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SELANGOR NEWS.

Straits Budget, 12 November 1895, Page 5

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SELANGOR NEWS.

(From our Correspondent.)

Kuala Lumpur, Monday.

THE RESIDENT.

The Acting Resident accompanied by Miss Rodger, Messrs. G. Brown and C. Maxwell went down the line on Saturday afternoon, and embarked for Kuala Langkat. The party are expected to return from Jugra this morning.

ECCLESIASTICAL.

It has been resolved to re-erect the old Kuala Lumpur Church at Kuala Kubu. Some time ago, the trustees sold the timber to the Freemasons, who proposed to use it for building a verandah to their Lodge; but the Government stepped in and, claiming the ownership of the building, caused the sale to be cancelled. The exact position of Government in the matter is not absolutely clear, but, presumably, the building was subsidised after the manner of the Selangor Club, which "is subject to a possible claim by Government only in the event of the Club's liquidation."

PLANTING.

H. E. the Governor's report on the Native States has been read with great interest—particularly by the planters of Selangor. The Governor states the object of the cultivations clause in agricultural leases but does not explain why, when they have this safeguard against the land speculator, the Government should find it necessary to restrict the area to 320 acres. For instance, Messrs. Meikle of Wardieburn have already planted nearly 500 acres in this State, but, in order to obtain a block of 1,000 acres, they were compelled to go outside Selangor (the country in which they had established their connexion and proved their *bona fides*), and selected land in Sungei Ujong.

Mr. Malcolm Cumming, who has recently returned from Europe as head of a firm with a capital sufficient to open several

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RAUB.

RAUB. The Mioing Mauer's Report for the four weeks ending the 31st October 1895, tuds as follows:

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION.

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION. Further suggestions towards uuieudug the Municipal Consolidation

PROF. LANKESTER IN TROUBLE

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hundred acres immediately, found it necessary to leave the State in which he had probably gained the best of his experience and purchase a private concession in Sungei Ujong.

SICKNESS AT THE GAOL.

During the last few months, the prison authorities—particularly the Medical branch have had an anxious and busy time. Cholera first appeared at the new Gaol soon after the first large batch of prisoners had been transferred to that building. Within a few weeks no less than 128 cases were reported, of which 68 terminated fatally. Shortly after this, the Gaol was connected with the new service Reservoir, and immediately the progress of the disease was checked.

Then, without granting any respite to the Medical Officers who had worked manfully against the cholera, an epidemic of beri-beri, of the most virulent type, made its appearance. This has lasted for several months. During September, out of 37 cases there were 13 deaths, while, last month, out of about 60 cases there were only 8 deaths. The prisoners have all been moved back to their old quarters in Kuala Lumpur, and the fall in the death-rate is attributed to this cause. It appears that the Pudoeh Gaol is being erected on the site of an old graveyard, and that the excavation work in progress there let loose the contents of a veritable "Pandora's box" amongst the unfortunate inmates. The choice of the site is very unfortunate; but, there is reason to hope that, when the construction is finished and the premises have been left to "air" a little, the Pudoeh climate will be no worse than any other. It is curious to note that the cholera killed very few of the long sentence prisoners.

LAW.

Various reforms in the Mining and Labour Regulations of this State are now under consideration. In order to harmonise the legislation of the two States, the Selangor authorities are considering the adoption of the Labour and Mining Codes of Perak. The former enactment was submitted to the report of a special commission consisting of the chief Magistrate (President), the Protector of Chinese, the Residency Surgeon, the Superintendent of Mines, and the Assistant Resident Engineer. Mr. C. Meikle was present to represent the Selangor Planters' Association; Mr. Tambusamy Pillai was there in the interests of the Tamil community; while the Chinese community was equally well represented. It is understood that the members of the commission, although in favour of having the Labour Regulations under one head, rather than scattered about in fragmentary paragraphs

and admitting the advantage of working on the same lines as Perak, were yet opposed to the adoption of the Perak Labour Code in its present form. The Perak Mining Code has been reported on by Mr. D'Arcy Irvine (Superintendent of Mines). It is believed that this official is vigorously opposed to the Code and that he has expressed himself accordingly. I gather from H. E. the Governor's report to the Secretary of State and from the Secretary of State's reply thereto, that "the point of greatest importance appears to be the encouragement of agriculture," it is therefore only fit and proper that proposed reforms in the Labour Regulations should first be considered from the planter's point of view.

The usual custom of Selangor planters, who wish to open an estate or to replenish their stock of labour, is to send a trusted conductor or *Cangahny* to India with a sum of money sufficient to pay the man's

expenses while he recruits the coolies, and to pay the passage of the party back to the Straits. It has been calculated that to obtain a gang of 50 coolies in this way necessitates an outlay of one thousand dollars. When the coolie reaches the estate he is duly informed of the amount of his debt, and a strict account is kept between master and man until the account be worked off. If the coolie attempts to leave before the planter has recovered the amount of his advance, the latter is supported by the long arm of the law. On the other hand, by steady work and frugal habits, the coolie may square his account within a few months of arrival and then he is free to go whithersoever he listeth. Now, the Perak Labour Code makes it legally possible for any coolie with or without advances to leave the estate at one month's notice, unless there exists a written agreement between himself and his employer. That is possibly a provision secured by labour laws throughout the English-speaking world. It may be so, and yet it may not suit the whims of the Tamil. I believe that there are a great number of Tamils who do not come for the restrictions of Indentured Immigration, and yet who, in the event of their passage being paid to the Straits, have no wish to shirk their obligation, and may, as a rule, be trusted to honourably fulfil the verbal conditions they made before their passages were paid. These men might have a most decided objection to enter into written agreements of service. Therefore, if I read it aright, the Perak Labour Code will need some revision before it will entirely meet the views of the disciples of Free Immigration.

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