

NATIVE SPORTS AND DANCE AT KAMABONG.

Kamabong, a small but flourishing Station in the Interior eighteen miles from Tenom Lama on the Pensiangan bridle path (Via Dolorosa) was invaded by over eleven hundred Muruts on or about January 9th, for a "Main January" and *Tamy*. This was arranged by the Resident and A. D. O. Tenom.

Arriving in the morning after an easy canter from Sapong on a well upkept bridle path I was met by the A. D. O. who had, the day before, distinguished himself by having his big toe bitten by an indiscriminating hunting hound after having plunged into the river to retrieve a buck deer shot in mid-stream.

Land sports were being concluded, one Murut getting over 4' 2" with a spring jump (taking off from the ground with both feet together.) It struck me that the average Murut was a poor runner, bounding along with bent knees and irregular stride.

In the afternoon we had the water sports. The horizontal greasy pole with a prize on the end was the most attractive feature and the Natives amazed us with their balancing feats, though there was many a tumble ending with a splash and a roar of delight from the crowd on the bank. We *Tuans* also had a shot but were in the river before the crowd realised the performance. After a race or two in which the A. D. O. held his own, we went in to our Head Quarters (the office) for tea. Unfortunately the boat race took place in the rain, which however soon held off.

After tea, we, in nice clean shirts and shorts, went to see what can only be described as "The Ball Game". A hundred be-chawated Murut lads a side on a very muddy and slimy field was a sight that would have made any Cinema Producer register great joy. Our indefatigable A. D. O. was already up to the eyes in mud and Murut and striving manfully to bore his way head first through the bread basket (or shall we say 'Tapai tub') of a well nourished *Kaiam*.

On the ball suddenly shooting our way out of a scrum (twenty-fifteen-twenty formation) we cast all thoughts of dhoobis to the winds and with rare abandon, seized the pill and hurled ourselves into the fray. As an ultra-futuristic-cubist-poet would put it...

"Mud, more mud, mud and Murut, yells-grunts-flop. Tally-ho-you-wurump..." and so on.

The sun has sunk below the frowning hills and all that sort of things. Dum-dom go the gongs and whack whack goes the springy dancing floor as it hits the bending poles. There are about thirty men in the middle of the 12'x12' floor surrounded by a ring of *Kaiams* holding hands; these in turn are surrounded by a ring of red white and black apparelled damsels all holding hands and facing inwards. The men are in the full Murut costume, *chawat*, feathers, beads and rudder sporrans (I forget the official term.) The damsels are in smart black *sarongs* with a broad band of white beads round the hips and a strip of red cloth wound round the breast. They have light coloured fillets round their glossy black hair which is gracefully looped low on the left shoulder and tucked into the fillet.

"Do-ai-kan-di-lo-oo" booms the song in sonorous base voices not unpleasingly mingled with the shriller voices of the damsels' reply. With short side steps and slightly bending knees, the whole crowd sways slowly round and round. As the dance proceeds the

floor is caused to spring up and down like a bobbing boat in a short choppy sea.

We join in. I, but lately from the *Tapai tajau*, miss-kick and am shot clean through the roof—well nearly anyway. I embrace a loudly bawling *Kaiam*; the *Kaiam* bawls louder and embraces me. Bagat is tickling the damsels' backs as they gracefully bob past with their dumpling like faces and shapely arms and shoulders. Salleh yelps with delight as he makes the dancers blink with an electric torchlight. A distinguished visitor is sucking *tapai* (and cheating) ear to ear with a merry little wench who doesn't mind quaffing three *tandas* to his one; he wears a "dastar" and hornbill's plume and reminds me of a musical comedy Balkan Prince.

The Resident with beads of perspiration on his brow soberly sits discoursing with the Elders.

Something pushes past my leg; I look down, it is a brave whose powers of locomotion have been temporarily retarded by the gentle *tapai*. He pushes his way with unerring directness to the bubbling bamboo in the *tapai* jar firmly lashed to a post.

Through a slight crack in the din I hear Sir Harry Lauder exhorting the lads to cuddle the lassies, —from the gramophone, the inevitable ubiquitous gramophone. We stagger out into the open air, a cutting bitter blast when compared with the solid frowst of the house. The revellers are left, —in heaps three deep all around; yet as we tuck in our *klambu*, booming through the darkness comes the song...

"DO-AI-KAN-DI-LO-OO..."

NOD.

STEVENSON SCHEME BENEFITS.

We may commend a perusal of the remarks made by Mr. H. W. Hewitt at the annual meeting of shareholders of the Pelepah Valley (Johore) Rubber Company on the subject of the benefits that have been brought about by the restriction of rubber output. His statement punctuates the many remarks about the Stevenson scheme that have found expression in all quarters, except where a certain prejudice or interest prevails. All who have followed the position in the rubber-producing industry have only to make a comparison of the reports of companies now appearing and those of the last two years. Debit balances have been reduced or wiped out, profits have increased, and in a large number of cases a resumption of dividends has been made possible. In many other ways as regards the estates, their managerial side and coolie forces and Government revenues show the results of restriction. Another point made by Mr. Hewitt was that, far from restriction being an aid to future competition by the Netherlands Indies, the longer the system lasts the more valuable the British-owned estates become, and the more impoverished those of our neighbours, who seek a short-lived advantage by unrestricted and excessive production at a time when restrained tapping is obviously the policy that will pay handsomely in the long run. The fact remains that the market is following its predestined course. The Stevenson scheme is here, and will remain until its task has been accomplished, and there is absolutely no fear that propaganda either to smash the scheme or to interfere with its provisions will have the slightest chance of success.—*The C. E. & T.*