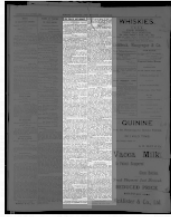




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Home > Newspaper Catalogue > Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle > 1906 > August > 28 > Page 5 > THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.



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Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle, 28 August 1906, Page 5

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## THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

### ANNUAL GOVERNMENT REPORT.

The Government Report on the Straits Settlements for the year 1905 has just been published over the signature of the Hon. E. L. Brockman, Acting Colonial Secretary.

We give below a brief summary, omitting portions which we have already dealt with in our excerpts from the various Departmental Reports:—

#### FINANCIAL.

The revenue for 1905 for \$11,656,153, the three Settlements contributing as follows: Singapore, \$6,629,723; Penang, \$2,947,482; and Malacca, \$2,078,948.

There was an increase over the revenue collected in 1904 of \$909,635, while that of 1903 was exceeded by \$3,697,657. This increase is entirely due to the sale of the Malacca-Palau Sebang Railway to the F. M. S., the proceeds of which, amounting to \$1,414,218, were placed to the credit of the Malacca revenue.

The revenue proper shows a decrease of \$504,583 as compared with 1904, and an increase of \$2,283,438 more than the revenue of 1903.

The principal increases were under the following headings:—Land sales, \$1,430,129; reimbursements, \$510,668; Post office receipts (including telegraph), \$46,024; fees of Office, \$19,166; and district collections, \$12,509.

The large increase in land sales is due to the sale of the Malacca Railway. Reimbursements include \$470,140.56 transferred from the Widows and Orphans Pension Fund to the general revenue of the Colony.

The chief decreases are under the headings: Licenses, \$954,795; Stamps \$146,481; and interest, \$19,374.

The decrease under licenses is due to fur-



other reductions being made in the Opium Farmers' rents and to their being allowed to defer payment of a portion of their rents till 1st January, 1907. The decrease in the revenue from stamps is due to a falling off in the duty on probate.

The expenditure for the year was \$11,005,137, an increase of \$156,148 over that of 1904, and \$2,819,185 more than the figures for 1903.

The increased expenditure was incurred in the following items:—Special expenses, \$745,625; lands and houses purchased, \$144,248; roads, streets, etc., special services, \$55,664; personal emoluments, \$45,480; interest, \$38,892.

The advances made out of revenue, amounting to \$747,580 83, to make good the difference between the market value and cost price of securities belonging to the investment portion of the Note Guarantee Fund, were written off as irrecoverable and debited to special expenses. The increase under "lands and houses purchased," is due to the Government taking over the Excise Farm buildings, and, under "roads, streets, etc.," to the construction of new roads. The increase under interest is caused by the loss on the sale of bullion purchased by the Crown Agents for subsidiary coin. No explanation is given for the increase in personal emoluments.

The exchange value of the Straits dollar was maintained at a fairly uniform rate during the first half of the year, the lowest decreased rate being 1s. 11½d. in January and April, and the highest 1s. 11¼d. in May. In July the dollar rose to 2s. 0¼d. and in August to 2s. 1½d. and continued to appreciate till December when it reached 2s. 1 1/16d. The average exchange for the year was 2s. 0 9/16d, an advance of 1½d. on the average for 1905, and nearly 3½d. on that of 1904.

A speculative market and the difficulty of getting cover for banking operations owing to the closing of the mints to the free coinage of dollars were amongst the causes which accelerated the rise in the value of the Straits dollar, but the main cause was the rise in the price of tin.

#### AGRICULTURAL AND BOTANICAL STATIONS

Pine-apple cultivation in Singapore has increased even more than it did in 1904. There has also been a further extension of Para rubber in Singapore and Malacca. The cultivation is everywhere increasing and the demand for seed from the Gardens is greater than can be supplied. The rubber which was made during the experiments in the Botanical Gardens was sold at 6s. 9d. per lb. the highest price then

procurable.

No new rubber estates have been opened in Province Wellesley, but the existing estates which grow rubber are largely extending this cultivation. A feature of one large estate is the granting of land to Chinese squatters, who cultivate tapioca and other surface crops on condition that they plant and tend Para rubber which will eventually become the chief crop. Other cultivations remain stationary.

The failure of Sea Island cotton, which was extensively experimented with at Golden Grove Estate, proves definitely that even that variety is, equally with the Egyptian variety, unsuitable for this country.

Considerable attention has been lately directed to fibre cultivation, chiefly in the matter of Sansevieria. It is probable that the next few years will see a development of this industry.

The fruit crop in Singapore was poor, but good in Penang.

The Agricultural Exhibition held in Penang last year was undoubtedly the best ever held in the East. The produce shown was not only very extensive, but some of the exhibits, especially of rubber, were of a high order of excellence; a large number of prizes for the most important produce were taken by Colonial exhibitors.

#### SHIPPING.

The tonnage of merchant vessels arriving and departing was 18,890,600—an increase

of 623,101 on the figures of 1904. In Singapore 1,002 vessels aggregating 9,025 tons, were built last year, as compared with 1,079 and 19,205 respectively during 1904.


#### TRADE.

The trade of the year, though profitable to merchants, was not altogether satisfactory.

The speculative element of exchange so dominated transactions that, while remunerative to some, it was injurious to others, and the volume turned over in manufactured goods was, with the exception of the textile class, not quite so large.

Dollar imports of merchandise decreased by 2 per cent. but owing to the rise of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in exchange increased by £1,400,000, or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The export value of merchandise measured in dollars increased in value by over  $3\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., and in sterling by  $10\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

The trade of Singapore itself to places outside the Colony, excluding treasure, fell in both imports and exports, showing decreases of nearly 3 per cent. and about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., respectively, in dollar values.




In the imports the principal increases over the figures for 1904 were cotton piece goods, coal, sarongs, fish (dry and salted), sugar, and spirits. Of these, fish (dry and salted) increased by about 34 per cent., and spirits by over 25 per cent.

The chief decreases were in rice, opium, silk piece goods, petroleum, tobacco, tin ore, and wheat flour.


The principal increases among the articles exported were in gums, hides, spices (over 33 per cent), copra (nearly 50 per cent), tin, and preserved pine-apples—about 20 per cent. The decreases were in sago, coffee, gambier, tapioca, and rattans.

#### LAND GRANTS.




Under the heading of Penang, 470 statutory grants were issued, aggregating 1,102 acres, 2 roods, and 31 poles, on which premia of \$932.25 were paid. This presumably includes Province Wellesley and the Dindings—a statement showing the figures of each place would have been more explanatory and given a better idea of the progress of the Dindings, etc.


#### MEDICAL.




Practically all the Hospitals of the Colony are under Government management, while the Estate hospitals maintained by the planters are under Government supervision. The total number of admissions to the Hospitals, exclusive of the Lunatic Asylum, was 23,762 as against 23,462 in 1904.



There were 45 cases of small-pox in the Colony last year. Ten, of which 5 were imported, were in Penang; 19 in Province Wellesley; and 17 in Singapore, including 5 imported. In 1904, there were in Singapore 15 cases, of which 4 were imported; in Penang, 7, including 5 imported; Province Wellesley, 7; and Malacca, 7. For 1903, the figures were:—Singapore, 34, including 6 cases imported; Penang, 57; Province Wellesley, 59; and Malacca, 40—in all 180. It will thus be seen that the local epidemic has decreased. There were no cases reported in Malacca last year and none at all in the Dindings during the three years under review.



There were 20 cases of cholera in Singapore in 1905 and one of these was imported, while the solitary case in Penang was also imported. Twenty-one cases of plague appeared in Singapore. Four of these were imported; out of the three cases in Penang one was imported. In 1904, the plague returns for Singapore and Penang showed 26 and 2 cases respectively. Six of the former were imported, as also were both the Penang cases. In 1903, there were 25 cases—22 imported





into Singapore, and 1 case imported into Penang.

Malacca and the Dindings, owing to their state of isolation, have had the advantage of being free from plague and cholera for the last three years.

There were 1,888 cases of beri-beri during 1905, against 2,287 in 1904, and 1,729 for 1903. Of the cases last year, there were in the Dindings, 3; Province Wellesley, 70; Penang and Malacca, 291 each; and Singapore 1,233.

There were 709 patients in the leper hospitals, as follows: Singapore, 120; Pulau Jerejak, 466; Malacca, 8; and the female leper ward, Jelutong (Penang) 15. The deaths and discharges (including those who absconded or were transferred) were: Singapore, 29 and 57; Pulau Jerejak, 78 and 31; Malacca, 8 and 1; and Jelutong, 5 died.

*(To be continued.)*



The Directors of the Scottish Malay Rubber Co., Limited, which owns Bukit Cheraka estate in Jeram, Selangor, in making a call of 7s. 6d. per share on the Company's capital (making with the sum paid on application and allotment 12s. 6d. per share called up) have issued a circular to shareholders, in which they state that they have had the estate acquired from Mr. J. A. Hunter in terms of the prospectus inspected and reported on, as at the date of taking over the property, viz, 1st June, 1906, by Mr. H. C. Rendle, of the Bukit Rajah estate, F.M.S., who reports that in his opinion the vendor has complied with the conditions of sale, and who gives a view of the property favourable to the future prospects of the Company. It is added that the Managing Director (Mr. Hunter,) reports that he hopes to be able to develop and plant the property with rubber somewhat faster than is stated in the prospectus. "As a consequence the calls on the shares may be somewhat earlier, and our profits should reach us sooner than indicated in the prospectus."