



Truck System.

The Straits Times, 6 March 1907, Page 7

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Previous Article

Next Article

Previous Page

Next Page

Truck System.

IMPERIAL INTERFERENCE WITH MALAY STATES.

Lord Elgin's Instructions to the High Commissioner.

[REUTER'S TELEGRAM.]

London, March 7.

Replying in the House of Commons to Mr. Arthur Acland Allen, the Liberal M.P. for Christchurch, Mr. Winston Churchill, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, stated that Lord Elgin (Colonial Secretary) had informed His Excellency Sir John Anderson, High Commissioner of the Federated Malay States, that the practice of paying Chinese miners in the Malay States partly in opium must cease.

Some Pertinent Questions

Although not bearing directly upon the subject of providing miners with opium, the following questions appended to a letter, signed "Junius," in our Ipoh contemporary, dealing with the truck system generally may not be without interest:—

1. Is the Government aware that the Truck System exists in the adjacent British Colony of the Straits Settlements? If so, is there any difference between the system in operation there and that which exists here?
2. Name the trade and industries in which the Truck System operates in the Colony.
3. Is the system introduced from the Colony or vice versa, by whom, when, and why?
4. What action has the Secretary of State for the Colonies taken with regard to the system carried on in the estates, plantations, etc in the British Colony of the Straits Settlements? If not, why not?
5. Has this country the same standard of civilization, culture, morals and government as Great Britain? If not, explain fully the cause.
6. Is it advisable to adopt the laws of Great Britain in Perak? Give an application of the adage "what is meat to one might be poison to the other" in this connection.
7. Is the country as safe and secure as Great Britain, and as immune from robbery by violence, murder, and the like? If not, why not, considering that we have an overflowing exchequer?
8. Enumerate the long list of recent robberies:—
 - (a) in the towns and villages.
 - (b) in country districts.
 - (c) undetected cases.
 - (d) the extent of harm done to victims physically and financially.
9. Do the coolies usually have sufficient money to live on for one month, assuming that the Truck System be abolished? If not, how will they manage to live, and are they likely to avail themselves of finding the

Information



Newspaper: The Straits Times
Date: 6 March 1907
Reel Number: NL00310

Table of Contents

< Previous | Page 7 | Next >

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View Full Table of Contents >

wherewithal to buy the necessaries of life by plunder and robbery during their leisure at night?

10. Can the coolies subsist on some other food besides rice, and if such can be found in the woods and jungles free of cost just to keep them on till pay day?

11. Most of the mines being remote from towns and villages, will the Government open shops close to mining camps for the convenience of the coolies on the credit system? If not, who will do so when the mine-owners will be prohibited from doing so by the abolition of the Truck System.

12. If an enterprising mine-owner were to open a mine, say 20 miles from any village or road, will the Government open up a new road and provide suitable transport to enable the coolies to travel to the nearest village in order to buy the necessaries of life from the cheapest shops?

13. How much time will the coolies lose in having to travel to the shops for their purchases and how will the mine owner be affected thereby?

14. Will the Government with its immense surplus advance a small sum to the coolies to enable them to buy food or to send a remittance to their families in China, on the coolies promising to reimburse the amount on pay-day either verbally or by notes of hand, signed and stamped before the Protector of Chinese? If not, suggest the various methods by which the coolies could raise money either legally or otherwise.

15. What attempt has the Government made to promote immigration of Chinese labourers? If any, give a list of immigrant ships chartered by the Government, their dates of arrival, the name of the ports of arrival and the number of coolies imported in each instance.

16. From what source does the Government draw its supply of Chinese labourers and state whether it or its contractor ever made advances in kind to the coolies under the objectionable Truck System? Are such cases rather exceptional than usual?

17. Explain why such a system is highly satisfactory to the coolies?

18. Is it not a fact that the retention of a part of their wages by their employers till the expiration of the term of six months prevents them from squandering their money in vices?

19. If the coolies are paid a monthly wage, will the coolies take less holidays and work harder; and how will it affect the mines?

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