

THE SELANGOR REPORT FOR 1892.

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THE SELANGOR REPORT FOR 1892.

[EXTRACTS.]

(Continued.)

Posts and Telegraphs.

THE revenue collected by the Postal Department amounted to \$14,645, against in the previous year of \$12,428. The total cost of the Department was \$57,567.14.

The number of articles dealt with by the Post Office was 759,770, as compared with 526,780 in 1891, or an increase of 44 per cent.

The stamps sold numbered 213,935, of a value of \$5,858, as compared with 160,173 stamps sold in 1891, or an increase of 33 per cent.

The money order business conducted was of the value of \$51,206 as compared with \$29,590 in the previous year. The commission on the orders issued shewed an increase of 50 per cent. on that of 1891, and it really was greater, as the Colonial Government claimed its half share of the commission on all orders issued on the Straits Settlements.

The Ulu Selangor service was much improved, and the Rawang mails were sent by rail as soon as the line was opened. Three pillar boxes were erected in Kuala Lumpur and were much used. A saving of \$1,250 to the State was effected by obtaining Selangor stamps from the Crown Agents. A scheme for a Post Office Savings Bank was prepared before the close of the year.

The paid telegrams exhibited an increase of 38 per cent. over the receipts of 1891, the total Telegraph receipts amounting to \$4,275 as compared with \$2,872 in 1891. The total number of telegrams received was 45,327, and those despatched numbered 44,325.

Though no new lines were erected in Selangor, the officers and funds of the State were employed in making telegraph lines in Pahang, and three stations were opened in that State: (a) at Tras on the 7th January, (b) at Ginting Bidai on the 13th of April, (c) at Kuala Lipis on the 19th of August. The first and second of these offices were closed on the 1st and 18th of December, respectively, but the third is still open, as it is the headquarters of Ulu Pahang. These lines consumed 99 miles of wire covering 63 miles of roadway.

The Pahang disturbances increased the work of the Department—the offices being kept open, for some months, from 6 A. M. to 9 P. M., and sometimes for the whole 24 hours. The number of messages to and from that State was 9,724.

Iron poles were substituted for wooden on the lines from Kajang to Bernam, Kuala Lumpur to Rawang and Kuala Kluang to



Tanjong Malim. This will eventually reduce the cost of upkeep, which amounted for the whole State to \$5,808 but of which, however, a sum of \$1,376 was on account of Pahang.

The new Telegraph Regulations—the outcome of the Penang conference—were brought into force in September. They are simple and effective, but the system of accounts is troublesome, and it should be arranged between the Governments concerned to strike a balance, on a give-and-take principle, for each State or Settlement, and so avoid much book-keeping. The new rules entailed a loss of \$1,000 to the Government owing to the altered rates.

Public Works.

Mr. C. E. Spooner was in charge of the Public Works Department, and by his untiring energy and great capacity for hard work he has made a considerable improvement in the manner in which public works have been carried out. He reports that he has received every assistance from the members of his staff.

The budget which the Public Works Department was expected to tackle in 1892 may be detailed as follows:—

Estimated expenditure on works and buildings	\$295,900
Revotes from 1891	56,920
Special votes taken in 1892	26,674

Total	\$379,494
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Estimated expenses on roads, streets and bridges	\$306,750
Revotes from 1891	94,787
Special votes taken in 1892	26,943

Total	\$428,480
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Of this budget, totalling almost \$808,000, there were expended the following sums:—


On works and buildings	\$262,755
On roads, streets and bridges	318,807

Total	\$581,562
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The expenditure for 1891 was \$426,307. There was an actual saving of about \$32,000 on works placed upon the budget, which were not undertaken. The rest of the unexpended balance is, however, in the nature of a liability.

Year by year it has been the case that the Public Works Department has not been able to spend the money provided, and this has been due to the frequent alteration of plans, to the delay in writing out specifications and consequent inability to invite tenders for works until the year was well advanced, with the result that large sums of money have had to be revoted and public works have been pushed on during the last six months of the year with more haste than supervision. This state of affairs has been remedied and should never be allowed to recur. In October I submitted to H.E. the Governor a plan and detailed estimate of every work entered on the budget for 1893, with the result that tenders were called for *en bloc* in December last and that in 1893 an early start was made. I mention this as it is in my opinion a most important matter, and as it reflects the greatest credit on Mr. Spooner and his staff.

A matter of equal importance is the cheapening of cost of public works. The scheme for a Factory was submitted to the Governor in detail and approved of, and in connection with it there will be a State Store from which materials will be supplied to the various district stores, and a body of skilled workmen will be recruited who will enable the State Engineer to undertake departmentally many works for which the most extravagant prices




have now to be paid. A Timber Depôt was arranged for and Government Brickfields started, and this immediately reduced the price hitherto paid for bricks inferior in size and in quality.

In connection with roads, streets and bridges there is not much to record of actual construction work. The High Street Bridge was not completed before the close of the year owing to the non-receipt of the ironwork till November. The road from Ampang to Ulu Klang was let to Mr. W. D. Mitchell


on contract and good progress made. The unsatisfactory contract, which was being still more unsatisfactorily carried out by Messrs. Becher, Louis and Co., for a trace and footpath through the Setapak Valley in the direction of Pahang, was ultimately determined. The bridle-path, of which the gradient is excellent, from Ginting Bidai to Kuala Tali was let to Mr. Edwin Watson and pushed on in a very satisfactory manner—the bridgework being very good. A considerable amount of work was done in the formation and improvement of new streets in the town and environs of Kuala Lumpur.

Ceylon system of Road upkeep.




In his report for 1891 Mr. Maxwell stated that the Ceylon system of road upkeep would be started in 1892. This was done: and as a special report on its working was called for by H. E. the Governor I now attach Mr. Spooner's report (see Appendix J). To commence with, the system did not work as economically as was anticipated, but it was pushed forward with great energy and the roads on which the metal was spread were much improved. The system cannot, however, be criticised in fairness until it has been tried for three years, as the essence of it is the gradual addition year by year of metal laid evenly along the whole surface from end to end of each road. Mr. H. F. Bellamy, whose loyal co-operation and willing work were much appreciated by the State Engineer, writes of it as follows:—"There can be no question that the system introduced is undoubtedly the best one, and the condition of the majority of the roads in the Kuala Lumpur district proved it." Mr. Bellamy is an officer of much road-making experience and was for some years head of the Public Works Department in Selangor. His opinion is endorsed by the three other officers in charge of districts.

Railways.



Mr. A. J. W. Watkins was in charge of the Selangor Government Railways in 1892.

It is very satisfactory to be able to report, and here I quote from the figures supplied to me by the Railway Department, that the actual earnings of the railway amounted to \$380,452, or \$70,197 more than in 1891: while the expenditure on open lines was only \$149,387, or 39 per cent. of the gross receipts. These figures are the more remarkable when it is remembered that the rates for certain goods (food-supplies) were reduced during the year to the extent of lowering the gross receipts by about \$14,000, and that a large item of the expenditure was the reconstruction of the Klang jetties.



The total sums spent on railways in Selangor amounted at the end of the year to \$2,092,574, and the net profit on that outlay for the year was 11.04 per cent., while the profit on the capital account of the Klang to Kuala Lumpur line alone was approximately 19 per cent.

The number of passengers carried was 182,211, or 47,698 more than in 1891; and the weight of goods rose from 855,171 pikuls to 1,054,181 pikuls: the revenue derived from goods traffic was more by \$48,782 than in the previous year.

The Contractors, Messrs. Campbell and Co., came to the conclusion that it would not be possible for them to carry out their contracts with the expedition required by the Government, and as the loss occasioned by the delay was great I deemed it my duty to urge that the contracts be taken out of their hands. This was approved of by His Excellency, and liberal terms were arranged in Singapore with Messrs. Campbell and Co. The Serendah Section of 4½ miles, the completion of which was 12 months overdue at the end of the year, and the Kuala Kubu Section, 13½ miles, which was to have been completed in April, 1893, are now being pushed on departmentally. On their completion depends largely the laying out of the two towns of Serendah and Kuala Kubu, as building operations there are retarded by the difficulties of transport.

The total expenditure during the year on the Extensions was \$270,282, as compared with \$335,000 in 1891 and \$561,000 in 1890. The Resident Engineer calculates that at least a sum of \$350,000 should have been earned by the Contractors, and there can be no doubt that a sufficient labour force was not kept on the works.

Railway Surveys.

Mr. Watkins reports as follows:—"Survey work during the year has been principally confined to exploration work on the main range of the Peninsula, with a view to the extension of the Selangor Government Railway into Pahang. Considerable progress has been made with the survey over the Ginting Peras gap, the results of which have been made the subject of several special reports to Government. This route, which is assumed to be about 87 miles long, follows the line now under construction to Pudoh, thence through the rich mining district of Sungei Besi to Cheras, then following the valley of the River Langat in a northerly and north-easterly direction it passes the village of Ulu Langat, and follows the River Langat past Ulu Lui to its source at Ginting Peras, which is crossed at an elevation of about 1,500 feet. Descending into Jelebu the route runs past Glami, Titi and Rawit, through the concession of the Jelebu Mining Company to the River Triang, thence it follows the River Triang to Pelangi, a point about 40 miles from Ginting Peras, and from this point it follows a north-easterly direction to Temerlo at the mouth of the River Semantan on the Pahang River, which it is proposed to make the terminus of the Selangor Government Railway in Pahang."

In his Administration Report for 1891 Mr. Maxwell wrote at some length on this route to Pahang. It is a route which commends itself very much to him and which will no doubt open up some rich valleys in Selangor, but there are at present no data on which it can be said to be the easiest, shortest or cheapest route to Pahang, and those who are supposed to know most of the requirements and capabilities of Pahang do not think that it will tap that portion of the country which is either rich in minerals or most thickly peopled. I do not conceive it possible for anyone at this juncture to offer to H. E. the Governor any advice as to which route should be followed to Pahang or to Jelebu, but my own opinion is that before any decision is arrived at it should be conclusively proved that there are serious



objections to entering Ulu Panang from Ulu Selangor, or Jebebu from Sungei Ujong. In each of these cases existing railway lines would save a million dollars in construction, and that argument in itself is worthy of earnest consideration, quite apart from the fact that many, who ought to know, think that, in the absence of engineering difficulties, the proper routes into the two States under notice are those I have indicated.

(To be continued).

“HE WHO INSULTS me to my face,” declares a Chinese proverb, “can yet be an honest man and my friend; but he who praises me on all occasions is a fool who despises me, or a knave who wishes to cheat me.”

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