, but these hopes have not altogether been realised. This is due partly to the action of the brokers' ring in India and partly to the development of Upper Burma: partly too to the small wages offered by planters in Province Wellesley.

4041. I believe many indirect advantages result from the Negapatam subsidy, apart from the arrival in the Colony of the Tamil coolie.

4042. It would be a distinct advantage to the State if an increased number of coolies were landed annually in the Colony, free to take up work wherever they please, and in this view a scheme of paying steamer-owners for a certain number of passages instead of paying a subsidy might be beneficial if the supply of labourers was assured.

4043. Wages have certainly gone up since the 1884 Ordinance was drawn up; as far as I remember I thought 12 cents a fair rate to be fixed as the minimum at that time.

4044. There is no reason to complain of the treatment of the indentured coolie

4045. A statute coolie is not, generally, equal in value to a free immigrant.

4046. I think 15 cents is what the planter ought to offer if he wants to keep his men: it is to his own advantage and cheaper to him in the end.

4047. I believe that the low wages are the cause of desertion.

4048. I did not know that men always chose a shorter term of contract in preference to higher wages, but I can quite understand their doing so.

4049. I cannot say at all where Government coolies are obtained from. I have never analysed the composition of a gang.

4050. I think the facilities of communication with India which exist at present, and the high wages offered in the Native States are sufficient to induce Tyndals and others to bring coolies over from India in considerable numbers.

4051. Road-contractors' rates do not necessarily afford a fair estimate for fixing a fair rate of wages to be paid by agriculturalists.

4052. I think the death-rate in Selangor, which was high in 1888, is now not excessive.

4053. I am not in favour of any Indian colonization scheme by Government. I do not believe in it.

4054. *By Mr. Turner:*—Contractors would naturally prefer seasoned men to new hands, but a higher rate of wages would bring over more free labour and the cost would not fall on the planters: such men would not of course be acclimatised on arrival, but would probably be of better physique than indentured immigrants picked up by recruiters.

4055. I would prefer to increase the wages rather than to present coolies with their advances, passage money, &c., and land them free on the estate. No doubt, however, the fact of having no debt to pay off would lessen the inducements to desert.

4056. I think the wages in Province Wellesley should be raised to 15 or 17 cents.

4057. There are complaints here from indentured coolies of being underpaid.

4058. *By Mr. Hill:*—I think an addition to the permanent population of 1,000 men per annum would be sufficient for the wants of the Colony and Native States.

4059. Railway contractors here have imported Javanese labour themselves direct, but I cannot say whether any road contractors have done so.

4060. I have heard that Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE have abandoned an estate in Sungei Ujong for want of labour, but I believe that at that time the Indian Government had not yet consented to emigration to Sungei Ujong.

Mr. W. E.
Maxwell.
9th January.

4061. I cannot say where our Tamil labourers come from.

4062. I am aware that the cost of a coolie to the planter has not fallen, as it was anticipated it would do in 1884.

4063. I know that a large proportion of the planters' advances is not recoverable from the coolies.

4064. I cannot say whether the opening up of the Native States has contributed towards increasing the rate of wages, but it has probably done so.

4065. I cannot say how labourers are obtained in Selangor, whether by planters or contractors.

4066. I should say contractors would consider their own pockets only in securing labour for their works and would not regard the interests of others further than the law requires. I do not expect disinterested philanthropy in matters of business.

4067. I had every confidence in the future of the Native States when drawing up the Ordinance in 1884; I had then had seven years' experience in Perak. The order only applied to the Colony, but it was believed that, the restrictions having been removed in India, the Native States would be beneficially affected. This hope has not been realized either as regards the quantity or the cheapness of labour.

4068. I have not studied the procedure adopted in Ceylon when that Colony was at the same stage of development as we are, but I have heard of the pioneer corps, &c.

4069. I am in favour of establishing pioneer corps in Selangor: they would probably have to be recruited in India.

4070. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—I was in favour of lowering the term of contract in 1884, but I cannot say if I tried to reduce the rate of wages.

4071. I wish to say that there must be some mistake in Mr. SKINNER's statement that the Ordinance was not in harmony with the views of Mr. BUCK and Colonel FISCHER. The first draft of the Bill was prepared by those two gentlemen in conjunction with myself.

4072. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I think 20 cents a reasonable rate of wages for the Native States for the first year, and 23 to 25 for the second year, on a two years' contract.

4073. *By the President:*—If wages rose to a point where it was prohibitive to employ labour at all, I should say it was the duty of the Government to aid in securing labour, but only if the industry in question were a vital one to the prosperity of the country.

4074. *By Mr. Hill:*—I think Mr. TOYNEBEE's opinion a valuable one, as coming from a planter of experience; when I arrived I found that he was the only employer of labour who had received loans from Government, and I imagine that this fact in itself would be a sufficient guarantee of his high standing as a planter.

4075. *By the President:*—I do not believe in any Tamil colonization scheme, economically. I am convinced that they would not succeed as rice cultivators, and I do not think they would remain. The competition of Burma and Siam would kill rice cultivation in the Straits.

4076. *By Mr. Turner:*—I think the Government Agent in Negapatam should make more effort to break the recruiters' ring there, but the co-operation of the officials in India would be necessary. There should be a staff of Government recruiters there.

CHINESE.

Mr. W. E. Maxwell, 9th January. 4077. *By the President*:—The supply is sufficient here, but the quality is not satisfactory, physically. The men's physique depends on their tribe: here they are all Khehs, who are not sufficiently hardy.

4078. I would have no inspection except on remote estates, and even then only from time to time: the present arrangements are satisfactory, both on estates and at the mines. The men are, generally, well treated.

4079. The sanitary inspection of free coolies is a duty of the Government.

4080. The Chinaman is a better colonist than the Kling: he works harder and contributes to the revenue: but the Colony should be equally open to both.

JAVANESE.

4081. The free men are excellent labourers, but the contract men are the most miserable lot I ever saw. I imagine this is due to the fact that they are probably recruited in the streets and not from the country.

4082. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—Most of the Chinese who are imported go to the mines.

4083. It is hard to say whether an agricultural country is more satisfactory than a mining community. Each has its advantages; compare Victoria and South Australia.

4084. The death-rate in our hospitals is high, though lower now than formerly. I think the deaths are due to climatic causes rather than to the men's discontent at their low wages, though complaints have been made on that subject.

4085. I would favour a Chinese colonization scheme if it were found practicable.

4086. Chinese immigration has fallen off lately. I attribute it chiefly to the fall in the price of tin: but it is higher now than it was in Larut in 1882.

4087. The export of tin has very much increased of late; it was 46,000 pikuls more in 1889 than in any previous year, and there has been a further increase in 1890: this does not seem compatible with greatly decreased immigration.

4088. Not many complaints are made of desertion by the Chinese from the mines. There is a system in force for preventing it, which works well. There is also, I believe, a discharge ticket system.

4089. The Selangor Government imports no labour.

4090. I cannot say what is the rate paid to Chinese coolies here; 40 cents a day used to be a maximum rate in Larut.

The meeting adjourned at 5.30 P. M.

R. P. G.

THIRTY-FIRST MEETING.

HELD IN THE EUROPEAN WARD OF THE GENERAL HOSPITAL, KWALA LUMPUR, ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 1891, AT NOON.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
T. H. HILL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. K. Tambisami, Manager of the Rawang Mines, gave evidence as follows

4091. I am a contractor, mining manager and planter.

Mr. K. Tambisami, 10th January.

4092. I employ only free Tamils for my contract works. I once employed Mr. K. indentured coolies on coco-nut planting, but gave them up owing to the inferior quality and quantity of their work. Mr. K. Tambisami, 10th January.

4093. I used to pay my free men on plantations 30 cents for each working day, but have now reduced it to 23½ cents.

4094. My indentured coolies were paid \$6 per month, but they were sickly and discontented and did not pay at all.

4095. I attribute the bad quality of their work to the discontent, which was brought about by their low wages, by the length of their contract and by their ignorance of the customs of the country they were coming to.

4096. I was sent over to India in 1886 to recruit coolies for Government, and from the experience then gained I can confidently assert that not one single coolie who leaves India knows the real value of the rupee in this country, nor the cost of living here.

4097. The recruiters are scoundrels to a man; they not only make gross misrepresentations to the intending emigrants, but even employ force to bring them over. I cannot quote any specific instance of this, but I have myself seen men dragged from the depôt to the steamer by force in the presence of Police Officers, who raised no remonstrance.

4098. The explanations given to coolies at the depôt are not sufficient. The men should be interviewed in the presence of some responsible official and away from the recruiters.

4099. I attribute the sickness of P. W. D. coolies on the Batu Road some years ago to their low pay.

4100. I would suggest a one-year contract and 18 to 20 cents a day wages. The men who would come over on such terms would not be so good, perhaps, as the ordinary Immigrant, but would be more contented and work better on the higher pay.

4101. The men are in sufficiently good health, as a rule, on first arrival, but deteriorate as time goes on.

4102. I would myself undertake to bring coolies over on the terms I have suggested, for I know it would be cheaper in the end.

4103. I am employing 700 men on contract works now at 35 cents; all Tanils.

4104. The cost of a coolie's daily food is, in Kwala Lumpur, 12 cents, and at Rawang 14 cents at least; this includes his actual food: his extras would amount to about 50 cents more a month.

4105. If the men in India knew exactly what they were coming to here under the existing conditions, they would prefer to remain there on Rs. 3 a month than to come here and earn Rs. 10.

4106. The men ought not to be kept confined all together in the depôt at Negapatam until the steamer leaves.

4107. Thirty-five cents a day is the usual rate paid here by me; the men find their own food and get no Sunday pay, but I provide free lines for the coolies who work on outlying stations.

4108. I have no objection to Government inspection of the coolies; on the contrary, I think it would probably do good.

4109. I am acquainted only with Singapore and Selangor. I was born in Singapore.

4110. I employ about 600 Chinese coolies at present, in the Rawang mines; of these, 200 are paid by the day, and 400 are under contract.

4111. I employ no Javanese.

Mr. K.
Tambisamy.
10th January.

4112. At 35 cents I can always get as much labour as I want.
4113. Some of my men are procured in Penang, others are brought over from India by the Kanggani. Last year about 80 of the latter came over. The Kanggani pays all expenses, and I stop the amount from the men's wages and repay it to him; the cost is usually about \$9 per man.
4114. I believe that the men who come from Penang are either released Immigrants or old labourers who have returned from India; I cannot say with any certainty.
4115. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—Some free labourers came to me about three months ago and complained of having been dismissed from their estate when they fell seriously ill.
4116. I have also had complaints about the low rate of wages and their inability to procure sufficient food.
4117. I am speaking solely as a planter in saying that the present Ordinance rates are unsatisfactory. I have only tried coco-nut planting, and have never employed more than forty men at it.
4118. The coolies' health is best when they first arrive.
4119. The men obtained by Government at Batu Caves were in very good health when they arrived.
4120. In India any coolie can get himself passed as fit, no matter what his state of health may be. [Witness subsequently explained that he had had no experience of India since the establishment of the Government depôt at Negapatam.]
4121. The men's health at Weld's Hill has improved since their arrival.
4122. A man gets less than Rs. 12 of his advances in India: the difference goes into the pocket of the Agent.
4123. The cost of some of the coolies who come here is Rs. 15 or Rs. 16.
4124. I am under no agreement whatever to provide my coolies with lines, nor in any way responsible for the condition of such lines as I may give them.
4125. I keep no Apothecary, but provide the coolies with medicine free.
4126. *By Mr. Turner*:—The items of a coolie's food, estimated at 12 cents a day, are, roughly, as follows:—
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Rice, | 4 to 5 cents. |
| Curry-stuff, | 2 cents. |
| Dholl, | 1 cent. |
| Salt-fish and Vegetables, | 4 to 5 cents. |
4127. If a Tyndal came among my coolies and tried to entice them away by the offer of higher wages I would prosecute him: his action would be a most unfair one.
4128. *By Mr. Hill*:—Only 80 out of my 700 coolies were imported; the remainder came from Penang, but I cannot say how they were obtained.
4129. I have no coolies in my employ who were imported by planters into Selangor. I cannot say if they were imported into Province Wellesley.
4130. I find free coolies cheaper than indentured Immigrants.
4131. Eight years ago there were about 200 Tamils in this State; six years ago there were certainly more than that number.
4132. I believe that other employers, the Manager of Weld's Hill Estate among them, have imported coolies in the same way as myself.
4133. *By Mr. Brown*:—The most that a Kanggani has ever recovered from a coolie is \$20.

4134. The men do not bring over their families. I have no women; I have no work for them to do.

Mr. K.
Tambisamy.
10th January.

4135. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—Five years ago the ruling rate of wages among contractors here was 30 cents, now it is 35. The least we ever paid was \$9, and I consider that a fair wage for Selangor.

4136. The living here is more expensive than in Singapore.

4137. When we were paying 30 cents we gave the men Sunday pay as well, but at our present rate we do not.

CHINESE.

4138. I pay my Chinese coolies \$7 a month and their food, which cost me about \$3.50 per man more. 35 cents a day is a fair wage for them.

4139. I can get plenty of Chinese labour here.

4140. For road work Chinese are no better than Klings.

4141. The contract men are paid a certain sum per yard of excavation.

4142. *By the President*:—I consider that one day's holiday in the week is necessary, but the same day should be fixed for all.

4143. I would like Sunday labour for the Chinese, but not for the Klings.

4144. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I can afford to pay 35 cents and yet make a profit, but I know of no cultivation that could stand such a price and yet pay.

4145. *By Mr. Turner*:—I cannot say where the Tyndals get their coolies from: I do not think they come from the estates.

4146. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—Free coolies are cheaper to me than indentured ones. I am quite satisfied that statute men could be induced to come and that they would be more contented when they arrived if higher wages were given.

4147. Contract coolies are useless as road-makers, but they are good agriculturists.

4148. I have never heard of coolies being taken over to Sumatra from Selangor.

4149. I think that the failure of the P. W. D. coolies at Batu Caves was due to mismanagement on the part of their Ceylonese Overseer.

4150. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—My coolies on 35 cents are strong and healthy; the Immigrants' health alone deteriorates.

4151. My coolies probably came over as Statute Immigrants.

4152. They get strong when they are released from their agreements.

4153. The only satisfactory Immigrants I have seen in Selangor estates are those at Weld's Hill.

4154. There are rather over 100 Immigrants at present in the State.

4155. I have never seen the coolies in Province Wellesley.

4156. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—I have no experience of sugar estates.

4157. *By Mr. Turner*:—The wages paid to indentured coolies are only sufficient for their food.

4158. The men are not so comfortable here as in India.

YIP KIM SHENG, Capitan China in Kwala Lumpur (SEE WAN interpreting) stated as follows:—

Yip Kim
Sheng. 10th
January.

4159. I have been Capitan China here for one year only, but have been engaged in tin-mining in Kwala Lumpur for 19 years.

4160. I am a Kheh.

4161. I employ mostly Khehs, but have also a certain number of Cantonese and a few miscellaneous tribesmen.

4162. I got about 7,000 men in 1889, but last year only 3,000. In 1889 the men were all *Sin-Khehs*: 6,000 of them signed contracts, and the remainder had paid their passages.

4163. Almost all of last year's men made contracts (in Singapore), but some of them who had paid half their passage money entered into no agreement.

4164. These *Sin-Khehs* were brought down here by old mining hands who had returned to China.

4165. Some of the contracts were for eight months only, the others for one year.

4166. The coolies on one-year contracts cost us altogether \$37 per man, and in addition we supplied them each with a coat and a pair of breeches, paid for by the Towkay: there were some additional small expenses in the way of tobacco, food, etc.

4167. The sum of \$18 specified in the contract as the maximum deduction to be made for passage money was not adhered to: the deductions made ranged from \$18 to \$24.

4168. The men from whom a deduction of \$24 was made were probably cheated by the *Kheh-Thaus*.

4169. It is the custom for men who come down from the Hai-lok-hong district to enter into an agreement with the *Kheh-Thaus* in China, by which they pledge themselves to pay them back double the amount of their proper debt. This has always been the recognised custom here, and I follow it; no doubt I ought to adhere to the terms laid down in the contract, but the former Capitan China did not do so, and I do not either; but if the Protector of Chinese orders me to do so, I will follow his instructions.

4170. When Mr. SWETTENHAM was Resident here, the mines were inspected once in seven months, and on such occasions the Inspector enquired into the treatment, health and sanitary arrangements of the coolies, but no questions were asked as to their wages. The Inspector interrogated the coolies themselves.

4171. Mr. SWETTENHAM on one occasion himself summoned all the Towkays before him and warned them against ill-treating the coolies or neglecting to pay them their proper wages: the coolies were also told that, if this was done, they were to complain to the Government.

4172. I have no difficulty in procuring enough coolies myself, and I believe this to be the case with all the other Towkays here. I believe this is due to the fact that many Towkays here have failed in their mining enterprises, and their coolies are in consequence available for the requirements of other employers. They failed partly in consequence of the fall in the price of tin, and partly because the banks ceased to advance them money.

4173. By Mr. Swettenham:—The price of tin is now \$30, but five years ago it was \$20 per pikul: the price is about the same now as last year.

4174. There is no difficulty in getting coolies from Canton and Wye Chan.

4175. By Mr. Brown:—There are at present about 88 Towkays here who employ Chinese labour to any large extent.

4176. There has been no Government inspection this year.

4177. By Mr. Swettenham:—The discharge ticket system is in force here.

4178. There is a depôt here, controlled by Chinamen of five different tribes, to prevent *Sin-Khehs* from absconding: it works satisfactorily.

4179. No coolie can leave the State unless provided with a pass, issued by myself. Yip Kim
Sheng. 10th
January.

4180. By Mr. Hill:—I do not think that a rise in the price of tin would cause any large increase in the supply of *Sin-Khehs*.

CHOW AH YOK was examined as follows:—

Chow Ah Yok,
10th January.

4181. I am a member of the State Council. I have been here thirty-one years.

4182. I agree generally with the evidence given by the last witness.

4183. By Mr. Swettenham:—I remember the visit of the Chinese Commissioners here three years ago. They had permission to go wherever they pleased and availed themselves of it very largely. I accompanied them. I explained the terms of the *Sin-Kheh's* service to them and they themselves interrogated the Mandors in the presence of the *Sin-Khehs*: they expressed themselves as quite satisfied with everything they saw, and added that they had heard that the *Sin-Khehs* were badly treated here, but had found it not to be the case.

4184. I attribute the falling off in the labour supply to the general depression caused by the refusal of the banks to advance money to the leading Towkays: I do not ascribe it to the price of tin, which I consider fair at present.

4185. Coolies have sometimes complained to me of their wages not being paid to them, and when time has permitted I have dealt with such cases myself; otherwise I have referred the coolies to the Capitan China.

4186. The amounts which coolies take back with them to China vary very much: some will take only \$40, and others as much as \$200 or \$300.

4187. They frequently remit money to China through the medium of their friends.

4188. It is a very common thing for men to return here after going back to China, and many of them bring friends back with them.

4189. Klang is well known in the Cantonese Province, especially of late years.

4190. The Chinese coolie's food costs him about \$3 a month: his extras amount to perhaps 50 cents more.

4191. The cost of a Tamil's food is about the same.

4192. I think the discharge-ticket system a good one: it is the employer's only security against the *Sin-Kheh's* running away and finding work elsewhere, which he certainly would do if it were abolished. The system was introduced at the special request of the Chinese employers.

4193. If \$18 was to be the maximum to be paid for coolies the supply would diminish: \$30 would be a fair price.

4194. It is only bad men who will bring *Sin-Khehs* down.

4195. If a *Sin-Kheh* is a 'good' man he will not cost the Towkay more than \$12, but if he is 'bad' and runs away he costs him more than \$20.

4196. The advance made to *Sin-Khehs* in China is only \$3.

The meeting adjourned at 2.30 P.M.

R. P. G.

THIRTY-SECOND MEETING.

HELD IN THE RAILWAY STATION AT PORT DICKSON, SUNGEI UJONG,
ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 11TH, 1891, AT 7.30 A. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. A. G. Mackie. 11th January. Mr. A. G. MACKIE, Manager of the Sungei Ujong Railway, gave evidence as follows:—

4197. I employ 1,200 Tamils, of whom half are free coolies and half are indentured Immigrants.

4198. I employ over 100 Chinese, all of them contractor's coolies.

4199. My Tamil indentured coolies are on a one-year contract, and are paid, the men 20 cents and the women 10 cents.

4200. We procured them through the Negapatam Agents, to whom we made advances of \$18 to \$22 per man for passages, &c. This we recover.

4201. I have imported altogether about 2,000 coolies during the last two years, and most of the men stay on with me as free coolies.

4202. There are not many desertions.

4203. I prefer free coolies to indentured ones as their cost is less and their work better; and their physique, too, is finer.

4204. To good men we pay 33 cents a day, and 30 cents to ordinary men.

4205. They work better on task work, and the sickness is also less.

4206. I employ indentured men only because it is difficult to get free coolies in sufficient numbers.

4207. I sometimes send for coolies myself, and sometimes men are brought in by the Tyndals of their own accord. I cannot say in either case where the men are procured, but I believe they come from different parts of the country; 30 or 40 coolies have been brought over from India by their friends.

4208. The death-rate, calculated over the whole number, is about 3 per 1,000 per month.

4209. The deaths are far more numerous among the indentured coolies than among the free, owing to their weak state of health when they arrive: I have had to send back nine from a single gang, who were utterly unfit for work.

4210. I was a planter for eight years in Ceylon.

4211. The men here are, generally speaking, as good as the men we got there. In Ceylon, however, very bad coolies were never employed. It was not worth the Kangani's while to bring them over.

4212. I prefer Tamils to Chinese: they are far more manageable and work better on fixed wages: they are cheaper, too, in the end, because you can get your work done exactly as you want it. The Chinese insist on doing work in their own way.

4213. Our system of work is this:—I fix what I consider to be a fair day's work and set a gang of, say, 100 coolies to work at it: as soon as it is finished the men can go home. If I think any man has been lazy at his work, I cut his wages.

4214. We have no sub-contracts.

4215. Our coolies do no Sunday work, nor do I pay the indentured men for Sundays. I think it best not to do so, as it would lead to constant disputes. Mr. A. G. Mackie. 11th January.

4216. I should object to any Government inspection of free coolies; it would be a good thing if it were certain that the Inspector would be a man of judgment, but it is not worth the risk. The inspection of indentured coolies is a sufficient nuisance as it is: the men are always complaining, and it tends to lessen the authority of the employer.

4217. I have had personal experience of this already: the Inspector's visits gave rise to a strong spirit of insubordination among the men.

4218. I speak sufficient Tamil to enable me to get on with the men.

4219. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I have been eight years in the Straits. I have employed Tamils also on estate work.

4220. The men almost invariably improve in physique after arrival, and the quality of their work improves in proportion.

4221. The difference of ten cents which I pay must be taken as representing the difference not only in the cost but also in the quality of the work of the free man and the indentured. The 20 cents which the latter receives affords no fair criterion of the cost to me.

4222. I am not aware that any special authority is necessary for Tamils to work on railways or at road-making.

4223. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—I did not know that it was contrary to law not to pay indentured coolies for Sundays. I am giving them a special rate of pay and I consider the case a special one too.

4224. Free men coming here from India would require to be acclimatised the same as an indentured coolie.

4225. *By Mr. Turner:*—The cost incurred in acclimatising coolies should fall on the man who imports them.

4226. I sell rice to the coolies at 20 cents a gantang, i.e., at a loss to myself: if I charged the men cost price they could not live. Rice is rather dearer here than in Penang, but the difference is paid by me.

4227. *By Mr. Brown:*—My coolies are employed on private, not Government contract.

4228. I prefer low wages to high. I do not consider 20 cents a high wage, though it would be considered so in Ceylon.

4229. The price of labour does not matter to me, as I must spend \$36,000 per mile on the railway.

4230. A coolie's cost of living here is about 6½ cents a day, including everything. I am almost certain of this.

4231. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—In Ceylon a coolie gets Rs. 9 to 10 according to his quality.

4232. *By Mr. Turner:*—In Ceylon the planters have no expenses in connection with the importation of labour.

The meeting adjourned at 8.10 A. M.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED IN THE RESIDENCY, SEREMBAN,

AT 12.15 P. M.

The same members were present as at the previous meeting.

Mr. W. F. B. PAUL, British Resident, Sungei Ujong, gave evidence as follows:—
4233. I am not satisfied with the present labour supply. Mr. W. F. B. Paul. 11th January.

Mr. W. F. B.
Paul, 11th
January.

4234. A better class of Tamil coolie and a more contented could be got if it were not for the restrictions imposed by the Ordinance. The term of contract is too long, and the rate of wages too low; the former should not exceed eighteen months, and the latter should not be less than 20 cents.

4235. The sickness of the coolies is caused by the discontent which they feel at seeing their countrymen getting much larger pay than themselves, and by the thought of the debt which they have to clear off. If the rate of pay were raised, the employer would find his compensation in the better quality of work that he would get.

4236. The more saving coolies pay off their debt in a year, and the others, seeing this, get jealous and discontented.

4237. The contract term, if expressed as "one year," would, to a coolie's mind, convey more meaning than "365 days."

4238. If we were sure of always being able to procure a sufficient supply of coolies and of keeping them when we had got them, there would be no further ground for dissatisfaction.

4239. I think Government might offer some inducements to men coming over here as settlers, not as coolies, but I see no reason why it should assist the men who import the coolies for their own purposes. The inducements might take the form of free passages and grants of land, and reasonable help in other ways, provided that suitable land, similar to that in the men's native country, could be found here.

4240. The men need not necessarily be tied down to working on their own land alone.

4241. There is ample land in Sungei Ujong suitable for gardening and agriculture generally—in fact, for any class of labourer—more than enough for any number of settlers who would come over.

4242. The land to be so granted would have to be in the neighbourhood of a town.

CHINESE.

4243. If the price of tin is low, the employers cannot afford to import *Sin-Khehs*.

4244. No extraordinary assistance is required in this way: the men settle fast enough already, provided the conditions are favourable.

4245. The Tamils make better agriculturalists, but are inferior to Chinese at mining work; they are more likely to succeed as settlers, because the Chinese bring no wives with them.

JAVANESE.

4246. We employ only a few. I do not think they are worth encouraging as settlers. Very few of them bring women.

4247. They are good at road-making and as syces, and work fairly well, but there is no demand for them here.

4248. Sungei Ujong pays \$1,000 a year towards the Negapatam steamer subsidy; all the coolies we have have been brought over by that agency.

4249. I am quite in favour of giving free passages to Government coolies. We only began the subsidy this year, but I think it is quite on the right lines. It falls less hard on the coolie even if his passage is recovered.

4250. I have no knowledge of either China or India as recruiting grounds.

4251. The present class of Immigrant is very satisfactory, but he gets discontented at the terms of his service after arrival.

4252. A coolie should live well on a minimum of \$5 a month: I give this sum as an all-round price, as some of the men bring their families as well.

4253. I think the present supervision of coolies here sufficient. There is no systematic ill-treatment, but I think that a sanitary and medical inspection of them might be introduced with advantage.

Mr. W. F. B.
Paul, 11th
January.

4254. The present regulations as to Sunday labour should be continued; one day's holiday per week ought to be insisted on.

4255. The free coolie should not be compelled to work on Sunday, and extra pay should always be given when he did so.

4256. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I have made some enquiry into the cost of living here to a Malay, and I do not think a man could live on 10 cents a day: I believe the ordinary labourer requires \$5 a month to live on.

4257. When Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE stopped the works on their estate here, no local supply of labour was available. They are the only employers of Tamil labourers on estate work here at present—the men are at Linsum.

4258. I believe planting would pay with 1½-year contracts and wages at 20 cents. I would be prepared to introduce large numbers of Tamils on those terms.

4259. The Government here has imported only 20 or 30 Tamils, who are now working as free labourers: we propose to get some more from India.

4260. I think Government ought to import labour for its own works.

4261. It would certainly pay us better to land 100 men free into the country every year than to bring over 50 men under contract to some employer.

4262. Men so imported would have to be under contract to come here.

4263. I think some arrangement between the different States would be quite feasible, to prevent the one State "underselling" the other.

4264. I would be prepared to pay higher wages to men who went away and returned here again.

4265. I think the offer of a free passage would prove quite sufficient in itself to induce men to come over here in considerable numbers. They would come here presumably to look for employment, which we should be prepared to provide them with.

4266. I think Government could very well take the necessary measures for protecting free coolies without any regular inspection.

4267. *By Mr. Turner*:—Mr. MACKIE has very good opportunities of ascertaining the cost of the coolie's living.

4268. Eighteen months would be sufficient to recoup the employer for his outlay if the class of coolie were a good one.

4269. Thirty cents a day is only paid to very good coolies here. Ten gantangs of rice per month should be quite enough for a man to live on, but I can give no details on this subject as I am not brought into direct contact with the men in the same way as Mr. MACKIE is.

4270. *By Mr. Macgregor*:—I would not agree with Mr. MACKIE's estimate of 6½ cents a day as being sufficient for a man to live on.

4271. *By Mr. Brown*:—Some of the Government works are given to contractors and some are done departmentally.

4272. I do not think Government is called upon to provide coolies for road making.

4273. The discharge-ticket system is in force here, and works satisfactorily: it is on the same lines as the Selangor system. The passes are granted to coolies by their respective employers, but no Government officer has been appointed to look after it.

4274. There is no regular inspection of the kongsis here; they are, however, occasionally visited by a Government official.

4275. The advances recoverable from Chinese *Sin-Khehs* are sometimes entered at \$30; the Government takes no steps to see that only the legal advances are recovered from the men.

Mr. P. S. Clarke. 11th as follows:—
January.

Mr. P. S. CLARKE, of the Sungei Ujong Public Works Department, gave evidence

4276. We pay Javanese labourers \$8 a month; Tamil 30 cents a day.

4277. We can get as many as we want at these rates.

4278. We employ 65 Tamils in Sungei Ujong, and 20 in Jelebu; they are paid at the same rate.

[The witness here handed in a written statement to the effect that thirty-two coolies are employed by the Public Works Department in Sungei Ujong. They are on a 3-year contract and served their first year on 14 cents, but are now receiving 16 cents. They have all paid off their advances. They complain that they have not enough to live on, and it is under contemplation to raise their pay to 20 cents. Forty-seven free Indian coolies, on 30 cents, are employed. They can all live well on 15 cents per diem. There was not much sickness among them last year. In addition to the above, 34 Javanese are employed on \$8 per month. They suffer from fever on the S'tul Road, due to the bad water there, but elsewhere they are perfectly healthy.]

The meeting adjourned at 1.15 p.m.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED AT THE *LINSUM ESTATE*, AT SUNGEI UJONG,
ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 11TH, 1891, AT 3 P.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. V. R. Wickwar. 11th as follows:—
January.

Mr. V. R. WICKWAR, Manager, Linsum Estate, Sungei Ujong, gave evidence as

4279. *By the President*:—The difficulty has been in obtaining the number required and the waste of time in getting them. I have got all I wanted, but only after two or three months' delay.

4280. I have given up engaging men on three-year agreements. The terms are settled by Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE. I send my indent to them and get all I want.

4281. I think, on the whole, that Government should prohibit Sunday labour. Probably legislation is unnecessary. Stress of crop would be an exception. I do not think generally coolies are overworked on Sundays.

4282. Thirty-four coolies deserted altogether last year, of whom 13 were recovered.

4283. Of the one-year men who commenced to arrive in July, 9 absconded and have not been arrested. This is a large percentage.

4284. It is well known that, of all classes of coolies, the largest proportion desert in the first six months.

4285. The present minimum wage is insufficient, as the coolie only works at most 25 days a month. Mr. V. R. Wickwar. 11th January.

4286. In estimating the rate of wages sufficient for a coolie to live on, the average number of days for which he receives wages should be considered and not the possible numbers.

4287. It costs the coolie \$3.10 to \$3.50 a month to live. This is arrived at from my own enquiries.

4288. Rice is issued every Sunday, from 43 to 45 catties per month, say 32 chupaks, at 21 cents a gantang.

4289. I think the coolie would have better heart if the contract were shortened. The prospect of a long contract has an effect on his health; the shorter contract and higher rate has attracted a better class of coolies, in spite of desertion. I believe there are professional deserters; in one particular case, which I know of my own knowledge, a coolie who could speak Malay brought clothes to disguise himself as a Chinaman and thus managed to get to Malacca.

4290. A Government Agency should be an assistance to private recruiting.

4291. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—My evidence is only local. If rice was only \$1 instead of \$1.60 a month, the higher rate of wages probably would not be necessary.

4292. Immediately on their arrival the coolies are in a better state of health than after about six months or a year, and the fittest men survive.

4293. The new men generally look as fit as the old ones.

4294. A new man is just as strong and fit for work as an old one.

4295. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—With rice at one fixed rate a fixed wage all round might be settled, but I think it would be a loss to the planter.

4296. I would sooner have a different rate of wages fixed for each place, according to the prices of rice. The different rate of wages would be a difficulty with regard to recruiting, as the coolies would not know or consider the cost of living.

4297. My experience is that free men at 25 cents cost the employer no more than 14 cents men under indenture.

4298. The admission into hospital is very small at present.

4299. A high rate of wage, whether under contract or not, would attract a better class of coolies and more of them.

4300. In Ceylon the management takes no responsibility to find out the amount due by the coolie to the Kanggani, or the amount recovered by the latter from the former.

4301. The maximum rate of wages in Ceylon in my time was 17 cents of a dollar. I have not heard that it has increased.

4302. *By Mr. Turner*:—I have obtained all the coolies I have ordered.

4303. I pay free coolies, on an average 25 cents (indifferent men 23 cents, and the best 26½ cents).

4304. Ten free coolies working for three years at 14 and 16 cents under indenture, would cost the same as ten free men at 25 cents. This is how I arrive at this conclusion:—

Ten Immigrants working 20 days a month would receive	
wages in 1st year at 14 cents,...	\$ 336
2nd & 3rd year, at 16 cents, ...	768
Cost of passages would be ...	200
Loss by death, desertion, &c.,...	350
Expenses in hospital, ...	300
	\$1,954
Less advances recovered, say ...	80
	\$1,874
Ten Free men working 20 days a month, at 25 cents a day, ...	
would receive wages in three years, ...	\$1,800

Mr. V. R.
Wickwar.
11th January.

4305. It would pay one to import immigrants on 20 cents a day even on a one-year contract. I should recoup myself for my advances even if the advances were not recoverable and the term reduced to one year.

4306. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—Sunday should be a holiday and no pay.
The meeting adjourned at 4.30 P. M.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED ON BOARD THE COLONIAL STEAMER *SEA-BELLE*, AT 6.30 P. M.

The same members were present as at the previous meeting.

Dr. E. A.
Travers.
11th January.

Dr. E. A. TRAVERS, Residency Surgeon and Assistant Indian Immigration Agent, Sungei Ujong, gave evidence as follows:—

4307. I have held my present post for three and a-half years.

4308. I speak no Tamil or Chinese.

4309. I do not inspect the coolies on arrival: my duties are to keep a register of all the coolies, to collect returns, to visit the estates at least four times a year, to receive any complaints, and to look after the coolies generally.

4310. As a matter of fact I visit the estates more frequently than my actual duties as Indian Immigration Agent compel me to, in the way of private practice, as I am employed by the estates as their medical adviser.

4311. I am doctor for all the estates and for the railway.

4312. The coolies' physique has improved since the depôt was opened at Nega-patam, i.e., during the past year, but many men of bad physique continue to arrive.

4313. In 1889 the sickness was very great here.

4314. There was formerly much sickness among the newly arrived coolies, but it has much decreased of late.

4315. The Vellalas, and high caste coolies generally, are the best men; they take more care of themselves, are more hardy and work better than the others.

4316. The men formerly received only 14 cents, but now get 20 cents. The new arrivals feed themselves better now than they used to.

4317. Fourteen cents is sufficient for a coolie's actual living, but he has sundry other small expenses which are almost as necessary to him as his food. Government coolies thrive and work well (on an average 24 days a month) on 16 cents a day, but they enjoy certain privileges, such as free admission into hospital, and are less hard-worked than estate or contractors' coolies.

4318. Eighteen cents should be sufficient in Sungei Ujong for the average coolie, and \$4 a month is the least they should get: a man does reasonably well on this.

4319. Malays can get their food more easily and cheaply here than the Tamils, who are strangers to the country, and yet the Javanese save no money in spite of their higher pay.

4320. Estate coolies are charged 13 cents per day in hospital.

4321. We pay the contractor 12½ cents per day for feeding men in hospital; the contract is at so much per catty, and I think the rate is cheap.

4322. Three years is too long for the term of contract; it should be reduced by half.

4323. The Government coolies imported into Sungei Ujong insisted strongly on a two-year contract.

Dr. E. A.
Travers.
11th January.

4324. The health of coolies on a one-year contract is wonderfully good. The prospect of his long contract seriously affects a coolie's health, but it does not account altogether for the high death-rate.

4325. The death-rate among the free coolies is not very high.

4326. The health of the coolies who were transported from Linsum improved much when living on the coast.

4327. I think the coolies are generally well housed, as regards health: they ought to be forced to give themselves proper ventilation, even against their will. They would soon grow used to it in the same way as they do in the hospitals, which are very freely ventilated.

4328. Every coolie in hospital should certainly have a blanket.

4329. I have no reason for believing that the coolies are seriously ill-treated. A very bad case of flogging was recently brought against a Tyndal, but the coolie would not give evidence. The Managers do all in their power to put down ill-treatment, but it is very hard to stop it altogether. The man KANDASAMI used to tyrannize over the coolies and squeeze them, and did much harm generally, but nothing of the kind goes on now.

4330. I think an inspection of the free coolies' lines, and also of the check-rolls is desirable: it should be made at least once a year, and preferably by a medical officer. The Tamil coolie is a great fool, and needs help to maintain his rights. Coolies should be encouraged to make complaints, when any cause for them exists, to the Indian Immigration Agent.

4331. I am under the Indian Immigration Agent in Penang; I correspond directly with him, and, generally speaking, should carry out any of his instructions.

CHINESE.

4332. I am brought into contact with Chinese only in the Government hospitals.

4333. Some cases of ill-treatment have occurred among them, but very few complaints are made.

4334. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I do not inspect the mines or kongsi houses, and have no sanitary control over them whatever.

4335. I inspect Mr. MACKIE's coolies, and believe that he pays them for Sundays, though they do not work.

4336. I do not think any new contract of importance—such as the extension of the railway to Pahang—would raise wages to 40 cents. Coolies have sometimes earned as much as that.

4337. Even though the indentured coolie's wages were raised to 18 cents, his health would still be affected if he saw his countrymen earning 40 cents. It would be a good thing if the contractors could afford to pay 25 cents or even more.

4338. A coolie's great desire is to get rid of his contract, and on 18 or 20 cents, a good coolie could clear off his debt in a year.

4339. The desertions are always more frequent during the first year than afterwards.

4340. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—It would be better for the coolies if their rice were sold to them cheaper and their wages proportionately reduced than it would be to sell them the rice at market prices and pay them the wages as usual.

4341. It would be a great advantage if one universal rate of wages could be fixed for the whole country.

Dr. E. A.
Travers. 11th
January.

4342. I consider that the Government scheme of importing coolies has been a great success.

4343. *By Mr. Turner:*—In advocating the increase of wages to 18 cents, I base my opinion rather on my experience of the estates than on my experience of the railway work.

4344. The death-rate among the free coolies last year was much lighter, but among the indentured coolies there was no perceptible difference.

4345. *By Mr. Brown:*—The coolies' physique is generally better on first arrival than afterwards, in the case of men on a three-year contract. I have not yet had sufficient experience of the new system to say what its effects will be.

4346. *By the President:*—The men are usually in a weak state when their three-year contract is over: I am speaking of the men on the old system, at 14 cents: I cannot say yet what the case will be with men drawing 20 cents.

4347. *By Mr. Brown:*—I do not think that any special climatic influences affected the death-rate of the coolies last year.

4348. *By Mr. Turner:*—I think the coolies would be more contented if their wages were raised and the deductions made as usual than they would be on the usual wages and with no debt to clear off.

4349. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—Men who have survived three, four, or five years' service are in every way better fitted for an agricultural coolie's work than men newly arrived in the Colony.

[The witness stated in conclusion that the rule as to coolies receiving Sunday pay if they worked the remaining six days of the week was a simple farce: scarcely any men worked for six days a week and earned the pay: the rule should, however, still be maintained, even with an increased rate of wages, as it was an incentive to the men to go out to work.]

He also laid stress on the evil practice of stopping the rice of sickly coolies who have been unable to work the number of days requisite to entitle them to their full rice allowance: instead of being better cared for when they are sick, the men wander about in a semi-starving condition, and eat all kinds of refuse to stay their hunger. This was the case more especially at Linsum Estate until recently.]

The meeting adjourned at 7.45 P.M.

R. P. G.

THIRTY-THIRD MEETING.
HELD IN THE STADT HOUSE, MALACCA, ON MONDAY,
JANUARY 12TH, 1891, AT NOON.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

TAN TEK GUAN, planter, was examined and stated as follows:—

4350. I am engaged in gambier and pepper planting, and am a part-owner of the Guan Seng Wat Hill Estate.

4351. I employ only Chinese there: Ten Hailams under *Sin-Kheh* contracts are working on the estate.

Tan Tek
Guan. 12th
January.

4352. When *Sin-Khehs* arrive here we pay the *Kheh-Thau*: the *Sin-Khehs'* wages are paid monthly, to each one personally. Tan Tek
Guan. 12th
January.

4353. We do not find much difficulty in procuring enough labour, but we sometimes have to pay \$28 for a man.

4354. The men come here direct from China in junks, calling at Singapore on the way. I do not know who pays the *Sin-Khehs'* passages: the junks do not belong to this place—they are Hailam vessels.

4355. Each coolie costs me \$22 the first year: we have no written contracts: the coolies are provided with everything free, including food, clothes, shaving, &c. and occasionally a little pocket money: they get no wages, but at the end of each six months we give them \$2 to send to China. If the men die we do not pay anything.

4356. The coolie's food costs me \$3 a month per man.

4357. I have never been to China.

4358. The *Lau-Khehs* insist on receiving their pay themselves, not through the headmen.

4359. I cannot get enough *Lau-Khehs* here; those from Singapore are a bad set of men.

4360. We must employ *Lau-Khehs* to teach the *Sin-Khehs* how to work, but they are more expensive.

4361. *By Mr. Powell:*—I employ only Hailams and Lui-chius. I have never sent any one to China to get men down.

4362. It is only the men who come down here in steamers who cost \$28.

4363. We deduct the advances made by the *Kheh-Thau* from the coolies' wages.

4364. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—We have no Government inspection.

4365. Some 2,000 or 3,000 men arrive here annually in junks, and they all go up-country.

4366. I think our system is a fair one as regards the coolies. We have to pay all expenses in advance, we take all risks, and the men are often very stupid on first arrival and useless for the work for some little time.

4367. The *Kheh-Thau* is responsible for any men who run away during the year; he is a Malacca man. If a coolie dies he does not have to pay for him.

4368. *By Mr. Turner:*—*Sin-Khehs* very seldom run away, as we treat them very well. If the *Kheh-Thau* re-arrests a deserter he returns him to the estate.

Dr. W. HOAD, Colonial Surgeon, Malacca, gave evidence as follows:—

4369. By a special arrangement in force here, I visit the estates where statute labourers are employed once every fortnight, and my Apothecary visits them every alternate fortnight, so they are visited once a week.

4370. I have been here ten months: I had no previous experience of estates. I do not speak Tamil.

4371. My duties are to inspect the lines, to enquire into any cases of sickness, and to initial the register. I do not muster the coolies, and there is no difficulty therefore in keeping cases of sickness from my knowledge.

4372. There are no hospitals on estates in Malacca: when necessary I send men to the Government hospitals.

4373. The lines are quite good enough for the health of the coolies.

4374. Any suggestions I may make are usually adopted by the Chinese employers.

Dr. W. Hoad.
12th January.

Dr. W. Hoad. 4375. The death-rate among the Tamils was very small last year—only two deaths occurred. Their health on the whole is quite satisfactory, and such cases as occur are mostly chronic. The water supply is quite satisfactory.

4376. Bad food is occasionally given, and I recently made one man substitute a better quality of rice for the bad kind he was giving.

4377. If a man falls ill he cannot earn enough to buy proper food, and gets worse and worse until he comes into hospital. When a Kling gets into that state, it is very hard to restore him to proper health.

4378. I think a blanket for each hospital patient is essential: in certain cases, such as fever, one patient often requires two or three blankets.

CHINESE.

4379. I only come into contact with the Chinese in hospital; they come in in a very broken-down condition, due chiefly to their having allowed their ailments to run on for too long neglected.

4380. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—There are four estates in Malacca employing Indian indentured coolies, and about forty coolies on each estate: the employers are all Chinese.

4381. I do not take an interpreter when I visit the estates.

4382. We pay the hospital contractor 8½ cents per diet for ordinary patients, and I think this is quite sufficient to procure good food.

4383. The men do not destroy their blankets in hospital.

4384. *By Mr. Turner*:—Chinese coolies are always anxious to remain in hospital.

4385. *By Mr. Brown*:—I believe our prison diet is the same as that used in Penang and Singapore: the men get no meat, and in place of 5 oz. of rice we give them 5 oz. of black peas. They do not like it, but it is better for them.

[Dr. HoAD subsequently stated, in answer to questions, that the cost per diem of an Indian Immigrant in the Government hospital was 10 cents, and that for P. W. D. coolies no hospital fees were charged.]

LEE KENG LIAT, estate owner, was examined and stated as follows (Mr. SWETTENHAM interpreting):—

4386. I have three estates, all for tapioca; one at Malaka Pindah, where 32 Tamils (indentured coolies), 18 *Sin-Khehs* and 45 *Lau-Khehs* are employed; one at Pulau Sebang, on which I have 7 *Sin-Khehs* and 290 *Hai-lok-hong* and *Hailam Lau-Khehs*; and one at Johol, with 10 *Sin-Khehs* and 320 *Lau-Khehs*.

4387. I pay my Tamils 12 cents per day their first year and 14 cents afterwards.

4388. The Tamils are hard to get, expensive, and unmanageable: they work badly, and often desert. I do not want any more of them.

4389. I have one Chinese Tyndal who can speak a very little Tamil, and one Tamil Clerk who speaks Malay, but no Chinese.

4390. I originally had 150 Tamils here, but 53 deserted, and about 40 redeemed themselves: they were very hard to re-arrest and they ran away four or five times. Imprisonment did not deter them at all.

4391. It costs me \$7 to \$8 to re-arrest a man, and I must bear the expense myself.

4392. I pay the doctor's fee for coming to visit the estates, as also the coolies' keep when in hospital and his transport there. I keep a Dresser on the estate who has a slight knowledge of medicine, and pay him \$15 a month. He was formerly in a Government hospital, but was dismissed.

4393. Owing to Government inspection the coolies grew undisciplined and insubordinate.

Lee Keng
Liat. 12th
January.

4394. They cost me \$24 per man. I give them 6 gantang of rice each man per month at 20 cents per gantang, *i.e.*, cost price: I always give this, whether the men work or not. I pay the cart hire myself.

4395. The Tamil's contracts will expire in fifteen months' time; the men will have to work off their days of absence before they go.

4396. I think 14 cents a low wage, but the other expenses which I incur with Tamils make them more expensive to me than Chinese.

4397. If the Government would abolish the inspection and not force me to pay the men's medical and hospital expenses I would pay them \$5 a month. They themselves would prefer this, for they are not contented on 14 cents.

FREE TAMILS.

4398. I had 10 formerly, at \$7.50 a month. They were not so good at their work as Chinese.

4399. I gave them only their lines free.

4400. I think flogging would prove a more effective punishment than imprisonment.

4401. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—I obtained my indentured Tamils partly through a man named GOVINDASAMI, partly through VENGADASALAM, and some—17—from a man named HICKY: the latter only brought the coolies after he had received instructions from me to do so.

4402. I employed GOVINDASAMI to work and feed the coolies on the estate, and he behaved very badly and flogged the men. I knew nothing of his proceedings, but was prosecuted in consequence of them. Since the enquiry into the matter everything has been put right, but the desertions still continue. Only 11 had absconded previous to the enquiry.

CHINESE.

4403. The *Sin-Khehs* are brought down in junks by the *Kheh-Thaus*. The Malacca Agent makes a profit of \$1 per head; he guarantees the men for one year, and pays for any losses incurred by desertions. The men enter into no agreement, but they work well for their year.

4404. The cost last year was \$28 per man, but I cannot get as many as I want at that price. I keep back \$5 to give to the coolies to send to China.

4405. I pay them no wages.

4406. A coolie's food costs me about \$3 or \$3.20 per month.

4407. Even though a man did no work for five or six months I would still release him at the end of his year, because their work is so good.

4408. If I want coolies in any large number I must send money to China to get them. I give \$200 or \$300 to the *Kheh-Thau* and he brings down the men to me, otherwise I could never get enough. Last year I got only 40 or 50 men.

4409. Only 30 or 40 of my men are *Sin-Khehs*; the rest are all *Lau-Khehs*.

4410. At Malaka Pindah I pay the *Lau-Khehs* \$8.50, at Pulau Sebang \$10, and at Johol \$11.

4411. I prefer *Lau-Khehs*, but they are hard to get.

4412. Though I pay *Lau-Khehs* double the ordinary wages they are worth more than the difference to me in the work they do.

Lee Keng
Liat. 12th
January.

4413. If they are sick and do not work I do not pay them, but I give them their food and deduct the amount from their pay.

4414. All my *Lau-Khehs* get their food from me.

Mr. J. R.
Innes. 12th
January.

Mr. J. R. INNES, District Officer, Alor Gajah, gave evidence as follows:—

4415. I have been Assistant Indian Immigration Agent for Malacca for eighteen months. I had no previous experience of Tamils. I speak the language very little, but sufficiently to get on.

4416. My duties are to inspect all the estates once a month. I am present when the men's wages are paid.

4417. There is no Government depôt here for Indian coolies, and none have arrived here during the last eighteen months. Applications for coolies have been made through me.

4418. The cost of a coolie's food, everything included, is about \$2.50. I think the men feed very well here, though occasionally the rice is bad. The men complain of getting low wages, but they are quite sufficient for them to live upon.

4419. The men are well treated here by the Chinese employers, thanks to the constant inspection, but without it the case would be different: ill-treatment occurred before the inspection was introduced, but has stopped now.

4420. The coolies complain chiefly of sickness.

4421. There are only indentured coolies on the estates in Malacca.

4422. The Government road coolies are very healthy men: indentured immigrants would not be strong enough for that kind of work.

4423. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—A coolie works on an average from 20 to 22 days a month.

4424. At Kesang three-fourths of the men get no money after the cost of their rice has been deducted.

4425. *By Mr. Turner*:—I should say that 25 per cent. of ex-estate coolies would be unfit for road work.

M. R. V.
Boswell. 12th
January.

Mr. R. V. BOSWELL, Acting Superintendent of Works and Surveys, Malacca, gave evidence as follows:—

4426. We employ about 200 road coolies, all free men, on about 20 cents a day; they get \$3 a month. If they work six days in the week they receive Sunday pay also.

4427. We have no difficulty in getting enough men, but the quality is not good; most of them come from Penang, and a certain number from Singapore and Sungei Ujong: they come here looking for employment.

4428. I do not think the Malacca road coolies are worse than any others.

4429. I employ Malays and Javanese on the same wages as the Klings. I have no Chinese.

4430. There is a good deal of sickness in certain districts, but very few go to hospital: they prefer to doctor themselves.

4431. The Tamils generally stay here two or three years and then return to India. They come back here again later on.

4432. No works have been stopped here for want of labour, but there is a great scarcity of skilled workmen.

4433. Twenty cents has been the rate here since I arrived in 1885.

4434. I was here from 1867 to 1877, and the rate, as far as I can remember, was the same then for P. W. D. coolies as it is now. Mr. R. V.
Boswell. 12th
January.

4435. The contractors pay \$7.50 a month, because they do not employ men for any length of time.

4436. Our coolies get their lines and lamp oil free, but no food.

4437. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—For road-making I prefer Tamils.

4438. *By Mr. Turner*:—If Government were to provide coolies with rations in the same way as is done on the estates, it would certainly be desirable that it should import its own indentured coolies for road-making.

4439. The Tyndals who procure the coolies get them either in the Colony or the Native States; not from India.

4440. The contractors get their coolies in the same way.

4441. *By Mr. Brown*:—I do not think that the price of labour would be affected if the Government introduced its own coolies for the public works.

4442. I do not consider 25 cents a day a high wage for contractor's coolies.

4443. *By the President*:—A coolie's food costs about \$3 to \$5 a month: for a man who does not drink \$3 is enough.

4444. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I do not see how the rate of wages for free labour in the Straits could be reduced.

4445. Even if Government were suddenly to stop all public works the price of labour would still remain the same: coolies would then seek work elsewhere.

4446. It is possible that they would accept the lower wages then.

The meeting adjourned at 2 P.M.

THE MEETING RE-ASSEMBLED AT 3.30 P.M.

The same members being present as at the morning sitting.

TAN HUN GUAN, planter, was examined and stated as follows:—

Tan Hun
Guan. 12th
January.

4447. *By Mr. Swettenham*:—I was born in Malacca. I have two estates: on the first, at Durian Tunggal, I employ 6 free Tamils, 26 *Sin-Khehs* and about 50 Malays on daily wages; on the second, at Padang Kladi, a tapioca estate, I employ no Tamils, but 70 *Sin-Khehs*, 80 *Lau-Khehs* and 50 or 60 Malays.

4448. I pay my Klings for road-work \$6 a month, and they find everything themselves.

4449. I pay *Sin-Khehs* \$26 a head for a year's work.

4450. I buy them from tongkangs in Malacca. I find everything for them.

4451. *Lau-Khehs* get \$7.50, \$8 and \$8.50 per month.

4452. The Tamils' work is good, but the men are troublesome. I have never had Tamils under agreement.

4453. There is no Government inspection of Chinese here. My men are not under contract.

4454. They never run away.

4455. They are recruited by an old servant of mine, and the Head of the Hailams in Malacca guarantees them for a year.

Tan Hun
Guan. 12th
January.

4456. We employers would like to adopt the Singapore system of making agreements, but if we did so the coolies would not come. No agreements are ever made here. I have asked coolies to do so, but they always refuse, though I cannot say for what reason; they are stupid and dislike the idea.

4457. I have had no desertions for the last twenty-eight years, but still the agreements would always be an extra safeguard to me should any desertions occur.

4458. I give my coolies 20 cents a month as pocket money.

4459. I have no experience outside of Malacca.

4460. I have never tried to get coolies in Singapore.

4461. Two thousand or 3,000 men come here annually in junks—all Hailams and Lui-chius—and find work here.

4462. The Chinese labour supply is not sufficient; we could find work for 6,000 Immigrants annually in Malacca and the Native States.

4463. There are no obstructions to emigration in China, but not enough recruiters go there.

4464. When men have worked well on my estate I give them \$50 or \$100, and they go to China and bring back 15 or 20 persons each.

4465. When the rice crop in China is bad, men will come down here in large numbers; otherwise they will not.

4466. They are much better off here than in China.

4467. Most of them remain here for a year, then go back to China, and subsequently return again to Malacca.

4468. The food of a man with a good appetite costs about \$3 a month; a saving man can live on \$2, but he would then eat meat not more than once in two or three months.

4469. I would have no objection myself to a Government inspection, but I think it would lead to insubordination, as I have heard is the case with Klings.

4470. I take great care of my coolies as I want them to work hard.

4471. Eight out of ten coolies would take Chinese medicine in preference to going into hospital. If the Chinese medicine does no good I compel the men to go to hospital.

4472. If the men die I lose my money.

4473. I hope the Government will not introduce any regulations for Chinese similar to those in force with Tamils. The Chinese are quite contented to continue as they have been hitherto.

4474. I have never had any complaints at all on my estate, nor have I heard any made against the employers on other estates, but I have heard complaints made of their Tyndals: the employer, though, is responsible, and unless he takes proper steps to prevent it ill-treatment will certainly occur.

Juan Jun
Chiang. 12th
January.

JUAN JUN CHIANG (stated by the previous witnesses to be an importing agent for coolies):—

4475. I am not connected in any way with the coolie business. I have been forty years in Malacca.

4476. I am a Hailam. I was formerly a tailor.

4477. The coolies come to Malacca in tongkangs.

4478. I believe \$20 to \$22 per man is the price paid for them. The Kheh-Thau gets the men for \$18 and makes a maximum profit of \$2 on each coolie. My

profit is \$1, and GEE QUEE also makes \$1 per man: GEE QUEE lands the men from the tongkangs.

[The witness exhibited a very evident reluctance to afford any information whatever, and his examination was discontinued.]

BOK GEE QUEE (also said to be a coolie importer) stated as follows:—

Bok Gee Quee.
12th January.

4479. By Mr. Swettenham:—Until quite recently I was a tailor, but have stopped business owing to the approach of the New Year: I have no occupation at present.

4480. TAN TEK GUAN asked me last year to get him some coolies: I happened to have 9 or 10 in my house at the time and gave them to him: they had come down from China in tongkangs: this was the only occasion on which I have had anything to do with the coolie traffic: the Towkays are lying if they say I get their coolies for them.

4481. The men were brought to my house by a Towkay, who had bought them from the Kheh-Thau for \$22 or \$23 each. I went surety for the coolies, that they should not run away, and received a commission of \$1 per man. If they run away I must get them back and return them to the estate.

4482. I do not know where the Towkays here get their coolies from.

4483. I cannot say how many coolies come down here in tongkangs each year.

4484. I have been ten years in Malacca.

4485. None of those ten coolies have run away.

The Hon'ble D. F. A. HERVEY, Resident Councillor, Malacca, undertook to furnish the Commission with a copy of the Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the health of the coolies on Kemendor Estate, and, in examination, stated as follows:—

4486. I understand that the proprietors of Kemendor Estate were satisfied with the arrangements there.

4487. No Indian Immigrants were imported into Malacca previous to 1888: they were introduced in consequence of the rise in the price of Chinese labour.

4488. I believe that the treatment of coolies here is now quite satisfactory, but the wages paid are far too small; a man cannot support himself on the present rate. The minimum wage to commence on should be 16 cents.

4489. I would like to see the contract system done away with altogether, but in any case three years is too long a term.

4490. I would suggest that the Government should pay the passages of free labourers coming over: if such a scheme were introduced simultaneously throughout the Colony the Government would benefit by it, for the people would settle in the country.

4491. By Mr. Swettenham:—I would be glad to see agriculture encouraged in the country, and I believe that the scheme I have suggested—of Government paying the passages of unindentured Immigrants—would both extend agriculture and reduce the present rate of wages.

4492. I do not think that Government would be deterred from carrying out the plan by the possibility of the men crossing over into neighbouring territory when they had arrived in the Colony.

4493. I believe that the scarcity of labour is deterring capitalists from investing money in this country.

4494. By Mr. MacGregor:—Grants of land, rent free, for one or two years, would have to be given to men imported in the manner suggested, but I do not think any agreement with them would be necessary.

The Hon'ble
D. F. A.
Hervey. 12th
January.

4495. The free passages would by themselves prove a sufficient inducement to attract men in large numbers, and the Government might easily guarantee them employment here on first arrival until they succeeded in finding work for themselves.

4496. I think a large proportion of the free labourers at present in the country must be old estate coolies.

4497. *By Mr. Turner:*—Government would derive benefit from the importation of free labourers even though they took to plantation work.

4498. I think it would be more desirable to land a coolie in the country free from debt and continue to pay him at the lower rate of wages than to increase the wages and continue the deductions as hitherto.

4499. *By Mr. Brown:*—The Government is certainly under an obligation to the planters for having kept alive certain industries in the Colony.

4500. The importation of labour by the planters must have given the Government facilities for procuring the coolies it requires for its public works, to a certain extent at least.

CHINESE.

4501. *By the President:*—Newly arrived coolies are registered by the Superintendent of Police, but there is no regular dépôt or Protectorate here.

4502. The Chinese coolie is liable to ill-treatment, and I know that certain cases of it have occurred.

4503. Men have been beaten, but I have never heard any complaints of their being underfed.

4504. There should be a regular inspection of both indentured and free coolies, and as often as might be thought necessary.

4505. There is plenty of land in Malacca suitable for agriculture if colonists were introduced: any number of families could find employment.

4506. The men would probably take to coco-nut planting and paddy cultivation.

4507. The immigration of both Tamils and Chinese should be encouraged, but preferably of Chinese: they work better, but it would be difficult to induce Chinese families to come down.

JAVANESE.

4508. There are very few Javanese in Malacca.

4509. Javanese can work well when they like, but the men here are an inferior set, and I think their quality has deteriorated lately.

4510. There are large numbers of Javanese in Muar.

4511. *By Mr. Swettenham:*—I do not know that the Straits Settlements Government have ever attempted to introduce any colonists into the country.

4512. If Chinese families were introduced it would be necessary that they should remain at least twelve months. I cannot say what it costs to keep a Chinese or Javanese family for that period.

4513. *By Mr. Turner:*—Paddy cultivation, by itself, is unreliable, but, helped out by other kinds of agriculture, it could be made to work successfully.

4514. I have urged the necessity of establishing a Chinese Protectorate here for some years past, in view of the large number of Chinese coolies in Malacca.

The meeting adjourned at 5 p. m.

R. P. G.

THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING.

HELD ON BOARD THE *SEA-BELLE*, ON WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 14TH, 1891, AT 8 A. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. R. C. FALKNER, Acting Superintendent of Police and Assistant Protector of Chinese, Malacca, gave evidence as follows:—
Falkner. 14th January.

4515. I keep a register of the names of all Chinese coolies arriving here of the junks which bring them down, and of the estates to which they go.

4516. My Protectorate Inspector boards the vessels: the men do not come before me.

4517. The system of written contracts has only recently been commenced here—about ten days ago—in accordance with instructions received from the Protector of Chinese: only six or eight contracts have been made as yet.

4518. Application has been made for a Chinese dépôt in Malacca, but, although ready, it has not yet been opened. There has never been a dépôt in Malacca within my experience.

4519. I have never heard any complaints from coolies when they first arrive.

4520. I do not inspect the coolies on estates or elsewhere.

4521. If a coolie who had not entered into a written contract wanted to leave an estate I should certainly allow him to do so, and should not recognize any verbal contract at all.

4522. *By Mr. Turner:*—We use the same contract form as is in use in Singapore.

4523. The wages named in it are \$3 to \$4 per month.

4524. Towkays have always told me that the men engage with them on \$3 a month, and get their food as well.

4525. I have never heard of any desertions occurring on the Malacca estates.

The meeting adjourned at 8.30 A. M.

R. P. G.

THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 16TH, 1891, AT 12, NOON.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
W. E. HOOPER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. A. F. AYRE, Acting Superintendent of Works and Surveys, Singapore, gave evidence as follows:—
Mr. A. F. Ayre. 16th January.

Mr A. F.
Ayre. 16th
January.

4526. The country road coolies get 23 cents per working day, and get no Sunday pay.
4527. In town, 24 cents is often paid.
4528. The men are nearly all Tamils, but a few Javanese are also employed, chiefly as gardeners.
4529. We can always get enough men at these rates.
4530. No Chinese are employed as day labourers.
4531. Until the beginning of 1889 the custom was to pay \$6.50 or \$7 per month; this had been usual since 1884, when I first knew Singapore.
4532. The men get free lines and medicine: they never go to hospital.
4533. They work regularly 26 days a month.
4534. *By Mr. Turner:*—Our Tamils are picked up in the town here. I cannot say where they originally come from.
- The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

R. P. G.

THE MEETING

RE-ASSEMBLED AT 3 P.M.

The same members being present as at the morning sitting, with the exception of Mr. W. E. HOOPER.

Mr. J. O.
Anthonisz.
16th Janu-
ary.

- Mr. J. O. ANTHONISZ, Acting 2nd Magistrate, Singapore, stated as follows:—
4535. I have been Assistant Indian Immigration Agent since 1885.
4536. I have passed in Tamil.
4537. I correspond both with the Colonial Secretary and with the Indian Immigration Agent, but I forward my returns to the latter direct.
4538. There are no estates in Singapore employing Statute Immigrants now, but applications for coolies were formerly made through me.
4539. I did not study the recruiting system in India when I was over there.
4540. My duties are confined entirely to issuing passes.
4541. I have no direct contact with the coolies, but complaints often come to me from Indians here, about their private quarrels.
4542. There is no depôt here. I believe only two batches of coolies ever came to Singapore: their contracts were made before me at the Police Court.
4543. I consider that the reason why the employment of labourers here is a failure is that there are greater inducements offered by the Public Works Department and Municipality. B. P. DE SILVA brought out 24 coolies, who borrowed money and redeemed their contracts and were engaged on road making by the Municipality on higher wages.
4544. Coolies who came to Singapore were always deserting, and the immigration here has completely ceased in consequence.
4545. About 2,000 certificates were issued in 1890 for places outside the Colony: I can furnish a detailed return of them.
4546. The men are brought up before me and I examined them myself.

4547. I would not refuse a pass to a man who belonged to an agricultural caste if I had sufficient proof that he was no longer employed in agriculture.

Mr. J. O.
Anthonisz.
16th Janu-
ary.

4548. I keep a register of contracts and passes, and formerly kept returns of the estates here.

4549. *By Mr. MacGregor:*—I imagine the fact that a greater number of passes are granted here than in Penang is due to the large number of people wishing to leave for places in this neighbourhood. There are more places to which people emigrate from Singapore than Penang. Deli and the Sumatra ports seem to be the only places to which people emigrate from the latter port.

4550. I believe more people pass through Singapore than through Penang each year.

4551. I find that out of the 2,000 passes issued last year over 1,600 were not for Tamils at all.

4552. I make enquiries into a man's antecedents, both personally and through the Police Court Interpreters: if I am not satisfied the man himself must put in a statutory declaration.

4553. *By Mr. Powell:*—I consider bullock-cart drivers to be of the agricultural class.

4554. The Attorney-General gave as his opinion that all contracts for labour for the Native States should be executed before the Protector of Emigrants or by a Magistrate authorised to witness contracts under Ordinance III of 1877 (Crimping Ordinance) and by the Indian Immigration Agent at Penang in his capacity as Indian Immigration Agent for the several Native States.

4555. *By Mr. Turner:*—I have heard several reports of coolies being taken over to Deli surreptitiously in tongkangs. The Police recently arrested about 30 men on suspicion, but no proof was forthcoming, and they were dismissed.

4556. My staff is quite inadequate to control this matter properly, and I think that a more efficient supervision is very necessary.

4557. *By Mr. Brown:*—All the coolies for B. P. DE SILVA's estate signed contracts here.

4558. *By Mr. Powell:*—The Sikhs recruited for Borneo about a year ago were specially authorised by Government to go.

4559. *By the President:*—I get all assistance from the Police that I ask them for.

4560. Mr. L. M. WOODWARD, Acting 3rd Magistrate, Singapore, gave evidence as follows:—

Mr. L. M.
Woodward.
16th January.

4561. *By Mr. Powell:*—I visited the depôt in Negapatam twice while in India last year.

4562. I stayed with Mr. HARDAKER, and went over the depôt with him: I visited Negapatam twice, and was there altogether five days.

4563. As regards the internal management, the depôt is excellent.

4564. The medical examination struck me as being very strict. Coolies of strong physique who were rejected for the Straits were afterwards sent to Mauritius and other places.

4565. I think the recruiting district might very well be enlarged: various districts in Madras, where labourers at least as good as are got at present for the Straits could be obtained, have never yet been tried. This is a mere matter of custom, I fancy, and not due to any restrictions being placed in the way.

Mr. John
Anderson.
17th January.

4600. I opened communications more than a year ago with a firm in Swatow, with a view to getting shipments of Chinese coolies sent direct thence to a tobacco estate in British North Borneo, for which I am Agent. The information I then got from Swatow led me to conclude that, provided the Chinese authorities would give sanction to coolies being sent direct to British North Borneo, they could be landed there, quite irrespective of passage money, at \$30 to \$35 less per head than they would cost if engaged in Singapore through the Chinese brokers and *Kheh-Thaus*. No shipment direct from Swatow to Borneo was got then, as, up to the time at which I cancelled my order, my Agents in Swatow had not succeeded in getting the sanction of the Chinese Authorities.

4601. I suggest as one remedy that the Government should establish recruiting depôts of its own at the Chinese ports.

4602. The Chinaman never feels the same respect for any mercantile organization, however influential, as he does for a Government.

4603. It would be preferable that the Government should undertake the whole recruiting business itself, if possible; but the genuine co-operation of the Chinese Government would be absolutely essential.

4604. I am astonished that the Chinese Government have not been officially approached long ago on this subject.

4605. I would establish a Government depôt here for receiving the coolies. The Government should be responsible for absconders, &c. until the men were delivered over to the employers, or their Agents here, on board of the vessels that are to take them hence to their destination.

4606. The Government should of course make a charge on each coolie to cover this responsibility and the losses by run-aways.

4607. The men should receive careful intimation in China as to the places they would be liable to be sent to work at from the Straits.

4608. I cannot see much objection to contracts being signed in China, provided the terms were properly explained to and understood by the men, but contracts made in Singapore would be preferred by the parties interested here.

4609. The central depôt in Singapore might be most conveniently situated, if in the neighbourhood of Tanjong Pagar, say on part of the land recently reclaimed by the Tanjong Pagar Land Company. I do not think a more advantageous site could be got than this last named one.

4610. If the Chinese Government were on our side the recruiters would in the end find themselves powerless to raise any serious obstacles.

4611. Legislation is, I consider, required to something of the following effect—that any recruiter or supplier of labour, if there be reasonable ground for supposing that he is charging unreasonable prices over and above his outlay and a reasonable remuneration, be deprived of his license, and be liable to prosecution by the employer or his agent, and to a penalty. I quite grant that probably it would be difficult to work, but I consider there should be some efficient means of checking the extortion of the brokers here and controlling their charges.

4612. Every passenger who comes down here contributes in some way to the revenue of the Colony, by his passage money in and out, food, house-room, opium, &c., and then again the trade or mercantile business of this place benefits by him; the financial aspect of the question is, in my opinion, a most important one, as affecting not only revenue, but a branch of Straits trade or business.

4613. Some steps should be taken to control the broker's charges, whether we obtain the Chinese Government sanction or not; matters should not be allowed to continue as at present.

4614. *By Mr. Turner:*—I do not think the mere establishment of depôts in Swatow or Amoy would by themselves amend matters sufficiently; the Government should carry out the entire arrangements itself if any real and lasting good is to be done.

4615. *By the President:*—I am Agent for the Trafalgar Tapioca Estate in Mr. John Anderson.
Singapore, situated about eight miles from town. 17th January.

4616. We employ there about 600 Chinamen, a few Javanese, and a few Tamils as cart-men.

4617. The Chinese coolie labour there is all paid by the day; the majority of the men get 20 cents per day if they do what is considered a day's work.

4618. The Chinese are mostly Te-chius and Hailams, with a small number of Khehs, and a few Hok-kiens. The Hok-kiens, as a class, are not usually agriculturists.

4619. We do not import the labour, but work on a system of kongsis, of which there are ten or twelve.

4620. The headman of each kongsi brings to work the number of men wanted, and his account is made up once a week for the number of men he has had; he is then paid for the lot, and settles afterwards with his men.

4621. We have no trouble nor complaints.

4622. Some of the Chinese at special work get more than 20 cents a day.

4623. We do some work by contract, such as the process of manufacturing.

4624. We have usually had about 1,000 acres under cultivation, but it is less just now.

4625. We have no Tamils on the estate working as field labourers.

4626. I would have nothing to do with indentured coolies, or with any to whom advances would have to be made; they would only clear out, leaving their debts behind them, and we could not effectively prevent them from going off.

4627. Our Chinese coolies at Trafalgar work pretty well when well overlooked, but they are far from being first class men.

4628. I fancy the headmen of the kongsis pick them up as best they can when opportunity offers.

4629. We keep rice on the estate for sale to the coolies, or rather to the headmen, but they are free to buy their rice where they like. Our charge is moderate, so they generally buy our rice.

4630. The coolies are all provided with free quarters, and appear quite contented. I have never had reports of discontent with the estate among the men.

4631. I consider Chinese preferable to Tamils for the work at Trafalgar; the latter are good at road-making.

4632. Generally speaking, I am satisfied with the conditions of labour at Trafalgar.

4633. I do not think the Straits Government would injure its own interests in the least by allowing coolies to be sent to Sumatra or Borneo.

4634. I would not make these other Governments pay in contribution for the advantages they would derive; the trade and its benefits to Singapore business should be kept in Singapore, encouraged and fostered.

4635. *By Mr. Powell:*—The coolies at present imported direct from China to Sumatra certainly, from all that I can hear, cost no less than they would do if imported to Sumatra from Singapore, and in many cases they probably cost more, if what I am told be correct.

4636. I have not heard of any orders for Sumatra being sent to Singapore lately.

Mr. John Anderson. 17th January. 4637. I would strongly object to Government inspection at Trafalgar. The men are quite satisfied as things are, and no Government interference is called for: it would cause endless trouble and complaints, and I would strongly advocate closing the Trafalgar estate if Government instituted inspection.

4638. By Mr. Powell:—Government, i.e., the Police and the Chinese Protectorate have occasionally rendered assistance at Trafalgar in cases of Hoey disturbances.

4639. By Mr. Turner:—The estate gets Chinese coolies, without making them advances, and if merely on a money consideration I would always prefer them to Tamils on that estate.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 P. M.

R. P. G.

THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE,
ON MONDAY, JANUARY 19TH, 1891, AT 11 A. M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (Secretary).

Mr. C. E. St. G. Caulfield. 19th January. Mr. C. E. St. G. CAULFIELD, Manager, Pulau Ubin Coffee and Pepper Estate, (owners Messrs. HILL & RATHBORNE and D. BRANDT & Co.), gave evidence as follows:—

4640. I have been connected with the estate for 2½ years.

4641. I have been in the Straits nine years, and was previously in Ceylon for more than twenty years.

4642. I speak Tamil well.

4643. We employ only Tamils at Pulau Ubin, all free.

4644. Formerly we employed about 80 Javanese.

4645. We used to employ free indentured Tamils also, but found free labour more satisfactory: the indentured men were unreliable in their work and regularity, and were much more expensive in the end. We cancelled their contracts and let them work on a higher pay as free coolies.

4646. I used to be on Loon Choo Estate, and it was there that this occurred.

4647. I think contract labour must always be unsatisfactory to all parties.

4648. I think a contract has no effect in preventing desertion; when inducement to desert offers, nothing will prevent the men from doing so.

4649. Our men are brought over by the headmen at their own risk and expense, and the amount owed to them is deducted from the coolies' wages.

4650. We do not hold the Kanggani responsible for deserters unless the man runs away at once.

4651. The men are paid 2 cents a day, head-money, in addition to their usual 25 cents a day, if they work regularly.

4652. I have no difficulty at present in getting enough coolies, or in keeping them when got.

4653. I am not satisfied with the present labour conditions as far as the Native States are concerned; the present laws are inadequate for the protection of the employer of free labour against desertion. Mr. C. E. St. G. Caulfield. 19th January.

4654. A discharge-ticket system is very necessary, but it would have to be combined with an understanding among the employers. It should be introduced into estates both in the Colony and in the Native States, through the planters themselves.

4655. Competition among employers is the real cause of the scarcity of labour.

4656. I can suggest no remedy for improving the state of affairs.

4657. The men brought over by the Kangganis are usually their fellow-villagers.

4658. The present rate of wages is unduly high, but on lower rates, the coolies would not remain with us.

4659. My men are paid for Sundays if they work six days a week: I am sure this is a great inducement to the men to work.

4660. They work on my estate about 20 days a month which, if they are kept up to the mark, is a very fair average; they do not work as much as this in Ceylon.

4661. The men's style of work improves in all ways as soon as they become free coolies, and earn higher pay.

4662. I allow women to work or not, as they please.

4663. On tea or coffee estates I could find work for any number of women; they are useful both as workers and in attracting men to the place.

JAVANESE.

4664. I gave up my coolies because their Mandor was convicted of theft and punished, and the men thereupon left by degrees.

4665. They were obtained through the depôts here.

KLINGS.

4666. By Mr. MacGregor:—I can distinguish men who come direct from India by their inferior physique and general appearance.

4667. I believe the Tyndal makes a considerable profit on the men's advances, and against this the coolie has no remedy. They make frequent complaints about this.

4668. The discharge-ticket system would be useless unless the Government consented to work hand-in-hand with the planters, but I see no reason why this should not be done. The present immigration to the Straits would have to be much increased, though.

4669. I think 18 or 20 cents would be a fair wage to pay.

4670. Depôts on the Indian coast should be established, and I think the men could be attracted over on the terms suggested without a contract.

4671. By Mr. Turner:—It would not pay me to import Statute Immigrants now, and then cancel the contracts on arrival of the men and let them work on as free coolies. The men I have spoken of were already on the Loon Choo Estate when I arrived there.

4672. In Ceylon, in my time, no man was paid more than 8d. a day, and 10d. for special work: this was from 1858 to 1878.

4673. I do not think it necessary to pay higher rates here than in Ceylon, if the greater distance from India is not considered.

4674. As long as a coolie is under indenture he would not work better on increased wages.

Mr. C. E. St.
G. Caulfield.
19th January.

4675. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—I have never increased the wages of indentured coolies in my employ.

4676. Ten or twelve dollars would be a fair price to pay for each man landed in Penang if a Government depôt were established at Negapatam.

4677. *By Mr. Brown*:—A uniform rate of wage and a fixed price for rice would be preferable to varying the rate of wages in different parts in accordance with the local prices of rice.

4678. *By Mr. Turner*:—I would deduct the cost of the coolie's importation from his wages of 18 or 20 cents.

4679. In Ceylon we have a district Doctor, paid for by all the estate owners together; the price amounted to about £10 for 66 men per annum. This has been all changed since then.

4680. If I made no reduction for the cost of a coolie's importation, I would reduce his wages by 3 or 4 cents.

4681. *By the President*:—Very few desertions occur at Pulau Ubin Estate.

4682. The rice is entirely supplied by the Kanggani; the estate only advances the money.

4683. I would not prohibit Sunday labour by law, as it is sometimes necessary to work on Sunday on account of the crop.

4684. There is a school on the estate, managed by the men themselves. I do not pay a schoolmaster.

4685. A man can live on \$2 on the estate, everything included.

4686. The Government should give free passages to a proportion of about 25 per cent. of the coolies coming over.

Mr. W. Turing Mac-
Kenzie. 19th
January.

Mr. W. Turing MacKENZIE, Manager of the Michaelstowe and Drumduan Estates, Johor, gave evidence as follows:—

4687. I have been nearly two years in the Straits, and was formerly for fourteen years in Ceylon.

4688. Michaelstowe Estate is tea; Drumduan pepper and coffee.

4689. I speak Tamil.

4690. I employ a few free Chinese on Drumduan, all the other men there are free Tamils. They are nearly all of them men who came over originally as indentured coolies, and were picked up here.

4691. I have had no experience of indentured Tamils, and do not want to.

4692. I have never got any coolies over myself: I tried to do so once in 1889, but it was an utter failure. Of 5 men that I brought over 2 were persistent malingerers and 2 were sick: these 5 men alone cost me \$360. It was my intention to bring them over under the Ordinance, but I was unaware at the time of the many restrictions which it involved: I will admit, however, that my recruiter was also to blame in this instance.

4693. I consider the licensed recruiting system to be at the bottom of the evil.

4694. I have as many coolies on Michaelstowe Estate now as I want, all Kelantan Malays, and can always get sufficient for my requirements; but my estate is unusually well situated.

4695. I can only recommend the importation of free labour as a means of reducing the rate of wages; but the market must be left to regulate itself, and it would do so if every man imported the labour he required.

4696. If coolies are well treated on an estate they will not want to leave it.

Mr. W. Turing Mac-
Kenzie. 19th
January.

4697. I attribute the high rates of wages paid by Government to its coolies simply to laxity on the part of the former: the men certainly do not deserve the pay they receive.

4698. This Colony is not sufficiently advertised in India: if more pains were taken in this direction the number of Immigrants would be largely increased.

4699. I object to Government inspection because it creates a spirit of unsettlement among the men and encourages complaints to an unreasonable extent.

4700. I have seen this on Drumduan Estate myself.

4701. Much depends on the way the inspection is carried out, but the evil is an inevitable consequence of the system. I would have no objection to an inspection of the books and accounts.

4702. I can find work for any number of women, and like to see them about an estate. I would allow them to work or not, as they pleased.

4703. I issue rice weekly, the full allowance of 10 catties for five days' work and 5 catties for four days' work. Thirty catties is enough for them to live on, and they can spend the remaining 10 catties on luxuries.

4704. The average daily wages is 23 cents a day, and I am sure that \$1.80 is quite enough for a man to live on.

4705. The men arrange among themselves to obtain their curry stuffs, &c., once a month from Johore Bharu. There is no shop on Drumduan.

4706. *By Mr. MacGregor*:—The cost of imported coolies would of necessity be larger in the Straits than in Ceylon, owing to the extra expenses of the passage money for Tyndals and coolies. Tea cultivation could not bear the price, but coffee could.

4707. I object to official inspection on principle, apart from the manner in which it may be conducted.

4708. I object most strongly to any system of recruiting necessitating the employment of recruiters on fixed salaries: they would work endless mischief and, for my own part, I think that recruiting could be much more satisfactorily worked by my own Tyndals.

4709. *By Mr. Turner*:—"Coolies recruited by Government" is simply another way of saying "coolies crimped from the planters."

4710. Some kind of discharge-ticket system is necessary; it would have to be worked by a combination among the employers themselves, who must pledge themselves never to engage a coolie who was unable to produce a discharge-ticket signed by his last employer.

4711. The high rate of wages is partly due to the action of the Public Works Department. Government ought to import its own labour.

4712. *By Mr. Brown*:—Neither of my estates is as yet entirely in full bearing.

4713. I do not object to contracts altogether, but three years is far too long a term, and to a coolie is very like slavery. Three months would be a fair term of contract if it were possible for a man to clear off his debt in that time, and if not, then the man who wished to crimp him should pay the balance.

4714. A man will work harder for higher pay if he is at all a good worker, and if he has begun to save he will go on trying to add to his hoard, but a lazy man would never work regularly no matter what the inducement.

4715. *By the President*:—I employ about 70 Kelantan Malays on Michaelstowe Estate, at the rate of 1 cent for every pound of green leaf they pick; my best pluckers have earned as much as 54 cents a day, but the men work very irregularly: the average is never less than 12 cents a day, and often as high as 20 cents. I believe that large numbers could be induced to come down without difficulty.

Mr. Turing
MacKenzie.
19th January.

4716. I like them very well, and much better than Javanese.
4717. The men come and go a good deal, but the number remains much the same.
4718. Only a few women are with them, and they have only begun to work quite recently.
4719. The Javanese work well if allowed to do so in their own way; they are employed on special work at \$6 a month.
4720. I have very little experience of Chinese.
4721. I think Kelantan or Trichinopoly coolies are the best all round labourers.
4722. There is no Planters' Association in Johor: I tried once to form one, but the distance between the various estates was too great, and the experiment fell through.
4723. When in Ceylon I always obtain my coolies through the Kanggani; I advanced him a sum of money and he recruited the men at a cost of about Rs.3.10 per man, but the rate has since risen to about Rs. 20, which is all recoverable.
4724. I am sure that very little dishonesty occurs among the Kangganis; it would not pay them. Complaints in this direction are very seldom made.
4725. The rates in Ceylon latterly have been 28 rupee cents a day in the lower districts, and 30 to 33 in the high country.
4726. The employers in Ceylon are almost all Europeans.
4727. Men can live cheaper in Johor than in Ceylon: the ruling rate in Ceylon for rice was in my time Rs. 4 per bushel.
4728. The Government inspection in Ceylon is medical only and carried out chiefly with a view to seeing that the "lines" are kept in a sanitary state.
4729. *By Mr. Turner:*—I do not think that the rate of wages, if fixed by an association of planters as suggested, would be kept to.

The meeting adjourned at 1 P.M.

R. P. G.

THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING.

HELD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, SINGAPORE, ON TUESDAY,
JANUARY 20TH, 1891, AT 11 A.M.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
 F. POWELL, Esquire.
 A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
 J. TURNER, Esquire.
 E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. G. T.
Hare. 20th
January.

Mr. G. T. HARE, Acting Assistant Protector of Chinese, Singapore, was examined and stated as follows:—

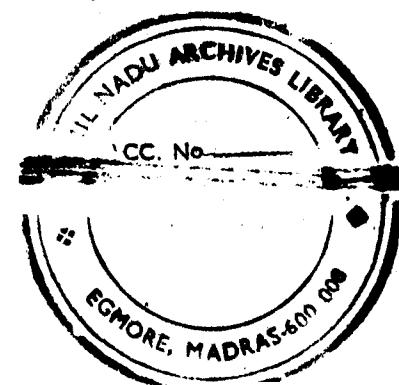
4730. I have been six years in the Straits, and speak Hok-kien and Cantonese.
4731. I have been in the Protectorate for two years—one year in Penang and one in Singapore. I have held my present post for over a year.
4732. The depôts are directly under my supervision: I inspect them as a rule once a week: they are visited regularly by myself or other officers of the Protectorate.

Mr. G. T.
Hare. 20th
January.

4733. I see to their cleanliness and check the books.
4734. I think on the whole that the depôts are excellently kept, and quite as good as they require to be.
4735. The men are never absent at roll-call except for sufficient reason, such as a visit to the doctor, etc.
4736. I could ascertain the truth of such an excuse when the men came up to sign their contract.
4737. I am responsible for the measurement of the depôts, to regulate the number of inmates for which a license is to be issued, and am bound to inspect a house before granting a license: the Principal Civil Medical Officer visits the place after me and reports on its sanitary condition.
4738. In Penang a joint inspection is made by the Protectorate officials and the Colonial Surgeon.
4739. No definite instructions as to what constitutes a "fit" depôt are laid down: the licensee must be a respectable person, of course, as far as can be ascertained by enquiry.
4740. Licenses have never, to my knowledge, been refused for sanitary reasons.
4741. I often inquire into a depôt-keeper's antecedents through European firms here with whom he may have had dealings, and licenses are not infrequently refused if a man's character is not considered satisfactory.
4742. Many of the depôt-keepers were headmen of the Chinese Secret Societies before they were abolished.
4743. The depôts are all inspected at least once a week, without fail, but the frequency of the inspection depends on the amount of time at the disposal of the Protectorate officials. When there is a press of office work, such as making out contracts they may be less frequently inspected.
4744. A record is regularly kept, in the shape of a monthly return, of the depôts visited, number of visits, and names of the officers inspecting.
4745. I think the present system of importing coolies works as well as it can be expected to do, but it is imperfect only inasmuch as it necessitates the confinement of the coolie here: I cannot see, however, how this can be avoided, and it is, I believe, the most practical way of working the immigration business.
4746. *By Mr. Turner:*—I have no personal experience of Chinese estates here.
4747. *By Mr. Brown:*—I have never heard any complaints from coolies of extortion on the part of the brokers.

The meeting adjourned at 12.15 P.M.

R. P. G.



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APPENDIX B.

VISITS OF INSPECTION MADE BY THE LABOUR COMMISSION OF 1890.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 1890.

THE COMMISSION MET AT 7 A.M. AT THE CHINESE PROTECTORATE, SINGAPORE.

PRESENT:

The Hon'ble Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).

J. M. B. VERMONT.

F. POWELL, Esquire.

The Commissioners visited the depôt at 88 and 89 New Bridge Road, Chop KWONG NGIEN LUNG, kept by CHIN FUI LAN, licensed for 125 inmates under Ordinance No. IV of 1880. Clean and well kept. Latrines, on bucket system, very dark and indifferently ventilated, but we are informed by the Protector of Chinese that they are approved by the Medical Department, and looked after by an Apothecary, superintended by the Principal Civil Medical Officer. They are always cleaned out in the morning, and had just been cleaned out at time of visit. Water supply in good order from Municipal pipes. About 120 inmates, Hongkong men, at time of visit, of whom some 80 had made contracts for New Guinea, remainder for Deli. Contracts signed and in possession of coolies. The food they were eating appeared very good, and the men generally strong and well. Questioned some coolies, whose chief complaint was that the Depôt-keeper sold them things (such as buckets, shoes, &c.) too dear, and that he charged 5 cents a cup for rice, three cups a day being necessary. They said they were not allowed to go out, men being stationed at the door to prevent them, but on being told by the Protector of Chinese that if they wished to go out of the depôt they could do so, said they did not wish to.

Visited depôt at 35 Almeida Street, Chop BAN TEK HENG, keeper KHO JOO CHIA, licensed for 95 men under Ordinance No. IV of 1880. Water supply good. Latrines very dark and ill-ventilated, but had just been cleaned. About 10 inmates, from Swatow. None had received any advances or had any cash. None had made contracts.

Visited depôt at 37 Almeida Street, Chop BAN HIN LONG, keeper LAI YING, licensed for 75 men, under Crimping Ordinance of 1877. Water good. Latrines light and fairly ventilated, but too close against cook-house, and on a higher level, so that there is risk of drainage entering cook-house. Only 3 inmates. Stated they had come from three years' work at tobacco in Deli, where they had saved nearly \$100 a year, but had lost it all by gambling in Deli. Were now going to Kudat, where they said they did not expect to make much money. Could not be got to state any reason why they did not go to Deli again, except that having lost their money there they would try another place. Paid Depôt-keeper 50 cents entrance, and about 10 cents a day for food. No complaints.

On leaving this house, heard a clamour from first floor of 36 Almeida Street, (between the last two depôts), and went up. Found three men; one stated he had paid his own passage down with money (\$10) borrowed by his father, he did not know from whom. Had relations in Singapore. On arrival ten days ago, a man said he would take him to them, but had brought him here, and he had been locked up ever since. The other two said they had come down to go to Penang, but were being detained here against their will. This was a private house, not licensed; windows were chained up, and there seems no doubt that these men were being wrongfully detained. The door however was not locked, and there was no physical barrier to prevent the men coming down. Handed them over to the Protector of Chinese for further enquiry. The *Towkay* had in his possession a book stated to be a register of coolies received, although the house was not licensed.

Visited Javanese depôt at 250 and 251 North Bridge Road, kept by CHI AKIP and Haji EPRIS. Licensed for 80 men under Crimping Ordinance of 1877. About 40 inmates, male and female, who had signed contracts in Java for work in Sumatra, and were living at the depôt in transit. Had no complaints regarding the depôt, but complained that they had not received the advance in Java for which they had "signed on." A gang of 11 men had just arrived from Assahan for work in the Straits. Had received advances varying from \$30 (for the Mandor) to \$15, and had signed a joint agreement undertaking to repay to the broker. There appeared to be no restraint over them, and no reason why they should not abscond if they liked.

— Insp. 2 —

VISIT No. 2.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2ND, 1890.

PRESENT :

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

S. S. *Mount-
chey*. 2nd De-
cember.

The Commissioners boarded the S. S. *Mountchey*, 1,368 tons register, Captain COLLINS, at 9.15 A.M. The ship is fitted to carry 1,092 deck passengers all told, in four holds, one on the main deck aft and one forward, and one on the orlop deck below each of these. They are all ventilated by fans, and the main deck by ports as well.

She had just arrived from Negapatam and had on board 398 free deck passengers, and 103 Statute Immigrants, accompanied by 6 dependants, for distribution as follows :—

ESTATE.	M.	W.	Dependants.			
			Adult.		Minor.	
			M.	F.	M.	F.
Batu Kawan, ...	5	2	...	...	...	...
Prye, ...	32	17	1	1	...	...
Caledonia, ...	23	13	...	...	...	...
Linsum (Sungei Ujong), ...	10	1	...	1	2	1
	70	33	1	2	2	1
	103		3		3	

The Commission inspected the whole of the passengers. The Statute Immigrants were, almost without exception, strong, healthy coolies. The women and especially the children also looked strong and well.

The free passengers were, if anything, inferior in physique and general appearance to the others.

The Travelling Inspector, AROOKIASAMY, stated that no complaints had been made during the voyage, and that the men were all fully aware of the work they were coming to, and this was confirmed by the statements of the Immigrants themselves.

The Captain stated that the arrangements for Statute and Free Immigrants are generally similar, but the former are rationed, and their cooking is done for them by the ship, while the latter bring their own food and cook how they please. The Statute Immigrants were all berthed apart from the others, in the after main deck hold, but they are not confined to this, and are free to mix with the others on deck as they please. No regular rule prevails of berthing the Statute and Free Immigrants apart, and should occasion require both may be accommodated in the same place.

The Commission then inspected the depôt, saw the free passengers being passed through, and saw the Indentured Immigrants admitted.

— Insp. 3 —

VISIT No. 3.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11th, 1890.

GULA SUGAR ESTATE.*

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Captain M. A. CAMERON (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Landed at hospital about 10.15 A.M. and were received by Mr. LINCOLN, Apothecary, and Mr. McCLELLAND, 1st Assistant on the estate. The hospital consists of two wards; No. 1 ward is a building on high brick piers with wooden floor, bertam sides, and attap roof. It is in good repair and well suited for its purpose, except that its great width leads to waste of space unless a middle tier of beds be used. It is about 104 ft. by 24 ft.; a space 24 feet long being partitioned off one end for females. The division between male and female wards is a bertam partition, under which any body could crawl. The Apothecary stated a watchman at night prevented intermingling of patients. The female ward contains 10 beds, and the other 38. The Apothecary does not know how many patients the hospital is intended to hold, and states he has no instructions on this point. Fifty is the most he has known put in it. Besides the beds down each side it has a middle tier of five beds, which does not appear a desirable arrangement.

Gula Sugar
Estate. 11th
December.

No. 2 ward is a building about 54 ft. by 30 ft., 12 feet of one end of which is cut off to form two rooms, each 15 ft. by 12 ft. It is not raised above ground, but the floor is the bare earth. The sides and roof are attap. It does not appear well suited for a hospital building. The main ward contains 15 beds, and of the end rooms one has 3 and the other 2.

Very few of the beds are supplied with blankets. The Apothecary stated that the patients used to tear up blankets and mosquito curtains (of which 120 were supplied) to clean their persons, so now blankets are only supplied to fever patients. Ulcer patients get sacks. Mr. McCLELLAND supported this statement. The last instance was a year ago, and the men received no punishment.

The latrines stand over the river, about 200 feet from the hospital. Males and females are separated by a damaged bertam screen. A bucket (wooden) is stated to be given to each patient at night. There is no bath-room.

Several coolies were examined.

One said he was sick, felt lazy, and could not work, and if he was not fed unless he worked must die.

Another was a grass-cutter and tender of sheep in India. Was beguiled here by a man who said he would take him to his brother in Rangoon. Could not use changkol, therefore would not work. Wants to cut grass and tend sheep and do nothing else.

Another had been a bill-collector. Could read and write, and was told he would get clerical work on an estate. Could only work a little at changkol as he had a bad arm.

Another, SELAMBARAM, was a padi-cultivator. Believed he would get Rs. 20 or 30 a month here. Has been 3 years 25 days on estate, and does not know how much more he has to serve. Works 28 or 29 days a month, and receives 2½ or 3 dollars

* In Perak.

Gula Sugar after paying for his rice. His monthly expenses, which keep himself and his woman, Estate. 11th are, in addition to his rice:—
December,

	Centg.
Chilies, ... 1 catty,	12
Dholl, ... 1½ chupakat 6 cts.	9
Green peas ... 1½ do.,	9
Salt ...	3
Tamarind, ... 2 catties,	10
Salt fish, ...	40
Coco-nut oil (6 cents per week),	25
Bathing oil (4 cents per week),	16
Turmeric, ...	1
Coriander, ... 1½ chupak,	6
Chiragam (2 cents per week),	8
Pepper, ...	8
Betel leaf and nut (12 leaves for ½ cent, 4 or 5 nuts for ½ cent),	25
Chunam, ...	1½
Shaving, ...	5
Total, ...	\$1.78½

He also buys two cloths a year at \$1.50 to \$2.50, say \$5 per year.

His rice for 28 days costs \$1 or \$1.15, and besides this he has to buy 2 days' extra supply, as the estate only supplies one bag to each three men per month and this is only enough for 28 days. The extra two days', which he has to buy in shops, costs 10 cents. He also spends about \$1.50 per month on toddy (arrack). He keeps a woman, who works on the estate. When his contract is worked off he does not wish to leave the estate. The woman makes \$2 or \$2½ per month, which she gives him to keep.

The hospital books appear carefully kept, though all entries are in pencil. The average daily sick for the last month has been about 65 men. The lowest number was 47, in January last.

The hospital is about 1½ miles from the estate. The site was chosen by Dr. SHEPPARD, and is stated to be healthy, but its distance from the estate must be very inconvenient.

The Commission then walked to the estate, where Mr. PARKINSON, the Manager, met them, and they inspected the coolie lines. These are of attap on the ground, with earth floor, and a sort of raised platform on three sides of the rooms, on which the coolies sleep. The rooms are of two sizes—a small one which holds two, and a larger size holding four or sometimes six. There are two small rooms to each larger one. A wide verandah runs down the front, in which they cook. Between the lines are small gardens in which the coolies can work, but the Manager stated that they did not do much, as anything industrious men grew was stolen by the others. The gardens were, however, fairly well cultivated.

The coolies are allowed to keep cattle, &c., and the Commission saw some belonging to them. They keep them in their verandah, or their milk would be stolen.

There is no school on the estate for the 190 children.

There is no Tamil-speaking European on the estate, except the Apothecary.

The water is brought by a boat, holding 40 tons, from a distance of 14 miles. She makes one trip in 48 hours. The water is pumped from her and run by a channel 7,000 feet long to large iron tanks, where the Manager states it can be drawn by any one who wants it.

There are no latrines for the lines. The coolies go where they please, and the result is painfully apparent behind the lines. The Protector of Immigrant states, however, that he believes they would not use latrines if they had them.

The lines were fairly clean and swept. A brick drain runs along the front of

each, and an earthen drain, standing full of water, behind. The sanitary arrangements cannot, therefore, be called good. Gula Sugar Estate. 11th December.

There are 4 shops—2 kept by Muhammadans, and 2 by Hindoos. The Manager relies on their competition to keep down prices, but does not himself enquire into them. He brings them over whatever they require in the estate launch twice a week from Penang, and things should therefore be sold at very little above Penang prices. The Manager does not know what actual prices of articles are.

The whole of the coolies were mustered and inspected by the Commissioners. Their complaints were numerous, but want of time limited the number which could be enquired into. Men flung themselves on the ground, and numbers endeavoured to make complaints. Making every allowance for the circumstances, there could be no doubt that discontent prevailed. Many of the men appeared strong and well grown, but as a whole the coolies were far from presenting an appearance of happiness. In the cases into which the Commission enquired, the initial grievance was nearly always the same—that the man had followed some other trade in his own country, expected to follow it here, and could not do the work now required of him.

One man said he had been beaten by his Tyndal, and displayed unmistakeable rattan marks. The Tyndal he accused said the man belonged to another gang than his. The Commissioners could not carry the enquiry further.

Another, NALLAN, No. 198 of 1887, said he had been told he had to work off 423 days in addition to his contract, whereas he had only been 3 months and 5 days away in hospital. The responsible assistant stated he had examined this man's record five times and there could be no mistake. (Subsequent examination of pay lists shews a mistake of 200 days has been made, and 223 is the proper number.)

VISIT No. 4.

12TH DECEMBER, 1890.

WATERLOO ESTATE, PERAK.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C. M. G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Mr. FRASER states that the coolies on the estate are quite up to the average of the same class in Ceylon. Waterloo Estate, Perak. 12th December.

That the Tamil coolie never, so far as he knows, averages over twenty days' work per month, though individuals may often work a whole month.

That at the end of the three years' contract he always lets any men go who wish to, and does not retain them on the estate for short-time work or any other causes, as it does not pay him to keep discontented men. Many of the coolies, however, stay on after expiration of contract, working as free coolies.

All his contracts are at enactment rates, but men are promoted to 18 and 20 cents, or even more if they deserve it.

There is no shop on the estate, and the Manager supplies coolies with all they want, stopping the cost from their pay. Anything else they require they can get from the bazaar shops three miles off down the hill. They are only allowed to go there on Sundays. As soon as the new Government road is made he will open shops on it close to the estate, which will prove an attraction to the coolies, and he then expects to get more on the estate.

Waterloo Es-
tate, Perak.
12th Decem-
ber.

The articles sold to coolies are charged at cost price on the estate. This for rice is 5½ cents per chupak. Free coolies are, however, charged 6 cents. The issues are all made daily.

The water supply is good and plentiful, from streams in the hill.

There is no hospital, sick men at present being put in a small room in the coolie lines. A new hospital is nearly finished and will be taken into use very shortly. The Commissioners inspected it. It is a wooden building on stone piers, with shingle roof. The site appears well chosen, and it should prove an excellent hospital.

There is at present only a Dresser. The Manager has been unable to get a qualified Apothecary, but is now advertising in Ceylon, and expects to get one very soon.

The lines consist of three buildings, in different situations. Two (one of which being at a considerable distance, was not inspected) are of attap sides and roof; the other is of mud with shingle roof. They are divided into small rooms, the latter 10 ft. by 10 ft., in which are usually about six people; the others 14 ft. by 20 ft., in one of which 18 coolies were living, men and women indiscriminately. All stand on the ground, which, however, being on a steep slope, is well drained and dry. The coolies cook in the mud huts inside their rooms, in the attap huts in the verandahs. The rooms are quite dark, and, according to European notions, ill-ventilated. They were, however, not unclean. Some of the married occupants being questioned said that they would prefer rooms to themselves, but none of them seemed to object much to having other occupants besides themselves. Sometimes three married couples are together in one room; in other cases one or two couples, as well as several single men.

The drains and ground surrounding the lines were clean and well-kept, a coolie being detailed for this duty alone.

The coolies were mustered and inspected. A few of them were sickly and weak, and some made complaints, chiefly that they could not walk up the hill to their work. The general appearance was that of a healthy and contented set of men and women, and there was none of the depression and misery so apparent the day before at Gula.

PAY LIST FOR SEPTEMBER, 1890.

The total number of men on pay list was 167, including men and women, indentured and free.

The total earned was \$662, or an average of \$3.96 per head.

The total number of days worked was 3,071, or about 18.4 each during the month; and the average pay per day is thus about 21.5 cents.

The following shews the No. of days' work done during the month by the people on various rates of pay :—

35 women on 12 cts. worked 653½ days or 18.66 each.	
26 men „ 14 „ „ 481½ „ 18.5 „	
29 „ „ 16 „ „ 658½ „ 22.3 „	
5 „ „ 18 „ „ 126½ „ 25.3 „	
5 „ „ 20 „ „ 112 „ 22.4 „	
16 „ „ 23 „ „ 204½ „ 12.8 „	
11 „ „ 25 „ „ 203 „ 18.4 „	
19 „ „ 30 „ „ 367½ „ 19.3 „	

A few other special rates were not taken out.

The total of rice supplied by the estate was 3,413 chupaks, or about 20.4 per head. The cost debited to the coolies for this was \$193. A further sum of \$74 was debited for curry-stuffs, &c., making a total of \$267 for food, or about \$1.60 per head. In addition to this each indentured immigrant is charged 8 cents a month for dhoby, amounting to \$8.64 for the 108 immigrants charged, and for “coast” or contract advances a further deduction of \$8.25 was made in the month. The total of these deductions would be \$284; but for various reasons, such as inability to pay owing to small earnings during the month, \$262 was actually deducted,

and the sum paid in cash to the coolies was, therefore, \$344, or an average of \$2.06 all round.

This includes a few highly paid men, on 33, 40, and even 55 cents. The indentured coolies' earnings were about as follows :—One hundred and one coolies earned \$294.87, or \$2.94 per head. From this, roughly speaking, the following stoppages would be deducted :—

Rice, 2,060 chupaks at 5½ cents,	...	\$113
Curry-stuff, about	...	45
Dhoby and “coast advances,”	...	17
Total,	...	\$175

This would leave a cash payment of \$120, or about \$1.19 per head, but, as stated above, the whole of the deductions were not enforced during the month, so that the actual cash payment was rather more.

VISIT No. 5.

15th DECEMBER, 1890.

BYRAM ESTATE, PROVINCE WELLESLEY.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President.)
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.

Owners of Estate :—Penang Sugar Estates Company.

Manager :—Mr. Adam Stewart.

Area of Property :—1,800 orlongs.

Nature and Area of present Cultivation :—Sugar canes, 615 orlongs.

Number of Coolies at date of Visit :—

Tamils,—Indentured : 295 males and 151 females.

Non-Indentured : 314 males and 110 females.

Javanese,—Indentured : 168 males and 70 females.

Landed from S. S. *Rosebud* at 9 A.M., and were received by Mr. TURNER, and Mr. STEWART, the Manager.

There is no hospital, that at Caledonia being used. A small building is being put up in which to accommodate patients slightly indisposed.

The coolie lines are brick buildings with attap roofs and earth floors, all in good order. Every married couple has a separate room, and there is no crowding. They are very dark, which the coolies appear to prefer, and the ventilating apertures in the walls have been stopped up by the coolies, but they cannot be said to be insubstantial.

The water is brought by boat from Caledonia Estate. There are no tanks, and it is taken in buckets direct from the boats.

The Kling coolies were mustered. Their appearance is generally good, and they made but few and trivial complaints.

Rice is issued daily in one-chupak portions, to every man who applies for it. The Manager states that this practice gives very little extra trouble. Two men attend to it, one to serve it out and the other to keep the tally. Many of the older coolies buy paddy in preference to the estate rice.

All the accounts of tasks are taken in the field by European Assistants.

The pay lists show that the practice of landing men free of debt is carried out, no advances being recorded against them. Consequently every man goes to the higher rate of pay, 14 cents per diem, on the completion of his first year.

Byram Estate,
Province
Wellesley.
15th Decem-
ber.

A considerable number of the men have served more than their three years.

The contracts of eight men on the estate dated more than four years back. Examination of their cases shewed that the average time noted against each one on the expiration of his original contract was 378 days, of which an average of 146 days each was for days "absent from work," the remainder being made up by gaol, desertion, and sickness, extra to the 30 days allowed. The cases of men over three but under four years' service, of whom there were a considerable number, were not analysed in detail, but "absent from work" forms a large proportion of the causes.

A good many cattle are owned by coolies on the estate and several of them stated they had saved money.

The women and especially the children looked healthy and well.

There is no school.

There are no Chinese on the estate.

There are about 240 Javanese, imported three or four months ago. They were mustered and inspected. Their general appearance is not satisfactory, they are a sickly looking lot, many appearing unfit for hard work, and 11 out of the original 250 have already died. When they first arrived they were employed felling jungle and did well enough, but since they have been put on regular field work they have worked very indifferently. In November the average of 104 of them was only slightly over 11 days' work each, the sum earned, at 20 cents a day, being \$236. Of this, \$105 was stopped for rice, and \$88 for contract advances, leaving only \$43 cash paid to the coolies or about 40 cents each, to provide for all expenses except rice. The Manager concurs in the opinion of the Commissioners that this sum is insufficient, especially as the men require good feeding to get them into condition, and will reduce the stoppages until the men can earn more. The women all looked well and strong, and are stated to work much better than the men.

The Javanese are housed in a large attap building, subdivided by partitions, and suitable enough for its purpose. There is a remarkable absence of belongings of any description in their house, and the Manager states they have sold even the mosquito nets with which they were all provided at first. Many of them are opium-smokers.

To shew the liberal spirit in which this estate is managed, it may be mentioned that instruments for a complete Javanese band and wayang (theatre) have been provided by the estate at a cost of \$250 to assist in making them contented and the experiment of their importation a success.

VISIT No. 6.

15TH DECEMBER, 1890.

CALEDONIA ESTATE, PROVINCE WELLESLEY.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Caledonia Es-
tate, Province
Wellesley.
15th Decem-
ber.

The Commissioners went from Byram to Caledonia, and first inspected the hospital. The main ward is an admirable building on brick footings, with wooden floor bertam sides, and attap roof. There is a small ward for diarrhoea patients, and a second large ward, both attap buildings, with earth floors. These are good of their kind, but cannot be considered good hospital buildings. In the main ward there are three tiers of beds as at Gula.

There were 91 patients at the time of our visit. This hospital serves Caledonia, Byram and Changkat estates. There are no latrines, the patients going into the fields close by. There is no bath-room, bathing being done at a neighbouring canal.

There are only 20 blankets in the hospital, all of which are issued for use.

Owing to the sudden departure of the estate doctor recently engaged, the whole establishment is for the time left in charge of a "Dresser" whose appearance and demeanour do not inspire confidence.

The Chinese Kongs house was next inspected. The coolies present appeared well fed and healthy. The house is a good attap building, and the beds are all provided with mosquito curtains. The coolies complained that their daily task was too heavy and they could not do it. The work-boards are hung up and duly posted to date, so that every man can see with how much work he is being credited.

The Kling lines are, for the most part, good brick buildings with attap roofs. Every married couple has a separate room and the space is ample. There are also some attap lines similar to those at Gula. The houses are good enough, but a sort of attic has been constructed in the verandahs to enable more men to live in them. These men are right over the heads of those in the verandah, and get all the smoke from the cooking which goes on there. The arrangement impedes ventilation and is not one to be encouraged.

Tuesday, Dec. 16th:—The Commissioners inspected the 6 o'clock muster of coolies. They are a very fairly strong looking set of men, apparently in good health. Scarcely any complaints were made, and those of a trivial character.

Inspection of the books shews that no indentured Immigrant has been longer on the estate than three years and four months, six of this date still remaining. Thirteen of three years and two months also remain. With such small numbers and amounts of overtime, it was not considered worth while to analyse the causes.

The Chinese pay list shewed that in October, 42 men worked 635 days, and earned \$178. Of this, \$41 was deducted to pay for rice issued to them after six months from their date of contract, the arrangement being that while the estate feeds them free for six months, they must feed themselves if they have not worked off their 180 tasks in that time. Thus the cash received for October was \$137. The pay is 28 cents per day, arrived at by dividing \$7, the stipulated monthly wage, by 25 days. No work is done and no pay allowed on Sundays. The \$2 for food is paid them in cash, but does not appear in the pay list. Some idea of their work may be gathered from the fact that one man did 22½ tasks in the month, the most accomplished, one did 22, five did 20½ or 21, and three did 20. The average was a little over 15.

In August, the same gang, 53 strong, worked 905½ days, or an average of over 17 days, and earned \$244, of which, \$52 was refunded for passage money, leaving \$192 cash paid to the coolies. In this month, three men worked 26 days, two worked 25, and fifteen more over 20 days.

The original batch which arrived in March was 81 strong; of these, 39 were lost, either by desertion or having to be returned to their parents in China, before October. Seven of them finished their 180 tasks and were discharged in October, and eight more in November, and one has since deserted.

The cost of the experiment of importing Chinese without the intermediary of brokers has, so far, been great. The following figures are supplied by Mr. TURNER:—

Memorandum.

Advances of 17 new Chinese Coolies at Swatow and passage-money to Penang (arrived at Caledonia on the 22nd October, 1890),...	\$159.21
Tyndal Moy KEN, passage-money to and from China, ...	12.00
Do., 2 months' wages, ...	28.00
Do., expenses incurred at Swatow and Hongkong, ...	17.00
Landing 18 men at Penang, ...	0.54
Passage-money of Steam Launch to Nibong Tebal, P. W., ...	6.66
Sampan hire at Swatow, ...	0.50
	<u>\$223.91</u>

Average of \$12.44 per head.

133 Chinese Coolies arrived here on the 10th October, 1889.

Deserted, ...	125 men.
Sent to China, ...	6 "
Died, ...	2 "

Total, 133

Loss, ...	<u>\$3,926.62</u>
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81 Chinese Coolies arrived here on the 9th March, 1890.

Deserted, ...	27 men.
Sent to China, ...	10 "
Died, ...	3 "
On Estate, ...	41 "

Total, 81

Loss, ...	<u>\$217.00</u>
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VISIT No. 7.

15TH DECEMBER 1890.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

The Commissioners on their way from Caledonia inspected Sungei Bakap Hospital, where were twenty Kling coolies from Caledonia, and eight Klings and three Javanese from Byram. They had hardly a complaint to make of their treatment either on the estate or in the hospital.

VISIT No. 8.

15TH DECEMBER 1890.

LYE WHATT'S ESTATE.*

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

A gang of coolies working in the field were first interrogated. Most of them were *Lau-Khehs*, and expressed themselves contented enough. They said they often got \$3 per month besides their food; the usual rate being 16 cents a task. One of them, a *Sin-Kheh*, had a bad sore on his leg, and another was also obviously sick and unfit to work. Both said they had asked the Towkay to send them to hospital, but he had refused. Afterwards in the house, the Towkay said that both had refused to go when told, and on confronting them, one coolie adhered to his former statement, but the other admitted that he did not wish to go to hospital.

The Commissioners went on to the estate and were received by the sons of the proprietor, who was absent.

The hospital is an attap building on brick footings with a wooden floor. Main ward 24 x 18 and a small dispensary and office at one end. No female ward or latrines, and the patients bathe at a well close by. The hospital is in charge of a Dresser, who served ten years at Sungei Bakap Government Hospital. All bad cases are sent to Sungei Bakap. The Dresser feeds the patients, being allowed 2 cents a day for doing so besides estate rice. No extras beyond this are ever given.

The Kling lines are three buildings, with mud and bertam sides and attap roofs. They are dark and dirty, and the sleeping benches are often non-existent or in very bad repair. Buildings themselves in fair repair. They are divided into small rooms containing from 2 to 4 people, with a verandah along the front.

The people in them state that rice is supplied by the estate at \$1.20 for one-third of a bag, which suffices for a month. They also state that from 40 to 70 cts. is enough to live on in addition to rice. One woman said she and her husband lived on 50 cents a month, but this included no flesh, which they had to go without here, though they got it three times a fortnight formerly in India.

As no Indian immigrants were received before 1888, there was no question of retaining over-time.

The books are kept in Chinese, but a copy in English is kept of the Indian Immigrants' pay-list, for inspection by the Indian Immigration Agent. To test the reliability of this several coolies were asked the amounts they had received in cash for October (November pay-lists were not yet translated into the book, but the coolies said they had received their November pay three days ago). In four or five cases the amounts nearly agreed with the sums shewn in the book. In two cases the men stated sums about \$1 less than in the book saying that \$1 had been deducted from their pay to refund passage money. The book shewed this re-payment as completed, and no deduction made.

The Klings looked healthy, and there was nothing in their appearance to indicate ill-treatment.

The work-board of one Chinese kongs for the 10th moon was examined and shewed that of 64 men 3 were discharged during the month, and the remaining 61 completed 1,678½ tasks, or an average of 27½ each. This, if correct, would be a very satisfactory result. It was explained that in addition to food, consisting of rice, fish, peas, salt, &c. costing 8 or 9 cents a day per man, each man received 15 cents per task, and the proprietor's son went on to state that this sum was paid whether a man finished a stated amount of work or not. This it is difficult to believe.

* In Province Wellesley.

VISIT No. 9.

TAN SIM HO'S ESTATE.*

15TH DECEMBER, 1890.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MacGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

A gang of volunteer Klings and another of Hok-chiu Chinese coolies were inspected at the kongsi house at Simpang Ampat. The former had no complaints; with regard to the latter, who presented a fine, healthy and robust appearance, it was found that great discontent prevailed on account of the rate of wage paid to the later arrivals. These men had been recruited by the Mandor YEOW CHUI HEE and said they had been promised \$3.50 a month as wages, whereas they were only receiving \$2.50. They were not under contract and were told that they were free to leave, but in reply to this they said they were unable to do so owing to their having no money, and to there being no Hok-chiu people in the Settlement besides themselves to whom they could apply for assistance.

VISIT No. 10.

COOLIE DEPÔTS, PENANG.

FRIDAY, 19TH DECEMBER, 1890.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
F. POWELL, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire.

The Commissioners met in Chulia Street at 7.30 A.M. to inspect depôts, accompanied by Mr. EVANS, Acting Assistant Protector of Chinese, and Mr. FERNANDEZ, the Protectorate Boarding Officer.

The first visited was chop KONG YIT THAI, at 168, Chulia Street, kept by ANG KAI, licensed for 60 *Sin-Khehs*. There were five *Sin-Khehs* in it, but all were out at the time of visit.

Chop THAI FO CHAN, 170, Chulia Street, kept by CHIONG SU NEU, licensed for 80 *Sin-Khehs*, was next inspected. There were 23 inmates, all present. Some were *Khehs* for Perak tin-mining. They had friends in Perak who they said were coming to redeem them, and they seemed to know where they were going and all about it. There were also *Khehs* for Bukit Mertajam, where they said they had friends. Several Hai-lok-hongs and *Khehs* on their way to Deli. They had heard in China that Deli was the best place to go to. Did not know it was not under British Government, nor did they care. None of the *Sin-Khehs* had yet signed contracts. They all knew the amount (\$19.50) they would have to repay for advances, which in every case had been made by Hongkong depôt-keepers, but very few knew how much they were going to earn or save. Asked if they had been out to see Penang, they stated they would like to go out but the depôt-keeper would not let them. The depôt was in excellent order throughout.

* In Province Wellesley.

Chop KONG NAM LONG CHAN, 296, Chulia Street, keeper GOH CHION LGUI, licensed for 100 *Sin-Khehs*. Six men in depôt, 4 in and 2 out at time of visit. Two of the *Sin-Khehs* had signed contracts for Perak mines and were waiting to sail. They had been told in China by men returned from working in Perak to their village that Perak was a good country to go to. They said they were not allowed to go out of the depôt.

A *Lau-Kheh* depôt, chop HONG HOH LONG, 294, Chulia Street, kept by TAN KI MENG and licensed for 50 inmates, was visited. There were six men in it who had been mining in Kulim and Perak. They had made no money, and were now waiting to go to Deli.

All these depôts were in good order and perfectly clean; latrines, light and well ventilated; water supplied from Municipal pipes; and in sanitary condition, excellent. The chief part of the bars had been removed so that they no longer appeared as prisons. Notices were not posted stating that the men were free to go as they liked as the forms of notice had not yet arrived from Singapore.

VISIT No. 11.

20TH DECEMBER, 1890.

BATU KAWAN ESTATE, PROVINCE WELLESLEY.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R. E. (*President*).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MacGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Hospital.—1st Ward.—A good building raised from ground, wood floor, bertam sides, attap roof. Had 21 Kling inmates. Several made complaints of having followed other vocations in India, which they had been told they could pursue here. All had blankets.

2nd Ward.—A similar building, divided in two by a cross partition. One end used for men with 12 beds, no inmates; other for women with 15 beds.

There is a latrine, common to men and women.

The Chinese ward is attap sides and roof and earth floor. One end being partitioned off for special cases; 18 inmates.

There is a latrine close by for the Chinese.

A Kling Dresser.

On the whole, hospital a good one and in good order.

The water supply is brought in pipes from neighbouring hill, to a set of filtering tanks. There are two taps, one for the lines, and one for the "buildings".

The married lines consist of attap buildings, divided into small rooms, each occupied by one couple, a verandah running down the front. They are in fair repair. The floors are all earth.

The men's barracks are long buildings, containing about 45 men each. Attap roofs and sides and earth floors. Each man has a separate sleeping platform. In several of them women were living also with their husbands. Interrogated, they stated they wished for rooms to themselves, but were obliged to live here because quarters were not available.

In some barracks, of an older type, only 25 men were accommodated, and there was a single sleeping platform running along the sides, instead of a separate one for

each. The men said they preferred this, as it gave more room for storing their things, but Mr. VERMONT prefers the other as being airier and keeping the men from huddling together.

A bricklayer was exhibited who had been 21 years on the estate and had saved Rs. 1,000 besides jewelry. In his first contract, an eighteen months' one, he said he had saved \$44, his pay being then 12 cents per diem.

There is a separate barrack room for unmarried women; a watchman being set over the door at night.

There is a school with a teacher paid by the estate. Attendance is not compulsory, and only 29 children were in it, which the teacher said was about the average. This is not many, out of the very large number of children on the estate.

The Kling coolies were mustered. They were, with very few exceptions, a strong looking set, well-fed and healthy. The exceptions were always found on enquiry to be men who had not been agriculturists in India, but had been induced to come over on false pretences. They said they could not do changkol work, and apparently would rather starve. In many cases lighter work is found for such men, and if they agree they are put to work in the women's gang on women's wages. There appears to be but little discontent on the estate.

The Chinese coolies were not mustered, but about 50 coolies were present for the purpose of renewing contracts. A Chinese kongsi house was also visited. The system of arranging accounts was enquired into. This rests wholly in the hands of the headman, no supervision being exercised over his dealings with the men. The kongsi house was clean and in good order.

The other kongsis being scattered over the estate at long distances were not visited.

Examination of the pay list shews that there are men whose contracts are dated 1887 and even 1886 who are only in receipt of 12 cents per diem, the reason being that they have not paid off their original advances.

It appears that formerly, when the advance was about \$8, about one-third usually became free of debt at the end of 12 months, and after 18 months about one-third still owed to the estate. At the end of two years the accounts generally cease, and it appears that a man who has not paid off by that time seldom does so, but remains permanently indebted, his pay, of course, being still 12 cents.

The advance account, however, shews a great recent reduction in the amounts of the advances. Before March, 1890, the average was from \$7.50 to \$8. The average for the batch arriving in May, 1890, was about \$2.20, for November about \$4.60, and for those just received in December about \$4.

VISIT NO. 12.

20TH DECEMBER, 1890.

TAN KANG HOCK'S ESTATE (CHINESE).*

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (Secretary).

There were 40 unindentured Klings, who made no complaints. Their lines were good, with plenty of space.

The estate has its own water supply, but by a pipe from the hill.

The pay of the Klings is 20 cents per diem.

* In Province Wellesley.

The hospital is a good building with earth floor, plank sides, and tiled roof. There is room for 25 beds, on wooden trestles, but only 10 were fitted up. One ward is 30 ft. by 27 ft., is fitted to contain 15 beds in three tiers; the other is 21 ft. by 27 ft., and has 10 beds in two tiers. It contained seven Chinese patients. There is a little dispensary and a Kling Dresser.

The owner states he does not oblige his men to go to hospital if they object.

There are about 70 Chinese *Sin-Khehs* and the same number of *Lau-Khehs* on the estate. One of the latter, who had been discharged by Mr. WRAY, said that he had returned to the estate with ten others of those who were sent away at the same time, as they found the work easier and their condition better there than elsewhere.

A *Sin-Kheh* who had been eleven months on the estate acknowledged his account as being quite correct, and expressed his desire to continue to work for his Towkay after his present contract is completed.

VISIT NO. 13.

7TH JANUARY, 1891.

TELOK ANSON.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (President).
The Hon'ble J. M. B. VERMONT.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (Secretary).

The Tamil "colony" was inspected. It was on the whole in a fair state of cultivation, although some of the holdings had been abandoned. The Superintendent of Lower Perak informed us that some of the work of irrigation, &c. that had been intended had not been carried out by the Government, in consequence, probably of the small number of families imported.

About twenty of the Tamil settlers were mustered in the Land Office, and some of them were questioned as regards the cost of living, wages received and general welfare.

One coolie, RATHAN, one of the first lot received, explained how he had been induced to leave his country with the promise of getting land to live on and cultivate, and said he had not been disappointed and would gladly get down more of his friends if their passage was paid for them, as he thought it would benefit them.

RYAMBO, a married man with three children, was also perfectly satisfied with his lot. He said he spent \$3 per month on rice and \$4 for curry-stuffs, &c. for his household to live on. He was able to earn enough to do this and his wife looked after the crops on his own land while he was engaged on outside work. He also stated it used to cost him Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 to live in his own country, but did not seem to be able to substantiate the fact.

VERAPATERAN, another married man with six children, said he was able to support his family in comfort on what he was able to earn. Both he and the former witness said that they would be glad to get their friends over from India and that it would be in their interest to come.

KARIAN, a contractor who had resided in the estate for ten years, said that the coolies could easily be well provided with food for \$3.50 a month and that they could be boarded for that amount. Extras such as betel-nut, tobacco, bath oil, &c. would be extra, and for this \$1 to \$1.50 would be ample.

The present price of rice was \$3.50 to \$3.60 per bag. He employs coolies, whom he gets chiefly from Penang and Parit Buntar. He pays them all 30 cents a day, and would have no difficulty in procuring any number at that rate. The place is healthy and few die.

VISIT No. 14.

8TH JANUARY, 1891.

TREMELBYE ESTATE, KLANG.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Tremelbye
Estate. 8th
January.

Sixty to seventy acres under cultivation—pepper and Liberian coffee.

Met by Mr. MELBYE, Manager. Inspected lines. Two attap buildings, partitioned off. In fair order and good enough for their purpose, but dark and ill-ventilated.

Mustered coolies, 45 in number, of whom 7 were women.

Seemed contented on the whole. Two or three said they were satisfied with their condition here, and no complaints were made. They looked healthy, but there was a considerable proportion of men unsuited for out-door work, and the Manager expressed himself much dissatisfied with them.

Rice is supplied at 5 cents per chupak, and 6 chupaks a week is the usual allowance. Manager stated he could not get as many as he wanted. Had applied for 15 last year, but had not got one. Applies to Madras Agents.

Employs no free coolies, because does not care for two classes on one small estate.

Believes by offering slightly more wages could get plenty, and thinks present wages too low; should be 18 cents and 20 cents in third year.

Formerly employed some Chinese, but wages too high, so got rid of them.

Advances, about \$7, are all recovered. All paid off under first year.

Scarcely any desertion. No work ever done on Sundays; pays Sunday if 6 days' work in week.

Pays enactment minimum, and 3 years' contract.

Man can live on about 50 cents, besides his rice.

The coolies buy everything except rice in Klang town, one mile off.

Examination of the pay lists shewed that in August and September, the gang being then of less than one year's service, 44 men (on 14 cents) worked on an average 22.8 days per month, and with the addition of Sunday pay, granted when they worked 6 days in the week, were credited with 25.4 days each in the month, or an average of \$3.57 each. From this was deducted an average of \$0.74 for passage and advances, leaving \$2.83 each nett. For rice was paid \$1.34 each (which however included the rice for six women).

In July, September and October, 1890, 37 men (on 16 cents) and 7 women (on 12 cents) between 1½ and 2 years' service, worked on an average 23 days per mensem, and were credited with 25.4 days' pay each, earning an average of \$3.14 each per month, from which no passage or money advances had to be deducted.

The cost of rice was \$1.09 per head.

VISIT No. 15.

10TH JANUARY, 1891.

WELD'S HILL ESTATE, KWALA LUMPUR.

MANAGER, MR. CUMMING.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Met by Mr. HILL, part-proprietor, and the Manager. Inspected coolie lines. Weld's Hill. Three buildings, of split bamboo and mud, in good order. One has concrete verandah floor and drains; the others are all earth. All are divided by bamboo partitions into small rooms. 10th January

Inspected the coolies, who were a healthy looking lot and appeared contented. Two were questioned, one of whom had been in Martinique and one in Mauritius. Both said they earned more in those countries than here, but otherwise had no complaints.

The free men on this estate are paid from 20 to 23 cents, and the women 18 to 20 cents. They are paid for Sundays if they work six days in the week.

Rice is sold to the men at Kwalla Lumpur at market price. They generally buy it in bags, paying cash, and it thus does not appear in the accounts. If they wish it, daily rations of rice are issued to them and debited in their accounts.

Examination of pay list shewed that in September, 1890, the indentured coolies—21 women and 8 men—were credited with 673 days, and earned \$78, from which was deducted \$8 for passages, and \$2 for rice. Thus each coolie was credited, including Sundays, with 23.2 days, and the average monthly earnings were \$2.69.

In the same month, 112 free coolies, of whom a few were women, were credited with 2,668 days, earning \$595, from which no deduction was made. This gives an average, including Sundays, of 23.8 days per month, and monthly earnings of \$5.31 per man. This sum corresponds with the statements of several coolies who were interrogated and professed themselves satisfied.

One coolie (free) stated that he and his friends left the estate when they could obtain higher wages on road works, and returned to the estate when such work was finished.

Another stated that he would bring his relatives if their passages were paid and they were not prevented from emigrating at Negapatam, but, owing to difficulties which some of them had previously experienced in this connection, seemed diffident as to putting it into practice.

Several Statute Immigrants on interrogation stated that they received 23 cents a day and were quite satisfied; they wished to remain on the estate, where they were well treated and comfortable.

Two Immigrant women, who had been employed on the estate for two years, stated that they were contented, except that their pay was not sufficient, but on further enquiry it was found that they were not even aware of the amount of wages they received. One free woman was receiving 20 cents a day, and several others 16 cents a day as wages.

The foregoing figures were compared with those of other months, and found to be a fair sample, but the amount earned was somewhat more than usual.

— Insp. 18 —

VISIT No. 16.

11TH JANUARY, 1891.

LINSUM ESTATE, SUNGEI UJONG.

MANAGER, MR. V. R. WICKWAR.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

Linsum Estate. 11th January. Inspected the coolie lines, chiefly attap roofs and bark walls, dark and ill-ventilated, cooking being done inside the house, of which there are altogether 41, so that on an average there are about $4\frac{1}{2}$ persons to a house, which is $12' \times 10'$.

The coolies on the whole looked healthy, with the exception of one man who was making up time after the completion of his three years, and one coolie who had only recently arrived. The coolies shewed a greater disposition to make complaints than on most estates. This may probably be largely attributed to the isolated situation of the estate.

There is a hospital on the estate, $30' \times 18'$, containing ten beds, but they are seldom all occupied, and adjoining it is a dispensary with a suitable stock of medicines.

The coolies can only obtain limited quantities of arrack from the licensed toddy shops, which belong to the estate, the Government having closed the previous shops rented by a Chinaman, whose main object was to induce the coolies to drink as much as possible, and thus caused much mischief.

In January, 1890, the total number of coolies on estate, free and indentured, was 179; they worked 3,406 days, or 19 days each in the month, and earned \$679, or \$3.79 each, being an average of 19.9 cents per weekly day.

In September, 1890, 138 people in all worked 3,445 days, or 25 each in the month, and earned \$637. The total deductions were advances \$48, rice \$190. Of these 104 were Statute Immigrants, nearly all being men. These worked 2,566 days, or about 25 each. They earned \$460, or \$4.42 each, from which \$47, or an average of 45 cents each, was deducted for passage money advances, and \$152, or \$1.46 each, for rice.

In the same month, 30 free coolies, 20 being men and ten women, worked 674 days, or $22\frac{1}{2}$ days each, earning \$119, or \$3.97 each; from which \$39, or \$1.30 each, was deducted for rice. The men were paid as follows:—One on 23 cents, nine on 20 cents, eight on 18 cents, and two on 17 cents.

In October, 1890, 134 of the same people worked 3,674 days, or 27.4 days each, and earned \$731, or \$5.45 each. The total deductions were \$42 for advances and \$307 for rice.

— Insp. 19 —

VISIT No. 17.

13TH JANUARY, 1891.

GADING ESTATE, MALACCA.

Manager: KOH SEK TUAN.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETTENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

In the absence of the Manager, the Commissioners were shown round by his son KOH TEONG LOW. The Kling coolie lines were first inspected, consisting of one large building $50' \times 30'$ with a 5' verandah all round the outside, which was used as a kitchen. A passage about 8 feet wide runs through the centre of the building, the rest being partitioned into sleeping compartments.

The estate supplies the coolies with all the food they require, and debits them with the cost of it. In the shops a notice was posted, said to have been issued by Government, in which it was ordered that $1\frac{1}{2}$ gantangs of Bengal rice should be issued each week to each coolie, at a rate not to exceed \$3.60 a pikul (say 17 to 18 gantangs); $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. dholl to be issued daily at the rate of \$4.50 a pikul (being the market price); coco-nut oil 1 pint a week per man at a maximum cost of 10 cents a catty.

It was also found that bath oil was supplied at 22 cents a catty, chilies at 1 cent a handful, perpu at 2 cents a gayong = $\frac{1}{4}$ pint.

The coolies appeared to be healthy and well fed.

The account book of the food supplied was examined, and the following is a statement of one coolie's account for the month of December:—

December 16th for Rice, $1\frac{1}{2}$ gantang, ...	18 cents.
„ „ „ Sundries, ...	10 „
„ 14th „ Rice, ...	27 „
„ „ „ Sundries, ...	19 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ 21st „ Rice, ...	30 „
„ „ „ Sundries, ...	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ 28th „ Rice, ...	30 „
„ „ „ Sundries, ...	21 „
	\$1.72 $\frac{1}{2}$
Cash given on going to hospital at beginning of month, ...	26
	Total, ... \$1.98 $\frac{1}{2}$

Examination of the pay lists elicited the following information:—

In March, 1890, 35 Indian statute coolies worked during the month 689 actual days' work, and earned 67 Sundays' pay for which no work was done, the average per man being 19.7 actual days' work per month.

The check-roll for August, 1890, shows that of an original number of 47 coolies, obtained at the end of 1888, 5 have deserted, 8 have died, and 34 remain on the estate. These in August worked 634 days, or an average of 18.6 days each, earning in addition 71 days' pay for Sundays, on which they did not actually work.

In October, 1890, 33 people worked 762 days, and earned in addition pay for 71 Sundays; an average of 23.1 days' actual work per month.

In November, 1890, 33 people, of whom 19 were men on 14 cents, 6 men on 12 cents, and 8 women on 8 cents, worked 612 days, and earned pay for 71 Sundays in addition, giving an average of 18.6 actual days' work in the month. They earned in all \$84.05, or \$2.55 each. The deductions which may have been made from this do not appear in the pay list, a separate account being kept with each coolie.

The December account was not quite completed.

The accounts for inspection by the Indian Immigration Department are kept in Tamil, to which there appears no objection, provided that the Assistant Indian Immigration Agent can read Tamil and has with him an assistant capable of comparing them with the originals, kept in Chinese, of which they are transcripts. They are, however, very roughly kept, on ruled manuscript forms, varying for the different months. For instance, November was the only month in which the rates of pay and amount earned were entered in the check-roll, and in none of them were the deductions for advances and food shown at all. For November and December, 1888, the accounts were kept only in Chinese; from then till July, 1889, no entries appear in the book at all; and from that time forward thence they are kept very untidily in pencil, in various forms as described above.

From the foregoing figures, it appears that the average number of days per month actually worked by coolies on this estate is 20.

The coolies look well and strong, and appear contented. They stated that some time back they were beaten and badly treated, but that now they have nothing to complain of.

Their lines are in indifferent repair, and are inferior to the average, but there appears nothing in them to render them unfit for use.

The rice is served out weekly, it was examined, and is very good.

There is no shop nearer than Malacca, except the small cottage of Durian Tunggal, and everything the men require is sold them by the estate.

There was a building called the hospital, in reality an indifferent cattle shed. The Manager said it was never used, and indeed it could not be of service as a hospital. The nearest hospital is that of Alor Gajah, distant about 10 miles.

The following table, extracted from a separate account of the advances, shows the amount of wages earned by, the rate of pay, the advances made, and cash remaining to pay off previous advances, for each coolie; and shows that the average monthly pay earned was \$3.06, and the average cost of living \$1.37:—

No.	Rate of Pay.	Amount of Wages.	Amount of Advances.	Balance.
	c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.
1	12	3 00	1 89	1 11
2	14	1 12	1 01½	0 10½
3	12	1 32	1 99½	...
4	14	1 48	1 54½	...
W. 6	8	2 16	1 48	0 68
7	14	4 34	2 18	2 16
W. 8	8	1 44	0 38	1 06

No.	Rate of Pay.	Amount of Wages.	Amount of Advances.	Balance.
	c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.
10	14	4 34	0 99½	3 34½
11	...	4 34	1 49	2 85
14	...	4 34	1 18½	3 15½
15	...	4 06	0 86½	3 19½
W. 16	08	1 84	1 59½	0 24½
W. 18	...	2 08	1 53½	0 54½
19	14	3 36	1 70½	1 65½
20	...	4 06	1 33½	2 72½
21	...	4 34	1 20	3 14
22	...	3 99	1 40	2 59
23	...	4 06	1 05	3 01
24	...	1 82	1 06	0 76
25	...	4 34	1 70½	2 63½
W. 27	08	2 00	1 53½	0 46½
30	14	0 44	0 82½	...
31	...	4 34	1 52½	2 81½
W. 35	10	3 10	1 37½	1 72½
36	14	4 34	1 52	2 82
39	...	4 34	1 25	3 09
W. 40	08	2 48	1 50	0 98
42	14	3 78	1 52	2 26
43	12	3 00	1 73½	1 26½
44	14	3 22	1 48	1 74
W. 45	08	0 40	0 25½	0 14½
46	14	3 99	1 42½	2 56½
47	...	4 34	1 70	2 64
W. 48	08	2 48	1 35	1 13
Total, 34		\$104 08	\$46 60½	

CHINESE.

GO SING KANG, 27, *Lau-Kheh*:—Two years in Malacca. Came in tongkang. On this estate ever since arrival. Works in mill. I get \$5 a month and food. I buy my clothes in Malacca. If I want to go there I can; I ask leave. I get paid on the last day of the month. Last month I got \$3; the other \$2 I had had before; I borrowed it. I owe the Towkay \$12 now; If I go to hospital I pay. I sent \$10 to China in the 9th moon. I borrowed it from the Towkay. I do not smoke tobacco or opium. I have spent all my money on food, medicine and clothes. The Towkay gives me rice only, everything else I buy. There are shops here. I do not owe them any money. I have a wife in China. When I have money I will return to China. I am well treated. I have no complaints. I have a mosquito curtain; I bought it myself. I know that if ill-treated I can complain to the Police. I know that if not well treated I can go and seek work elsewhere.

LIM AH LOK, Hylam, 22, *Sin-Kheh*:—Since January. Brought by KENG HUN, a *Kheh-Thau*. Received \$2 in China from KENG HUN. Came in a tongkang. Five days in tongkang at Malacca. Stayed a night in KOH TEK CHUAN's house in Malacca and then came here. Twenty-two *Sin-Khehs* came with me in the tongkang. About 20 days on board. Received good food on board. Have been employed in the mill ever since I came. My Towkay paid \$21. I have to receive \$3. I have received nothing yet—not a cent. I get plenty of good food. Work from 6 to 11 and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. I have to work 340 days, then I shall get the \$3. I know I can go where I please then. I have been seven days in the Malacca hospital. I went in a bullock cart. I have no complaints. I prefer being in China. I came here to get money. The *Kheh-Thau* told me I would get good wages. He did not tell me I should have to work for 340 days before I should be free. I expect to get \$3 or \$4 a month and my food. I shall be my own master. I have never been ill-treated. If I were ill-treated I should not know where to go to complain. I have not seen any others ill-treated. I do not smoke. I am clothed, and sometimes get cakes; that is all I get.

Eight other *Sin-Khehs* all agree that the above is correct, and say they will return to China when they have \$20 or \$30. None of them smoke opium. They all appear to be in very good health.

VISIT No. 18.

13TH JANUARY, 1891.

PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. A. SWETENHAM, Esquire, C.M.G.
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

MALAKA PINDAH ESTATE, MALACCA.

The Tamil coolie lines were first inspected. They are in two buildings. One has attap sides and roof, is in fair order, but a poorly constructed building. The other is a disgraceful building, apparently converted from a cow-shed by enclosing the sides with rag or sticks, or any rubbish. It has no drainage whatever.

The pay list for December, 1890, shews 38 names—11 men on 14 cents, 12 on 12 cents, and 4 absent; 10 women on 8 cents, and 1 absent. They worked 741 days, or (for those who worked at all) 22.5 days each, and earned 60 Sundays in addition. They earned \$33.48, or \$2.53 each. From this \$7.63 was deducted for passage advances, and \$56.33 for rice and food, leaving a balance of \$19.52 in cash paid to the coolies, or an average of about 51 cents each.

In November, 1890, 47 people appear on the pay list, namely, 17 men on 14 cents, 14 on 12 cents, 11 women on 8 cents, and 5 absent. They worked 635 days, or 15.1 each, and got 58 Sundays' pay in addition. They earned \$80.97, or \$1.90 each. No passage advances were deducted, but after deducting rice and food \$77.66, the cash payment to the 42 people who worked was \$3.31, or about 8 cents each.

From comparison with others, this does not appear to have been an exceptionally bad month on the estate.

The back pay lists shew that the work has been wretched; for instance, in May, 1889, 48 people are credited with 632 days' pay, or 13.5 days each including Sundays.

The system of keeping coolies constantly in debt is here in full force, the present debt of the 38 Tamils on the pay list being \$235, or about \$6.19 each, after two years' service. The result is seen in the fact that only 12 men have been raised to 14 cents, the other 11 being still on 12, and all the women on 8 cents. Five coolies are absent and their rates not noted.

The coolies on this estate shewed great desire to make complaints, and though it was impossible to go into many details, it was abundantly evident that they were very discontented.

The following may be taken as a sample of the cost of living for one month:—

	20th Sept. 1890.	27th Sept. 1890.	5th Oct. 1890.	12th Oct. 1890.	
Six chupaks Rice, ...	28	35	30	30	
Oil, ...	3	6	3	3	
Salt, ...	1	1	1	...	
Saffron, ...	2	...	...	...	
Chilies, ...	1	1	2	1	
Coriander, ...	2	2	1	1	
Fish, ...	5	2½	5	2½	
Tamarind, ...	2	2	2	2	
Tobacco, ...	1	2	1	...	
Perpu, ...	...	...	...	8	
Curry-stuff, ...	2	...	...	1½	
Peas, ...	...	2½	...	2½	
Onions, ...	...	...	1	...	
Total,...	49	54	46	51½	\$2.00½

Red Cloth is supplied to the coolies at 14 cents a yard.

VISIT No. 19.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15th, 1891.

STOKE ROCHFORD ESTATE.*

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Captain M. A. CAMERON, R.E. (*President*).
F. POWELL, Esquire.
A. M. MACGREGOR, Esquire.
J. TURNER, Esquire.
E. A. B. BROWN, Esquire (*Secretary*).

The pay list for November, 1890, shews 8 non-indentured coolies on 23 cents each. They are not paid for Sundays, or any days except those actually worked. They worked 138 days, or 17.25 each, in the month, earning \$34.48, of which \$17.04 was stopped by the estate for food supplied.

There are 55 Statute Immigrants on the books, 39 men and 16 women, who actually worked 789 days, or 14.8 days each, and earned \$112, or \$2.04 each, from which a total of \$95 was deducted for food.

The small number of days worked is partly due to the fact that all the names entered on the pay list are counted in, though some of them may have been sick or not at work all the month, while on every other estate only those who actually worked during the month have been considered. After allowing for this, however, the work done is but small.

In considering the deductions for food, it must be borne in mind that they are not for rice alone, but for all articles of food required. The allowance of rice is 36 catties per month for a man, and 30 for a woman, for which 4 cents a catty is charged. Each man also receives 70 cents worth, and each woman 50 cents worth

* In Johor.

of curry-stuff per month. Thus the cost of bare necessities of food for a man is \$2.14. The whole of this is not deducted, in the case of men in hospital or absentees, and consequently the total deduction is only about \$1.73 per man. In many cases the deduction for food of an individual coolie exceeds the total wages due; the excess is never, the Manager informs us, carried on to the next month as a debt, but is at once struck off as unrecoverable.

There is a shop on the estate kept by a Tamil, for the sale of miscellaneous articles, the prices of which are regulated by the Manager. The Manager said that there were several Chinese shops available for the coolies at the landing place on the river-side, distant about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Of the 49 immigrants who have over one year's service, 12 men are still only on 14 cents and 9 women on 10 cents, so that there is considerable delay in obtaining the increased rate of pay. Of the 14-cent men there are 2 of two years and four months' service; 6 of one year and six months; and 4 of one year and one month only.

The Manager states that there is but little desertion, which he attributes to the great difficulty of getting away from this isolated locality.

There is no hospital on the estate, the sick being sent to a Government Hospital on the road to the landing place, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the estate. It contained six Statute Immigrants at the time of the Commissioners' visit, and is a suitable building in good order, with both Tamil and Chinese wards. It is in charge of an Apothecary, Mr. D'Vaz (who also visits the estates) and is visited (the Apothecary informed us) every two or three months by Dr. Wilson from Johor Bharu.

Considerable discontent with their lot was evinced by the coolies; some of them bore marks which only too clearly proved the use of the cane, and some who should have been in hospital were at work on the estate. The quantity of coffee to be picked as a day's task might be better defined.

The Manager, on the other hand, complained of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of getting his coolies punished by a Magistrate owing to there being no European Magistrate nearer than Johor Bharu.

APPENDIX C.

SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO BE SENT TO EMPLOYERS OF TAMIL INDENTURED LABOUR.

[In order to facilitate your reply please read through all these questions before commencing to answer any.]

- 1.—Is the present supply of labour defective and if so in what respects?
- 2.—To what causes do you attribute this defect?
- 3.—Are you satisfied with the physique of the immigrants you receive?
- 4.—How do you obtain your indentured immigrants at present?
- 5.—What terms have you offered?
- 6.—Have you experienced any difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number on these terms?
- 7.—Have you tried any other method, and with what results?
- 8.—What is the average cost of each cooly landed on your estate?
- 9.—What is the average amount recoverable from them, giving details as far as possible?
- 10.—What number of men, women and children do you employ, stating each separately?
- 11.—At what rate or rates of wages do you pay them?
- 12.—What is the total possible amount of earnings per head?
- 13.—What is the actual amount of pay earned?
- 14.—What deductions do you make from their pay?
- 15.—Is payment made direct to the cooly, and by whom?
- 16.—How many hours a day on an average do your coolies remain in the field?
- 17.—What are the recognised holidays throughout the year on your estate? Do the coolies receive pay or not for those days?
- 18.—Would you recommend or not the prohibition of Sunday labour, and give reasons?
- 19.—What provision do you make for the medical attendance upon and treatment of your coolies, and at what cost?
- 20.—What loss have you suffered on importation of this labour during the last five years :—
 - (a) By death?
 - (b) By desertion?
 - (c) By unrecoverable expenses?and state the number of indentured immigrants imported during that period.
- 21.—What profit has been made on your estate during these years?
- 22.—What facilities have your indentured coolies for communicating with their homes?
- 23.—What are the facilities for importing and maintaining wives and families?

Do you put any restriction on the proportion of women to men imported?

- 24.—What do you consider should be the maximum term of contract?
- 25.—What would you fix as the minimum legal rate of wage :—
 - (a) For an adult male?
 - (b) For a female?
 - (c) For a boy over 16 years of age?
- 26.—Are the minimum rates prescribed by the Enactment adhered to by you at present?
- 27.—With reference to section 16 of the Straits Settlements Ordinance No. V of 1884, what do you pay to males between the ages of 16 and 21 years?
- 28.—Is the present minimum rate of wage sufficient to provide the cooly with proper food?
- 29.—What is the usual food of a cooly on your estate, and how much does it cost him?
- 30.—What is the average price at which you have supplied your coolies with rice? Over how many years do you calculate this average?
- 31.—Would either the offer of better wages or a shortened period of contract or both encourage the immigration of a better class?
- 32.—If it became necessary to make some alteration, would you prefer to shorten the period of contract or increase the minimum legal rate of wage in the third year? State by how much in either case.
- 33.—What percentage of your indentured coolies re-engage after the expiration of their first contract, and at what rate of pay?
- 34.—Can you give any information as regards what becomes of the remainder?
- 35.—Is the present Indian Immigration Ordinance open to amendment, and if so in what direction?
- 36.—Is the present system of recruiting satisfactory, and if not what alteration would you suggest?
- 37.—Are there any other points in which you consider the system of obtaining labour considered as a whole wants alteration?
- 38.—What losses have you experienced by crimping? Can you suggest a remedy?
- 39.—Do you think it advisable to introduce a system by which no unindentured labourer can be employed without the production of a certificate to that effect?
- 40.—Have you any suggestions to offer to generally improve the supply of Indian labour?
- 41.—What inducements are you prepared to offer to encourage families to settle on your estate after the completion of their contracts?
- 42.—Do you employ any nationality other than Chinese or Tamil as labourers, and if so what nationality or nationalities and what number of each?
- 43.—Have you any suggestions to make as to their employment?
- 44.—Can you suggest any other source of labour which might be available for the needs of the Colony and Native States?

SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO BE SENT TO EMPLOYERS OF TAMIL UNIDENTURED LABOUR.

[In order to facilitate your reply please read through all these questions before commencing to answer any.]

- 1.—What number of coolies do you employ, stating men, women and children separately?
- 2.—How do you obtain them?
- 3.—On what terms do you employ them as to :—
 - (a) Contracts?
 - (b) Rates of Wages?
 - (c) Food Supply?
 - (d) Housing?
 - (e) Allowances, etc.?
- 4.—What provision do you make for the medical attendance upon and treatment of your coolies, and at what cost?
- 5.—Is payment made direct to the cooly, and by whom?
- 6.—What are the recognised holidays throughout the year on your estate? Do the coolies receive pay or not for those days?
- 7.—Would you recommend or not the prohibition of Sunday labour, and give reasons?
- 8.—Are you of opinion that unindentured labourers should be subject to Government inspection?
- 9.—Do you think it advisable to introduce a system by which no unindentured labourer can be employed without the production of a certificate to that effect?
- 10.—What inducements are you prepared to offer to encourage families to settle on your estate after completion of their contracts?
- 11.—What profits have been made on your estate during the last five years?
- 12.—What facilities have your coolies for communicating with their homes?
- 13.—What are the facilities for importing and maintaining wives and families? Do you put any restriction on the proportion of women to men?
- 14.—What is the usual food of a cooly on your estate, and what does it cost him?
- 15.—What is the system and cost of providing your coolies with food?
- 16.—Have you any suggestion to make upon the subject of free immigration from India, and as to how it can be increased?
- 17.—Do you employ any nationality other than Chinese or Tamil as labourers, and if so what nationality or nationalities and what number of each?
- 18.—Have you any suggestions to make as to their employment?
- 19.—Can you suggest any other source of labour which might be available for the needs of the Colony and Native States?

SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO BE SENT TO EMPLOYERS OF
CHINESE LABOUR UNDER CONTRACT.

*[In order to facilitate your reply please read through all these questions
before commencing to answer any.]*

1.—What number do you employ of each of the following tribes, viz. :—

- (a) Te-chiu?
- (b) Hok-kien?
- (c) Cantonese?
- (d) Kheh?
- (e) Hailam?
- (f) Hai-lok-hong?
- (g) Other?

2.—On what terms do you employ them as to :—

- (a) Contracts?
- (b) Rates of Wages?
- (c) Food Supply?
- (d) Housing?
- (e) Allowances, etc.?

3.—What provision do you make for the medical attendance upon and treatment of your coolies, and at what cost?

4.—Are your contracts made within or without the Colony or Native States?

5.—State fully upon what system or systems your coolies are paid.

6.—Is payment made direct to the cooly, and by whom?

7.—What is the actual amount of pay earned per head per annum?

8.—What are the recognised holidays throughout the year on your estate? Do the coolies receive pay or not for those days?

9.—Would you recommend or not the prohibition of Sunday labour, and give reasons?

10.—How many hours a day on an average do your coolies remain in the field?

11.—Is the present supply of labour defective, and if so in what respects?

12.—To what causes do you attribute this defect?

13.—Are you satisfied with the physique of the immigrants you receive?

14.—How do you obtain your contract coolies at present?

15.—What terms have you offered?

16.—Have you experienced any difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number on these terms?

17.—Have you tried any other method, and with what results?

18.—What is the average cost of each cooly landed on your estate?

19.—What is the average amount recoverable, giving detail as far as possible?

20.—What loss have you suffered on importation of labour during the last five years :—

- (a) By death?
- (b) By desertion?
- (c) By unrecoverable expenses?

and state number of contract coolies imported during that period.

21.—What profit has been made on your estate during these years?

22.—What facilities have your contract coolies for communicating with their homes?

23.—What are the facilities for importing and maintaining wives and families? Do you put any restriction on the proportion of women to men imported?

24.—What do you consider should be the maximum term of contract?

25.—What would you fix as the minimum legal rate of wage :—

- (a) For an adult male?
- (b) For a female?
- (c) For a boy over 16?

26.—Are the terms of your contracts adhered to by you, and if not why not and in what respects do they differ?

27.—What is the usual food of a contract cooly on your estate, and what does it cost him?

28.—What is the system and cost of providing your coolies with food?

29.—What advances other than those specified in the contract are made to the coolies?

How and when are they recovered?

30.—Would either the offer of better wages or a shortened period of contract or both encourage the immigration of a better class?

31.—What percentage of your contract coolies re-engage after the expiration of their first contract, and at what rate of pay?

32.—Can you give any information as regards what becomes of the remainder?

33.—Does the Straits Settlements Chinese Immigration Ordinance (Ord. IV of 1880) need alteration, and in what respects?

34.—Has your supply of coolies been affected by the decision under this Ordinance of the Court of Appeal, S. S., on the 18th June, 1890?

35.—Are there any points in which you consider the system of obtaining labour considered as a whole wants alteration?

36.—What losses have you experienced by crimping?

Can you suggest a remedy?

37.—Do you think it advisable to introduce a system by which no unindentured labour can be employed without the production of a certificate to that effect?

38.—Have you any suggestion to offer to generally improve the supply of Chinese contract coolies?

39.—Are you of opinion that contract coolies should be subject to Government inspection?

- 40.—What inducements are you prepared to offer to encourage families to settle on your estate after completion of their contracts?
- 41.—Do you employ any nationality other than Chinese or Tamil as labourers, and if so what nationality or nationalities and what number of each?
- 42.—Have you any suggestions to make as to their employment?
- 43.—Can you suggest any other source of labour which might be available for the needs of the Colony and Native States?

SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO BE SENT TO EMPLOYERS OF
CHINESE LABOUR NOT UNDER CONTRACT.

[In order to facilitate your reply please read through all these questions before commencing to answer any.]

- 1.—What number do you employ of each of the following tribes, viz. :—

- (a) Te-chiu?
- (b) Hok-kien?
- (c) Cantonese?
- (d) Kheh?
- (e) Hailam?
- (f) Hai-lok-hong?
- (g) Other?

- 2.—On what terms do you employ them as to :—

- (a) Rates of Wages?
- (b) Food Supply?
- (c) Housing?
- (d) Allowances, etc.?

- 3.—What provision do you make for the medical attendance upon and treatment of your coolies, and at what cost?
- 4.—State fully upon what system or systems your coolies are paid?
- 5.—What are the actual earnings per head per month?
- 6.—Is payment made direct to the coolies, and by whom?
- 7.—What are the recognised holidays throughout the year on your estate? Do the coolies receive pay or not for those days?
- 8.—How many hours a day on an average do your coolies remain in the field?
- 9.—Is the present supply of labour defective, and if so in what respects?
- 10.—To what causes do you attribute this defect?
- 11.—How do you obtain your coolies at present?
- 12.—Have you experienced any difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number on these terms?
- 13.—Have you tried any other method, and with what results?
- 14.—What profit has been made on your estate during the last five years?
- 15.—What facilities have your coolies for communicating with their homes?

- 16.—What are the facilities for importing and maintaining wives and families? Do you put any restriction on the proportion of women to men?
- 17.—What is the usual food of a cooly on your estate, and what does it cost him?
- 18.—What is the system and cost of providing your coolies with food?
- 19.—Are there any points in which you consider the system of obtaining labour considered as a whole wants alteration?
- 20.—Do you think it advisable to introduce a system by which no unindentured labourer can be employed without the production of a certificate to that effect?
- 21.—Are you of opinion that coolies not under contract should be subject to Government inspection?
- 22.—Would you recommend or not the prohibition of Sunday labour, and give reasons?
- 23.—Have you any other suggestions to make upon the employment of Chinese labour not under contract?
- 24.—What inducements are you prepared to offer to encourage families to settle on your estate?
- 25.—Have you any suggestions to offer to generally improve the supply of labour?
- 26.—Do you employ any nationality other than Chinese or Tamil as labourers, and if so what nationality or nationalities and what number of each?
- 27.—Have you any suggestions to make as to their employment?
- 28.—Can you suggest any other source of labour which might be available for the needs of the Colony and Native States?

APPENDIX D.

LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Total number of meetings held, ... 46
Total number of visits paid, ... 19

Member.	Meetings.				Visits of Inspection.
	Preliminary.	To take Evidence.	To discuss Report.	Total.	
Captain M. A. Cameron, M.E., ...	2	36	8	46	19
F. A. Swettenham, ...	1	20	8	29	7
Hon'ble J. M. B. Vermont, ...	1	13	6	20	9
Hon'ble J. Y. Kennedy, ...	1	0	5	6	0
F. Powell, ...	2	26	6	34	14
A. M. MacGregor, ...	2	20	8	30	17
T. H. Hill, ...	2	12	0	14	0
D. Comrie, ...	2	2	4	8	0
J. Turner, ...	2	20	8	30	17
W. E. Hooper, ...	0	5	0	5	0
Kho Bu Ann, ...	2	7	1	10	0
E. A. B. Brown, ...	2	24	8	34	17

Table B.,—Continued.

[illegible]

SUMMARY OF CONTRACTS.

Unpaid Immigrants from China <i>v.</i> Ordinance IV of 1880,	...	5,533
Coolies from Emigrant Dépôts established under Ordinance III of 1877, Chinese,	...	3,014
Do. do. do.	...	2,791
Chinese not from Dépôts,	...	431
Natives do.	...	1,419
Total (Chinese, 8,978; Natives, 4,210)	...	13,188

Total (Chinese, 8,978, Natives, 4,210)

Table B,—Continued.

*Yearly Record of the number of Chinese Women arrived at Singapore,
from 1878-1889.*

From							Proceeded to other Ports.										
Year.	Shanghai.	Hongkong.	Swatow.	Amoy.	Hainam.	Total.	Landed in Singapore.	Penang.	Malacca.	Malay Peninsula.	Australia.	Sumatra.	Java and other Dutch Possessions.	British North Borneo.	Bangkok.	Miscellaneous.	Total.
1878.	...	1,688	153	34	...	1,824	1,327	472	19	...	4	...	...	...	...	2	1,824
1879.	...	2,711	102	98	...	2,902	1,996	909	36	...	21	...	...	...	...	...	2,962
1880.	...	2,665	193	189	...	3,047	1,897	1,104	15	...	31	...	...	...	...	...	3,047
1881.	...	2,804	143	118	...	3,065	2,053	998	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,065
1882.	...	2,325	189	497	...	3,011	1,534	1,168	31	168	...	62	48	...	...	...	3,011
1883.	...	3,494	311	454	...	4,259	1,701	2,279	41	121	...	64	49	...	...	...	4,259
1884.	...	3,002	409	573	...	3,984	2,089	1,460	54	157	...	77	125	...	...	...	3,984
1885.	87	2,841	351	631	...	3,910	2,014	1,528	37	129	...	81	89	19	9	...	3,910
1886.	79	3,468	316	851	...	4,714	2,345	1,792	20	268	...	71	152	34	30	...	4,714
1887.	82	4,705	383	1,099	2	6,271	3,037	2,667	21	223	...	9	100	142	28	...	6,271
1888.	36	5,214	320	1,104	...	6,674	3,164	2,730	35	49	...	156	115	12	23	...	6,674
1889.	...	4,229	589	1,253	...	6,071	3,837	2,023	...	...	...	32	24	...	4	113	6,071
*1890.	1	2,868	321	1,032	...	4,222	2,913	1,297	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	...	4,222
†1890.	...	3,824	428	1,376	...	5,629	3,884	1,729	...	...	...	...	...	...	16	...	5,629

* Up to 30th September.

† As estimated for the whole year, on the average of the first nine months.

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Protector of Chinese.

LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Table C.

Return shewing Number of Contracts entered into at Penang for Labour in the following Places:—

Year.	Penang.	Province Wellesley.	Malacca.	Dindings.	Singapore.	Total.	Perak.	Selangor.	Pahang.	Total.	Siamese Territories.	Dutch Possessions.	Miscellaneous.	Grand Total.
1881,	1,601	5,283	17	38	...	6,939	2,670	3	...	2,673	1,672	7,759	...	19,043
1882,	2,465	6,524	3	43	...	9,045	3,142	63	...	3,405	1,227	6,382	19	20,078
1883,	2,193	5,447	...	31	...	7,671	3,025	92	...	3,717	590	6,871	64	18,913
1884,	1,426	4,192	...	22	...	5,640	1,554	96	...	1,650	206	9,055	77	16,628
1885,	1,670	3,714	...	14	...	5,404	2,239	1	...	2,240	362	11,727	16	19,749
1886,	1,866	4,346	...	9	...	6,221	5,450	157	...	5,407	394	12,719	8	24,246
1887,	1,814	3,601	...	48	1	5,464	7,419	253	...	7,672	324	12,854	27	26,359
1888,	1,039	1,422	...	15	...	2,476	4,530	136	...	4,666	504	11,682	1	19,399
1889,	752	2,255	...	...	...	3,007	1,716	...	...	1,721	274	7,449	163	12,605
1890,	670	1,210	...	11	...	1,891	1,432	...	17	1,449	422	5,656	...	9,605

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Table D.

Return shewing the Work from 1st January to 30th September, 1890, of Chinese Sin-Kheh Depôts established under Ordinance IV of 1880.

Name of Depôt.	Number of Immigrants.									Remarks.
	Received into Depôts.	Left for Penang Depôts.	Left for Malacca.	Signed Contracts.	Absconded either when landing or from Depôts.	Released.	Redeemed by Relatives or Friends.	Returned to China.	Died.	
Tao Chew Kheh Chan, ...	144	130	...	4	8	1	1	...	...	Licensed from 1st Jan., 1890.
Nam Chhiong Thai, ...	479	...	...	479	...	...	...	...	...	Do.
Kwong Thai Vo, ...	374	188	...	190	4	...	2	...	...	Do.
Ban Tek Keng, ...	941	430	...	408	19	11	53	...	1	Do.
Sin Kwong Chhiong, ...	901	335	...	423	29	6	24	3	1	Do.
Kwong Hok Hoa, ...	1,047	975	...	46	13	7	5	1	...	Do.
Jong Siong Mui, ...	1,256	651	...	444	49	46	51	4	1	Do.
Kwong Ngien Lung, ...	2,754	932	...	1,574	97	...	43	15	4	Do.
Si Tek Li, ...	171	60	...	119	1	6	10	2	...	License issued, 4th Feb., 1890.
Kwong Hok Siong, ...	98	50	...	41	3	1	5	...	...	Do., 14th Feb., 1890.
Bun Hok Heng, ...	145	86	...	47	5	5	2	...	...	Do., 5th Mar., 1890.
Kwong Nam Lung, ...	931	659	...	210	25	3	19	...	...	Do., 9th April, 1890.
San Wo Sun, ...	282	233	...	25	8	4	7	4	...	Do., 18th June, 1890.
Kwong Hok Hoa Chan, ...	234	184	...	34	5	9	1	4	...	Do., do.
Sin Goan Li, ...	182	65	...	73	...	5	3	...	...	Do., 25th April, 1890.
Sam Wo Kong So, ...	181	...	...	179	...	...	2	...	...	Depôt closed, 3rd Mar., 1890.
Kwong Fat Sang, ...	209	...	...	208	1	...	...	...	...	Do., 13th Aug., 1890.
Ngí Sun, ...	273	41	...	217	8	4	23	3	1	Do., 1st May, 1890.
Ng Yun Kun, ...	154	...	...	141	...	...	13	...	...	Do., 11th Mar., 1890.
Kwong Ban Heng, ...	40	...	...	40	...	...	...	...	...	Do., 8th May, 1890.
Si Tek Heng, ...	35	12	...	38	1	...	1	...	...	Do., in January.
Ban Sun Koan, ...	197	...	...	191	2	18	4	...	...	Do., 7th Mar., 1890.
Kheng Chew Kong So, ...	520	27	10	358	...	...	125	...	...	Do., 8th May, 1890.
Total, ...	11,548	5,058	10	5,489	278	126	394	36	8	

Note.—In addition to the 11,548 Sin-Khehs who arrived, 44 signed contracts and proceeded direct to Tanjong Pagar, making the total number of Immigrants from China 11,592.

F. POWELL,
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LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Table E.

Return shewing the Coolies signed on from 1st January to 30th September, 1890, from Emigrant Depôts established under Ordinance III of 1877.

Name of Depôt.	Native Depôts.		Chinese Depôts.	
	No. signed on.	Remarks.	Name of Depôt.	No. signed on.
Hadji Mahomed Hus-sain's, ...	719	Licensed from 1st Jan., 1890.	Tao Chew Nam Chan,	257
Mahomed Salley's, ...	342	Do.	Jong Siong Mui Chau,	171
Rajeedin's, ...	245	Do.	Ban Tek Heng Chan	268
Abdul Manap's ...	334	Do.	Kwong Heng Thai	...
Seman's, ...	330	Do.	Chan, ...	988
Hadji Abdul Hamid's,	86	Do.	Ban Hin Lung,	675
Hadji Abdul Raman's,	113	Do.	Kwong Fat Lung, ...	163
Che Akip's, ...	239	Closed, 20th June, 1890.		
Che Akip & Hadji Idris',	205	License issued, 20th June, 1890.	Jong Ki,	28
			Si Tek Heng Chan,	1
Hadji Yahya's, ...	105	Depôt closed, 5th July, 1890.	Seng Li,	463
Saman's, ...	73	Do., 16th Sept., 1890.		
Total, ...	2,791		Total, ...	3,014

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LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Table F.

Return shewing the Immigration of Chinese Women and Children to Penang, during the following years:—

Year.	Total Number arrived.	Remained in Penang.	Left for other Ports.						Children.			
			Rangoon.	Perak.	Klang.	Sumatra.	Siam.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	Total Children arrived.	Remained in Penang.	Left for other Ports.
1881,	1,068	893	...	...	...	...	...	175	1,068	275	252	23
1882,	1,115	759	16	262	...	31	44	3	1,115	379	...	...
1883,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1884,	1,431	990	26	340	...	54	14	...	1,431	...	...	...
1885,	1,354	883	49	366	2	36	18	...	1,354	...	...	...
1886,	1,713	1,360	13	314	...	28	17	1	1,713	938	832	106
1887,	2,784	2,234	37	428	1	44	30	10	2,784	1,643	1,495	148
1888,	2,675	2,176	34	425	3	28	6	3	2,675	1,383	1,244	139
1889,	1,980	1,590	33	234	...	23	97	3	1,980	996	824	172
† 1890,	1,327	1,016	28	162	...	40	80	1	1,327	578	419	159
‡ 1890,	1,769	1,354	37	216	...	53	106	...	1,769	770	558	212

* No returns available.

† Up to the end of September.

‡ Estimate for the whole year based on the average of the first nine months.

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LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Table G.

Return shewing the Number of Chinese Immigrants arrived at Penang, during the years 1881 to 1890 inclusive.

Year.	Number of Immigrants examined on board or in Depôts.			Number of Artisans and Traders who left for:—							
	Passages paid.	Passages unpaid.	Total.	British Colonies.				Native States.			
				Rangoon.	Calcutta and Moulmein.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	Perak.	Selangor.	Total.	Siamese Territory.
1881,	21,262	20,794	42,056	522	93	...	615	666	3	669	191
1882,	28,111	17,011	45,122	1,340	213	...	1,553	3,661	5	3,666	1,609
1883,	31,733	16,197	47,930	977	137	...	1,114	5,074	1	5,075	1,210
1884,	23,059	15,181	38,240	738	122	1	861	960	3	963	277
1885,	25,108	17,034	42,142	370	3	...	373	790	...	790	238
1886,	33,727	23,459	57,186	758	...	...	758	2,201	8	2,209	837
1887,	42,444	22,904	65,348	1,134	...	...	1,134	2,640	...	2,640	750
1888,	46,626	16,186	62,812	891	...	...	891	8,320	...	8,320	2,445
1889,	35,190	9,251	44,441	389	153	...	542	2,696	...	2,696	1,584
* 1890,	22,135	5,473	27,608	215	142	...	357	1,760	...	1,760	1,019
† 1890,	29,513	7,297	36,810	286	189	...	475	4,346	...	4,346	1,358

* Up to the end of September.

† Estimate for the whole year based on the average of the first nine months.

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LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Table H.

Return shewing the Number of Chinese Immigrants who arrived in Penang, during the year 1890.

During the Months of	Total Number of Chinese Immi- grants arrived in Penang.	Unpaid Passengers received in Depôts.	Proceeded to														Nationality of Vessels.								
			Native States.		British Colonies		Dutch Colonies.				Siamese Territory.				British.	Dutch.	Italian.	Austrian.	Chinese Junks.	German.	Chinese.				
			Perak.	Larut.	Rangoon.	Calcutta.	Deli.	Padang.	Langkat.	Acheen.	Edie.	Trang.	Kopah.	Tongka.								Kulim.	Kedah.	Renong.	
January, ...	1,139	383	48	64	19	6	...	...	...	3	...	3	...	31	...	14	21	15	2	1	1	...	...	...	
February, ...	1,921	181	40	47	20	11	...	11	...	13	...	...	...	4	30	...	9	...	10	...	1	1	10	...	1
March, ...	5,698	749	144	163	36	28	...	26	10	70	11	47	112	30	...	53	...	...	...	1	1	10	...	...	...
April, ...	3,903	804	119	159	35	22	10	80	38	68	46	54	53	69	...	44	43	21	1	1	1	...	...	...	1
May, ...	3,687	831	103	116	25	22	29	47	28	37	26	33	20	41	...	26	43	16	2	1	1	1	...	...	...
June, ...	4,095	1,024	72	136	24	17	22	51	36	43	22	23	16	42	...	19	16	21	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
July, ...	2,589	527	90	131	19	15	10	31	17	18	10	28	9	48	...	20	27	17	2	1	...	...	...	...	1
August, ...	2,744	546	64	114	19	10	15	53	22	23	27	34	14	61	...	35	26	17	1	2	...	...	...	...	1
September, ...	1,832	428	58	92	18	11	8	29	9	13	7	19	9	33	12	17	16	16	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
October, ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
November, ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
December, ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total, ...	27,608	5,473	738	1,022	215	142	94	328	160	288	149	241	237	455	12	237	192	150	12	9	9	37	41	1	1

F. POWELL,
Protector of Chinese.

LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Table I.

Return shewing the Number of Women and Children who arrived in Penang, during the year 1890.

During the Months of	Number of Women.	Proceeded to													Number of Children.	Proceeded to														
		Perak.	Larut.	Calcutta.	Rangoon.	Kedah.	Tongka.	Trang.	Renong.	Kopah.	Padang.	Acheen.	Ede.	Deli.		Langkat.	Perak.	Larut.	Calcutta.	Rangoon.	Kedah.	Tongka.	Kopah.	Trang.	Renong.	Padang.	Acheen.	Ede.	Deli.	Langkat.
January, ...	126	4	3	...	3	1	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	46	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
February, ...	45	1	4	...	3	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	41	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
March, ...	146	7	11	...	4	4	5	2	3	1	3	1	...	...	93	6	3	1	4	4	5	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	
April, ...	122	13	22	...	4	3	9	3	1	...	3	1	...	...	78	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	
May, ...	210	9	18	...	2	3	9	1	2	...	2	...	...	...	106	5	6	1	3	3	3	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	
June, ...	213	5	15	...	4	2	8	1	2	1	2	1	...	...	109	5	6	1	3	3	3	1	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	
July, ...	155	6	9	1	4	2	3	6	2	...	...	...	...	...	52	1	1	...	2	3	3	1	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	
August, ...	196	9	18	...	1	2	4	5	...	...	2	1	1	...	65	2	4	...	2	5	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
September, ...	114	3	5	...	3	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	41	1	2	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
October, ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
November, ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
December, ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Total, ...	1,327	57	105	1	28	17	33	21	4	5	5	6	6	12	11	578	23	27	3	17	10	29	5	15	2	3	3	5	7	10

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LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Table J.

Return shewing the Number of Contracts signed at Penang during the year 1890 for Labour in the following Places.

During the Months of	Straits Settlements.		British Colony.		Native States.				Siamese Territory.						Dutch Colonies.										Stamp Fees.										
	Penang.	Province Wellesley.	British North Borneo.	Pangkor.	Perak.	Larut.	Kuan.	Parit Buntar.	Taiping.	Pahang.	Renong.	Tongkah.	Kedah.	Trang.	Kulim.	Ulu.	Kopah.	Assahan.	Deli.	Langkat.	Padang.	Kwaleo.	Acheen.	Batu Baira.		Pagoerawan.	Bedjee.	Edie.	Bila.	Medan.	Obleh.	Serdang.	Bobongan.	Total.	
January,	64	68	16	11	34	1	...	4	...	...	5	4	...	...	...	...	...	127	206	19	64	38	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	778	567 00
February,	106	10	33	11	72	3	6	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	182	91	76	22	38	2	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	602	457 50
March,	90	106	27	...	72	75	6	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	113	117	115	43	10	8	75	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,023	652 50
April,	71	133	23	...	84	9	10	19	4	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	97	89	153	19	27	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	818	550 25
May,	54	174	18	...	220	68	...	31	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	15	41	328	32	26	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,048	616 75
June,	50	136	...	...	220	13	33	38	...	...	102	...	...	...	...	...	...	37	41	253	13	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,100	607 25
July,	63	130	...	...	72	7	40	12	...	...	13	4	...	...	...	...	...	33	58	103	47	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	743	497 00
August,	38	83	...	...	51	7	24	9	...	...	89	...	...	...	...	...	...	69	50	104	105	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	644	468 00
September,	36	73	...	...	22	2	21	7	...	...	17	10	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	32	141	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	579	445 50
October,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
November,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
December,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total,...	572	1,003	192	11	778	183	140	143	9	17	234	18	22	34	2	1	1	691	793	1,225	486	190	54	124	78	69	4	27	3	1	125	105	7,335	4,951 75	

F. POWELL,
Protector of Chinese.

APPENDIX EE.

AGREEMENTS MADE IN JAVA BY EMIGRANTS TO REPAY ADVANCES.

TANJONG BALAI, ASAHAN,
October 5th, 1890.

On the above-mentioned date we people of Batavia and Java, namely, AKIB, ALLI 1st, ALLI 2nd, SEEMIN and KECHER, agree to be responsible for the sum of \$65 which we have received in cash from Haji MEASIN, and also agree to follow Haji MEASIN to Singapore or anywhere else, and when we arrive at Singapore we agree to sign an agreement to go to the Island of Borneo, and the above-mentioned amount shall be re-paid to Haji MEASIN soon after the agreement is signed. If we like to settle the amount without signing any agreement we can pay the amount together with the usual commission paid by the mercantile offices. In witness thereof we set our respective marks in the presence of respectable men.

The mark of	x	AKIB, indebted	\$13.00
"	"	x ALLI 1st, indebted	13.00
"	"	x ALLI 2nd	13.00
"	"	x SEEMIN,	13.00
"	"	x KECHER,	13.00

Total, \$65.00

Should any of us five run away the persons who are left behind agree to pay the amount in full.

Witness,
OTHMAN.

We, KASAN and SERKAM, agree respectively to pay the amount borrowed by us, namely, \$42 subject to the agreement as above-mentioned.

We set our respective marks below.

The mark of	x	KASAN, borrowed	\$21.00
"	"	x SERKAM,	21.00

Total, 42.00

We, KASIM and JAEDIN, agree respectively to pay the amount of \$26 borrowed by us, subject to the agreement stated above.

We set our respective marks below.

The mark of	x	KASIM, borrowed	\$13.00
"	"	x JAEDIN,	13.00

Total, 26.00

Witness,
OTHMAN.

BANJAR MASIN,
September 5th, 1890.

We, the undersigned eight persons, namely, CHAHUT, AMAH, ONONG, ALYONDIN, TEUNAH, TERAHEE, ENDAHEE and SLAMAH, have duly borrowed from Haji JALIL the sum of f250 = \$86 in cash. We jointly and severally promise to pay the amount to Haji JALIL when we arrive in Singapore.

If any of us should die or run away the persons who are left will be responsible for the payment. If we are unable to pay the amount to Haji JALIL's Agent in Singapore, we agree to sign any agreement for employment, and he may recover the amount mentioned in this document from our wages.

We acknowledge that the articles of agreement mentioned above are true. We set our respective marks in the presence of two persons.

Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
CHAHUT.	AMAH.	ONONG.	ALYONDIN.	TEUNAH.	TERAHEE.	ENDAHEE.	SLAMAH.

Witness.	Witness.
Mark of	Mark of
x	x
AMBADA.	Haji AHMED.

List of persons who have borrowed money for paying their freight and expenses as follows :—

No.	Names.	Freight.	Expenses.	Grand Total.
		\$ c.	\$ Rs. cts.	\$ Rs. cts.
1	Chahut, ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 35
2	Amah (Girl), ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 25
3	Onong, ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 25
4	Alyondin, ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 25
5	Teunah (Girl), ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 25
6	Terahee, ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 25
7	Endahee, ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 25
8	Slamah, ...	7 00	3 2 25	10 2 25
		56 00	30 1	
			Se Kechil,	1 50
			Total,...	86 2 50

SAMARANG,

3rd Shaaban, 1307 = 25th March, 1890.

We the undersigned have duly borrowed from RAJEEDIN of Singapore the sum of Seventeen Mexican Dollars each, and promise to pay in Singapore five days after arrival.

	\$ c.
1 Haji Shafehec (of Kandal), ...	17 00
2 Abduraman, ...	17 00
3 Saree, ...	17 00
4 Husain, ...	17 00
5 Seruman, ...	17 00
6 Pa Rusan, ...	17 00
7 Ambo Rusan, ...	17 00
8 Yousope, ...	17 00
9 Abdulhim, ...	17 00
10 Haji Arshat, ...	17 00
11 Seekam, ...	17 00
12 Ambo Seenah, ...	17 00
13 Ambo Sajeerah, ...	17 00
14 Seram, ...	17 00
15 Sruan (Youth), ...	8 50
16 Merhadi, ,, ...	8 50
17 Kesbee, ,, ...	8 50
18 Ngepee, ,, ...	8 50
19 Rusah, ,, ...	8 50
20 Ngah Saerah (Youth), ...	8 50
21 Chaman, (of Kalongan), ...	17 00
22 Sheraman, ,, ...	17 00

BANJAR MASIN,
23rd September, 1890.

We, the undermentioned twenty-one persons, have jointly and severally borrowed from Haji KETEE ABDULRANI the sum of \$105 in cash, which amount we have paid to UNG LIM TEE the Agency as freight for one trip to Singapore by the S. S. *Banjar*. Our names are as follows :—

AHMET, MATAILL, MEIL, TWA, PA'SHAR, KASIR, KENCHEE, DAUD, KECHIL, YOUSOPE, CHUKANG, DOLAH, KENTUHEE, MAEL, SAHEED, BUASAN, URIP, HASAN, KASAN, BAOK and AMAN.

When we arrive in Singapore we will remain in the house of Shaik MAHOMED SALEH BIN ABDULLAH, who is the Agent of the said Haji KETEE ABDULRANI, and the said amount shall be paid to him.

If any of us should die or run away the persons who are left behind will be responsible for the payment of the said amount. If we are unable to pay the amount demanded, we agree to sign any agreement for employment made by the creditor for the recovery of the amount mentioned in this agreement.

We acknowledge that the articles of the above-mentioned agreement are considered to be true, and it was made in the presence of two witnesses.

Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
AHMET.	MATAILL.	MEIL.	TWA.	PA'SHAR.	KASIR.	KENCHEE.	DAUD.
Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
KECHIL.	YOUSOPE.	CHUKANG.	DOLAH.	KENTUHEE.	MAEL.	SAHEED.	
Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	Mark of	
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
BUASAN.	URIP.	HASAN.	KASAN.	BAOK.	AMAN.		

Witness.

Mark of

x

DANDAN.

Witness.

Mark of

x

AMAT.

APPENDIX F.

NOTE EMBODYING THE CONCLUSIONS ARRIVED AT IN THE
CONFERENCE HELD AT OOTACAMUND RESPECTING
EMIGRATION TO THE STRAITS.

Re-printed for the Labour Commission, 1890.

It is proposed that at all ports within the Madras Presidency, from which there may be any passenger traffic, a register should be kept of all Native passengers who may leave them for the Straits Settlements.

2. In the case of those who may be leaving for the purpose of labouring for hire, the register should contain the following particulars :—The name of the intending labourer; the name of his or her father; his or her age; sex; the name of his or her village and district; his or her profession; his or her distinguishing marks; whether free and unassisted or engaged by some agent; the name of the agent; amount of advances received by the intending labourer from this agent; and remarks. The object of entering the advances in this register is to afford evidence for the Straits of the fact of advances having been given, and not for that of interfering with the free current of emigration under a system of advances.

3. In the case of native passengers not going for labour only, the first six columns would be filled up; and this would entail no more vexation than the entry of a European on the books of a Steamer Company.

4. A copy of this register should be sent by the registering officer, through the Captain or Nakhoda of the vessel conveying these passengers, and, by Post, to the Protector of Emigrants (or other official discharging the same functions) at the port of destination, who should personally satisfy himself that this list is correct, enter its contents in a register to be kept by him for this purpose, and transmit the original copy, with such remarks as he may find it necessary to make, to the Emigration Commissioner, or proposed Head of the Madras Emigration Department.*

5. At the port of embarkation, the officer, whose duty it will be to register intending passengers, will distinctly explain to each individual passenger that no contract or engagement will be binding, unless made under the Straits Settlements Ordinance, before the proper officer, and a certificate to the effect that this explanation has been thus duly made will be entered in every copy of the register which he will furnish. At Madras, Pondicherry, and Karrikal, this duty will be performed by the Protector of Emigrants and by the two Consular Agents, and at other ports by such official as the Madras Government may direct. A fee of two annas or other small fee will be paid for each person thus registered; and a further fee of ten per cent. by any person who may require the registration of an advance.†

† It was considered by His Excellency in Council that it would probably be desirable not to enforce this fee.

6. With regard to the accommodation and food of these Native passengers on board ship, the provisions of the Native Passenger Ships Act (VIII of 1876), subject to such local modifications as the Government of Madras may see fit to introduce, appear to offer a sufficient guarantee both for their comfort and their health.

7. It seems, however, necessary that an Emigration Department, specially devoted to the subject of emigration, should be formed, as far as possible, on the existing basis, and that the Emigration Commissioner, or executive head of this department, or any superior official to whom he may be subordinate, should have power to visit, from time to time, any of the ports from which emigration is conducted, to travel into any district in which labourers are recruited, and to bring directly to the notice of Government any abuses that may seem to him to require amendment. He

* In order to minimise, as far as possible, the misrepresentations of the Agents who may recruit labourers, and to obviate the evils to which the advance system is liable, it will be the duty of the Emigration Commissioner to draw up a succinct account of the condition and prospects of labour of the Straits Settlements, which will be translated into Tamil, and given such circulation as Government may direct for the information of the people.

should also be authorised to go over to the Straits Settlements or any contiguous territory, when it may be necessary, to inspect any or all of the estates there, to examine, under such regulations as may be laid down by the Straits Government, the general condition of the labourers on these estates, and to report, both to the Government of Madras and to the Straits Administration, such facts as may appear to him to require notice.

8. The question remains whether any system of licensing recruiters should be maintained. It is desirable that the agents sent over by the planters in the Straits Settlements to recruit labourers here should be approved and registered by the Emigration Commissioner, and a descriptive roll of each such person sent to the district in which he proposes to exercise his calling. This is necessary not only to ensure the respectability of recruiters, but also to enable the Police to distinguish between Straits recruiters and crimpers for places to which emigration might not be permitted.

9. The above proposals conclude the executive precautions that will, when Act V of 1877 is repealed, be necessary on the Madras side of the Bay of Bengal. It is understood, however, that the consent to the repeal of Act V of 1877 is only accorded on the condition that the main principles of the suggested Straits Ordinance Bill are fully maintained with respect to coolies who may enter a formal contract under this Ordinance, and who will, hereafter, be referred to in this Note as "indentured labourers."

10. It will thus be necessary to divide, in the Straits Ordinance, all Native labourers into two classes—indentured labourers and free labourers.

11. The main reform now proposed is to remove restrictions in the case of the first class (that is, indentured labourers) on the Madras side; and to extend protection in the case of the second class (or free labourers) on the Straits side. It will be optional to the planter or engager of Indian labour on the Straits side to bring the labourer under the Ordinance contract or not; but, as proposed in the present Bill, no contract will be binding (that is, every contract will be voidable) if the planter does not bring the labourer under the Ordinance contract. If he does bring him under the Ordinance contract, he will be subject to the same class of supervision and restriction as now proposed in the Ordinance Bill; such modifications, of course, being made as the suggested changes may necessitate. If he does not bring him under the Ordinance contract, the labourers, or estates upon which they are engaged, will, notwithstanding, be subject to inspection. This is new. Hitherto, labourers not engaged under a formal contract have been subject to no inspection. Neither the Indian nor Straits Government have had any means of ascertaining what the fate or treatment of such labourers has been.*

12. It is not proposed that any vexatious system of inspection should be exercised in the case of free labourers; but merely that provision should be introduced into the Ordinance, which will enable officers authorised to inspect estates and inquire into the following circumstances:—(1) whether proper medical treatment is always available; (2) whether the labourers are properly housed in a locality which is sufficiently healthy and supplied with good water; and (3) whether the general treatment of these free labourers is satisfactory. Reports on the condition of all labourers on each estate will be periodically submitted to Government; and if it is found that abuses are not unfrequent, it will then be for the Government of India or Madras to consider whether it may not be necessary to impose more stringent restrictions on the employment of free labour. It will, perhaps, be desirable to include in the Ordinance some rules as regards the medical treatment and housing of free labourers; and also to give the Straits Government the power of forbidding the employment of free labour on any estates on which gross abuses may be found to exist. The insertion of provisions of this kind would do much to prevent the possibility of the occasion arising on which the Government of India might consider it its duty to interfere.

13. It is impossible that the Madras Government can of itself draw up a revised Ordinance for the consideration of the Straits Government; all that can be done by them now is to offer to repeal Act V of 1877, if the Straits Government are willing to accept the principles laid down in this Note. If the Straits Government can do so, it will then be necessary for that Government to make the requisite modifications in the Ordinance. It will save much delay and friction if the revised Ordinance can

* The Straits Protector of Immigrants reported, in March, 1881, "that 19,443 natives of the Madras Presidency have arrived in Penang, not under the Ordinance, since 1876, against 4,494, under the Ordinance, and it is utterly impossible to give any account of these (in round numbers) 20,000 natives."

be drawn up in consultation with Mr. BUCK and Major FISCHER. It will be extremely desirable, on the one hand, that any provisions included now, for the first time, in the revised Ordinance should be thoroughly understood by some Madras official who can explain the object of them to his own Government; and on the other, that the advice of an officer acquainted with the details of emigration on the Madras side should be available. It will also be no small advantage that Major FISCHER should obtain some personal and practical knowledge of the circumstances connected with emigration in the Straits Settlements.

14. It seems desirable that some power should be given to the Madras Authorities to detain any minors or females brought up for registration, whenever there might be any suspicion that they are being abducted from their proper guardians. If the Madras Government desire, a provision to this effect might be included in the General Emigration Act.

15. The above Note has been drawn up by Major FISCHER and myself in accordance with instructions received from the Government of Madras.

E. C. BUCK,
Secretary to the Government of India,
Rev. and Agri. Department.

OOTACAMUND,
6th June, 1883.

OFFICIAL NOTE BY THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF
INDIA, REVENUE AND AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, ON
EXTENSION OF INDIAN IMMIGRATION TO PERAK,
SELANGOR AND SUNGEI UJONG.

THE present position appears to be this: Section 70 of Ordinance No. 1 of 1876 permits His Excellency the Governor of the Straits Settlements to extend that Ordinance to any Protected Native States. But the Secretary of State had hitherto refused to allow Indian Emigrants to be sent there.*

His Excellency Sir F. A. WELD appealed to the Secretary of State to remove this veto in a letter † containing forcible arguments in favour of allowing the introduction of Indian Immigrants. His Excellency's despatch was accompanied by a letter from Sir HUGH (then Mr.) LOW, Resident of Perak, and a note by the Protector of Immigrants.

The Secretary of State then (in his despatch, marked Emigration, of the 12th August, 1881) withdrew his veto on condition—

(1) That all the precautions suggested by the Governor and the Protector of Immigrants were observed.

(2) That the Government of India assented.

The Government of India assented with respect to Perak, in regard to which Protected Native State Mr. HUGH LOW's letter shewed that ample protection was afforded by the Magisterial system adopted in the State, but suspended its assent with respect to Selangor and Sungei Ujong in regard to which no such information was forthcoming.

It suggested that the Fiji Ordinance might form a useful basis to the Perak authorities in drawing up rules for immigration.

Here I think that section 70 of Ordinance No. 1 of 1876 was overlooked. All that is necessary, apparently, to set on foot immigration to Perak is to extend Ordinance No. 1 of 1876 by a Notification in accordance with section 70. I do not think any further action is required. As matters stand, open immigration has not commenced in Perak, though a large number of Indians, labourers and others, are gradually transferring themselves, partly *via* Province Wellesley and partly *via* Port Matang, to that State. The two roads—from Thaipeng to the Port and from Thaipeng to Province Wellesley—are lined with the huts of Indians.

If His Excellency the Governor and the Resident of Perak desire to add any of the Fiji rules to the Ordinance, it is, I imagine, quite within their province to do so without consulting the Government of India in the first instance. The Secretary of State will object to nothing which is not inconsistent with the Secretary of State's despatch. With regard to the other two States—Selangor and Sungei Ujong—it will be observed that the Government of India's hesitation was due entirely to a want of information as to the character of those two States. That information I have now obtained, and as it removes all cause for further hesitation, I feel myself justified in guaranteeing the assent of the Government of India to Indian Immigration to

* I have not seen this correspondence on this part of the subject.

† No. 172, of the 5th May, 1881.

those States. I see no reason, therefore, why, if His Excellency the Governor is satisfied with this assurance, section 70 may not be applied to those States as well as to Perak at once.

It will, of course, be understood that the assent of the Government of India to immigration to Selangor and Sungei Ujong involves the precautions required by the Secretary of State. With respect to these precautions, I may perhaps be permitted to give my opinion, that they need only be observed *ad literam* until the new Ordinance is accepted and promulgated. But, in any case, I imagine that the Madras Government, as well as the Government of India, would wish that the Officer nominated by Madras should have the power of ascertaining the condition of the coolies in the Native States. As far as I can ascertain, the point at which investigation by an Official conversant with the habits and language of the natives is chiefly required, is where the relations between Tamil overseers and Tamil coolies are not what they ought to be. (An Indian Overseer will, for instance, make a cooly give him part of his pay, and report him for other misconduct if he does not do so, and so on.) Throughout all Colonies, this is the most frequent cause of oppression. I need not, however, pursue this part of the subject further here.

The main object of this Note is to explain to His Excellency the Governor that if His Excellency is willing to accept the assurance to which I have given expression in this Note, there appears to be no reason why coolies should not at once be taken to Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong.

26th July, 1883.

E. C. BUCK.

NOTE EMBODYING THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH EMIGRATION
FROM INDIA TO THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS
WILL HEREAFTER BE CONDUCTED.

1. The proposals of the Government of India, made in conjunction with the Government of Madras, are summarised in a Note dated Ootacamund, 6th June, 1883, and to these the Government of the Straits Settlements have no objection to offer, expressing, however, their confidence that the system of registration of all passengers leaving Madras for the Straits will be so managed as to cause the minimum of inconvenience to free native passengers.

2. It is believed that this registration—which should be carried out (free of charge) by an official sent for that purpose on board a vessel clearing for the Straits—will cause little trouble to those passengers who, though travelling in a vessel which conveys cooly-emigrants, are not themselves proceeding to the Straits for labour. They will be required to give their names and a few particulars. Similarly, every desire is entertained on the part of the Government of the Colony to avoid troublesome restrictions in regard to this class of passengers on the arrival of the vessel in port. Provisions will be inserted in the new Ordinance freeing first and second class passengers, their servants, and all “certificated immigrants” from all restrictions on arrival. A Steamer Company which conveys cooly-emigrants to the Straits must, of course, submit to all necessary formalities in respect of all native passengers, except those just enumerated; but after all this need give very little trouble.

3. The Government of the Straits is willing that the Head of the Emigration Department in Madras shall, at any time, visit the Colony, and make all examinations and enquiries on estates, &c., which may appear necessary. This Officer should, as proposed by the Government of Madras, act under the regulations of, or in concurrence with, the Colonial Government, to whom, as well as to his own Government, he would report.

4. Any Recruiter sent from the Colony to the Madras Presidency to engage coolies, will, on production of a written certificate from the Indian Immigration Agent in the Colony that he is a person to whom a license to recruit may properly be given, be furnished with a license to recruit upon the usual terms.

5. The most important change which will result from the repeal of Indian Act No. V of 1877 is in the legal status of the cooly at the time when he reaches the Colony. Instead of arriving already bound by the terms of a written contract drawn up in India, he will land in the Colony as a debtor to the extent of the sums paid for his passage and advanced to him on the other side of the Bay of Bengal, for the repayment of which sums he will be under a verbal engagement to give his labour.

6. Under these circumstances, it is agreed that the Straits Ordinance must include provisions giving effect to the following principles:—

- I. That coolies who arrive, under advances, for labour in the Straits, may be detained in licensed depôts for a period not exceeding seven days.
- II. That a cooly who, after his arrival in the Colony, and before signing a contract to labour, pays his debt, shall be absolutely free of all express or implied engagements to enter into a contract to labour.
- III. That a cooly under advances who attempts to evade his obligations by escaping from the depôt, or by refusing to contract for labour for the employer at whose expense he has been brought from India, may be punished.

7. In order to prevent the transfer of a cooly from agent to agent by a real or fictitious payment of the debt, the amount being swelled possibly on each transaction by charges, and in order to protect the cooly generally from excessive charges, it becomes necessary to fix definitely the maximum sum which may be entered in a labour contract, as the debt which the cooly has to work off. This should be fixed for the present at \$12, but power should be given by the Ordinance to the Governor of the Straits Settlements to alter this from time to time according as the facilities of communication and the circumstances of recruiting make labour cheap or otherwise.

8. There is in force in the Straits Settlements a local Ordinance (No. I of 1882, “Labour Contracts Ordinance”) by which the relations between employer and labourer are governed. Coolies who enter into a contract in the Colony for service are subject to the provisions of this law, and, but for the fact that the Indian Act No. V of 1877 obliges intending cooly-emigrants to execute the labour-contract in India before departure, it would apply to this class of labourers among others.

With the repeal of Act No. V of 1877, therefore, and in the absence of special legislation in the Straits, the newly-arrived cooly would be subject to the general labour law of the Colony as embodied in “The Labour Contracts Ordinance.”

9. In undertaking special legislation to obviate such a result, it becomes necessary to consider how far Ordinance No. I of 1882 shall be declared to be inapplicable to Indian Immigrants in the Straits Settlements. In the Ootacamund Note, already referred to, the terms of which are accepted generally by the Straits Government, a desire is expressed to include “free labourers” employed by planters on estates, in the general scheme of supervision and protection adopted for the benefit of indentured immigrants.

10. It must, therefore, be declared very clearly what natives of India must be employed by a planter under the future Immigration Ordinance, and not otherwise, and what (if any) natives of India may be employed by him under the general law of the Colony. There is already a large resident population of Indians in the Straits Settlements, and it does not appear from the Note that it is proposed to interfere with the power of free labourers to contract verbally or in writing to labour in trades or callings not agricultural.

11. It is not proposed that all contracts for labour of any kind entered into hereafter by an Indian Immigrant with an Employer shall be made under the future Immigration Ordinance, and not otherwise. In a Colony where there is a free resident population of Indians, many born in and subjects of the Colony, it will be often difficult, if not impossible, to say who is an immigrant and who is not.

12. It would not be enough to declare that the Indian Immigrant during his first contract term of service shall be subject to the special Ordinance, while he shall be at liberty afterwards to contract under the general labour law, for this would open a door to evasion of the special Ordinance by fictitious first-contracts for short terms, followed by contracts for further terms under the general law.

13. Some employers of cooly-labour in the Straits are opposed to applying the same labour law to coolies freshly arrived from India as to those who, having served their apprenticeship on an estate as indentured immigrants, are willing to renew their engagements for a further term. They would prefer to contract with the latter under the general labour law (Ordinance No. I of 1882), and assert that such an arrangement is in accordance with the expressed inclination of this class of labourer. But, even if the Government of India were willing to yield a point so much insisted upon in the Ootacamund Note, it is doubtful whether the distinction between the two classes of agricultural labourers could be rigidly maintained in practice.

14. If this view of the planters could be accepted, it would be necessary to define clearly what labourer should be bound by no contract other than the Ordinance contract, and what labourer should have power to bind himself by a contract under the general law.

15. It is not easy to see where the line is to be drawn. It must be remembered that the Ordinance contract is to be executed in future in the Colony and not in India. Suppose that it were declared by law that the cooly who is working off his first contract for the repayment of his passage and advances is a man who must be bound by the Ordinance contract and no other, while he who renews may contract under the general law; or enact that the cooly during the three first years of his residence in the Colony shall be bound by the Ordinance contract only, while an Immigrant after three years' residence in the Colony may contract under the general law; it must be manifest that, in either of these cases, it would be easy, by fraud or collusion, to manufacture, so to speak, old coolies out of new ones, and to evade the new Ordinance with little danger of detection.

16. Apart from the difficulty which exists of defining "old coolies" and "new coolies" for legislative purposes, there are many reasons why the simple distinction of agricultural labourers and non-agricultural labourers should be adhered to in the new Ordinance. The incidents of service of all coolies on the estate should be similar. There can be no good reason why one body of Indian coolies should live under proper sanitary regulations, while others in adjoining houses on the same estate should be under no control in this respect. Nor does there appear to be any logical explanation of the fact that at present an employer of coolies working off their first advances is bound to supply hospital accommodation and medicines, while as regards others also working under advances, but under local contracts, he is under no such obligation.

17. Finally, as regards the inclination of the cooly himself, it is difficult, after comparing his liability to punishment for breach of contract under Ordinance I of 1882, with the liability attaching to similar offences under the Immigration Ordinance, to understand that any reasonable supposition can be entertained, that he will be in any worse position under the latter than under the former. On this point, it is sufficient to say that the labourer whose contract makes him subject to "The Labour Contracts Ordinance" may, if he absconds, be arrested without warrant, and may, under some circumstances, be imprisoned for six months for breach of contract. He may also be punished by a fine of twenty-five dollars or thirty days' rigorous imprisonment for disobedience to lawful orders, negligence of duty, carelessness in taking care of property, or other misconduct, whereas the scale of punishment under the Immigration Ordinance is decidedly lighter.

18. The object sought by the Government of India is to subject all Indian Immigrants working on estates or in large gangs to inspection, and to ensure them good treatment. There is no proposal to affect by legislation the Immigrants who come as Colonists or for employment in trades, &c. This principle being accepted, the native of India in the Straits Settlements, as regards his liability under a contract to labour, may be classified as follows:—

19. I.—Immigrants who arrive in the Colony under advances, intending to labour on an estate where agricultural labourers are employed.—Immigrants of this class will not be legally bound by any contract except the new Ordinance contract.
- II.—Immigrants who arrive in the Colony not under advances, and those already in the Colony, who engage to labour on an estate where agricultural labourers are employed.—Immigrants of this class will not be legally bound by any contract except the new Ordinance contract.
- III.—Immigrants who arrive in the Colony under advances, intending to contract for their repayment, by labour in trades, service, menial employment, &c.—Immigrants of this class may be legally bound by any contract enforceable under the general law of the Colony.
- IV.—Immigrants who arrive in the Colony under no advances, and those already in the Colony, who enter into a contract for labour in trades, service, menial employment, &c.—Immigrants of this class may be legally bound by any contract enforceable under the general law of the Colony.

20. A question arises whether at the time of the coming into operation of the new Immigration Ordinance, the persons described above in Class II, many of whom

are now employed under contract intended to be enforced under the general labour law (Ordinance I of 1882), shall or shall not be held to be free from such contracts, as it is proposed that such persons shall in future be employed under the Ordinance contract and not otherwise. It will probably be sufficient to declare in the Ordinance that, for the purposes of the Ordinance, such contracts shall be held to have the same effect as if they had been made in accordance with it.

21. It seems advisable that, having regard to the complete alteration of the policy regarding emigration from India to the Straits and the substitution of general superintendence of all indentured Indian labourers in the Colony for the special supervision of a particular class, the title of "Protector of Immigrants," which has hitherto been given to the Officer charged with the latter duty, should be exchanged for one more in consonance with the altered situation. "Indian Immigration Agent" would appear to be a more suitable title for the officer to be employed in future. He should, as already agreed, be appointed by the Madras Government, while receiving his salary and all official instructions from the Colonial Government.*

* His Excellency the Governor is of opinion that it will be advisable that this Officer shall be appointed by the Colonial Government.

22. A draft Ordinance has been drawn up by Mr. BUCK and Major FISCHER in communication with Mr. MAXWELL. Though admittedly incomplete in details, it is believed that it sufficiently embodies the principles already laid down in this Note, as those held by the Governments of India, Madras and the Straits.

23. Certain features in it which are new, and certain important points which remain for decision by the Legislature of the Colony, require notice here.

24. *Certificated Immigrants.*—It is submitted to be a matter of absolute necessity to prevent, by all possible means, the emigration of natives of British India of the labouring class to the Colonies of other European powers with whom the Government of India has no Convention, or to neighbouring Asiatic States not under British protection.

25. This does not apply to persons not of the labouring class, such as traders, shop-keepers, &c., and it is desired to afford all such persons due facility for escaping the restrictions to be placed by law upon emigration from the Colony.

26. Masters of vessels leaving the ports of the Colony cannot be expected to be able to distinguish between Indians of the labouring class, who are not entitled to proceed to neighbouring Colonies and States, and those of the trading class who are. This must be the duty of the Indian Immigration Agent in the Straits and of the Emigration Department in Madras.

27. It is proposed that it shall be made penal in the Colony for any native of British India to leave the Colony for any place other than British India, unless he be provided with a certificate stating that he is not a labourer or of the labouring class. This certificate may be issued, free of charge, either by the Emigration Department at the ports in the Madras Presidency, or by the Indian Immigration Agent's Department in the Colony, and will be in force for one year, after which it may be renewed.

28. The holder of such a certificate is free to go where he likes, and, if he travels from India to the Straits in a vessel which conveys labourers, he will be entitled to leave the vessel after her arrival in port without being subjected to any of the formalities necessary in the case of other native passengers.

29. Penal provisions will be necessary to prescribe the punishment to which the master of a vessel and other persons shipping uncertified immigrants for conveyance from the Colony shall be liable, and executive arrangements will have to be made to ensure that the object of legislation in this respect will not be defeated.

30. The object of the certificate system is twofold: firstly, to prevent the Ordinance interfering with the liberty of the native of India who is able to take care of himself; secondly, to enable Port Officials and Ship Captains to be certain at once what passengers may be taken on board without breach of the Ordinance. At present it is impossible for any one to decide with certainty whether a native of India is being taken away for the purpose of labour or not.

ORDINANCE CONTRACTS.

31. *Hours of Work.*—It is proposed to fix the time which shall constitute a day's work in the case of an indentured labourer (called in the Ordinance a "statute immigrant") at nine hours' actual work. This was recommended in the Report of the Commission of 1881. (See Report, para. 64.)

32. *Period of Contract.*—The maximum term now permitted by law to be inserted in the Ordinance contract is three years. This is also the maximum term for which a contract may be made under "The Labour Contracts Ordinance" of 1882, though it would appear that at one time the Secretary of State for the Colonies held the opinion that one year was the maximum term which should be legally enforced under that enactment.

33. Previous to 1876, the customary term for which Indian coolies engaged for labour in the Straits was two years, but as the Indian Act V of 1877 imposed restrictions which added to the expenses of the planter in procuring labour, the Government of India agreed to the raising of the term of service to three years. These restrictions are now to be removed, and with them the additional expenses of the planter will naturally cease. It is believed that the sum of twelve dollars which has been provisionally fixed as the maximum sum which any statute-labourer shall be required by his contract to repay, is in excess of what will be the real cost incidental on his transfer from India to the Straits, and if, as has been alleged, the Recruiter's fee may be susceptible of reduction from Rs. 17 (the present charge) to one dollar, the sum above stated as the maximum may be reduced by one-half.

34. It is a question, therefore, whether any reasonable grounds can be shown for maintaining the period of contract at three years, or whether it should not be reduced in the new Ordinance to two years. Even the maximum sum of \$12 should be repaid by the labourer in one year or little more, and it is difficult to see why, in that case, he should be bound for a further term of two years. This is a point which it has been felt should be left to the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements to decide, the arguments in favour of the reduced term being merely summarised here.

35. *Stoppage of pay.*—In working the present Immigration Ordinance (I of 1886), it has been felt to be a hardship both to employer and labourer that the former has no power to stop the pay of the latter for a trifling offence without the intervention of the Magistrate. It is fully admitted on all sides that to take coolies through the district for miles as prisoners, because certain petty offences cannot be dealt with summarily by the employer, is a serious evil. It is considered expedient that in the new Ordinance the employer shall have power to stop from the wages of a cooly half a day's pay, as a punishment for an act of disobedience, and that for absence and neglect to work, the wages of the defaulting labourer may be stopped by the employer for the period of such absence or neglect. This practice has been adopted in the Inland Emigration Act (Assam), and it is proposed that the abuse of authority by the employer shall be guarded against by means similar to those prescribed in that enactment, namely, that the employer shall forward to the Indian Immigration Agent monthly a return shewing all stoppages, and that these shall be subject to the confirmation of the latter after enquiry.

36. It is considered that (see Report of Commission, 1881, para. 139) it will be sufficient to require the Indian Immigration Agent to visit every estate once in three months, authorising him, however, to visit any estate at lesser intervals should he deem it advisable. The returns of stoppages will afford him a good guide for his conduct in this respect.

37. It is not proposed that the power of the employer to stop the pay of a cooly shall, in any way, deprive him of his right to prosecute the man for his offence at a Police Court, if he prefers to take that course.

Remittances to India.—It is desirable that facilities shall be given to Immigrants to remit money to their friends in India. Experience having proved that in India there is great difficulty sometimes in tracing an addressee by name, unless the name of his village be correctly given, it is considered that in cases where money is remitted by means of Post Office Orders the identification of the recipient would be greatly facilitated if the Post Office should ascertain and enter, where possible, the registered number of the cooly who remits. This number will refer to a register kept at the port in India from which the Immigrant originally embarked, and should it be found that the name of the man's village is incorrectly written in the address of the letter enclosing the order, a reference to the register in India will always disclose the real name of the locality intended to be designated.

39. *Native States.*—All objection to the engagement of Indian coolies for labour on estates in Native States on the Malay Peninsula in which there is a Resident subordinate to the Governor of the Straits Settlements will be withdrawn by the Government of India.

40. Indian labour may be introduced in these States in future as freely as into the Colony, on the understanding that all regulations introduced into the Ordinance to be in force in the Colony affecting the statute-labourer shall be carried out under the directions of the Resident and his Officers, and that the Government of the Straits Settlements will guarantee that this is done.

41. The powers of the Indian Immigration Agent appointed by the Madras Government* will extend to the Protected Native States as well as to the Colony.

* See marginal note para. 21.

J. F. A. McNAIR.
E. C. BUCK.
BOWNESS FISCHER.
W. E. MAXWELL.
C. W. SNEYD-KYNNERSLEY.

Penang, 26th July, 1883.

APPENDIX G.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT made the 27th day of May, 1890, between AUGUST HUTTENBACH, LUDWIG HUTTENBACH and ALFRED LIEBERT, of Penang, Merchants, carrying on business under the style or firm of HUTTENBACH, LIEBERT AND COMPANY (hereinafter called "the Contractors") of the one part, and His Excellency Sir JOHN FREDERICK DICKSON, K.C.M.G., Acting Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of the Straits Settlements (hereinafter called "the Governor") of the other part. WHEREBY IT IS AGREED by and between the parties hereto as follows, that is to say:—

1. During the period of two years commencing from the 1st day of June, 1890, the Contractors will run and maintain at least two steamers to run between Negapatam and Penang and Singapore in the manner and subject to the conditions hereinafter more particularly mentioned.

2. During the same period the Contractors will run from Penang to Singapore by way of the Coast Ports lying between Penang and Singapore, at least one coasting steamer in the manner and subject to the conditions hereinafter more particularly mentioned.

3. The Contractors will carry by the said line of steamers all natives of India who may offer themselves as passengers for Penang, Singapore, and the Coast Ports referred to in the second clause hereof whether such persons be under contract statute or not, provided that:—(1) every such person shall come within the description of an artisan, mechanic, or labourer employed or to be employed in agriculture, road-making, or mining operations, and the wives and children of the same; and (2) every such person shall have been passed at Negapatam by the officer employed by the Government of the Straits Settlements for that purpose.

4. Two of the steamers running on the line mentioned in clause 1 hereof shall be of at least 2,000 tons gross measurement, and shall carry an Apothecary who shall have been approved of by the Government of the Straits Settlements, and such medicines and instruments as the said Government may from time to time direct.

5. The steamers shall leave Negapatam once a fortnight and complete the voyage to Penang (the Act of God, the Queen's Enemies, Restraint of Rulers or Princes and Pirates excepted) in 5½ days. The said steamers to be allowed a few days for docking once in every four months, but if such docking or other repairs takes longer than one week, the Contractors to substitute another steamer.

6. The coasting steamer mentioned in the second clause hereof shall run once a fortnight in conjunction with the steamers mentioned in the first clause hereof, and shall leave Penang as soon as possible after the arrival of each such fortnightly steamer from Negapatam.

7. The said coasting steamer or steamers shall touch at the following ports, that is to say: (1) Port Weld; (2) Pangkor or Lumut; (3) Telok Anson; (4) Klang; (5) Port Dickson; and (6) Malacca, or in such a manner as shall be eventually agreed.

8. Good accommodation shall be provided in the said coasting steamer for not less than four 1st class European passengers.

9. On arrival at Penang of the fortnightly steamer from Negapatam, immigrants for any of the ports mentioned in the seventh clause hereof shall be transferred direct from one steamer to the other, but all immigrants provided with through-tickets for Coast Ports wishing to break their journey at Penang must give up their tickets to the Contractors which will then be void.

10. The Contractors shall be entitled to charge for every adult passenger conveyed by them under the provisions of the third clause hereof, rates of passage money not exceeding the following, that is to say:—

From Negapatam to Penang and the Coast Ports named	Rs. 8
in the 7th clause hereof,	
From Negapatam to Singapore,	Rs. 11
and for all other deck passengers the rate shall not be above Rs. 10 from Negapatam to Penang for adults, and Rs. 13 from Negapatam to Singapore for adults.	

Children under the age of three years being carried free, and those under twelve years at half rates; the passengers to be supplied without further charge with fuel for cooking and fresh water.

11. All the said steamers shall sail under the British flag.
12. On the requisition of the Colonial Secretary or of the Resident Councillor of Penang or Malacca, or of the Government of any of the Protected Native States, all the steamers shall carry any officer of the Indian Immigration Department on duty free of charge between any of the ports named.
13. During the subsistence of this Contract no other line of steamers shall be subsidized by the Government of the Straits Settlements or by the Protected Native States in connection with emigration from any of the ports in the Madras Presidency.
14. During the period of two years mentioned in the first clause hereof, the Government of the Straits Settlements will pay to the Contractors an annual subsidy of Dollars thirty thousand (\$30,000) payable in monthly instalments of Dollars two thousand five hundred (\$2,500). Each instalment to be paid in Singapore on or before the last day of the month for which it is payable.
15. If and so often as the said steamer from Negapatam shall not arrive at Penang within two days of the time fixed in the 5th clause hereof, the Contractors shall pay to the Governor the sum of Dollars two hundred and fifty (\$250) per day for every day or part of a day which shall elapse from the expiration of such two days and until the arrival of the steamer which shall be overdue.
16. If the Contractors shall become bankrupt or fail to pay such sum or sums of money as become due under the 15th clause hereof within twenty-four hours after the same shall have been demanded by the Governor, or if the Contractors shall in any other respect unduly or wilfully fail in the due performance of this agreement, the Governor may determine this agreement by a notice in writing under the hand of the Colonial Secretary, and this agreement shall thereupon be determined and no compensation shall be payable to the Contractors.
17. Subject and without prejudice to the power given to the Governor by the last preceding clause of these presents, whenever any doubt, difference, or dispute shall hereafter arise between the Contractors and the Governor touching or concerning this agreement or the construction hereof, or touching or concerning the due performance of this agreement by the Contractors, or touching or concerning any other thing in anywise relating to the agreement or the rights, duties or liabilities of the Contractors or the Governor in connection therewith, every such doubt, difference, or dispute shall be referred to two arbitrators or their umpire, pursuant to, and so as, with regard to the mode and consequence of the reference and in all other respects, to conform to the provisions in that behalf contained in the Imperial Act known as "The Common Law Procedure Act 1854," or any then subsisting statutory modification thereof which shall be deemed to form part of and be comprised in these presents. This agreement may also be filed under the provisions of section 456 of "The Civil Procedure Ordinance 1878."
18. Whenever the expression "the Contractors" is used in this agreement, the same shall include the Contractors and their respective executors and administrators, and whenever the expression "The Governor" is used, the same shall include the Governor and his successors in office.
19. The Governor may order a further medical inspection of all immigrants arriving at Penang by the said steamers from Negapatam, which inspection shall take place in the Indian Immigration Depot at Penang immediately on arrival, and if on such medical examination any such immigrants are found unfit for the ordinary labour of a healthy person, the Contractors shall provide them with passage tickets to Negapatam free of charge.
20. Should the Contractors run more than one steamer a fortnight from Penang to the Coast Ports mentioned in clause 7 hereof, then each individual steamer need not call at all the ports each voyage, provided that all ports are touched at at least once every fortnight, and that the passengers for all Coast Ports are always transhipped at Penang to the coasting steamer immediately on their arrival from Negapatam, provided moreover, that one steamer shall make the voyage once in every fortnight from Singapore to Penang and *vice versa* by the Coast Ports of Pangkor, Telok Anson, Klang, Port Dickson, and Malacca.
21. All the steamers running under this agreement shall have the status and privileges of mail steamers.

22. This agreement shall in the first instance be binding on the Contractors as principals, but if within six months after the date of this agreement the Contractors shall procure the adoption of the same to the satisfaction of the Governor by the British India Steam Navigation Company or the Netherlands India Steam Navigation Company (if running under the British flag) so as to bind one or other of the said Companies or the Trustees to be appointed by either or both of the said Companies, as principals, then this agreement shall cease to be binding on the Contractors as principals and shall be binding on them only as Agents for such Company or Companies.

IN WITNESS whereof the said Contractors and the said Governor have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year below mentioned at Penang and Singapore respectively.

On the 27th day of May, 1890, at Penang,		
Signed and sealed by	AUGUST HUTTENBACH	
in the presence of	FRED. AERIA. E. ANDERSON.	A. HUTTENBACH. [L. S.]
Signed and sealed by	LUDWIG HUTTENBACH	
by his Attorney A. HUTTENBACH in the presence of	FRED. AERIA. E. ANDERSON.	L. HUTTENBACH, [L. S.] by his Attorney A. HUTTENBACH.
Signed and sealed by	ALFRED LIEBERT by	
his Attorney A. HUTTENBACH in the presence of	FRED. AERIA. E. ANDERSON.	A. LIEBERT, [L. S.] by his Attorney A. HUTTENBACH.
On the 31st day of May, 1890, at Singapore,		
Signed and sealed by	the said Governor in	
the presence of	A. P. TALBOT, Acting Colonial Secretary, S.S.	J. F. DICKSON. [L. S.]

APPENDIX H.

RULES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF OFFICERS CONCERNED IN CARRYING
OUT OR SUPERINTENDING EMIGRATION TO THE
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

(G. O. 15th May, 1888, No. 510.)

I. Every recruiter or other person shipping coolies for labour in the Straits shall furnish to the Emigration Agent at the port of embarkation, at least 24 hours before the ship sails, a true statement, in duplicate, of the persons to be so shipped by him in the following form :—

Statement—Form A.

Name of Ship.	Name of Labourer.	Father's Name.	Age.	Sex.	Village and District.	Occupation.	Marks.	Agent if any.	Sum advanced.	Remarks.

II. All such persons must be inspected by the Emigration Agent, at the recruiter's depôt, within 24 hours of the sailing of the ship in which they are to embark, and no person, under a recruiter's charge, shall leave the shore until such inspection has been completed. The Emigration Agent will at the time of inspection check the entries in Form A, and make such additions or alterations therein as may be required.

III. On completion of his inspection, the Emigration Agent shall sign Form A in evidence of corrections, and shall furnish a copy to the master of the ship, after which no addition shall be made to it.

IV. The Emigration Agent shall explain to every labourer under advances that no contract for labour in the Straits, at a place where agricultural labour is employed, will be binding, unless made under the local Ordinance before the proper officer.

V. Registration in Form A shall be free of charge.

VI. Any native passenger, who is not a labourer or of a class ordinarily employed in agricultural work, may obtain from the Emigration Agent a certificate in the form given below, which will exempt him from the restrictions laid down in the Straits Settlements Indian Immigration Ordinance 1884. The Emigration Agents will understand that every facility should be given to enable persons entitled to such certificates to obtain them promptly :—

Certificate—Form B.*

I hereby certify that the person herein named and described is not subject to the provisions of "The Indian Immigration Ordinance 1884."

(Signed)

Emigration Agent.

* Old Form C.

Name.	Father's Name.	Age.	Sex.	Religion and Caste (if any).	Place of Abode in India.	Occupation.	General Description and Distinctive Marks.

Notes.—On arrival in the Straits Settlements, the certificate must be countersigned by an officer of the Straits Settlements Immigration Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY RULES REGARDING EMIGRATION TO THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

1. No labourer shall be registered in Form A under the rules prescribed in G. O., 5th May, 1887, No. 635, Public, unless he has been engaged by a licensed recruiter.
2. A licensed recruiter is a person who has obtained from a qualified Magistrate a license to recruit coolies for labour in the Straits Settlements, and has been registered by the Emigration Agent at the port from which the coolies he proposes to recruit are to be shipped.
3. A license under Rule 2 can be given only by a Magistrate of the first class exercising jurisdiction either in the local area in which the recruiter proposes to work or at the port from which the coolies he recruits are to be shipped.
4. The license, which shall be in the form given below, shall not be valid for more than one year from the date of issue, and shall specify the local areas in which the recruiter proposes to work :—

Form of Recruiter's License.

Office of the Magistrate of

A. B., described in the descriptive roll annexed, is hereby licensed to be a recruiter of emigrants for the Straits Settlements in (*here specify the local area within which the recruiter is licensed to recruit*).

This license will be in force until the _____ of _____ unless previously cancelled.

(Signed) C. D.,
Magistrate, 1st-Class.

Dated the _____ day of _____

Descriptive Roll.

Name.	Father's Name.	Age.		Caste.	Colour.	Height.		Distinguish- ing Marks.	Name of Village, local sub-division (Taluk, Taluk, &c.), and District to which he belongs.
		Years.	Months.			Feet.	Inches.		

5. Such license shall only be granted to the following persons :—

- (a) Persons appointed in India by agents for estates in the Straits Settlements who are recognised by the District Magistrate.
- (b) Persons producing a letter of recommendation from the Indian Immigration Agent in the Straits Settlements.

6. A license may, on proof of misconduct or breach of these or other rules prescribed by the Government from time to time, be cancelled within the period for which it is in force by any Magistrate exercising first-class powers.

7. Every licensed recruiter must report himself to the Sub-divisional Magistrate having jurisdiction in the area in which he wishes to carry on operations, and shall produce his license, on demand, to any Magistrate or Police Officer.

8. Every licensed recruiter must have, at the port of embarkation, a depôt in which the persons recruited by him shall be lodged during their stay at such port. Such depôt must be licensed by a Magistrate qualified to license recruiters under Rule 3 above, and must be registered before the local Emigration Agent.

9. Any licensed depôt may be inspected at any time by any of the following persons :—

- (a) any Magistrate;
- (b) any Police Officer of or above the rank of head constable;
- (c) the Civil Surgeon, and, in his absence, the Senior Medical Officer at the station;
- (d) the Emigration Agent.

and shall be inspected by the last-mentioned Officer before the embarkation therefrom of any labourers registered in Form A, as provided in Rule II of the rules issued in G. O., 5th May, 1887, No. 635, Public.

10. The Emigration Agent may, on the report of a Medical Officer, direct that any emigrant suffering from any disease likely to be dangerous to his neighbours shall be excluded from a licensed depôt, and may forbid the embarkation of any such person until he is certified by the Medical Officer to be in a fit state to travel.

Note:—There is no objection to several recruiters using the same depôt.

APPENDIX I.

The following rules are issued for the guidance of the Superintendent, Straits Settlements Emigration Depôt, Negapatam :—

1. Immediately on the arrival of S. S. *Meanachy* at Negapatam, you will take charge of the depôt, and inform the recruiting agents that in future all the coolies they have recruited for the Straits Settlements must be sent to the depôt, and you should further request the Head Assistant Magistrate not to allow any other depôts for coolies recruited for the Straits Settlements.
2. You must become acquainted with the Government Officials and endeavour to obtain their sympathy and co-operation.
3. A notice must be affixed on the gate of the depôt stating the hour at which you will be prepared to examine the coolies daily for admission into the depôt, and due intimation must be given to all recruiting agents.
4. You must not admit any emigrant into the depôt until you have examined and passed him as fit for agricultural labour.
5. You will inform the recruiting agents that although you may admit a cooly into the depôt, you will return him on their hands should he prove to be subject to fits of any sort.
6. A register in form A attached must be kept in the depôt, each name being entered immediately on admission.
7. You will clearly explain to each emigrant in the depôt the work that will be required of him and the wages he will receive, and you must not hold out hopes to any of them of getting any but agricultural work.
8. You must carefully ascertain whether any of the emigrants are related or come from the same village, and in communication with the recruiting agents arrange for them to go to the same estate.
9. Careful enquiry must be made to prevent fictitious names being given, and a clear and full description of each emigrant should be given.
10. You must not permit female emigrants to bring able-bodied relatives of either sex as dependents.
11. No one over forty-five years of age or under sixteen can be accepted as an emigrant. Should any cooly object to emigrate after having matters explained to him, you must inform the local Protector of Emigrants.
12. You will personally see to the embarkation of each batch of emigrants, and great care must be taken to prevent substitution.
13. A list of emigrants embarked must be given to the Inspector in Form B, which the Inspector should initial after satisfying himself that all the emigrants named therein are on board.
14. You must carefully enquire into the advances entered against each emigrant, for it is evident that actual advances are not at present entered.
15. When coolies are returned from the Straits Settlements the Inspector will hand them over to you and you must forward them to their homes, paying from your contingent fund, submitting a bill to the Indian Immigration Agent, Straits Settlements, who will recover the amount and transmit it to you.
16. You must do all in your power to encourage emigration, and any mal-practices on the part of the recruiters which may come to your notice should at once be reported to the Head Assistant Magistrate.
17. You must pay particular attention to the following, which will give you a fair idea of who should, and who should not, be accepted as emigrants :—
 - (a) Attention should be paid to the general physical development of men, especially as regards chest measurement.
 - (b) Men with abdominal obesity but in whom the muscles of the chest and arms are not developed or adipose tissue in fair ratio to the abdominal development, to be rejected.

(c) Men who are lean and wiry and whose muscles, although small, are hard and firm, may be accepted.

(d) *Development of Head*.—This should not escape notice. Any tendency to idiocy either indicated by formation of head or from observation of personal habits, previous to embarkation, should be carefully enquired into.

(e) *Eyes*.—The eyes should be examined. Blindness in one eye, lencoma of any portion of cornea or chronic disease of sclerotic or conjunctiva or eyelids should necessitate rejection. If necessary, examinations of the eye with ophthalmoscope or other tests should be used for diseases apprehended but not superficial in the ordinary examination.

(f) *Hands*.—No man should be accepted whose hands do not show evidence of manual field labour.

(g) *Chest*.—Every man should be examined with the stethoscope and by percussion. Any abnormal defects should necessitate rejection.

(h) *Abdomen*.—Percussion and palpation required. The liver and spleen should be carefully examined and any signs of anæmia sought for.

(i) As it is presumed that most of the emigrants are in a depôt previous to embarkation, a daily visit to the latrines should be made with a view of detecting chronic dysentery or diarrhœa.

(j) *Genital Organs*.—Hernia, hydrocele, or any enlargement of testicle, buboes and primary syphilis, should be examined for and, if found, the former would indicate rejection, and the latter at the discretion of the Medical Officer.

(k) *Arms*.—Arms should be examined for fistula, &c.

(l) *Lower Extremities*.—Edema of legs, chronic ulcers, varicose veins (if to any extent) necessitate rejection.

(m) *Deformities*.—Any deformity of joints or limbs should lead to rejection.

(n) *Skin Diseases*.—All indicating a chronic nature should lead to rejection.

18. The following should be rejected even if they are found physically fit:—

Fakeers, Brahmins, Barbers, Baniahs, Muhammadans, Shop-keepers, Toddy-drawers, Bangle-makers, Weavers, Beggars.

19. Tenders should be called for for the supply of diet on a fixed scale and cloths.

20. Forms C and D can be used by you when submitting bills for dicting and shipping coolies.

MEMORANDUM BY THE INDIAN IMMIGRATION AGENT, S. S., ON THE SUBJECT OF RECRUITING IN INDIA.

1. Statute Immigrants are now obtained in India through Recruiting Agents who employ recruiters, who employ sub-recruiters.

2. The Recruiting Agent advances money to the recruiter and against this advance the recruiter is credited with Rs. 20 per head for each cooly passed by the Medical Officer at the depôt.

4. Of this amount, Rs. 12 to Rs. 15 is said to be paid to the sub-recruiter.

4. The recruiters, being paid by commission, care nothing as to the class of coolies they bring, so long as they can get them passed by the Medical Officer, who has great difficulty in ascertaining whether the coolies presented for examination are really agricultural labourers, owing to the way the recruiters tutor the coolies what to say at the medical examination.

5. The present depôt has, no doubt, done some good, but the recruiters throw as much difficulty in the way of the Superintendent as possible by bringing the coolies a day or so before the steamer sails.

6. The recruiters are now on strike on the ground that the Recruiting Agents are squeezing them in order to make larger profits for themselves, but I learn that one of the Recruiting Agents is endeavouring to keep up the strike hoping thereby to get the depôt abolished in order that the old malpractice may be renewed.

7. Again, a few years ago, I was asked by Province Wellesley Planters to arrange at Negapatam the terms on which Recruiting Agents would send coolies. I arranged for Rs. 27 per cooly landed in Penang. Since then Planters have tried to outbid each other in order to get a better supply of coolies, and the rates now vary from Rs. 35 to Rs. 42 per cooly, and unless my information is incorrect, a further increase will soon be demanded. It is clear, therefore, that there is no limit to the extortionate demands of the Recruiting Agencies now employed, which must be disastrous to the Planter, to the hope of opening up the country, and to the cooly, as no increase of wage or reduction of the term of contract can be hoped for so long as the expenses incurred in importing labourers continue steadily to rise.

8. The Districts from which coolies are now obtained are Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura and occasionally from Salem and Coimbatore, but these Districts are also drawn on by Ceylon, Mauritius and Natal and, I think, it has now been clearly proved that we must extend the sphere of our operations if we are to obtain a supply of labour anything like equal to the demand.

9. I would, therefore, advocate that Government should undertake to recruit coolies as is done in every other Colony employing Indian labour, and deliver them to employers in the Straits at a fixed rate which, from calculations I have made, could, I believe, be fixed at Rs. 25, on condition:—

1st.—That every cooly so recruited is landed free of all debt;

2nd.—That the pay of the coolies be increased to cents 15 per diem for first year, cents 18 for the second and third years, or even cents 20 for the third year.

10. To carry out this proposal I consider it would be necessary:—

1st.—That an Officer should be appointed to superintend recruiting operations, but he must necessarily be one thoroughly acquainted with the country and the people, or failure is certain;

2nd.—The Central Depôt at Negapatam with a Superintendent in charge must be maintained on a modified scale;

3rd.—Sub-depôts in each District where recruiting operations are to be carried on, should be arranged for, with a Clerk in charge, and one or more recruiters should be attached to each sub-depôt on a fixed salary, each recruiter to submit a weekly diary shewing the villages visited,

the coolies recruited and passed, &c., &c. The coolies to be medically examined at each sub-depôt by the Civil Surgeon and those passed sent to the Central Dépôt at Negapatam in charge of a subordinate with a list and full descriptive roll of each, the list to be signed by the Superintendent at Negapatam as an acknowledgment of the coolies received;

4th.—From Negapatam the coolies would be forwarded to Penang as at present.

11. My estimate of the expenses to be incurred is approximate, but, I believe, there will be a sufficient balance to cover any unforeseen expenditure.

12. I would propose to commence operations in ten Districts, and I have selected those adjacent to the Railways, but I do not wish it to be supposed that I propose confining operations to these Districts hereafter.

13. The following are the Districts I would commence in:—

1. Tanjore.	} Tamil.
2. Trichinopoly.	
3. Madura.	
4. Tinnevelly.	
5. Coimbatore.	
6. Salem.	
7. North Arcot.	
8. South Arcot.	
9. Mysore— <i>Canarese</i> .	} Telugu.
10. Nellore— <i>Telugu</i> .	

14. As soon as proper communication can be arranged for I would recruit in the

Godavery.	} Telugu.
Vizagapatam.	
Ganjam.	

Districts, but, at present, the only communication with Madras is by B. I. S. N. steamers who have already declined to arrange their steamers so as to meet the Straits boats, and their charges for passengers are simply prohibitive.

15. From the manner in which the Madras Government have always met my proposals, I am confident of their cordial support.

16. The greatest care and tact would, at first, be required, for, undoubtedly, the recruiters, thus ousted, would throw every obstacle in our way, and, at first, Immigration might fall off, but I feel no doubt of ultimate success.

17. There is, however, one thing necessary to success which, I fear, the Government would not care to undertake and that is giving advances. I have reduced the chance of any serious loss to a minimum by having the coolies examined in each District, and I think that my figures will show such an excess in receipts over ordinary or known disbursements that any actual loss is all but impossible.

18. At present no special inducement is offered for coolies who have returned to India to re-emigrate. I would suggest that all such men who have obtained good certificates from their employers should be re-engaged on the highest pay given on the estate or the wage usually given to free coolies.

19. Other Colonies encourage the immigration of boys of from ten years of age and upwards and each of them receives pay on an ascending scale and this, I believe, would be an advantage both to the cooly and the employer, for employers have often informed me that they could employ a number of boys on the estates and the cooly would, by this means, be able to add to his income.

20. I do not advocate children being brought over without their parents, but that recruiters should be able to guarantee employment to the families of coolies who emigrate at fixed rates.

21. I would also strongly advise that females should not be compelled to labour, at all events at field work. The objection to this among the women and the men is all but universal and causes much discontent. Some women would work, especially

on coffee and tea estates, but regular field labour—"changkol work"—they strongly object to.

22. By the proposed system also every facility could be given to coolies to remit money to their friends, and if they found that they could really save money there can be little doubt they would write to their friends and invite them to emigrate.

23. Good labourers should be allowed to earn extra wages by extra work. A hard working cooly will finish his task certainly two hours before the others, but he can on most estates, only earn the minimum wage. So good and bad are paid alike. This system has been tried on some estates with great success.

24. If a Government Agent was appointed in India he might give "orders" to persons wishing to emigrate not under contract, which, on presentation at the Shipping Office at the port of embarkation, would entitle him to a free ticket or one at the reduced rate, the "orders" being produced as vouchers for the issue of the tickets.

APPROXIMATE ESTIMATE OF EXPENSES.

ESTABLISHMENTS.

Negapatam Dépôt.

Superintendent at Rs. 220,	yearly	Rs. 2,640
One Clerk " " 30,	"	" 360
One Toty " " 6,	"	" 72
Four Peons " " 7 each,	"	" 336
Rent " " 35,	"	" 420
Contingencies,	"	" 150
		Rs. 3,978

Each Sub-Dépôt.

One Clerk in charge at Rs. 20,	yearly	Rs. 240
One Toty " " 6,	"	" 72
Rent " " 10,	"	" 120
Contingencies " " 5,	"	" 60
One Peon " " 8,	"	" 96

Rs. 558

10 Sub-dépôts at Rs. 588,	Rs. 5,880
12 Recruiters " " 50,	" 7,200
3,500 Passages with food at Rs. 10,	" 35,000
Medical Fees,	" 4,500
Transport of Coolies, at Rs. 8,	" 10,500
Feeding 3,500 Coolies, Clothes, &c.,	" 9,296
Landing 3,500 Coolies at 2 cents,	" 154
Contribution to Agent's Pay,	" 7,920
Agent's Transport,	" 2,000
One Clerk for Agent,	" 360
One Peon,	" 84

Rs. 86,872

Receipts.

3,500 Coolies at \$12 at Rs. 222 per \$100,	Rs. 93,240
Deduct Expenses,	" 86,872

Balance, Rs. 6,368

A. M. MACGREGOR,
Indian Immigration Agent, S.S.

Penang, 30th August, 1890.

APPENDIX K.

LABOUR COMMISSION, 1890.

Suggestions by Captain Menzell for the Improvement of the Recruiting System in India.

In my opinion there are certain imperfections in the present system of obtaining Tamil labour for the Straits, which might be successfully removed if certain alterations in the present mode of working were made, alterations which I will try to indicate. The imperfections I allude to I will class under five headings, viz. :—

1. There are too many people employed in the enlistment of the labourers and whose earnings are solely dependent upon the number of people they can bring forward and get passed by the authorities in Negapatam.
2. Cash advances are now indiscriminately allowed. No doubt this is to a certain extent a necessary evil owing to the too many go-between brokers. I mean that the advances are so far indiscriminately given because labourers who are ultimately rejected as unfit after their arrival at the depôt in Negapatam have in many instances received advances which they cannot repay and which consequently will fall as a loss upon somebody else than themselves.
3. I consider it a mistake to have only one depôt as at present in Negapatam, as in most instances people are compelled to travel a great distance from their homes before they can be sure of gaining their object, that is, having their services accepted by the agents of the employers of labour after being passed by the medical authority.
4. I think it a mistake that as at present the medical examination should be the only decision as to whether a labourer is qualified or not to emigrate to the Straits.
5. My opinion is that the action which, under the present system, Government takes with a view to protect the interests of the emigrants is commenced too late, inasmuch as too great a scope for blackmailing and mischief is allowed when the first overtures are made to the intending emigrant. I take the moment they now enter the Negapatam depôt to be the time when Government interference commences.

The alterations which I would consider desirable are, in the first instance, that instead of recruiters, sub-recruiters, etc., being paid irregularly to travel about in the villages, a well-recommended tradesman in each village should be authorised to open a Registration Office for intending emigrants, somewhat in the same manner as the Post Office business is given to well frequented shops in nearly all small towns in England. No doubt the appointment for such registration would give a shop-keeper many extra opportunities to deal with the surrounding population and thereby benefit him in his trade; this would make him eager to accept such a post, so that only a small allowance for each acceptable person registered would satisfy him.

By adopting such an arrangement the services of the sub-recruiter could be dispensed with. In connection with the foregoing a depôt should in my opinion be erected in each of the principal districts where recruiting is thought to be desirable, to which place one of the recruiters paid by Government (the number of whom should be equal to the number of depôts, so that each recruiter has a certain depôt considered as his headquarters) should bring in such numbers of labourers as he from time to time might find registered at the different village Registration Offices within his district. Those depôts should be visited at regular intervals by the medical adviser, who should make a final examination then and there and deliver all acceptable emigrants to the recruiter of that depôt, who should be instructed to be present at the depôt at the time of inspection, and under whose guidance the emigrants should be brought to the port of embarkation or, if necessary, to what might be considered a Central Depôt there. Under such an arrangement no emigrant should be allowed to throw over his engagement after having arrived at the port of embarkation or Central Depôt, as no illegal proceedings in bringing him there could be possible, and the losses which are now often incurred by the emigrants altering their minds at the last moment before going on board would no longer be met with.

Cash advances would no doubt still be necessary to some extent, but they would be very much minimized as from the time of registering to the time of being passed at the nearest depôt, no further cash outlay should be allowed except such as a recruiter could strictly account for for the conveyance of the emigrants from the place of registration to the nearest depôt and from there to the port of embarkation when passed. At such a port or Central Depôt a reasonable advance could be given to the emigrant in the form of Postal Orders or an order upon the Registration Office of his village in favour of his relations or to whomsoever he might desire it to be given. Advances given in such a manner would be actually to the benefit of the emigrant. At present it is not believed that the emigrant gets the benefit of advances entered against him in his account.

Many of the intending emigrants who have now to travel great distances from their homes to Negapatam to be examined there, incur more or less expenses in doing so. As a rule the emigrant has not the money required; if he is not passed the agent for the would-be employer does not pay the loss, the recruiter or sub-recruiter who has assisted the man in coming is not likely to do so, consequently there is only one party left to bear it, and that is the emigrant who is passed. It means that the recruiter or sub-recruiter who brings in a batch of people charges those who are passed for all expenses incurred upon the whole number, and it is for this reason therefore to a large extent that an emigrant now generally becomes so expensive to those who employ him ultimately.

Instead of the medical officer having, so to say, work to do only once every fortnight as at present, he might as well travel about as a judge does on his circuit at proper intervals, or should it be difficult to find a man to take up such a post, there is little doubt that each District Surgeon for a moderate fee would be willing to undertake the needful examination at the depôt in his district.

At the time of examination the recruiter's opinion of the qualifications of an intending emigrant should be considered together with the medical officer's opinion, provided that the recruiters are men who are competent to judge of the qualifications of a labourer as he ought to be. As it is well known that many a workman labours and labours well, although he may not be physically free of ailments, so no doubt the doctor now in authority in Negapatam has rejected many a would-be emigrant owing to physical defects which might not have been noticed or found a disadvantage at all by an employer here. Such instances have no doubt partly brought about the late falling off in the number of emigrants to the Straits.

In any system similar to what has been above indicated Government control would be exercised from the beginning of an emigrant's enlistment, and no doubt the first cost of obtaining each emigrant would be much lessened thereby and (what would perhaps be the most important point of all) the emigrants would be likely to enter on their service much more contented than, as a general rule, is the case now.

Penang, 2nd December, 1890.

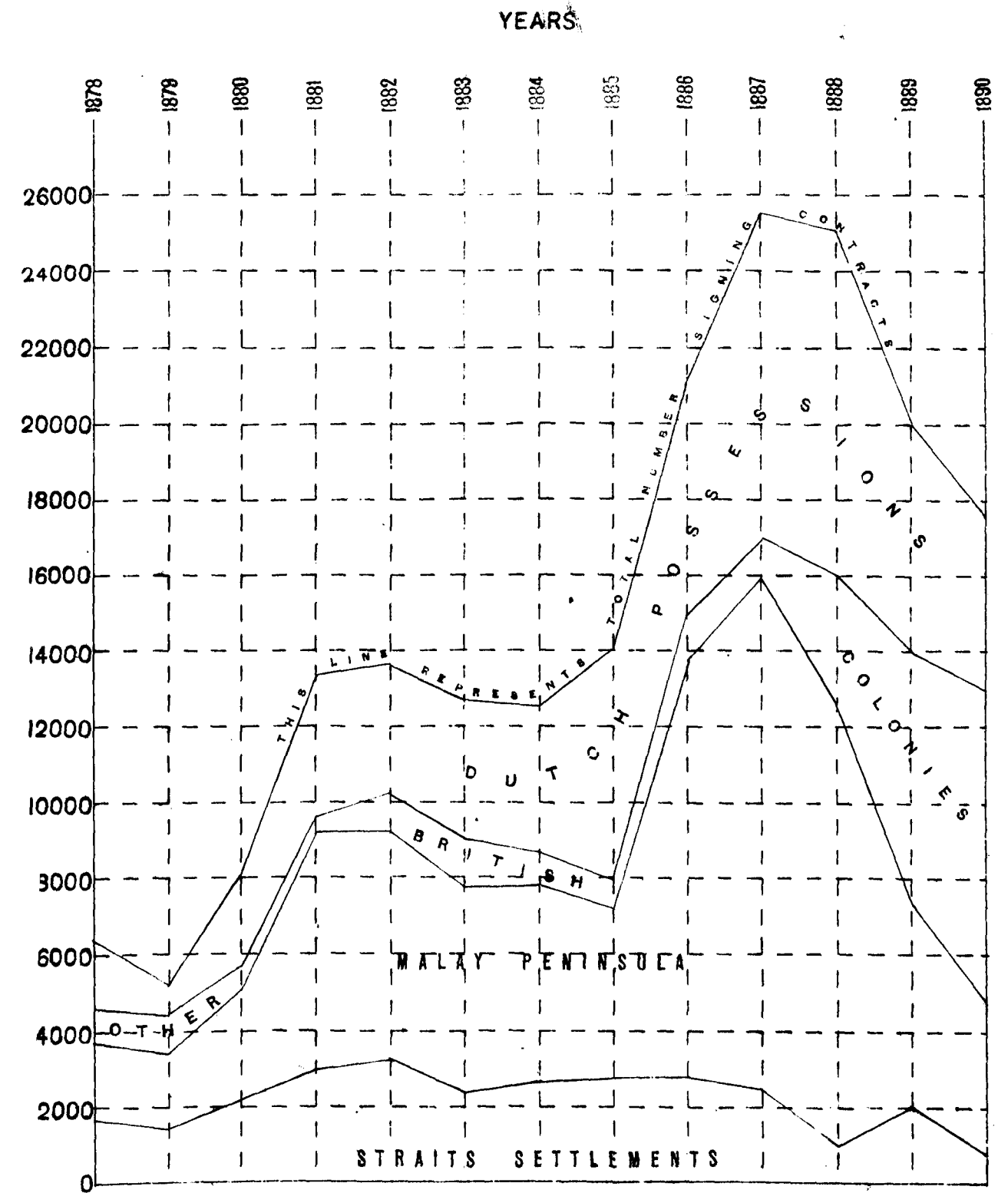
APPENDIX L.

Return shewing the total Expenditure on Public Works in the Colony and the Native States during the following years.

Year.	COLONIAL GOVERNMENT.			MUNICIPALITIES.			NATIVE STATES.					Total.
	Singapore.	Penang.	Malacca.	Singapore.	Penang.	Malacca.	Perak.	Selangor.	Sungei Ujong.	Negri Sembilan.	Pahang.	
1880	\$ 348,659	\$ 111,122	\$ 56,869	\$ (not given)	\$ 131,935	\$ 10,848	\$..	\$..	\$..	\$..	\$..	\$ 659,433
1881	373,847	133,507	37,345	190,105	116,184	12,350	52,669	..	..	..	..	916,007
1882	272,593	218,825	88,437	163,103	183,780	19,288	151,224	..	..	..	..	1,097,250
1883	473,235	354,957	112,733	238,408	218,240	18,053	352,438	179,500	..	..	..	1,947,564
1884	620,765	472,179	130,030	356,712	198,840	17,260	415,747	157,434	..	..	..	2,368,967
1885	669,997	458,374	157,916	381,838	197,491	17,254	490,860	130,937	28,811	..	..	2,533,478
1886	710,719	338,448	122,879	343,730	208,724	16,067	587,839	153,105	26,770	11,445	..	2,519,726
1887	491,974	383,983	155,910	348,769	218,709	15,056	522,191	280,880	34,165	14,000	..	2,465,637
1888	472,640	425,579	164,182	407,295	188,736	8,850	514,476	355,794	45,961	28,066	..	2,611,579
1889	710,230	389,905	135,710	471,628	361,112	11,659	721,681	535,711	75,094	45,000	26,013	3,483,743

SINGAPORE

DIAGRAM SHEWING THE NUMBER OF CHINESE
AND OTHER NATIONALITIES WHO SIGNED CONTRACTS
AT SINGAPORE DURING THE YEARS 1878 to 1890

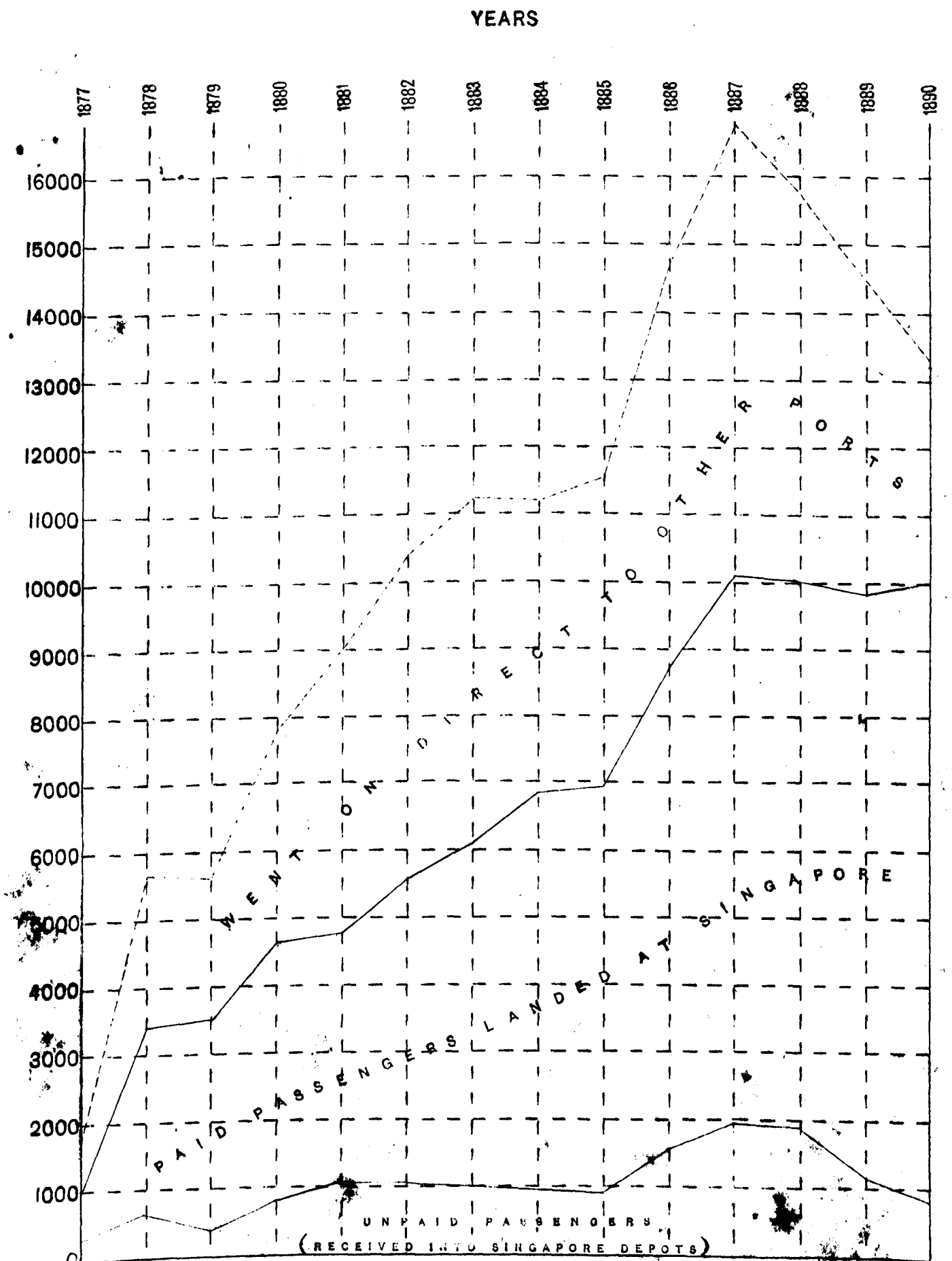


SINGAPORE

DIAGRAM SHEWING THE NUMBERS OF PAID AND UNPAID

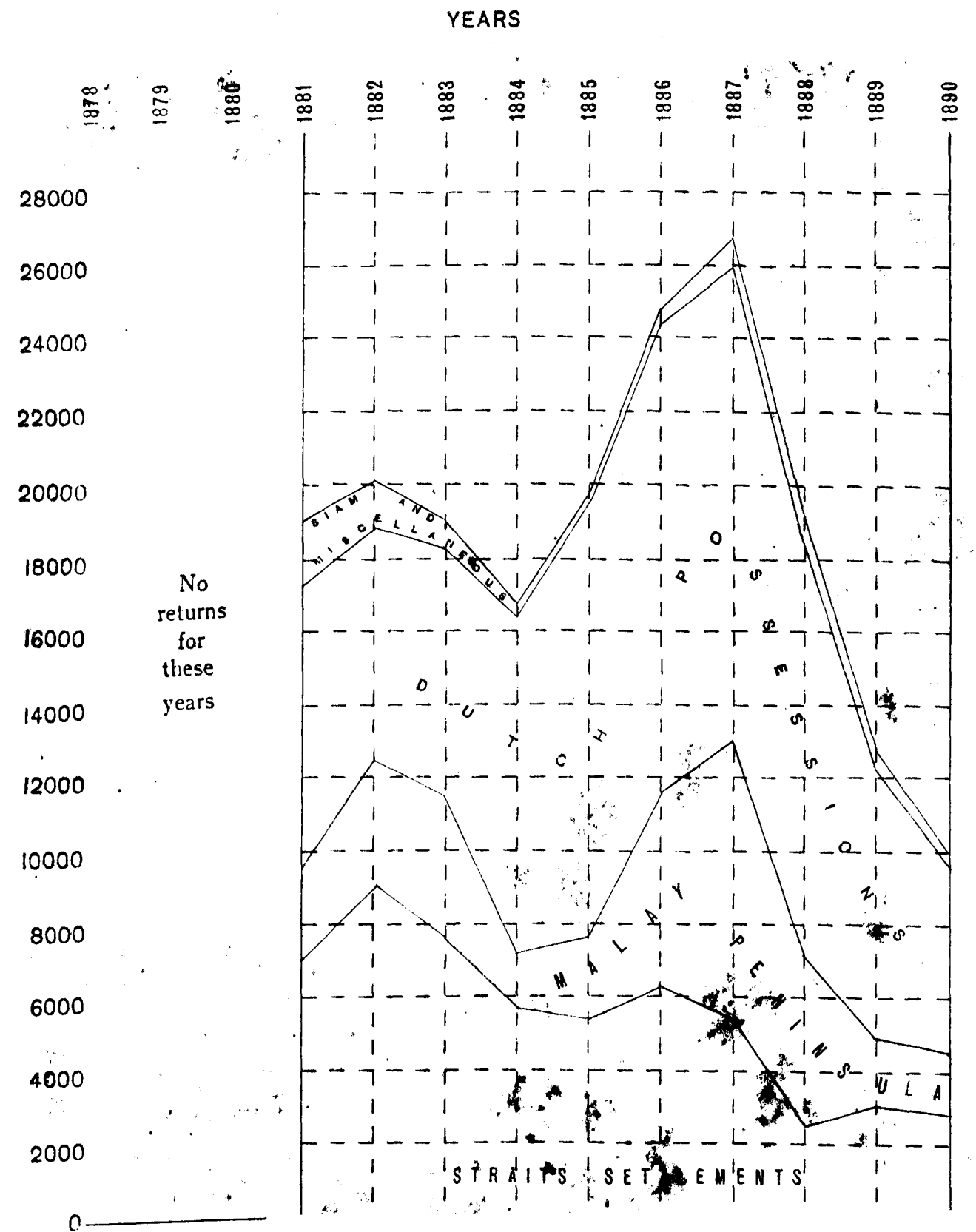
CHINESE IMMIGRANTS DURING THE YEARS 1877 to 1890.

(From Returns furnished by the Protector of Chinese)



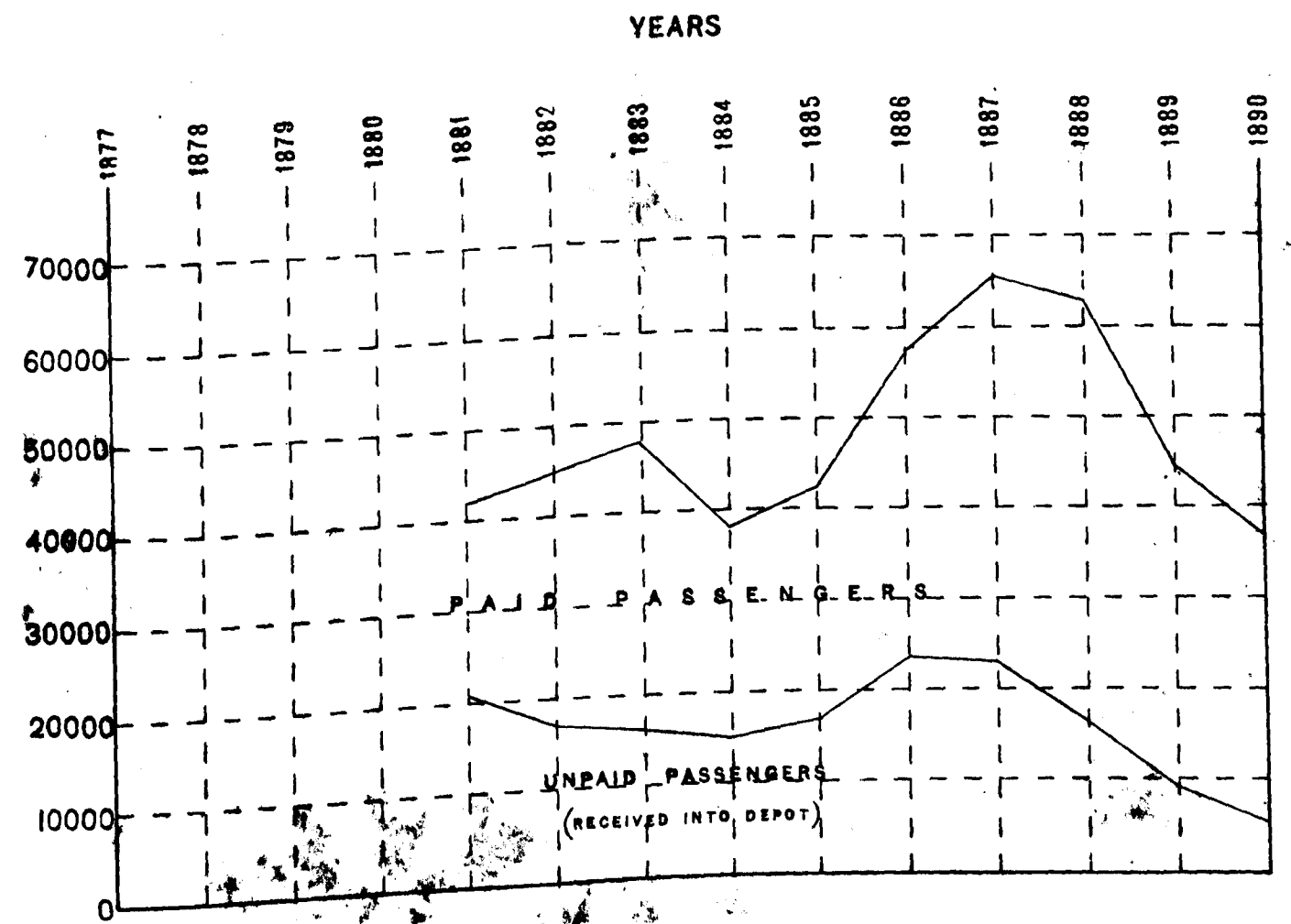
PENANG

DIAGRAM SHEWING THE NUMBER OF CHINESE
AND OTHER NATIONALITIES WHO SIGNED CONTRACTS
AT PENANG DURING THE YEARS 1881 TO 1890.



PENANG

DIAGRAM SHEWING THE NUMBER OF PAID AND UNPAID
CHINESE IMMIGRANTS DURING THE YEARS 1881 TO 1890.
(From Returns furnished by the Protector of Chinese)



PAPERS IN CONTINUATION OF THE REPORT BY THE COMMISSIONERS
APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE STATE OF LABOUR IN
THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS AND NATIVE STATES.

1.

The Acting Colonial Secretary to The Hon'ble Captain M. A. Cameron, R.E.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Singapore, 6th October, 1890.

SIR,—I am directed by the Acting Governor to transmit the enclosed Instrument under Ordinance VIII of 1876, appointing you to be the President and the persons therein named to be members of a Commission to enquire into and report upon the question of the state of labour in the Straits Settlements and the Protected Native States with a view to devising a scheme for encouraging immigration and thereby supplying the demand for labour. You will observe that Mr. E. A. B. BROWN has been appointed to act as Secretary to the Commission.

1. Notes of His Excellency's tour, &c. with reference to entry of 2nd September, 1890.
2. Correspondence *re* treatment of Chinese labourers in Province Wellesley.
3. Proposed Bill for regulation of Chinese agricultural labour, with remarks thereon by Messrs. VERMONT, POWELL and HERVEY.
4. Correspondence *re* mortality of Indian Immigrants in the Native States.
2. I am at the same time to transmit for the information of the Commissioners the papers noted in the margin.

3. With reference to the statement in the last paragraph of the letter to the Resident Councillor, Penang, included in the correspondence upon the treatment of Chinese labourers in Province Wellesley, I am to state that His Excellency desires that the scope of the Commission should embrace full enquiry into and consideration of the whole question, and the proposal of entirely new laws if necessary.

4. In the event of the Commissioners considering it advisable to carry out immigration by the agency of the Government, they should consider and report what share of the cost should fall upon the public revenue and how the far larger share should be levied upon the Municipalities, Native States and employers of labour.

5. I am to add that personally it is His Excellency's wish to see the body of the labourer no longer made a security for debt.

I have, &c.,

A. P. TALBOT,
Acting Colonial Secretary, S. S.

Enclosure 1.

NOTES OF VISITS MADE BY SIR FREDERICK DICKSON, K.C.M.G., TO THE SETTLEMENTS OF PENANG AND MALACCA AND TO THE NATIVE STATES OF THE MALAY PENINSULA DURING THE PERIOD APRIL-SEPTEMBER, 1890, WHILE ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

SEPTEMBER 2ND.

* * * * *

Received two deputations—one respecting the Prai-Selama Railway, the other respecting labour. I explained my views in favour of abolishing, if practicable, all contracts for labour, beyond the usual monthly agreement under the ordinary labour law of the Colony: if contracts are necessary, that they should in no case exceed one year in duration, and that no debt for the expenses of importation of labour should be made a claim on the person of the immigrant. It would be necessary for the Government to bear out of the public purse a share of the expenses of importing coolie labour, and the difficulty was to devise the method of levying the remainder on employers of labour, including the Municipalities, the Native States, and all employers of contractors, as well as on the planters.

Enclosure 2.

CORRESPONDENCE *RE* TREATMENT OF CHINESE LABOURERS IN
PROVINCE WELLESLEY.CHINESE PROTECTORATE,
Penang, 2nd June, 1890.

SIR,—I have the honour to report that, on the 27th and 28th ultimo, I took the opportunity of inspecting the sugar estate of TAN KANG HOK at Batu Kawan, in connection with the case of the coolie reported to have been starved to death in a stable at the back of his employer's house.

2. The Police will doubtless report as to this particular case, and I shall confine my report to the state of things which I found to exist on this estate, which immediately adjoins that of Mr. VERMONT.

3. I found that there were on the estate a number of labourers who, having originally gone there as *Sin-khehs*, were still working for the employer, though against their will.

4. Some had fulfilled their original contract three or four years ago, but had been continually kept in debt, and apparently compelled to work under the impression that they were still legally bound to their employer.

5. One man had, he stated, worked against his will for nine years, and was still in debt when I went there.

6. The coolies were unanimous in stating that they could not have got off the island if they had tried to, the rule of the place being that the watchmen at the ferries stop all coolies unknown to them, unless they have a pass, nor will the sampanmen ordinarily take them as passengers.

7. On hearing that their indebtedness was no impediment to their leaving the island, thirty of them immediately stated that they wished to leave, and it was instructive to see them running for two miles after my carriage in evident fear lest they should be again detained. Only three of those who were free agreed to remain on the estate for regular wages.

8. Nearly all the coolies were suffering from some complaint or other, the only hospital being a little shed in the stable yard of the employer's private house, where the coolie is said to have been starved to death within fifty yards of a Police Station.

9. I found about fifteen coolies there ill, one being a leper, and I told the employer to send them all to hospital. He stated that Mr. VERMONT'S apothecary (a native) visited this shed periodically, but the coolies stated that they had never seen any doctor. Serious cases (he declared) he sent to Mr. VERMONT'S hospital or Sungei Bakap; but that, as the coolie in question was dying, he did not care to run to the expense for nothing.

10. I fear that similar irregularities prevail on other estates in the Province (and perhaps in the Native States), which may account for the scarcity of labour complained of by Province planters, and I trust that the new Labour Ordinance will grant full power to hold periodical enquiries into the accounts and condition of Chinese labourers.

11. I am told that several other Chinese estate owners have, since my visit to TAN KANG HOK'S estate, discharged large numbers of their labourers who had been illegally detained in a similar manner.

I have, &c.,

G. C. WRAY,
Acting Assistant Protector of Chinese.The Hon'ble
The Resident Councillor, Penang.PRY ESTATE, P. W.,
Penang, 10th July, 1890.

SIR,—At a General Meeting of the Penang and Province Wellesley Planters' Association held in the Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, the 8th July, it was unanimously resolved:—

"That Government be requested to appoint a Commission to make enquiries 'regarding the treatment of Chinese Immigrants under Indenture in these Settlements,' and, if possible, devise means of encouraging and assisting Chinese Immigration."

I may point out that it was the general opinion of the meeting that the condition of Chinese Immigration is eminently unsatisfactory; and that it may be considered the principal cause of the great difficulty there is in obtaining this class of labour.

It is absolutely necessary, for the welfare of the Colony, that Immigration from China, especially of the agricultural and labouring class, should be greatly encouraged; and with this object it behoves Government to move at once in this matter; and, judging from the opinion of the meeting, every assistance will be given by the planters.

I have, therefore, the honour to request that you will be good enough to forward a copy of this resolution to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, in the hope that steps may at once be taken for making these Settlements a favourite field for labour, which, according to the minute of the Protector of Chinese dated the 5th ultimo, is not the case at present, as, until this is the case, it can hardly be expected that any great amelioration of the Chinese Immigration question can be effected.

I have, &c.,

E. A. B. BROWN,
Honorary Secretary,
Penang and Province Wellesley
Planters' Association.The Hon'ble
The Resident Councillor, Penang.COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Singapore, 9th August, 1890.

SIR,—I am directed by the Acting Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter Penang 883 of 15th July forwarding a copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of the Planters' Association, together with other documents in connection with the death of a coolie on the estate of TAN KANG HOK at Batu Kawan, and to inform you that the questions therein raised have been carefully considered by His Excellency in Council.

2. I am to request you to be good enough to inform the Planters' Association that a Draft Ordinance dealing with the question of Chinese labour has already been prepared under Sir CECIL SMITH'S instructions, and will be considered on his return.

3. I am to add that His Excellency acknowledges the necessity for an inquiry such as the Association suggests, and will be ready to accept a resolution for the appointment of a Commission should it be moved in the Legislative Council. Without such a resolution, there is no power to appoint a Commission.

4. The scope of the inquiry will be a matter for future consideration, but it will be necessary to give full opportunity for the discussion of proposals to dispense with the present system of forcible retention of coolies in private employment until the discharge of the debt incurred by the expenses of importation into the Colony.

I have, &c.,

A. P. TALBOT,
Acting Colonial Secretary, S. S.

The Hon'ble
The Resident Councillor, Penang.

REPORT OF THE DECISION OF THE COURT OF APPEAL IN THE CASE REGINA v. TAN
ENG WEE, TAKEN FROM "THE STRAITS LAW JOURNAL," 18TH JUNE, 1890.

Before O'Malley, C. J., Wood and Pellercau, J. J.

The defendant was charged on the 26th November, 1889, before Mr. HUDSON, Acting 3rd Magistrate, with an offence under section 14 of the Chinese Immigrants Ordinance (IV of 1880):—

"Any person or persons who shall induce or attempt to induce any immigrant whose passage money shall not have been paid to go to any place other than a depôt established under this Ordinance, or shall entice or attempt to entice away from any depôt any immigrant sent there by an Officer of the Protectorate, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty dollars for each immigrant."

On the 3rd December, 1889, the case was argued before WOOD, J., by the Attorney-General on behalf of the Crown, and DREW on behalf of the Defendant.

The learned Judge held that he could not depart from the words of the section; there was no ambiguity. He quashed the conviction, but, on the application of the Attorney-General, reserved the question for the Court of Appeal.

On the 18th June, 1890, the question was argued before the Court of Appeal, consisting of O'MALLEY, C. J., and WOOD and PELLEREAU, J. J.

The Attorney-General appeared for the Crown, and asked the Court to construe the words "any immigrant whose passage money shall not have been paid" in section 14, as meaning paid by the immigrant himself, pointing out that to construe the section otherwise would be virtually to put an end to the work of the Chinese Protectorate. The evil which the Ordinance was intended to meet was the virtual slavery which the immigrant would be under to the man who had brought him down from China and paid his passage money, if he were freed from the supervision of the Chinese Protectorate.

NAPIER for the Defendant.—This is a Penal Ordinance and must be construed strictly.

O'MALLEY, C. J., held that the section being a penal one, its words must be read in their general sense, and not in the particular sense contended for by the Attorney-General. He thought that the evil hinted at by the Attorney-General had arisen since the passing of the Ordinance.

WOOD and PELLEREAU, J. J., concurred.

Enclosure 3.

A BILL

intituled

An Ordinance to regulate Chinese Labour on Agricultural Estates.

WHEREAS it is expedient to make provision by law for the protection of Chinese labourers employed on agricultural estates in the Colony:

It is hereby enacted by the Governor of the Straits Settlements with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council thereof as follows:—

1. This Ordinance may be cited as "The Chinese Agricultural Labourers Protection Ordinance 1889" and shall come into operation on the first day of January 1890.

Short title and commencement of Ordinance.

2. In this Ordinance unless the context otherwise requires:—
"Labourer" means a Chinese person employed to labour on an estate where agricultural operations are carried on.

Interpretation.

"Employer" means the person for whose service a contract of service is entered into and in his absence from the estate includes his agent or manager or other person in charge of the business on the estate.

"Contract of service" means a contract made between an employer and a labourer under this Ordinance.

"Magistrate" means a Magistrate sitting in a Police Court.

"Medical Officer" means a medical officer appointed or acting under this Ordinance.

"The Protector" means the officer for the time being performing the duties of Protector of Chinese Immigrants and includes the officer performing the duties of Assistant Protector of Chinese Immigrants at any Settlement in the absence of the Protector.

3. Except as in this Ordinance expressly provided every contract of service shall be subject to the provisions of "The Labour Contracts Ordinance 1882" and every breach thereof shall be punishable in manner provided by that Ordinance.

Contracts of service to be subject to provisions of Labour Contracts Ordinance 1882.

4. Where any contract of service is in writing it shall be in the prescribed form otherwise the same shall be void and of no effect.

Contracts of service not in prescribed form to be void.

5. (1)—If any labourer desires to make a complaint to a Magistrate and requests his employer to take him or allow him to go before the nearest Magistrate such employer shall be legally bound to comply with such request within a reasonable time thereafter.

Complaints by labourers against employers.

(2)—Any employer who without reasonable excuse (the proof of which shall lie with him) omits to comply with such request as in this section is mentioned shall be punished with fine which may extend to two hundred dollars and with a further fine which may extend to fifty dollars for each day during which such omission is continued.

(3)—If the Magistrate before whom a labourer comes or is

brought under this section is of opinion that the complaint is frivolous he may award to the employer compensation to be paid by the labourer to an amount not exceeding ten dollars for any loss or damage which he may have sustained by reason of the absence from work of the labourer or otherwise by reason of the complaint.

Complaints by employers against labourers. 6. (1)—If any employer desires to make a complaint to a Magistrate against a labourer he may apprehend and take such labourer before the nearest Magistrate.

(2)—If it appears to the Magistrate that there was no sufficient ground for apprehending and bringing such labourer before him he may award to the labourer compensation to be paid by the employer to an amount not exceeding ten dollars.

Magistrate may order payment of costs of arrest of absconding labourer. 7. If a labourer absconds and is convicted thereof before a Magistrate the Magistrate may in addition to any other penalty which he may impose order the labourer to pay to the employer such sum not exceeding ten dollars as may be proved to his satisfaction to have been expended by the employer in effecting the labourer's arrest.

Provisions of section 27 of Ordinance I of 1882 not to apply in certain cases. 8. The provisions of section twenty-seven of "The Labour Contracts Ordinance 1882" shall not apply to the case of a labourer who has worked for three years continuously under one and the same contract of service.

Notice of employment of 20 labourers to be given to the Protector. 9. (1)—Every employer who at the commencement of this Ordinance employs twenty labourers or upwards shall forthwith after the passing of this Ordinance forward to the Protector a notice stating the number of labourers so employed by him and every employer who after the passing of this Ordinance shall employ twenty labourers or upwards shall forthwith after such employment give a similar notice.

(2)—Any person making default in giving a notice required by this section shall be punished with fine which may extend to two hundred dollars.

Register to be kept by employer. 10. (1)—Every employer who employs twenty labourers or upwards shall keep a register in the prescribed form of all labourers employed on the estate.

(2)—Every such employer shall within the first seven days of the months of January April July and October in every year forward to the Protector a return giving the particulars of every death desertion dismissal or expiry of contract of a labourer which has occurred on his estate during the three months immediately preceding the month in which the return is to be made.

(3)—Every person who omits duly to make the prescribed entries in such register and every person who omits duly to forward such returns as are in this section mentioned or omits to give any of the particulars in this section mentioned shall be punished with fine which may extend to one hundred dollars for every such omission.

Protector's powers of inspection. 11. The Protector or any Officer authorised by him in writing shall have at all times the right to enter upon and visit every estate on which labourers are employed and every part thereof and to

enter all buildings thereon for the purpose of inspecting the condition thereof and of the labourers employed thereon and also for the like purpose shall have at all times the right to enter into and upon all coolie lines and other places where labourers reside whether such lines and places are situate on the estate or not.

Employers to produce books &c. to Protector when required. 12. (1)—Every employer shall once in every year on receiving forty-eight hours' notice in writing signed by the Protector and also at all times on receiving a like notice signed by the Colonial Secretary or Resident Councillor muster and produce before the Protector or other Officer named in such notice all labourers employed by him and also shall at the same time and whenever requested by the Protector produce to the Protector or such other Officer as aforesaid all contracts registers books of account and other documents referring to his labourers and shall be legally bound to answer all such questions as the Protector may put to him respecting the same or in any wise relating to his labourers.

(2)—An employer who without reasonable excuse (the proof of which shall lie with him) refuses or neglects to comply with any request or to answer any question made or put to him by the Protector under the provisions of this section shall be punished with fine which may extend to two hundred dollars for every offence.

Advances to be worked off. 13. (1)—Where by a written contract of service a labourer is bound to repay to the employer the specified amount of certain advances already made to him or on his behalf and such amount shall not have been repaid at the expiration of the period for which the contract is made such period shall be deemed to be extended and the contract to be in force until such time as the whole of such amount shall have been repaid.

(2)—In every such case the employer shall at the expiration of the original period of service endorse on the contract the amount remaining due and shall within one month thereafter give notice thereof in writing to the Protector.

Days and hours of labour. 14. No labourer shall be bound to work more than nine hours a day of actual labour and shall be allowed without any deduction of pay two days' holiday in each month over and above the usual Chinese holidays.

Labourer may determine written contracts on payment of advances and in certain cases of smart money also. 15. (1)—A labourer whose contract of service is for a definite period shall be entitled to determine such contract at any time on giving one month's notice and on payment to the employer of all advances (if any) made to him or on his behalf and also if such determination take place during the first twelve months of such period on payment of an additional sum of twenty-five dollars by way of smart money.

(2)—Every employer shall be bound within a reasonable time after request by a labourer to furnish him with an account shewing what moneys (if any) are due by such labourer to the employer for advances.

(3)—Any employer who without reasonable excuse (the proof of which shall lie with him) refuses or neglects to furnish such account having been so requested as aforesaid or who shall knowingly fur-

nish an incorrect account and every employer who without reasonable excuse (the proof of which shall lie with him) refuses to allow a labourer whose contract has been determined to leave his service shall be punished with fine which may extend to one hundred dollars for each offence.

16. (1)—The employer shall be bound to provide for the labourer to the satisfaction of the Protector :—

- (a) Sufficient and proper house accommodation.
- (b) A sufficient supply of wholesome water.
- (c) Sufficient and proper sanitary arrangements.
- (d) Hospital accommodation.
- (e) Medical attendance.
- (f) A sufficient quantity of ordinary medicines of good quality.

(2)—An employer who without reasonable excuse (the proof of which shall lie with him) shall refuse or neglect to comply with any of the requirements of this section shall be punished with fine which may extend to two hundred dollars and also with a further fine which may extend to fifty dollars for every day during which such refusal or neglect shall continue.

Labourer
in hospital.

17. If a labourer be received for medical treatment in a Government Hospital the expenses attending the feeding and medical care of such labourer shall be paid for by his employer at such rate as the Governor may from time to time prescribe by notification in the *Gazette*. Such expenses whatever the amount shall be recoverable from the employer in a Court of Requests at the suit of the Protector and the certificate of the Protector shall be sufficient *prima facie* evidence that the amount therein specified is due from the employer.

Removal
of labourer
to hospital.

18. If it shall at any time appear to a Medical Officer or the Protector that a labourer is suffering from a contagious or infectious disease or that it is otherwise proper for his health that he should be attended to in hospital such labourer shall forthwith be placed in such hospital as such Medical Officer may direct and shall be detained therein for treatment until discharged by order in writing under the hand of the Medical Officer.

Temporary
incapacity.

19. Any labourer who is declared by a Medical Officer to be incapacitated for work by sickness pregnancy or other sufficient cause shall be entitled to be received into and kept in hospital where he or she shall be fed and clothed at the expense of the employer during such incapacity but shall not be entitled to any wages for such period.

Absence from
sickness.

20. (1)—If any labourer is compelled to absent himself from work on account of sickness for a period or periods exceeding the total number of thirty days in any one year and the employer as soon as such number is exceeded gives such labourer a notice in writing to that effect the Protector shall from time to time endorse on the contract of such labourer after such enquiry as may be necessary the number of days of absence in excess of thirty.

(2)—If the absence from work of a labourer for any period is certified by a Medical Officer to be the direct result of the labourer's intemperance immorality or wilful misconduct the Protector may endorse on the contract of such labourer after such enquiry as may be necessary the period of such absence.

When result
of immo-
rality.

21. For the purposes of this Ordinance and of the Penal Code the Protector and all officers authorised by him in writing under this Ordinance shall be deemed to be public servants.

Protector and
officers to be
public
servants.

Ord. 13
of 1872.

22. For the purposes of section forty of "The Summary Criminal Jurisdiction Ordinance 1872" an estate on which twenty or more labourers are employed shall be deemed a public place.

Estate to be
deemed a
public place.

23. Whenever a labourer under a written contract of service is convicted of any offence the Judge or Magistrate before whom such conviction is heard shall endorse on the contract a memorandum of the conviction and sentence.

Conviction
to be
endorsed on
contract.

24. All offences against this Ordinance shall be tried summarily before a Magistrate or Court of two Magistrates.

Trial of
offences.

25. Any person charged with an offence against this Ordinance may if he thinks fit tender himself to be examined on his own behalf and thereupon may give evidence in the same manner and with the like effect and consequences as any other witness.

Person
charged may
give evidence
on his own
behalf.

26. (1)—The Governor in Council may make rules in respect of all or any of the following matters :—

Rules.

- (a) the forms of register to be kept by employers and the particulars to be entered therein;
- (b) the forms of contracts of service;
- (c) the days which are to be deemed usual Chinese holidays for the purpose of this Ordinance;
- (d) the periodical inspection of estates on which labourers are employed and of the coolie lines in which labourers reside; and
- (e) generally in relation to any matters whether similar or not to those above-mentioned as to which it may be expedient to make rules for carrying into effect the objects of this Ordinance.

(2)—In making a rule under this section the Governor in Council may direct that a breach of it shall be punishable with fine which may extend to one hundred dollars and when the breach is a continuing breach with a further fine which may extend to ten dollars for every day after the first during which the breach continues.

(3)—Every rule made under this section shall be laid on the table of the Legislative Council at its next meeting and shall then be published in the *Gazette* and shall have the same force and effect as if enacted in this Ordinance but such rule shall not come into operation until a date to be fixed for that purpose by the Governor which date shall be subsequent to the meeting of the Legislative Council next ensuing that at which such rule is so laid on the table and any rule which is disapproved by a resolution of the Legislative Council shall not come into operation or if it has come into operation shall cease to have operation.

REMARKS ON THE PROPOSED BILL TO REGULATE CHINESE
LABOUR ON AGRICULTURAL ESTATES.

BATU KAWAN ESTATE,
Province Wellesley, 26th November, 1889.

SIR,—I have to thank your Excellency for favouring me with a view of the above proposed Ordinance, before its presentation to the Legislative Council.

2. I now have the honour to express my opinion and suggestions, trusting it may somewhat be the means of introducing a workable bill; not only for the benefit of the labourer, but, will also tend to ameliorate the many serious losses and burthens inflicted on that sorely tried class the planters.

3. Employers in Province Wellesley are singular in this respect, that they have to bear the losses and trouble attending the importation of their necessary labour; the difficulties entailed on them have increased greatly within the last few years with regard to Chinese; so much so that large tracts of land have been allowed to go out of cultivation to the almost ruin of the owners; as well as loss of revenue to Government, which will be seriously felt sooner or later, if some steps are not taken to ensure a cheap and steady supply of labour, than that now existing.

4. To illustrate this, I may mention that this year, the cost of procuring Chinese labour has risen from \$28 to \$38; and even \$42 per man has been paid for passage from China, advances and other charges.

5. Employers can only procure labour through the agency of certain persons named *Kheh-thaus*, who regulate the cost, according to the supply and demand.

6. Personally I have done my best to procure labour direct from China through the agency of an European firm, and although men were shipped costing with all charges near on \$35 per man, they were intercepted at Singapore for other places; the result being that the attempt entailed a loss of \$700 in cash.

7. Even after securing your labourers at great cost and trouble, the demand for labour in the surrounding districts and neighbouring States is so great, that unscrupulous persons hold out every inducement for them to abscond, which the labourer is but too ready to avail himself of, so as to be free from his original obligations.

8. In 1888 I engaged 479 Chinese, in the course of the year 75 deserted; to date in 1889, I have engaged 584 men, of whom 114 have already absconded, this with deaths, incapacity and the difference between actual cost and that recoverable, means a very heavy monetary loss to an enterprise.

9. While on this subject of cost of importing Chinese, I would beg to point out that the two Commissions that have sat—on one of which I had the honour to be a member—on this question, it was clearly established that the actual cost of bringing a cooly from Swatow to Penang, amounted with credit passage, advances, commission, &c., to at least \$25; it seems strange that the Protectorate should only allow \$19.50 to be the advance recoverable, well knowing, that to get this labour, that the employer is paying much more, this is one of the grievances that employers complain of seriously.

10. With these remarks I now proceed to suggest and point out the incongruity of the Ordinance.

11. *Section 4. Contracts of service not in prescribed form to be void.*—As the contracts of service are to be drawn up by the Governor in Council, in doing so, it is hoped that some consideration will be shown the employer, who perhaps require more protection than the labourer; it is earnestly requested that a clause may be inserted, recognising task or contract work, it is only by this kind of work that Chinese can be made to work satisfactorily; it is a custom among them from time immemorial; a good worker can earn a higher rate of wages, work fewer hours, and in many instances may complete his engagement earlier; they are also more their own master, than tied down to a daily wage. Our present form of contract was in a measure dictated to us by the Protectorate and is silent on the subject; contract work being the system in vogue, such omission may cause some difficulties in the future.

12. *Section 5. Complaints of labourers against employers.*—Sub-section (2).—The fines in this section and I may say throughout the whole of the Ordinance are, as a rule, far in excess of any need; if the employer omits to comply with his coolie's request without a reasonable excuse, he can be fined \$200 with an additional fine for each day during which the omission is continued which may extend to \$50. Does this mean that he can be fined \$50 for each day, or only a sum that may amount to \$50? If the former, it is simply monstrous. It puts too much in the power of an unscrupulous, foolish or spiteful youth. Sub-section (3).—Should labourers be unable to pay the award what redress has the employer? In my opinion it should be allowed to be put as a debt, to work it off by his labour.

13. *Section 7. Magistrate may order payment of costs of arrest of absconding labourer.*—I think instead of *may* it should be *shall* if proved to his satisfaction. Ten dollars is too small a sum—speaking generally—to reimburse an employer for the expenses incurred in arresting a deserter. I have known as much as \$25 paid simply for the information of his whereabouts, then there is gharry hire, tyndal's pay, &c., &c. soon runs up an account. I think the case would be met if "not exceeding fifteen dollars" were allowed, when proved to the satisfaction of the Magistrate, and in case he is unable to pay, he should be obliged to work off the amount in labour.

14. *Section 8. Provision of section 27 of Ordinance I of 1882 not to apply in certain cases.*—The wording of this section is ambiguous, supposing a contract was made for three years, would the Government exempt this man from making up his absent time, malingering and imprisonment; this is an important point, and as it is I would like to see it eliminated from the Ordinance, for it is important that idlers should make up lost time. It is a most cumbersome proceeding, that absence must be prosecuted before a Magistrate to get it endorsed; why not introduce a section as 74 Ordinance V of 1884, that the Protector should confirm the absence, by his signature after enquiry, on one of his visits.

Section 9. Notice of employment of 20 labourers to be given to the Protector.—However desirable it may be that Government should know every employer of labour; this section will interfere very much with small planters and to inflict a fine of \$200 for default in giving notice, as required by the section, is outrageous; \$100 would be sufficient.

16. *Section 10. Register to be kept by employer.*—Not knowing the nature of the register to be kept I can make no remarks, but it appears to me that the Hon'ble the Attorney-General appears to think that planters can afford to pay in fines hundreds of dollars; inflict them and it will be very soon seen that the small planters would soon abandon their holdings; however, if the Register is simple in form and the particulars easily obtained, I have not much objection to raise.

17. *Section 13. Advances to be worked off.*—This is a very important section; as advances are frequently made to Chinese coolies by the employer during the period of his contract over and above the original advances; for instance, a porkman, cake seller, fish or many other things may be passing the kongsee, or even a little gambling may be on; it strikes the cooly he would like to have a little something on his own account, he borrows money from his towkay to gratify that wish, the money so lent is put to his account, should the towkay refuse, he would be considered a hard master and discontent would be the result. Provision must be made in the Ordinance or contract to meet this. Gambling is no doubt rife wherever bodies of men are gathered together, they have no other way to amuse themselves after their day's work, and, therefore, in my opinion, as long as men from outside are not admitted, and the play is among themselves, I see no harm in it, especially as it is admissible in the Native States and over the border.

Sub-section (2) entails unnecessary work and trouble, having to report in writing to the Protector the amount remaining due; let it be endorsed on his visits.

18. *Section 14. Days and hours of labour.*—With two days' holidays in a month, besides other holidays, means the total cessation, of work on an estate for one month in the year, as well as having to pay for such loss of labour; no agricultural enterprise in the Straits could survive such a serious loss of labour and money; as:—

First.—To carry on the necessary work, an extra percentage of men would have to be engaged.

Second.—More house accommodation and the upkeep of such would have to be provided.

Third.—Extra supplies would have to be got in, all this would entail extra capital and consideration in carrying on an estate, thus adding to our difficulties which in all conscience are bad enough at present, needing nothing more to make it unbearable.

The rule and custom has always been with Chinese, that of their own accord, they frequently take a half-holiday or even a whole day when they choose; by their present contracts they are allowed half a day on Chinese holidays on which they get a full day's pay and food; it must not be lost sight of that on these holidays and stoppages as on wet days, they are fed by their headmen; unless the stoppages exceed thirty days in the year, then they have to pay eight cents per day for their food, and make up the absent days.

Their contract is for 360 working days, and to meet the absent days, they are supposed to be with their employers 390 days as a year.

With the exception of certain Chinese holidays, it has never been the custom to pay wages for non-working days, the maxim among them being "no work no pay"; I think the employer is sufficiently taxed by having to give food free.

In the Indian Immigration Ordinance, section 47, the one day off work with pay is only earned on working six consecutive days in the week—but they feed themselves, so that to introduce such a law for the Chinese labourers as proposed, would be the breaking of an established custom, seriously checking all agricultural enterprises, and tending to still more encourage gambling.

19. *Section 15. Labourer may determine written contracts on payment of advances and in certain case of smart money also.*—Is not definite enough, what employers principally complain of, is that when labourers wish to determine their contract, or their friends and so called relatives for them, only the arbitrary advance endorsed on their contract is repayable, whereas in fact the employer may have paid some \$38 or \$42 to engage the services of the labourer, thus opening a door for an unprincipled person to redeem the man, for a much less sum than he otherwise would have to pay.

I would suggest that line 33 after the word "behalf" should be written "before or after signing his contract" or words somewhat similar to the terms of section 25 of Ordinance V of 1884. The reason I say "before" is that an employer before taking the labourer to the Protectorate, the labourer having verbally agreed to enter service, has paid or agreed to pay the *Kheh-Thau* the sum agreed on; when on the point of signing the contract a so-called relative steps in and says "I wish to redeem my nephew tendering say \$20"; this is accepted by the Protector, and the man is free to accept another engagement, leaving the employer to settle the difference with the importer; he should not only be obliged to pay advances, and money advanced on his behalf, but all the expenses incurred by his employer in engaging him whether on the cooly's behalf or not. This should be made very plain. By a liberal reading of the wording, the words "on his behalf" may mean all the employer's expenses; but a lawyer might argue that they only meant advances to him or at his request, or for his food, clothing, &c. This would exclude the broker's profit, which is an uncertain sum, but which in such a matter must be taken into account. The wording must, therefore, leave no ambiguity as has been done in section 25 of Ordinance V of 1884.

20. *Section 16. Employers of twenty coolies can scarcely be expected to find "hospital accommodation" "medical attendance" and "medicines of good quality."* Generally Chinese prefer their own medicines. The fines in this section are exorbitant and may be abused.

21. *Section 19. Temporary incapacity.*—As no Chinese women are employed in the Settlement as agricultural labourers, part of the section is unnecessary; but were they, why should their husbands be relieved of a responsibility that exists in all civilised society and even otherwise. I can understand such a regulation in the days of slavery, as the child and mother were the master's property, but in this century all are free agents.

22. *Section 20, sub-section (1). Absence from sickness.*—If section 14 of this Ordinance and this section be enforced, it reads that the labourer can claim some sixty days in the year for absence, thirty of which he is fed gratis and paid also; this section leaves it an open question whether pay goes on or not. I do not think in England farm servants are allowed such privileges as is wished to be given to the heathen Chinese in this Ordinance; not that I personally would refuse to aid and assist a sick man in my service, but this motherly care makes a man indifferent for the wet day that may come. I would seek to make him prudent and careful when in health.

23. Section 85 of Ordinance V of 1884 ought to be introduced in this Ordinance.

24. In conclusion I have again to thank your Excellency for your consideration in affording me an opportunity for expressing my views on so important a subject.

I have, &c.,

J. M. VERMONT.

His Excellency the Governor,
Straits Settlements.

BATU KAWAN ESTATE,
2nd December, 1889.

SIR,—In forwarding my notes on "The Ordinance to regulate Chinese Labour on Agricultural Estates," I omitted to send copies of our present Contracts which have been in force and acted upon for several years. I now have the honour of forwarding three copies, A, B and C.

2. A shows that the advances actually made was \$30.50 per man, of which only \$19.50 was recoverable from the labourer; it shows also the difficulty of recruiting, for eleven men verbally agreed to join the estate, but when it came to signing only four men did so, the others being deterred by some outside machinations.

3. B shows that engagements made in Singapore are even more irksome on the employer than in Penang, for in that Contract the advances are \$33 and only \$18 recoverable; the employer losing \$15 on each man or, in other words, having to pay that amount to the recruiter so as to secure his labourers.

4. C is a Contract with time-expired men, or, as they are called, *Lau-Khehs*, by it; it will be seen that he is by far the cheaper man, as the advances are only \$14 each, all of which is recoverable; and the enhanced rate of wages is only \$8; with this advantage, he is a climatized man and a thorough good workman; can it be wondered, therefore, that employers are so much against the *Lau-Kheh* depôts that have been lately established in Penang, where every facility is given to men to leave the Settlement and work under another flag.

5. I would beg to call to your notice that the Contracts are all for 360 full days' work according to custom, working ten hours daily until the said number of days' work has been completed, except on the customary Chinese holidays.

6. Section 14 of Ordinance makes the working hours nine; I can see no reason to alter the customary hours, as in fact with task work they work seldom more than eight hours, but circumstances might arise when it would be necessary to enforce a full day's actual labour.

7. My former letter comments fully on the other portion of the section.

8. By the Contract, on Chinese holidays work cannot be enforced; as stated in my former letter, no work is allowed for half a day, but a full day's pay is given.

9. I think that section 70 of Ordinance V of 1884 might be usefully introduced in the new Ordinance, it would then give employers an opportunity to answer reports made by Government against them.

10. I am told, with what amount of truth I cannot say, that Mr. WRAY, the Protector of Chinese in Penang, is somewhat going against employers in these customs, interpreting them in a different way than heretofore, the consequence is that there is much excitement and friction that should not exist, it is, therefore, hoped that our present Contracts will be somewhat recognised.

I have, &c.,

J. M. VERMONT.

His Excellency the Governor,
Straits Settlements.

Section 2. "In the absence of the Protector."—I would strongly urge that these words be omitted. A similar provision in the Women and Girls' Protection Ordinance has caused very considerable delay in the transaction of business and it is unfair to put the whole burden of the working of all his Ordinances on the Protector when he is in a Settlement.

Section 4. "In the prescribed form."—For this read "in a form approved by the Governor in Council under section 26 (3)." There will be many 'prescribed forms' *vide* Mr. VERMONT's letter.

Section 5 (3), Section 6 (2), Section 7.—Both Mr. HERVEY and Mr. VERMONT very properly point out that the Ordinance does not lay down how the compensation in these sections is to be paid. I would suggest that the amount should be endorsed on the contract by the Magistrate and if it is to be paid by the employer it should be considered as so much wages earned by the labourer and if it is to be paid by the labourer as so much advance received from the employer which must be worked out like any other advance.

Section 7.—Mr. VERMONT's request that this may be raised to \$15 is not unreasonable.

Section 8.—As Mr. VERMONT points out for the proper working of section 27 of the Labour Contracts Ordinance a provision similar to section 74 of Ordinance V of 1884 should be here inserted, *i.e.*, that the absent days should be certified to by the Protector on one of his visits.

Section 9.—Mr. HERVEY suggests "ten" instead of "twenty" labourers.

Section 13.—It is very important that this should apply not only to original advances but to further advances made during the period of contract.

Section 14.—For "two days' holiday in each month" should be read "the 1st and 15th of every Chinese moon as holidays." Mr. HERVEY suggests 8 instead of 9 hours, but the Indian Immigration Ordinance makes it 9.

Section 19.—The Medical Officer in this section would generally be the Apothecary on the estate, each of whom would require to be gazetted as Medical Officer under section 2.

Section 20 (1) and (2).—This section appears to me to be incomplete. The idea is that any excess over thirty days' legitimate illness in one year or any illness due to the labourer's own indiscretion should not count as part of the period of contract but this section does not say so, stopping at the endorsement of the contract. It is unnecessary, I think, that the employer should give a written notice to the labourer.

Section 22.—There is, I understand, a new Summary Criminal Jurisdiction Ordinance in preparation.

F. POWELL,
Acting Protector of Chinese.

Singapore, 8th January, 1889.

RESIDENT COUNCILLOR'S OFFICE,
Malacca, 19th November, 1889.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter Attorney-General dated the 14th instant, forwarding for my remarks copy of a Draft Ordinance to regulate Chinese labour on agricultural estates, and to offer the following observations thereon.

2. I would suggest that the compensation to be paid by a labourer under section 5 and section 7 be recovered by deduction from his wages, at a rate to be fixed by the Magistrate, which should be recorded on the contract for the information of the Assistant Protector.

3. Compensation to be made to the labourer under clause 2 of section 6 should be reckoned and similarly recorded as part payment by the labourer of his advance.

4. (a) Section 9 might be amended by the insertion, after "employs" in the 2nd line, of the words "on any one estate more than ten," and by the omission of the word "twenty" after "employs".

(b)—Line 5 between "shall" and "employ" insert the word "so".

(c)—Line 6 for "twenty" substitute "ten".

5. Section 11, 1st line, before "the Protector" insert "the Resident Councillor" and in the same line for "him" substitute "either of them".

6. (a)—Section 12, line 2, after "notice" insert "counting from service of the same on the Manager of the estate".

(b)—Such notice should be both in Chinese and English.

7. Section 13, clause (2), line 3, for "month" substitute "week".

from Section 14, line 1, for "nine" substitute "eight," working hours being, say, 6 A.M. to 11 A.M. and from 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. or from 6 A.M. to 11 A.M. and 1 P.M. M., which should not, I think, be exceeded, unless the labourer should make an agreement with the employer to work longer hours for extra remuneration, such agreement to be made before the Assistant Protector and the remuneration to be regarded as part payment of the advance, such agreement should be terminable by a notice on either side, to be given to the Assistant Protector.

Section 16 (1) (e), I am disposed to think it better that Government should take the medical attendance, appointing a Dresser where required, to be paid by the employer and supplying the medicines at cost price. The employer might pay salary to Government, who could pay the Dresser; this would guarantee a better salary of Dresser, and better attendance, and the employer would gain in getting the medicines at cost price, against having to pay a rather better salary for the Dresser than he might otherwise have to do. This might be dealt with under the Rules.

10. Section 20, a 3rd clause might be added to the effect that a labourer absconding from hospital would be liable to the same punishment as though he had absconded from the estate.

11. Section 26, clause 3, line 2, for "its" substitute "their".

I have, &c.,

D. F. A. HERVEY,
Resident Councillor of Malacca.

The Hon'ble
The Colonial Secretary, S. S.
Singapore.

Enclosure 4.

CORRESPONDENCE RE MORTALITY OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS
IN THE NATIVE STATES.

Secretary to Government of India, to Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements.

Revenue & Agricultural Dept.
Emigration.

CALCUTTA, the 3rd March, 1890.

SIR,—With reference to your letter No. 9677—89, dated 17th September last, relating to the high mortality amongst statute immigrants in the Sungei Ujong and Selangor States in 1888, I am directed to forward, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, a copy of the accompanying correspondence with the Government of Madras on the subject.

2. His Excellency the Governor-General in Council apprehends that the climatic conditions on estates newly opened up for cultivation in the Protected States offer greater risks to the health of coolies than those of estates in the Province of Wellesley and elsewhere which have been long established, and that this is especially true in the case of those coolies who have not, like the majority of the free Tamils, become acclimatized. The Governor-General in Council agrees, therefore, with His Excellency the Governor that special care is necessary in the selection of newly-recruited coolies in the Madras Presidency. There seems to be no reason to believe that the officers and agents upon whom the primary responsibility of selection is placed by the Government of the Straits Settlements will find it out of their power to obtain men of

correspondence annexed and to specially commend to the consideration of the Government of India the suggestions made in paragraph 4 of the letter of the Civil Surgeon of Negapatam dated the 15th November, 1890.

2. I am to add that this Government is of opinion that some stipulation should be made as to the minimum wages to be paid to contract labourers. The men cannot, of course, expect the same terms as free labourers who find their own way to the Straits, but if the latter class receive as much as from 20 to 30 rupees a month, this Government is of opinion that contract labourers should not be paid so little as Rs. 9—a sum which appears to be only sufficient for bare subsistence, if even that.

3. I am accordingly to request that the question of increasing the wages of indentured emigrants may be taken into consideration, as it seems probable that many of the deaths attributed to debility and diarrhoea have been primarily due to want of means to procure sufficient wholesome food.

I have, &c.,

FORT ST. GEORGE,
10th January, 1891.

J. F. PRICE,
Chief Secretary.

APPENDIX.

From J. THOMSON, Esq., Acting Collector, Tanjore, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Vallam, 28th November, 1890, No. 851.

Referring to endorsement, No. 2872, of 20th October last, in the Public Department, forwarding, for remarks, the annual report on Indian Immigration in the Straits Settlements for 1889, I have the honour to submit copies of the Head Assistant Collector's, Negapatam Emigration Agent's, and Civil Surgeon's observations thereon.

2. It will be observed that the Emigration Agent recommends a furlough in depôt at Penang, while the Colonial Secretary (paragraph 7 of his report) of 4 or 5 days, and that he denies that the class of coolies sent to the Straits to that sent elsewhere. The Civil Surgeon's acquaintance with returned emigrants seeking his assistance has not impressed him favourably as to the climate, he estimates wage, term of contract, and work. His suggestion that intending emigrants should be made fully aware of prices where they purpose going is practical and should be adopted. Mr. Cobb objects to the Straits emigration *in toto*, saying that there is a home demand for labour, that the Straits emigrant is properly remunerated, and that the East Coast native constitution is unequal to the Straits climate.

3. The Straits Settlements will of course get a better class of men physically means of their having a competent agent in Negapatam. But that does not excuse this Government of the obligation of seeing that the conditions of climate, labour, and wage there are such as the ordinary cooly should be subjected to, and Mr. MacGREGOR's report, paragraphs 6, 9, 10, and 17 to 19, and the tables and causes of mortality such, in my view, as to indicate grossly-careless treatment or ill-treatment of the emigrants, and that the India Government should insist on a higher rate of wages, shorter term of contract, and more attention to housing and no doubt clothing, or prohibit the emigration. The physically-better class selected in the circumstances stated would only drag out a longer existence.

ENCLOSURES.

From H. V. COBB, Esq., Acting Head Assistant Collector of Tanjore, to the Collector of Tanjore, dated Negapatam, 17th November, 1890, No. 1922.

In returning Government reference, dated 20th October, 1890, with your endorsement, No. 7150, of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to observe that it is not quite clear to me whether you desire a general expression of opinion on the emigration from Negapatam to the Straits or whether you wish that my remarks should be confined to the question of mortality referred to by the Government of India. I propose, however, to adopt the former view, and accordingly make the following observations.

2. The emigration depôt established here is, in my opinion, an excellent institution. The fact that there have been so many

Paragraph 14 of the annual report. rejections shows that the Superintendent is really doing his duty. Under existing arrangements, kidnapping or anything approaching thereto is impossible. The recruiter may, and probably does, hold out false inducements to many would-be emigrants. These promises are, however, ruthlessly dispelled by the plain and unvarnished truth which is put before every man, woman and child, when brought to the depôt, by not only the Superintendent, but also by the Emigration Agent, whose duty it is to inspect the emigrants a few hours before they sail. I have myself, since my arrival, seen this inspection held, and was pleased with the thorough and efficient manner in which it was conducted. Here, however, it should be said that although the emigrants are told exactly what pay they will receive during the whole period of their contract, yet they cannot and do not the least understand what it really means. Political economy is a science unknown to them, and a disquisition on the fact that the value of wages is dependent on food prices would present but little meaning to their untutored minds. All their grasp is that, whereas here their earnings would not exceed, say, Rs. 4 a month, in the land of promise to which they are going their monthly wage will commence at Rs. 7-4-0 and will be raised to Rs. 9 after the first year. They do not know that in point of fact they would do better with Rs. 3 here than Rs. 9 there, and

Paragraph 19 of the report. that they will have the mortification of seeing * their fellow-countrymen employed on free labour earning Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 a month for exactly similar work.

Till contract wages have been doubled, I for my part would be glad not to see a single cooly leave our ports. The planters of Coorg, the Nilgiris and Malabar are crying aloud for labour, and till they are supplied I look with disfavour upon official attempts to bolster up recruitment for foreign lands, especially when such recruitment is attended with a minimum wage and a maximum mortality.

3. As regards the question of mortality, in spite of the remarks of the Acting Colonial Secretary in paragraph 7 of his letter, dated 19th June, 1890, No. 3251, I still think that there is considerable truth in the point raised by my predecessor as to prostration caused by sea-sickness. A more important consideration however—and one which the Port Officer urges strongly—is that the Straits climate is totally different to that of the East Coast of India, whence most of the emigrants are drawn. I am informed that in the Straits there is constant rain all the year round. If, then, men are to be recruited at all, I would urge that the most suitable for the purpose are West Coast natives, who are acclimatised to a heavy rainfall.

4. As stated above, however, I am altogether averse to emigration, which is beset with misrepresentations here and hardships there. If it is to continue, the wages rate must at any cost be raised, and then, and not till then, will the number of deaths euphemistically ascribed to "debility"—which, I take it, is another method of expressing "want of proper food"—be satisfactorily reduced.

5. I enclose true copies of a letter on the subject from the Civil Surgeon and of some remarks made by the Port Officer on paragraph 3 of the present report.

REMARKS of the Port Officer on paragraph 3 of the Head Assistant Collector's report.

The Port Officer as Emigration Agent has had considerable experience in the subject extending over two years, and points out that the majority of the coolies are fresh caught in the jungles. The voyage is just long enough to pull them down; the most of them have never even been on ship and of course are sea-sick the whole five days of the voyage. Were they received in a depôt at Penang and fed up for a fortnight before being sent to the estates, they would have a chance. It is absurd to say the stamp of coolies sent is inferior; the same sort of people are sent to Mauritius and Natal, but the voyage is longer, and they arrive at their destination strong and healthy.

(Signed) P. JAMES,
Emigration Agent.

From S. PATRAO, Esq., Acting Civil Surgeon, Negapatam, to the Head Assistant Collector, Negapatam, dated 15th November, 1890, No. 417.

I have the honour to return herewith Annual Report on Indian Immigration Agent for the year 1889 and its enclosures received by me from the Port Officer, Negapatam, on the 14th instant.

1. It is indeed very deplorable to go over the long list of deaths among the Indian emigrants in the Straits Settlements during the year 1889, and I consider that the excessive death-rate is generally due to the unhealthiness of most of the estates and the climatic influence, the low rate of wages and the long term of their contract, or overwork.

2. The Indian cooly, who is mostly tantalized by the recruiters, finding that his wages at the Straits Settlements would be far better than what he would earn here, hardly gives ear to what is told him in earnest by the Emigration Agent and Protector, but exposes himself to the risk of trying his fortune in a strange land the description of which has already been given to him by the recruiters in the most commendable terms.

3. I had occasion to see some of the returned emigrants who sought admission into the municipal hospital during the last one year I have been in medical charge and found many of them suffering from chronic diarrhoea and dropsy, which clearly show that among the coolies who return from the Straits, most of them, with a very few exceptions, are subject to some disease or other contracted during their sojourn there, and as these men are found quite helpless and destitute with regard to their means and health, it is a question open to answer whether those who go there with the hopes of earning their fortunes or at least bettering their prospects, do really obtain their object in view.

4. However I would suggest—

- (a) that the emigrants after they are landed at their destination should be given at least a week's rest before they are sent for work;
- (b) that a shorter period of contract and liberal wages should be offered, as the wages are too small for the work taken owing to the high prices of provisions, &c. In conclusion, I would solicit that a table showing the prices of the several articles of food current at the Straits should be posted at the depôt here for the guidance of the coolies, so that they may be able to see things as they are, and not to be misguided.

