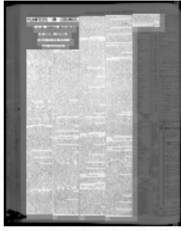




Home > Newspaper Catalogue > Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle > 1919 > May > 2 > Page 2 > PLANTERS IN COUNCIL.



PLANTERS IN COUNCIL.

Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle, 2 May 1919, Page 2

Share

Save Citation

Microfilm: NL3734

<<

Previous Article

Next Article

>>

PLANTERS IN COUNCIL. P. A. M. ANNUAL MEETING. THE MARAMA SCANDAL. CABLE TO THE R. G. A. FOOD PRODUCTION.

In the Town Hall, Kuala Lumpur, on Wednesday, the annual general meeting of the Planters' Association of Malaya took place, the meeting occupying the whole of the day. The chair was taken by Mr. F. G. Harvey, and there was a representative gathering of delegates present from all the associated D.P.A.'s except from Kelantan:

Messrs. M. Gilmore, C. A. Crush, W. H. Bragg, Carlyle Bell, G. W. Bennett, A. P. Chalmers, V. C. Manners, C. Weesly, and J. S. Arter (Batu Tiga D.P.A.), Vicomte R. de Bondy (Central Pahang P.A.) P. A. Lawford A. H. Orr, and J. S. Ferguson (Central Perak P.A.), J. S. Beldam, C. S. Buyers, and C. W. Bronson (Johore P.A.), H. L. Lamotte, C. H. Shelton-Ager, B. Biggin and N. F. L. Marshall (Kajang D.P.A.), L. Mooijaart, W. Fisher, W. L. R. O'Brien, W. S. Price, J. F. Fletcher, M. H. Corke, L. Compton, V. Kinlock, Captain F. H. Brunton, E. H. King-Harman, (Kapar D.P.A.), R. M. Bonsfield, S. C. Yeomans, R. Battiscombe and H. R. Quartley (Klang D.P.A.), H. O. Kennedy, F. H. Mustard and H. C. W. Avery (Kuala Langkat D.P.A.), R. St. John Gore, F. Clyde-Jeavons, H. Armstrong, G. Reeve-Tucker, F. S. Williams, W. E. Hilton Ross, J. B. Douglas, H. B. Wilkinson, D. M. Tibbs, F. M. Riley, W. B. Anderson, G. P. Barnet, D. S. Ainger, W. D. Fraser (Kuala Lumpur D.P.A.), T. H. Menzies, J. M. Ferguson, R. W. G. Mercer, C. G. Trotter, W. M. Gordon, T. L. Stevens, R. A. White, H. G. L. Richards,

G. De Morney, H. B. Dudley and C. V. Lermitt (Kuala Selangor D.P.A.), W. Roberts and H. de H. Smith (Lower Perak P.A.), H. Gough, H. R. Moullin, R. H. Thrupp, J. W. Kennedy, J. Cruickshank, A. A. Craigen, M. Strivens and E. D. Lane (Malay Peninsula A.A.), J. Bruce, G. Grant, R. Gooch, W. D. McCulloch, V. A. Taylor, A. Burgess, G. W. Hingston, J. Burgess and J. H. Talbot (Negri Sembilan P.A.), C. O. T. Powell, G. Low, and W. H. Tate (Taiping P.A.) R. A. Tivy, M. D. Fallon, G. C. Bailey, J. Gordon-Brown and W. H. Dakeyne (Ulu Selangor D.P.A.), Cyril Baxendale (R.G.A. Council), J. C. Macaulay, E. S. Biddlecombe, Dr. B. Day, W. R. Henderson, G. W. F. Clifford, G. L. Catho, F. G. Pasmore, B. J. Eaton, Geo Grant (Klang) A. Anderson, J. Firth, J. C. Hammett and B. Bunting (Visitors), and J. Lewton-Brain, Director of Agriculture (Honorary Member) and H. C. E. Zacharias (Secretary).

THE PENANG MEETING.

The Chairman said he had taken upon himself to arrange the meeting in the Town Hall, rather than at the P.A.M. chambers, for two reasons. Firstly, because their usual rooms were notoriously bad rooms for hearing, and secondly, because they were glary. He had hoped to see many more present, but probably more would turn up later on.

With regard to the minutes of the meeting of January 29th, the Chairman read the following: "Proposed by the Johore Planters' Association: That the minutes of the last meeting be confirmed with the exception of the resolution referring to the remarks of the Chairman and others, which resolution shall be removed from the minute book and the remarks made by the Chairman and others at the Penang meeting be restored thereto."

The Chairman said he ruled this proposal out of order, not on his own responsibility alone. He had taken proper advice on the matter, and this proposal could not stand. (Applause).

The resolution passed by the Malay Peninsular Agricultural Association, said the Chairman, was not down on the agenda as a proposal, but only to be brought to the notice of all members.

On behalf of the Central Perak Planters' Association, Mr. Ferguson proposed and Mr. Gordon Brown seconded, "That this meeting desires to place on record its regrets at the circumstances which brought about the resignation of Mr. R. C. M. Kindersley from the Chairmanship of the P.A.M." Delegates from the Malay Peninsula A.A., Taiping P.A., Negri Sembilan P.A., Ulu Selangor P.A., Kuala Lumpur D.P.A., Batu Tiga

P.A., Lower Perak P.A., Kapar D.P.A., and Klang-Selangor P.A., supported this resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. Lawford proposed, and Mr. Orr seconded, on behalf of the Central Perak P.A. : "That this meeting desires to record its appreciation of the services rendered to the planting industry generally by Mr. Kindersley, both in his capacity of Chairman of the P.A.M. and member of the Federal Council."

The Chairman said he would like to have his name associated with this resolution. He had been a close personal friend of Mr. Kindersley for some considerable time, and he did not think anyone knew better than himself, how much hard and conscientious work Mr. Kindersley had done for the planting industry in all matters pertaining to it. The proposal was then put to the meeting and carried without dissent.

On behalf of the Central Perak P.A., it was proposed, seconded and carried "nem con," "That this meeting is in favour at all times of free and fair criticism on any questions affecting the planting industry."

Mr. J. D. McCulloch proposed, and Mr. Mooijart seconded, "That the minutes of the meeting held on January 29th be now passed." This was carried without dissent.

WAR RELIEF FUND.

The Secretary stated that \$164,000 had been collected for the Planters' War Relief Fund by members of the P.A.M. up to date. During the last quarter of 1918, £500 was paid out, and there was now in hand some £35,000. With regard to the Association's letter of December 4th, 1918, in which they asked for an expression of opinion as to what capital sum should be aimed at, Sir William Taylor had replied that he had consulted the members of the London Committee on the subject, and their views were divergent, but that the view unanimously held was, that a definite expression of opinion at present would be difficult if not impossible. Sir William Taylor said Mr. Arthur Young, one of the members of the Committee was about to leave for Malaya, and had kindly undertaken to confer with them on this subject. A later letter from Sir William Taylor said the majority of the London Committee were satisfied that no more money was required, on the other hand, there was a minority who thought that the full effects of the war had not been felt as yet, and that more money should be collected. Mr. Arthur Young had arrived here, said the Secretary, and had interviewed him. Mr. Young said it was very difficult to arrange annuities, they thought the best plan would be to make allowances from time to time as required. Mr. Young reminded

him that the Planters' Benevolent Fund had not supplied the whole of this money, some having been subscribed by the Tin section of the community, and some by merchants, and therefore it was not for the planters to decide absolutely what should be done with the balance in hand.

The Chairman proposed that the fund be now closed, if any further cases of particular hardship should occur connected with Malaya, another fund could be opened, which he felt sure would be properly supported.

Mr. McCulloch said he would second this. He knew of a number of planters who were continuing their subscriptions, on the understanding that the next month would be the last. It was better to close the fund in a flourishing condition, than to wait until subscriptions fell off and dwindled to nothing.

Mr. V. A. Taylor was also quite in accord with the Chairman on the closing of the fund. If more money were required in the future, all planters would undoubtedly subscribe to a new fund. If more money was required, there would surely be some notification to this effect from Home.

Mr. Cyril Baxendale said, speaking as an individual only, he certainly was of opinion that they had already collected a sufficient sum.

It was proposed by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Tait and carried unanimously that the Planters' War Relief Fund be now closed.

THE MARAMA: MORE FACTS

The Chairman said he thought the passages by the s.s. Marama might now be discussed. He would be pleased if any members who had first hand information would speak.

A Kajang planter said those present who knew his wife, would, he felt sure not accuse her of enlarging upon matters. He then proceeded to read excerpts from her letter from Colombo in which she described things on board as indescribably shocking.

A Negri Sembilan representative and a representative from Ulu Selangor also read portions of letters, all of which described the terrible hardships many of the women and children on board had undergone, through overcrowding, insufficient staff, gross insanitary arrangements, etc. Two children had died between Port Swettenham and Colombo; five miscarriages had occurred; there were only four stewardesses amongst over 400 women and children; the latrines had not been cleaned out for the ten days occupied between Port Swettenham and Colombo; some 30 odd of the male passengers had formed themselves into relief squads, and were doing stewards'

work besides looking after sanitary matters; through the awful stench and heat on board, there was a great plague of flies; it was feared there would be an outbreak of dysentery or even cholera through the total inadequacy of sanitary arrangements; the men had now volunteered, rather than make a stay of five days at Colombo, (in quarantine) to undertake the cleaning of latrines, decks, etc. Some women were three and others four days without a change of clothes, after leaving Port Swettenham, as they could not get their boxes or trunks, and the children, particularly the younger of them, fared even worse.

A Batu Caves planter, who had also received letters from his wife, said she corroborated all the statements already made and said the conditions on board were absolutely indescribable and scandalous beyond belief.

The Chairman said perhaps Dr. Day would like to say something.

DR. DAY said he thought it would perhaps be best if they all considered how the Marama was got out. He went into details regarding the requisitioning of the Nore and Novara for Germans, and mentioned that later, Mr. Kindersley and others made strong representations to Government, for a ship to be procured to take away their wives and children. Sir Arthur Adams made further strong representation to Government, until finally they were told that the Marama was

being sent as a relief ship. As regards the classification of passages, from a health point of view, he regretted to say that he was afraid the greatest care had not been taken to ensure the most serious cases of illness being given priority as regards passages. Speaking personally, one had to do one's best of course, with regard to one's own patients, but there was very little doubt that some ladies who had been in the country only a matter of two years, were granted passages, while serious cases of illness were shut out. He went down to Port Swettenham, and went on board the Marama. She was a fine ship, and a clean one, but he was told that there was practically no milk on board—and that with over 200 children on board.

CABLE TO R.G.A.

Mr. Mooijaart said it appeared that they had before them a case of one of the greatest hardship which had ever come before that Association, all on account of mismanagement and absolute incompetence of those responsible in this matter. They could do very little, if anything, to alleviate this suffering, as the Marama was then only some 36 hours out of Marseilles. But they could, and he hoped they would, make every endeavour to fix the responsibility for this gross scandal

on to the proper shoulders, so that they, whoever it was, shall be brought to book. He therefore begged to propose, that a cablegram be sent now to the London Committee of the R.G.A., to go on board, if possible, on arrival, and make the strictest inquiries with the main idea of fixing the responsibility of so grave a scandal on those responsible for it.

Mr. King Harman suggested going higher than the R.G.A., why not direct to the Home Government?

Mr. Dakeyne suggested the Society of Estate Medical Officers should also cable.

Mr. Monteith suggested the Board of Trade at Home should be communicated with by cable at once as every ship was supposed to conform to certain regulations as regards sanitation, overcrowding, etc.

Mr. Baxendale suggested it was more a matter for the Straits Association than the R.G.A. as it concerned many other people out here besides planters. He felt sure the R.G.A. would be glad to do all they could in the matter, but he thought the Straits Association were in a better position to do considerably more.

Mr. Mooijaart proposed, Mr. Kennedy seconded, and it was carried by the meeting that a telegram, by express rates, be despatched at once to the R.G.A. in London, as follows:— "P.A.M. request you to kindly constitute immediately a committee of inquiry to enquire on arrival if possible of s.s. Marama into alleged hardships on board due to overcrowding, insufficient staff, insanitary arrangements, etc., etc., with a view of fixing the responsibility, should such allegations prove well founded. Suggest also that you approach Board of Trade, Colonial Office, Admiralty and Straits Association."

Mr. Kennedy proposed that a copy of this telegram be sent to all Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Mines, in the Straits and F.M.S., with a view to them taking similar action, which would strengthen the hands of the P.A.M. This was seconded by Mr. V. A. Taylor and carried.

Mr. Lamotte said with regard to overcrowding, the Marama took 560 cot cases to New Zealand.

Dr. Day said he telegraphed on Monday to Dr. Galloway requesting him to approach the Medical Committee in London for them to take action in the matter.

The Chairman proposed, Mr. Jeavons seconded and it was agreed to by the meeting, "That Government be asked to take immediate steps with regard to the formation of a properly constituted Board of Control, for the classification of passages according to priority of illness, such Board to consist chiefly of medical officers."

Papers on Tamil Immigration, contained in a pamphlet of some fifty odd papers were laid on the table, and shortly discussed. The publication was somewhat late, said the Chairman, because they had thought it best to ask Dr. Day and Mr. Mooijaart to reply to comments in their report.

Mr. Taylor proposed and Mr. Ferguson seconded that in view of the very excellent information contained in this pamphlet, and in view of the time when shipping accommodation would be considerably improved that a sub-committee be formed to consider the information now available regarding Preventive Quarantine.

Mr. Kennedy said, after reading all the printed matter in the memorandum, that there was no need for Preventive Quarantine.

The Chairman said he was convinced it would be a step very much in the wrong direction.

Mr. Kennedy asked the Association to record its warm thanks to Mr. Gilman, Dr. Brooke, Dr. Wellington and others for their share in this very valuable and comprehensive report.

The Secretary read a letter from the Controller of Labour dated April 4th, which stated that cholera had broken out in the Malabar district.

ESTATE HOSPITALS.

The Secretary said that since the agenda and correspondence had been printed, he had received letters from the R.G.A., dated March 6th, of great importance. He then read the following letters:—

March 6, 1919.

GENERAL MATTERS: MEDICAL—ESTATE HOSPITALS.

With reference to the P.A.M. Minutes of 25th November, 1918, I think you will like to be posted with regard to discussions at meetings of my Council on the subject of Medical Research. In 1917 following on a communication from Dr. Malcolm Watson to Mr. Norman Grieve, the Council appointed a sub-Committee consisting of Mr. Norman Grieve (as Convener) Mr. F. W. Barker, Mr. P. J. Burgess, Mr. Charles Emerson, Mr. R. W. Harrison, Major E. A. O. Travers, R.A.M.C., subsequently Mr. E. Macfadyen and Dr. Watson (after his arrival in England) were co-opted to the Committee.

The attached reports of the Committee to the Council will give you the steps taken by the Rubber Growers' Association to date. Dr. Watson was invited to address the Council at their meeting on the 6th January, 1919 and during the course of his remarks gave

interesting figures and statistics regarding the health conditions of the Labour Force in F.M.S.

I have shown the extract from the P.A.M. minutes to Mr. Norman Grieve and he would be greatly obliged if you would keep me advised of the progress of events in Malaya.

I cannot find the draft Bill in the Gazette and if you can let me have a copy I shall be obliged.

The following extract from minutes of a meetings of the Borneo Chamber of Commerce held on 21st December, 1918 will give you an idea of what they think of Government Hospitals.

"A Resolution from the West Coast Branch was read, to the effect that the attention of Government, should be drawn to the deplorable condition of their Hospitals, their utter lack of quarantine stations, and their indifference in general to the health of the State."

REPORT OF MEDICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Medical Research Committee was held on 9th January, when the following business was transacted:—As sanctioned by the Council at its last meeting Dr. Malcolm Watson was unanimously co-opted member of the Committee.

The following letter was drafted and approved and ordered to be despatched forthwith to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies:

9th January, 1919.

The Council of this Association, being desirous of approaching you on the subject of the Medical Treatment of the Indian Emigrants employed on the Rubber Properties in the Malay Peninsula, beg to forward for your perusal reports made at different times by the Private Practitioners now engaged in the work of managing the estate hospitals in which the labourers are treated. The Council would draw your attention to the remarkable results achieved under the Estate Hospital System in reducing the death rate which obtained prior to its introduction, from 62.3 per mille in 1911 on a population of 143,614 to 12.17 per mille in 1917 on a population of 214,972 (Pamphlet C. page 4). It appears that a scheme is on foot, founded, my Council believe, on a misconception of the facts, as the official correspondence shown (Paper No. 7 of 1912 F.M.S.) to alter the present system which has been developed at great expense to the estates, into a system of centre hospitals, administered by the local Government. In the opinion of my Council and I believe, of all these who have had practical experience in dealing with Indian labour in the Malay States and in Ceylon, such a change would be a great mistake, and not in the interests of the coolies whose welfare we

the interests of the colony, whose welfare, presumably, the Indian Government has at heart. This opinion is fully confirmed by the recent reports on Indian labour emigrating to Ceylon and Malaya. The Commissioners, Messrs. Marjoribanks and Tamby Marakayae report fully on the point (See Pamphlet R. page 2.) This letter, I need hardly say, is a mere outline of the question at issue, and my Council have the honour to request that, at an early date, you will be pleased to receive a deputation, when details of the case can be more fully put before you.

The following reply was received, under date 24th January:—

I am directed by Viscount Milner to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th January with regard to the Medical treatment of Indian emigrants employed on rubber estates in the Malay Peninsula, and to inform you that he has not yet received Paper No. 7 of 1918 concerning the alteration of the existing system of estate hospitals into a system of Central Hospitals administered by the local Government. The High Commissioner for the Malay States has, however, been requested by telegraph to furnish a copy, with his observations on the matter, and it would, in Lord Milner's opinion, be more convenient if the proposed discussion could be postponed until he has received the High Commissioner's proposals.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

NORMAN W. GRIEVE, Convener.

Adopted by Council on 3rd February, 1919—
the Convener intimating that he understood that operation of the new Enactment has been postponed for three years.

ITEM NO. 9—REPORT OF MEDICAL RESEARCH
F.M.S. SUB-COMMITTEE.


The Committee have carefully considered the important question of establishing a properly equipped Laboratory and of the appointment of qualified Entomologists to carry on Research Work in the F.M.S.

Two meetings have been held which were attended by all members, with the addition, at the second meeting, of Mr. E. Macfadyen, who was co-opted and was kind enough to attend.


After a very full discussion it was decided to report to the Council as follows:—

a. That owing to the difficulties presented by the War in procuring the services of Scientific men, also to the impossibility, at the present time, of obtaining the necessary equipment for starting a Laboratory, it was out of the question that anything should be done till after the war.

b. The Committee suggest that it would be neither necessary nor desirable to bring into existence a permanent laboratory.




existence a separate administrative organisation. The employment of one (and perhaps later more) entomologists and provision of such housing accommodation as might prove necessary could be undertaken without any new establishment by appointing a strong Sub-Committee of our local representative body to direct their operations and we are emphatically of opinion that Dr. Watson should be invited to join such Sub-Committee. The business side of these arrangements could be placed under our existing administrative staff and should involve little, if any, additional expense beyond the salary or salaries of scientific workers.



c. The Committee understand that a most suitable man who has already done valuable work in the Malay States as an Entomologist, is at present employed by Government in one of the theatres of war.

If, when these activities come to an end, his services could be obtained in the F.M.S. the Committee think that, having regard to his past experience in that country he would be admirably suited to fill such a post as it is desired to create.

4. The Committee were unanimous in the belief that the whole subject of sanitation and medical research was one vitally affecting the Rubber Industry in the Malay Peninsula,



and that the expense connected with its full and continuous investigation was a trifling matter compared with the results which it is confidently hoped would accrue to the whole community by the application of the best scientific knowledge in its treatment.

(Sd.) NORMAN W. GRIEVE, Convener of
Committee.

Adopted by Council June 4th, 1917.