

# Dutch Methods of Governing in the East Indies



GENERAL W. ROOSENBOM, GOVERNOR OF DUTCH EAST INDIES.

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**B**UITENZORG, Java, Aug. 1.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I spent an hour here this morning with General W. Roosenboom, the ruler of the Dutch East Indies. He has been a soldier of high distinction in the Dutch army, and it is only a year or so ago that he was sent here to be governor general of the vast possessions which Holland owns in this part of the world. The words governor general give but a small idea of the extent of his power. He is in reality a king, and he has more power over his subjects than any ruler of Europe. He rules more than 34,000,000 people, scattered over a territory more than three times as great as Germany or France and greater than any country in Europe except Russia. He has thousands of officials under him; his standing army is more than half as large as our own, and he has for years been carrying on a war with some of the tribes of Sumatra as serious as our war with the Philippines.

## Chat with Governor General.

The governor general lives in great state here in Java. He is allowed \$60,000 a year for entertaining and his annual salary is larger than that of our president. His palace is as big as the White House and it

says it is the only one by which they can be made contented and happy. Upon leaving he gave me notes to some of his officials and since then has had forwarded me a general letter to the resident governors of the various provinces, the officers of the military and others in all parts of the islands, directing them to aid me in my investigations in every possible way.

## Civil Service in Java.

The civil service of the Dutch East Indies is the most remarkable of the world. There is no colony where the officials are so well educated and of such a high standing in every respect. The system is based upon the native government, the native nobles and chiefs ruling the people by their own laws, with the Dutch as advisers behind them. The native rulers are merely the tools in the hands of the Dutch; they are the strings which the latter pull to influence the people. In Java there are twenty-two provinces or residences. Each of these has its native governor, assisted by a Dutch resident, who is known as his elder brother. The elder brother lives in fine state. He has a magnificent house and a fund for entertaining and his salary is \$5,000 a year. The native chief is also paid a salary and an allowance. Under these residents there are assistant residents, controleurs and clerks, all of whom have their titles. The native rulers are of the nobility and the officials all come from the best families. The common people, therefore, feel that they are ruled by the Javanese nobles and the majority of them do not know that the foreigners are in actual control.

Somewhat the same system prevails in the Dutch East Indies outside Java, although some of the islands, inhabited by savages, have to be held with a firmer rein. **Dutch and the Natives.**

The native officials are also well educated. There are schools for them in all parts of the country and the higher-class natives often speak Dutch, French and English as well as the Javanese languages. They are treated just like the Europeans native subordinates or younger brothers, and the native chief's wife has the same standing as the wife of the resident governor. The salaries paid to the native chiefs vary according to the province and the state required. Some native chiefs have houses built for them at a cost of from \$30,000 to \$40,000 apiece and they receive salaries of \$500 a month.

I am told that the Dutch believe they can easily control the natives if they can



GOVERNMENT OFFICES AT BATAVIA.

is properly collected. It has its accountants who go through the offices of the provinces examining the books, the cash and the manner of doing business. There is a law for everything, and the bookkeeping is enormous. There are irrigation officials, roadmaking officials, civil engineers and all the machinery of a vast government.

## Dutch as Superior Belongs.

The Dutch endeavor to impress upon the natives that they belong to a higher order of creation than the Javanese. They insist that all of the Dutch officials shall be treated with the same respect shown the noblest of the Javanese chiefs. This is very evident in out-of-the-way districts. I have traveled for miles through the country where every man, woman and child I met would squat down on the ground and fold his hands in an attitude of prayer until I passed. I have met Javanese on horseback, myself riding at the same time, and the Javanese as soon as he saw me would jump down from his horse in order that he might not be on the same level as myself when I passed by. I have had women with great bundles on their backs lift them down and seat themselves on their heels, putting their hands together, in my honor, and I believe that the rank of superior and inferior is nowhere greater than here. According to the old customs of Java which still prevail those of lower rank must not sit above those of higher rank. There are several native sultans in central Java, and when the resident governors were first chosen to rule with them there was quite a discussion as to whether the sultan should not be a little higher than his elder brother. The Dutch insisted on absolute equality, but it is said that for a time the sultan had silver dollars nailed to the legs of his chair in order that he might be a trifle higher up than the Dutch resident when the two sat together.

## Servants and Masters.

I have a native servant, a swell Javanese, who speaks broken English and who acts for me both as boy and as interpreter. He whitens my shoes and my helmet, and sleeps in front of my door at night. He never smokes a cigarette when I am present and he never comes before me without his turban. It is etiquette here for the servant to keep his head covered, and it would be quite as impolite for Simo, my boy, to come in without his turban as it would be for your hired man to keep his hat on when he enters your parlor. A native should not smoke in the presence of a European, and if he is smoking on the street he should take the cigarette out of his mouth and hold it behind him while Europeans pass. The Dutch official never requests his servants to do things, he commands them. The inferior is expected to use high Javanese in speaking to his superior, and the superior speaks low Javanese in speaking to him. A Javanese should not speak in Dutch to a European without the European especially requests it.

Such treatment seems ridiculous to Americans, amongst whom all are equal. The Dutch say that it is a necessity in this part of the world, and that it is only by means of upholding the old customs that they can maintain the respect of the people. One of the richest of the planters, a Dutch baron, who has charge of a property worth several millions and who employs hundreds of natives, tells me that the people do not look upon such actions as degrading. They do it as a matter of politeness and respect to their superiors. The customs have prevailed for generations and the employer who does not insist upon them will soon lose caste with his people. They will think him an ignorant boor and he can do nothing with them.

In the native states the servility of the common people to their native superiors is

so great that one would hardly believe it if he did not experience it himself. I have seen princes kissing the feet of their fathers and crawling along to them on their knees, and at one time I saw 1,000 officials squatting down on their heels in honor of the native chief.

## Every Clerk a Scholar.

I have spoken of the education of the Dutch officials, but I almost despair of making you understand how well educated they are. Every clerk here is a college graduate. The Dutch have a university at Delft, in Holland, for the education of their colonial officials. Every clerk has to be a graduate of the public schools and also of this university, where he takes a special course to fit himself for the colonial service. He must be able to speak French, German and English and at least two of the native languages of Java, one of which must be the Malay. There are four languages spoken in Java, but the Malay is in common use everywhere. The higher officials and those who act as judges of any of the courts must be able to speak three languages and must also be graduates in Dutch law, as well as thoroughly posted on the native laws, customs and religions of Java. The character of the clerks is carefully looked after, and as a rule only gentlemen are chosen.

## Service in Java.

After graduation the would-be government clerk is sent out here on trial. He must pass an examination for aspirant

controleur and if successful is assigned as an assistant to a controleur or minor official of one of the provinces. He now receives about \$80 a month and a house, but he is as yet only on probation and he must serve several years before he can be examined for the position of controleur of the second class. If he passes this exam-

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NATIVE OFFICIALS OR DUTCH YOUNGER BROTHERS.

is situated in a great park, a part of which contains the botanical gardens, said to be by far the finest in the whole world. It was in the palace that I met his excellency. The audience was held in the morning, but notwithstanding this I had to go in full dress and in as much state as though to visit a king. I was met at the palace door by soldiers and officials in uniform and his excellency's secretaries passed me from one to another until I was at last ushered into the audience room of the governor.

His excellency addressed me in English and we chatted together for some time about the Dutch colonial empire and how matters are handled in Java. The question of the Philippines came up and he intimated that we had a big job on our hands, but suggested that we might learn something from Holland's experience in handling the people. He approved of the Dutch methods of treating the natives and he

control the chiefs, but at the same time they are careful to let the citizens know that they themselves are the rulers. They make it a principle to be honest with the natives and to protect them in their rights. There are courts everywhere held by the Dutch officials and in quarrels between natives and Europeans the natives are given the benefit of the doubt. I am told that it will be much safer for me to strike an European here than a native, for the native will be sure to land me in prison.

## Strict Accounts and Taxes.

At the same time the government is very strict in keeping its accounts. Taxes are honestly levied and must be honestly paid. Every village and every house in the whole island is numbered, and every piece of ground pays its tax. Every horse and every cart pays a tax. The government has its tax inspectors, who see that everything

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