



MALAYA IS SELF-GOVERNING ON AUGUST 31

He is Chief Minister

• Students arrange celebrations here

Malayan students at Adelaide University are preparing to celebrate their country's independence on August 31.

On that day, Malaya will become an independent nation within the British Commonwealth.

A special Merdeka Organising Committee has been set up within the University to co-ordinate activities and make necessary arrangements.

At the end of the month

it is planned to hold a Merdeka Ceremony at 10.30 a.m. in the Refectory for official guests.

The Proclamation of Independence will be read at the same time here, as in Kuala

Lumpur, the Malayan capital.

At night a special ball will be held for the Malayan students and their friends.

Malayan students are excited at the thought of their country being free at the end of this month.

Celebrations are being held in many parts of Australia, and overseas. In Wellington some newspapers may print special features on Malaya.

More than 45 nations will be represented at the Merdeka celebrations in Kuala Lumpur.

A new stadium has been erected, and most of the celebrations will be held there.

Full details of what independence means to Malaya, and its importance to the world, are given in this special edition of "On Dit."



Chief Minister of Malaya, Tengku Abdul Rahman.

AUSSIES — THROUGH MALAYAN EYES ...

A Malayan journalist has written a series of articles about Australia for the Malayan press.

The Malayan journalist, Mr. Ng Yook Yoon, made a 10,000-mile tour of Australia recently with seven other Asian journalists, at the invitation of the External Affairs Department.

He said that the Australians knew more about the Chief Minister of Singapore than the Chief Minister of Malaya. He described the Australians as a great nation of "do-it-yourselfers." "Perhaps a thing that makes them such decent people is their being unable to be idle."

Then he went on: "Some, of course, are inherently lazy, but those who have homes just can't afford to be idle. There is so much to be done, and they have got to do it themselves."

"Besides being the breadwinner, the head of an Australian family has to be the gardener, chauffeur, carpenter, and handyman. The wife has to be the cook, washerwoman, and shopper. The men cherish their little mercies—their tobacco, their beer, and their newspapers. They love to relax at some sports, entertainment, and occasionally have a small flutter at the races—horses, greyhounds, or 'spiders' (trotting)."

He remarked that his party were struck by the absence of a national press, and by the petty jealousies that existed between the States. He gave lavish praise to the gigantic Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Project, and said: "The project has special interest for Malaya, because the 120 million dollar Cameron Highlands Hydro-electric Scheme in Malaya resembles this gigantic project."

KUALA LUMPUR CELEBRATIONS

Over 45 nations will be represented in the Merdeka celebrations in Kuala Lumpur. This has been revealed by the Federation Government, together with the announcement of the official programme.

Most of the ceremonies will take place in the newly constructed "Merdeka" Stadium, which will be opened by the Chief Minister on August 30. On August 31 over 20,000 people will witness the official Merdeka ceremony, during which the Proclamation of Independence will be read by the Chief Minister. At noon the Supreme Ruler will be sworn in.

On September 1 the Chief Minister will take the salute in a military parade in which about 2,600 members of the armed forces will march to the music of 12 military bands. On the same afternoon the Chief Minister will entertain 1,500 guests at a garden reception. On September 3 the Parliament will be opened.

Rotary Fellowships

Rotary International (the Association of Rotary Clubs of the world), under the Rotary Foundation Scheme, offers, every second year, a number of Fellowships for Advanced Study, tenable in countries other than that of the applicants.

The object of the Fellowships is to give students of potential leadership ability the opportunity of advanced study for one year in another country, and at the same time of acquiring a knowledge of its people, their culture, their outlook, and how they live, and thereby help to improve international relationships.

Candidates of either sex must be between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine years, and have qualified, or are about to qualify, for a Bachelor's degree.

Further particulars may be obtained from the office of the Rotary Club of Adelaide, Shell House, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Applications must be lodged not later than September 30, 1957.

AN IMPORTANT UNION MEETING

A General Meeting of the Union will be held to discuss the proposed new constitution of the Union at 1.20 in the Lady Symon Hall on Wednesday, August 7.

Over the last few years Union activities have been increasing in quite a remarkable fashion.

Not so long ago the Refectory closed at five o'clock, there was no coffee service in the George Murray common room in the evenings, and the function of the Union Council was rather nebulous.

With the growth in student numbers, and an increasing desire for Union facilities, great changes have been made. The new Union buildings at present being erected are evidence of this growth.

Last year the Union Council, in keeping with the times, realised that its little-used Constitution was due for a re-drafting. Much time has been spent by the Council and its Constitutional Subcommittee in doing this, and you are urged to attend the meeting.

The President of the Union, Mr. David Evans, will also present a report on Union activities over the last few years, culminating in the present extensions. This

will be his final report before he leaves for Oxford at the end of August to take up the Rhodes Scholarship.

Mr. R. B. Lewis, President of the Sports Association, will be the new Union President.

A Malayan Varsity?

The Malayan Minister of Education recently announced that the Federation was considering the establishment of its own University.

He said that, with the transference of the whole of the first year of the Arts Faculty of the University of Malaya from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur, the capital, in September, it was hoped to form a nucleus of a University college as a fore-runner to a full University.

This announcement was warmly welcomed by educationists all over Malaya, who felt that it was fitting that an independent Malaya should possess its own higher seat of learning.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MALAYA

Specially written by K. VIJI

The Federation of Malaya, the largest British possession in Asia today, becomes independent within the British Commonwealth on August 31, 1957.

Progress towards this goal has steadily continued since the end of the last world war, despite the inevitable complications arising in a plural society, and the burden of the Communist terrorist insurrection since 1948. A general background to the independence of the country is helpful in understanding the future of Malaya, which I feel is going to be vital to Australia and the other South-East Asian countries in many respects.

The population of Malaya is, roughly, 6½ million, of whom 3 million are Malays, 2½ million are Chinese, and ½ million are Indians and others. The Malays are the indigenous people, and are the modern counterpart of peoples that emerged from the interfusion of races and cultures that ranged from Central Asia to South-East Asia many centuries ago.

The main influx of Chinese and Indians took place about the end of the last century, when they were brought by the British as indentured laborers, and also a large number came as traders.

The national economy is based on agriculture, with rubber as the chief source of the country's prosperity. Tin is second only to rubber in its contribution to the economy.

Till the beginning of World War II, when the Japanese occupied Malaya, the area was composed of three administrative units — the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, and the Unfederated Malay States.

The war, the Japanese occupation, and the political upsurge of other Asian nations, together with educational expansion before and after the war, stimulated political awakening in Malaya.

Before the war the different States and Settlements had a large measure of autonomy, and there was no effective central Federal Government. In 1948 the Federation of Malaya came into existence, under which each State and Settlement was united under a strong central Government, though each retained its individuality.

From its inception the Federation of Malaya has advanced towards a democratic self-government, despite the guerilla warfare of the Communists on the civilian population and the government machinery. The first Legislative Council, representing the various races and interests, had an unofficial majority, though it was not elected. In 1951 the "Member" system was introduced. This was a significant advancement towards self-government, and was the first step towards Ministerial responsibility. Various departments and subjects were assembled together, and placed severally under the control of individual Legislative Council members, most of

whom were political and community leaders.

In 1952 the composition of the Executive Council was changed to include all those who were "Members" in the Legislative Council. In 1955 a new Constitution was introduced, by which the greater part of the responsibility of the government of the Federation of Malaya was transferred to elected representatives of the people. The new Federal Legislative Council was to have 98 members, of whom 52 were to be elected by the people, and the rest were to be State and Settlement representatives, and members nominated by the High Commissioner. For the purposes of the election, the three main communal political parties formed an Alliance. They are the United Malay National Organisation (U.M.N.O.), the Malayan Chinese Association (M.C.A.), and the Malayan Indian Congress (M.I.C.). The Alliance (U.M.N.O.-M.C.A.-M.I.C.), won 51 out of the 52 seats contested at the first national general elections, held in July, 1955. The High Commissioner (Sir Donald MacGillivray) announced the composition of the new Executive Council after the elections. It was composed of the High Commissioner, 10 elected members from the Legislative Council, together with three ex-officio members and two nominated members. All the ten elected members were assigned portfolios and became Ministers. The leader of the party with the majority (U.M.N.O.) became the Chief Minister (Tengku Abdul Rahman).

The Alliance which formed the first elected Government with popular support, went further with constitutional advances. In January, 1956, a conference was called in London to discuss advancement towards self-government. This conference was attended by representatives of the United Kingdom Government, their Highnesses the Malay rulers, and the Alliance Government in the Federation. At this conference it was agreed that necessary steps towards the securing of early establishment of a fully self-governing and independent Federation of Malaya within the Commonwealth on the basis of Parliamentary institutions were to be taken. The conference made recommendations on defence, internal security, financial and economic matters, public services, and future constitutional changes.

During the interim period between January, 1956, and August, 1957, the political leaders have busied themselves with the implementation of the recommendations of the London conference.

During the latter part of 1956 a Constitutional Committee was set up to propose a draft Constitution for independent Malaya. Five of the best Commonwealth Constitutional experts stayed in Malaya for six months to

study local conditions and find facts on various subjects before drafting the Constitution. They are Sir William McKell (Australia), Mr. Justice Hamid (Pakistan), Mr. Justice Malik (India), Sir Ivor Jennings (United Kingdom), and Lord Reid (United Kingdom). Lord Reid was the chairman, and it was called the Reid Commission. The Constitution is being recognised as being of a very high standard, and in July of this year, with minor modifications, both of "substance and form," it was adopted by the Government of the Federation of Malaya.

Thus the new Malaya will have it as their Constitution, and in the long run the success of the Constitution will depend on the rate and implementation of the various facets of the Constitution, especially in regard to education, rural and industrial development, the public services, and the overall improvement of the standards of living of the Malaysians.

MALAYA HAS SOME FINE CULTURES

On the 31st. of this month, a new nation will be born.

This newcomer is the Federation of Malaya, the renowned land of tin and rubber, and long the "Gate to the East." To the seafaring Portuguese and Dutch of days bygone this strip of peninsula held the key to the monopoly of the spice trade. The British later were also aware of its rich natural resources and its favorable position geographically. More recently, a decade or two ago, the Japanese, in strides of conquest, were only too eager to swallow her up as part of the "Great Asiatic Co-prosperity Sphere."

The term "Malayan culture" may be slightly misleading, because as a nation Malaya does not yet possess a distinctive national culture as we understand it in other ancient Asian or European countries. Therefore, in considering "Malayan culture," one should be fair to bear in mind that Malaya is still very young.

BUILDINGS

In architecture one can still find many notable buildings and churches in Malacca of Portuguese and Dutch designs. In this ancient seaport, the "Old Gate," the remnant of the former citadel surrounding the town, and the bleak fortress on top of the hill, are still standing there to remind us of the past prowess of European naval power in this part of the world. These and other historical relics remain as the earmarks of the history of development of the land.

The early Chinese settlers have also bequeathed the

ONCE UPON A TIME . . .

Eight or nine years ago the words "Kuala Lumpur," "Penang," "Kota Bahru," and even "Singapore" were little more than names carrying a sinister overtone to Australian ears.

Malaya was a "foreign," "tropical" and vaguely alien country about which we knew, and wanted to know, little.

Malayan students have changed all that permanently for an astonishing number of Australians. Originally we may have been surprised that these students could compete on even terms with Australians in all University courses. Now we accept it as one of the facts of our world that these boys and girls speak, think, play, and react to human situations in the same way as we do, and that most of them appear to have a zest and purpose in living which many of us seem to lack.

The fact that in a country so near to our own three distinct racial groups live in a relatively harmonious and homogeneous society has made a deep impression on us who have been trained to believe that racial isolation-

ism, like honesty, is the best policy.

Malayan students have had a lion's share in the great change coming over Australian public opinion about our immigration policy. This is only one of the many things which we owe to Malaya.

My six years in Adelaide have given me a kaleidoscopic memory picture of names and faces—Sreenivasan, Wilf Anthonisz and Josh Owen, Choo, K. H. Lim, Karim, and many others who have returned home (not to mention a host of equally important people still among us), who have possibly contributed more to the University life of their generation than any comparable number of outstanding Australian students.

We all rejoice with Malaya in achieving Merdeka. May all that is best in her multi-racial culture continue, together with many new and great achievements made possible by her new political status. F. T. BORLAND.

by CHONG CHOW PANG

land with many excellent houses and temples of Ching Dynasty. They have stood well the cruel tests of the tropical climate for a century or more.

Fortunately, the intricate industry of silverware, and the production of the highly ornamental cloths woven in with gold threads, are still enjoying their proud and unique position in the field of local crafts.

VISUAL ARTS

In spheres of visual arts and other cultural activities, foreign influences have been very noticeable. The folk music of the country is of Indo-Malay form. This rather strange music may be heard in the village "Wayang Kulit" (the "shadow show"), or as the accompaniment of the display of "bersilat" (the Malay art of self-defence). The Hindu civilisation has also left its marks in the Malay customs and language.

After the initial influx of tin miners, the latter Chinese immigrants brought along their highly developed arts. Consequently, in Malaya one will be able to witness the Peking opera in its original form.

The Chinese painting, with its delicate brushwork, its ethereal beauty, and its exuberant expression, has established its prestige in the new land. The modern painters have increasingly introduced local subjects into their work—an encouraging sign indeed.

Sad to say, there has been very little noteworthy literary work since the days of Munshi Abdullah.

MUSIC

The influences of the Western cultures are perhaps more and more strongly felt.

Last year a "Festival of Culture" was held in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, where, for the first time in history, collective effort had been made to present a programme of dances and songs, and other artistic performances, contributed by the various communities in Malaya. It was a great success. No doubt this is a memorable step in the right direction.

Malaya has a people of cosmopolitan origin. The barriers of language and religion, one may think, will suffice to retard any process of integration of these different cultures into a national pattern. But the mere nature of its diversity may prove to be the inexhaustible sources from which a new characteristically Malayan type of culture may emerge, inheriting the fine points of East and West.

Therefore, to the youths of today and tomorrow are dedicated the important task of overcoming these not insurmountable obstacles in creating a new form from this immensely rich melting pot.

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