

## BY INVITATION

THE FOUNDING OF THE MEDICAL  
SCHOOL IN SINGAPORE (PART II)

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Three months later, on 10th January 1905, the Governor wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for permission to establish the Medical School as all his conditions had been fulfilled, in fact subscriptions far in excess of the amount actually required had been collected (\$87,000):<sup>32</sup>

*"Sir, I have the honour to transmit for your consideration copies of correspondence with the Hon'ble Tan Jiak Kim, the Chinese Member of the Legislative Council, on the subject of the establishment of a Medical School in Singapore for the Colony and the Federated Malay States.*

*The desirability of such a School if it can be successfully worked is beyond question. At present both the Federated Malay States and the Colony find the greatest difficulty in filling the ranks of Assistant Surgeons as the native-born Chinese and Eurasians also in general shrink from the wide separation involved in allowing their sons to accept the scholarships which the two Governments provide to enable them to proceed to one or other of the Indian Medical Colleges.*

*In Singapore the students would be able to live either at their own houses or with friends, and I am assured by all those who are best able to form an opinion that a school in Singapore will not be at all likely to suffer from lack of students, a view in which I find my predecessor concurred.*

*The proposal has the hearty sympathy of the Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council, and of the European community, who were quite willing to subscribe to the Fund which I required to be raised, but the Chinese and other Asiatic members of the community desired to find the amount themselves, which I learn they have now done.*

*As regards the expenditure, the estimates formed by the Principal Civil Medical Officer are set forth in the letter from the Colonial Secretary to Mr. Tan Jiak Kim. The amount of the Government Scholarships will be the same as that annually provided, though seldom expended for students to be educated in India, and the only additional charge will be that required for the payment of the staff and maintenance estimated at \$13,200 per annum which I*

*propose should be found in equal moieties by the Colony and the Federated Malay States.*

The main part of this expenditure would be for the salary of a Professor of Anatomy, etc., which the Principal Civil Medical Officer recommends should be fixed at £800 per annum and he recommends for the post Mr. Gerald Dudley Freer, Colonial Surgeon Resident in Penang. Dr. Freer's qualifications are of a very high order and I have no hesitation in supporting Dr. McDowell's recommendation. Dr. Freer has been in the service for fourteen years, at present draws salary at the rate of \$3,600 with double exchange compensation and free quarters, so that the salary proposed would not seem excessive.

The remainder of the staff would be private or Government medical practitioners to whom a small non-pensionable honorarium would be paid.

Dr. McDowell assures me that there will be no difficulty in securing the assistance and co-operation of the various members of the profession in Singapore in the work of the school.

If you approve of the establishment of the school, and of the appointment of Dr. Freer, I should be glad if you would inform me by telegraph in order that I may bring the matter formally before the Legislative Council.

I have, etc.  
JOHN ANDERSON."

A telegram was sent from London on 21st February 1905 to the Governor: "Referring to your Despatch No. 9 of the 10th January, proposals approved. LYTTLETON."<sup>32</sup>

All the preliminary steps for the establishment of the Medical School were taken soon after the Petition was received by the Governor. There was much confidence in the success of the venture. In 1902, the principal advisers to Government had opposed the idea, but by 1904, they had been replaced by men who were more hopeful, more sympathetic and more knowledgeable, namely, Dr. D. K. McDowell, the Principal Civil Medical Officer, and Mr. W. D. Barnes, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, and it was on their advice that the Governor acted in the manner he did.

In fact, in November 1904, two months before the Governor wrote to the Secretary of State for approval, the Gazette Notification inviting applications for Student Assistant Surgeons had this sentence:<sup>33</sup>

*"... sent to Madras to join the Medical College on 1st July 1905, i.e. if the proposed Medical School in Singapore had not yet started, otherwise the Students will be detained to complete their course of study in Singapore. . . ."*

(By the end of 1904, there were eleven Straits students left in Madras.<sup>34</sup> No more were sent after 1904. Two students remained at the end of 1908<sup>35</sup> and they returned to Singapore in 1909).

After receiving the Secretary of State's approval, the legislative machinery was set in motion.

On 17th March 1905, at a meeting of the Legislative Council, the Colonial Secretary laid on the table the "Correspondence regarding the establishment of a Medical School in Singapore". (see above, the Petition, the Governor's reply, the Governor's letter to London and the Secretary of State's reply.)<sup>32</sup>

Even before the Bill to provide for the establishment of the Medical School was introduced in the Legislative Council, the following Gazette notification appeared on 12th May 1905:<sup>36</sup>

*"It is expected that the new Straits Medical School will be opened at Singapore on the 1st of July. The course of study will be five years, and successful students will receive diplomas entitling them to practise in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States. A certain number of approved students at the School will pay no fees, will receive scholarships at the rate of \$15 per month and will have the use of instruments and expensive books free of charge.*

*No student will be accepted unless his knowledge of English and general education are sufficient to enable him to profit by the instruction given. Intending students should communicate with the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Singapore, from whom further information concerning the School can be obtained."*

This notice was re-published in the Straits Times.<sup>37</sup> Note that it was to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs that all correspondence should be addressed.

The Singapore Free Press of 13th June 1905 published some information regarding the proposed Medical School culled from a private letter, and criticised the pro-tem committee for not keeping the public informed of their work.<sup>38</sup> It is possible that they wanted to wait until the law was passed before making official public announcements. (The Bill was not introduced until 16th June 1905).

#### **"The Straits Medical School"**

The directorate of the new Straits Medical School at Singapore are apparently not yet aware of the value of publicity in connection with their work. This is from a private letter to a Chinese gentleman in Penang.

The Committee held a preliminary meeting last Friday in the Office of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs at Singapore. The syllabus for the first year will be as follows:

#### **July — December Session.**

Practical Anatomy (Dissecting).  
Elementary Anatomy.  
Osteology.  
Botany.  
Chemistry.  
Physics.

#### **March — May Session**

Anatomy.  
Chemistry.  
Elementary and Practical Anatomy (Dissecting).

The School will be opened on Monday 3rd July next. So far there are only eight applications, all from Singapore. Considering the objects the promoters had in view when they originated the scheme, it is to be hoped that applications from Penang, Malacca and the Federated Malay States will be forthcoming. There are doubtless many would-be applicants in the places mentioned, who are probably deterred from sending in their names by considerations of expense. The problem of providing for themselves board and lodging in a strange place is, with many young persons, one which is not easy of solution. The Opium and Spirit Farmers of Singapore are desirous of assisting would-be candidates who are confronted by this difficulty, and have offered to find them board and lodging at their present spacious offices.

Only candidates who have been pronounced physically fit will be admitted. In Singapore, Dr. Freer has kindly volunteered to medically examine candidates, while in Penang, the Colonial Surgeon will be asked to undertake similar work. Candidates from other places must be in Singapore by the 15th of July, and all applications not received in time will have to stand over till next session.

I hope you will kindly second the efforts of the communities by urging on the young Babas of Penang the great services which a successful medical career would enable them to render to their own people and to others."

This article was news-worthy enough for the Penang Gazette to re-publish it on 20th June 1905.<sup>39</sup>

At the Legislative Council meeting of 16th June 1905, the Attorney-General moved that a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to provide for the Establishment of a School of Medicine at Singapore" be read a first time. He said,<sup>40</sup>

"I am happily moving a Bill to which nobody, I think, will object in principle, and I think that if it were a private Bill, there would be no great difficulty in proving the preamble 'that it is expedient that a school should be founded in Singapore to provide facilities for the study of medicine, surgery and midwifery'. This Bill is intended to remedy, to a great extent, a most serious state of things in the Colony with regard to medicine and surgery. We, Europeans, get on very well; we have got capital doctors, who look after us very well, and we enjoy excellent health, and if we break a bone or do anything foolish, we are very soon set on our legs again. It is a very different thing with the mass of the population here, especially amongst the Chinese, who have no confidence in European methods of treatment, who have no real doctors of their own, and whose lives subject them to a very great number of

accidents and to a large number of diseases. I have not the smallest doubt, Sir, that every member of this Council has heard the most gruesome tales, and perfectly true ones, with regard to the sufferings of poor Chinamen, who are treated for ordinary hurts, that any reasonable Dresser at a hospital would be able to cure at once, in such a way that they die a lingering death, in torture. The same is true, to a great extent, with regard to diseases, although, of course, the difference between civilisation and barbarism is not so great in medicine as in surgery, although it is great indeed. Then there is a very bad state of things with regard to midwifery. We trust that this school will bring together sensible students, who will be just as capable of learning and studying, and just as capable afterwards of treating their people, as European doctors, who have had all the advantages that they will have. .... (establishment of the Council for medical education, its duties) .... Then there is a very important thing, the provision of scholarships for the benefit of students of the school. It is hoped that we shall have large subscriptions from outside, and it is hoped that these subscriptions will be devoted, for the most part, to these scholarships. Scholarships are useful in more than one way. They permit poor men of intelligence and application to perfect an education which they would not otherwise be able to afford, and they also attract to our school the better class of intellects, because, where there is something to be got, the clever man goes and tries to get it. So, not only do we help poor students, but we attract good brains, and, therefore, there is a double benefit to the institution to which these scholarships belong. ....

The non-professional members of the Council are to be elected by the body of the subscribers. ....

Now comes another branch of the subject, the diplomas and certificates. The granting of these will be a function of this educational establishment and is an extremely important function. It is to be an Examining Body; it will issue certificates to those who pass its examinations, and they will be, as far as may be — I do not see why they should not be absolutely — equivalent to such examinations as are passed in Europe, and for that reason it is laid down in Section 21 that the standard required from candidates at any qualifying examination, i.e. examinations at which they qualify in medicine, surgery and midwifery, shall be 'such as sufficiently to guarantee the possession of the knowledge and skill required for the practice of medicine, surgery and midwifery'. These are commonplace words; you may say they do not tell you much, but the reason, and I think it is a very proper one, why they are inserted there, is that they are the words of the Medical Act in England directing the education of doctors and surgeons in Great Britain. Putting them in this Bill is a protest that we mean to have the same standard as in Great Britain, the same standard of excellence in our surgeons and in our doctors as in any part of the world. The requisite provisions for the qualifying examinations that will be held are in this last part of the Bill, and in Section 23, which is important, we provide that the holders of the diplomas of this school are to be entitled to be registered under 'The Medical Registration Ordinance 1905' or any other Ordinance for the time being in force of the same kind. That, I think, is a guarantee that the examinations will be sufficiently strict to ensure a high standard of excellence. ...."

Mr. Tan Jiak Kim seconded the motion, which was agreed to, and the Bill was read a first time.

At the Legislative Council meeting of 30th June 1905, the Attorney-General moved the second reading of the Bill. Mr. Tan Jiak Kim seconded the motion and addressed the Council. He wanted assurance from the Governor that the Medical School would be a Government responsibility:<sup>41</sup>

*"... Now, in the proposed Bill itself, I cannot find that there is any provision that the Government can spend the public revenue of the Colony on the maintenance of this school. I am sure that it is the intention of Your Excellency to make this institution a Government one. It is very important that an institution of this kind should be entirely under Government. Your Excellency has provided for a Council for the school, and with the exception of some Government officials, you will allow the subscribers the liberty of nominating their own representatives, and I do not think that Your Excellency need, for one moment, entertain the opinion that when this school is a Government institution, that the Chinese community will not take any further interest in the welfare of the school. They are bound to take an interest as they do in the case of Tan Tock Seng's Hospital. ... And I must tell Your Excellency one thing, that when the petitioners received the reply from Government, we were all under the impression that if we could raise the amount of \$71,000, then the institution should be a Government institution, maintained and provided by Government in future. I hope Your Excellency will see your way to allow certain provisions in order to make it clear that this school will be a Government institution. ... I shall simply say that the community of this Colony, as well as of the Native States, are deeply indebted to Your Excellency for the very ready manner in which you met the prayer of their petition in establishing this school. This school will fill one of the most important needs of this Colony, and I am sure the community will look upon this school as a special sign for the future higher progress of education in the Colony."*

The Governor replied that there was no doubt that the school was to be a Government responsibility, and predicted the part its graduates would play in promoting the health of the Colony:<sup>41</sup>

*"... The arrangement that has been adopted and approved by the Secretary of State, is that half the cost of the staff and maintenance should be borne by the Colony, and the other half should be borne by the Federated Malay States. ... I am very glad indeed to hear what my honourable friend has stated, that there is no fear that the Chinese will not continue to take an interest in the institution, and I am glad to say that they have already given the fullest proofs of that interest, not only by generous subscriptions, but also by the assistance which they have given in regard to obtaining pupils. ... I think that the institution is absolutely necessary at the present stage of our development. No one can doubt, I think, that it is really appalling to see our vital statistics in this Colony, situated as we are, with such a very large proportion of our population coming here in the prime of their manhood, in the prime of their strength, and then, in spite of that fact, in spite of the fact that so large a proportion, more than half, of our population consists of men, among whom in ordinary circumstances the death rate should not exceed 4 or 5 per thousand, here our*

*statistics shew that, even in a favourable year, we reach 40 per thousand! I think that fact alone is sufficient to convince anybody that such an institution is very much wanted. It has a great work before it, not only in the actual work of training those who are seeking to cure disease, but also a still greater work in teaching the mass of population with whom they will be brought into immediate contact, the importance, in fact, the necessity, of paying proper attention to sanitary precautions and remedial measures. I think that, in these matters, dealing with a population which is alien to European ideas, and has no sympathy with the restrictions which have been enforced without demur in every country in Europe, I say that, in dealing with a population like that, we have got to educate them before we can start imposing restrictions. I look to the students who will be turned out from this school to help the Government, to help the Municipality, to help all those interested in improving our sanitary position, to educate people up to that frame of mind in which they will be prepared not only to accept restrictions, but to co-operate with the Government and the Municipality in carrying them out. I am sure that the honourable member who has spoken will agree with me that there is no likelihood of the Government seeking to evade one jot or one tittle of the promise I have been authorised to make on behalf of this institution . . ."*

The Bill was read a second time.

The proceedings of the Legislative Council meetings were published in full in the newspapers of Singapore and Penang, and were followed with interest by prospective students and their parents. One father wrote to the Straits Times on 30th June 1905, to say that there were rumours that the Singapore diploma would not be recognised outside the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, and that anxiety regarding this should be allayed otherwise the inducement for local boys to join the Medical School would lose its attractions:<sup>42</sup>

"Dear Sir,

In view of the progress in Council of a Bill to provide for the establishment of a School of Medicine at Singapore, it would be interesting to parents and guardians to know whether it is proposed to admit the School to the privilege of affiliated colleges, as is the case with the Provincial Medical Schools of the United Kingdom and some of the Colleges in India. There is an impression abroad that a student who obtains a licentiate's diploma from this Institution, will only have licence to practise medicine and surgery locally; and that his status as a Medical Practitioner will only serve him in good stead so long as he is not beyond the bounds of the Straits Settlements. In short, it means that he will not be recognised elsewhere as a medical man privileged to practise. His sphere of usefulness or his chances of money-making is circumscribed. If this be so, the inducements which the School offers cannot be said to be very great. From the tenor of the Attorney-General's remarks in Council, it would appear that in establishing the School, the main object is to induce Chinese youths to study and practise Western methods in order that the great mass of their countrymen, who are conservative to the backbone in the matter of medical treatment on European lines, might be benefited thereby; and the hope is expressed that the School would bring forward a number of doctors, especially Chinese, who would be just as capable of learning and sub-

sequently of treating their people as European doctors. As the School will also be open for the admission of other than Chinese young men who are disposed to avail themselves of whatever advantages it offers, many people are naturally anxious to know whether a diploma granted by the local institution would be as good as one from the Madras Medical College which has the reputation of being second to none in the East, and whether it would serve as a sufficient passport to entitle the holder to recognition as a qualified man of his rank in any other Colony besides the Colonies of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States. It is no secret that in spite of the many advantages which a course in the Madras Medical College offers, the Straits Government has ever found it a difficult matter to secure suitable young men to study there preparatory to admission into the ranks of the subordinate branch of the Medical Department of the Straits Settlements. The reason is not far to seek; but the future career of a graduate of the Madras Medical College, who has undergone a crucial test of four years' hard study and practice, is thereby assured. It is true that he begins with a salary not by any means commensurate with his position, but his career in the Service which does not exceed 15 years or so, is mapped out for him, and on his retirement, he can practise as a medical man in any portion of the British Empire. He is not tied down to the Straits, and can go where he chooses where his standing as a medical man can never be questioned.

I am, Dear Sir, Yours etc.  
PATERFAMILIAS."

The Medical School started its first session on 3rd July 1905, eleven days before the Bill establishing it became law. The School was housed in the old Lunatic Asylum premises for women at Sepoy Lines. The buildings there had been adapted for the purposes of the School by the Public Works Department, and consisted of a dissecting room, lecture room, class room and office.

At the Legislative Council meetings of 7th July and 14 July 1905, the Council went into Committee to consider the Medical School Bill.<sup>43</sup> A number of amendments were proposed and accepted, including one which changed the name of the School from "Straits Medical School" to "Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School" in view of the fact that the Federated Malay States Government would be paying half the maintenance cost. After the debate on 14th July, the Governor certified that it was urgent that the Bill be passed through its remaining stages without delay, and the Attorney-General moved, the Auditor-General seconding, that the standing orders be suspended and that the Bill be read a third time. The motion was carried and the Bill was read a third time, passed and numbered XV of 1905.

The official opening of the Medical School was postponed to Thursday, 28th September 1905.<sup>44</sup> By this time, most of the equipment ordered from Britain had arrived and it was possible to show the School more or less in working order. This was the reason for the postponement.

The Opening Ceremony was at 3.00 p.m. Awaiting the arrival of His Excellency the Governor, Sir John Anderson, was a large and representative company of leading residents and students, those interested in founding the School and the School staff, whilst the medical profession had assembled in force. After the guests had

inspected the School building, the formal opening started with a speech of welcome by the Principal Civil Medical Officer, Dr. D. K. McDowell, C.M.G., President of the School Council. Dr. McDowell having expressed his pleasure at seeing so many members of the medical profession present, and alluded to the great interest evinced in medical matters in the Colony, welcomed the Governor and the other guests heartily on behalf of the School. He then called upon Dr. G. D. Freer, the Principal of the School, to make a few remarks. Dr. Freer read a short report on the working of the Medical School to date. He said among other things:

*"... Doubts were expressed at one time as to whether a sufficient number of students would be obtained to form a school, but I think on that head we need have no further misgivings. Twenty-two students have been enrolled for the present session, of whom nine are Chinese, and the remainder Eurasians, Tamils, Singalese and one European. (In his Annual Report, he mentioned 23 students — 9 Chinese, 6 Eurasians, 5 Tamils, 1 Ceylonese, 1 Malay and 1 European). Sixteen of them come from schools in the Colony or Native States. Two of the students are paying full fees for the course. Already a number of applications to join next year have been received, including one from a lady student, the daughter of a local practitioner, and one from an Australian. As regards the progress of the students... in most cases, a high percentage of marks has been obtained... generally well satisfied with the progress made... The syllabus will show that through the ready help given by the local medical practitioners, as well as by Government Medical Officers, the School Staff is now complete except for a lecturer in Physiology. This appointment was first of all offered to Dr. Guoh Lean Tuch, a Straits-born Chinaman and a distinguished graduate of Cambridge University. I regret to say he felt unable to undertake it, and steps are now being taken to fill the appointment as soon as possible. In conclusion, I would add that the utility of the School has quite early been put to a practical test. The Lecturers and Examiners on the staff have just been engaged in preparing and examining in Surgery, Medicine and Midwifery unqualified practitioners who, under the new Medical Registration Ordinance would, without examination have been inadmissible to the Register..."*

The Hon'ble Tan Jiak Kim said it was customary before asking the Governor to declare the opening of the School that some reference should be made to the history of the institution. He mentioned the friendly advice and assistance of his friend, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, in the matter of the Memorial to the Governor and the collection of the subscriptions when although only \$71,000 were required, more than \$80,000 were collected. He also reminded the audience of the Governor's very ready and favourable consideration of the petition, and his redemption of his promise by providing an adequate staff and the building to temporarily accommodate the School. He was sure that it was the hope of all present that when the School had proved a success, the Governor would see fit to provide further facilities for higher education for local boys, the most urgent of which was engineering, which was necessary to develop the magnificent resources of the Federated Malay States. He then on behalf of the School Council "respectfully asked His

Excellency to set the seal on his work by formally declaring the School open".

The Governor in his speech said that when the petition was submitted to him, he looked into the relevant files on the founding of a Medical School in Singapore. He found that the scheme had been mooted previously but had been found not feasible, the principal reasons being a fear that sufficient students would not be forthcoming, and the uncertainty of support necessary for the School's maintenance from the Chinese community and other Asiatic races. But the members of the Government who had held that opinion had gone, and their places taken by men with more hopefulness, and perhaps more discrimination and more sympathetic knowledge of the community. He had referred the matter to Mr. Barnes and Dr. McDowell, and on their advice he acted, and it was to them that the main credit of what had been done was due. The hopefulness and tenacity with which Dr. McDowell set about his work and the successful way in which he had enlisted the sympathy and services of his brethren in the medical profession had been beyond praise. Mr. Barnes had succeeded in collecting subscriptions beyond his wildest dreams. He next praised Mr. Tan Jiak Kim and the medical profession:

*"... But I must mention my friend, Mr. Tan Jiak Kim, in this connection. It is not only the munificent gift (\$12,000) which he gave personally but also the enthusiasm and energy which he threw into the work to enlist the sympathy and find his way into the pockets of his fellow Chinese that it is largely, almost entirely due to him that we see the institution started and started in such very hopeful circumstances. I think also that we must not forget on behalf of the community to give our thanks to the medical profession for the ready manner in which they have come forward and shown their sympathy with the Institution in such a practical way by giving their services as honorary lecturers, but for which it would have been quite impossible for the Government and the community to have attempted the task. The members of the medical profession here are men who are engaged in the daily discharge of the duties of a very arduous profession with little time or leisure at their disposal, and I think it is very little we can do to express our indebtedness to them for the action they have taken in this matter. I think everyone will admit it is worthy of the best records of the profession..."*

The Governor then said he did not propose, in fact, it was quite unnecessary, to dwell upon the need for a Medical School in Singapore. The death rate in Singapore was more than 50 per 1000 inhabitants each year. What was more startling was the mortality among children born in Singapore. In 1904, out of the 5400 children born, 1715 had died before they reached the age of one. He believed that the Medical School would contribute to combating this slaughter, it could be called nothing else. The birth rate was only half the death rate. Were it not for the constant stream of immigration Singapore would cease to exist in a few years. They however could not always count upon this immigration. If Singapore was to remain a great city, a great centre of commerce and industry, the children had to be saved.

*His Excellency then specially addressed the students: "... Now, I would like to say a few words to you, young men, who are amongst our first students. I am very glad*

*indeed to hear that the records so far are so good. I think the figures that Dr. Freer read to us are very satisfactory indeed. What I want you to remember is that the course of study you are about to enter upon is not merely a course of study which is intended to enable you to earn a living, but as a passport to membership of a very great profession, a profession in many instances, of unselfish devotion and splendid achievement, a profession with very lofty ideals and one which calls for all the best qualities, mental and moral, which a man can give. It demands not only freshness and vigour of body, but steadiness and skill in hand and eye. It wants infinite patience and keenest sympathy, and to all these qualities, there has to be added unfaltering courage. Day by day when you come to practise your profession you will find yourselves enlisted in an army which is always in the presence of the foe. The soldier has his rest. He has time to think when and where he will meet the enemy. The enemy with which you have to meet is all around you. Everywhere in the world life preys upon life and it is the duty and the work of the medical profession to find out these forms of life and disease which prey upon human life, and not only to cure disease but to prevent it as far as possible, to destroy the seeds of beginning of those forms of life which do prey upon humanity. It is a welfare which requires all the best qualities that any man can bring to its service. I am sure that with the example of unselfishness which has been set you by the medical profession here, you will start on your course at any rate with a fair example before your eyes of the spirit in which you are expected to discharge the duties of your profession. I am sure you will realise the best hopes of the Government and the community. It is to you that Government look especially. You are of the East, and to you they look, to break down the walls of native prejudice and overcome this ignorance. You have access as the Westerner has not, to the inmost household in the East, and it is a very real battle that will have to be fought, and I think, with the training you will acquire here, you will go forth well-equipped and determined to win in the real spirit of the profession. And in a few years' time, you will overcome them and the community will reap the benefit by an increasingly healthy population, a diminishing death rate and improved conditions of life everywhere . . ."*

He concluded by declaring with much pleasure the School open. Mr. W. D. Barnes, on behalf of the School Council, thanked the Governor for declaring the School open. He said that the Governor had not only opened but had founded the School by his decision in the matter. He confidently hoped that when His Excellency visited the School again he would find that his faith in the institution's success was justified. Mr. Tan Theam Hock, representing the Penang Chinese community, seconded the vote of thanks which was carried. His Excellency briefly returned thanks and expressed a cordial wish for the School's success.

The formal proceedings then closed, and light refreshment was served to the company. (For those interested, a list of some of those present can be found in Appendix E. There are a number of Chinese names.)

The Eastern Daily Mail, a Singapore newspaper, in addition to reporting the official opening of the Medical School like the Straits Times, the Singapore Free Press and the Penang Gazette, published an article on "The

Medical School" on 30th September 1905:<sup>45</sup>

*"Most of us will agree with Mr. Tan Jiak Kim in his expressed hope at the opening ceremony of the Medical School yesterday that when the institution had proved to be a thorough success, Government would provide us with still further facilities for the higher education of our boys. That the Medical School is to be a success is evident from the fact that already 22 suitably prepared and eager pupils have been enrolled and are doing excellent work. There are those among us who affect to sneer at the idea of providing opportunities for professional training and higher education in general, asserting that there are no qualified candidates for entrance into such schools. The Medical School has proved the falsity of this assertion. Within a few weeks after the commencement of work, over a score have been enrolled. And each of these students will, as His Excellency remarked, be of great value to the Colony in teaching modern methods of sanitation and hygiene to those who so much need the knowledge.*

*His Excellency pointed out the fact that reliance upon immigration for the upkeep of the population of the Colony was impossible. He might also have mentioned the fact that the kind of population which we receive by immigration cannot be compared in its quality to that which is native to the soil; as is evident in a comparison of the average Chinese Baba with the average immigrant from China. The turbulent and the lawless element we receive by immigration, while the law-abiding and useful citizen is of our own stock. His Excellency struck the right chord when he suggested the necessity, from patriotic as well as humanitarian reasons, of doing the utmost to preserve the lives of the infants and young children who are born here. In this work not only the Medical School but higher educational institutions as well, should have an important part, General knowledge, as well as medical, tends to the adoption of modern ideas for the young and the improvement of the home in all that promotes vigour of both body and mind. The sooner then that Government provides us with facilities for such training as shall follow upon that begun in the existing schools, the sooner may we expect the death rate to decrease and the general tone of social life amongst us to be elevated."*

By December 1905, all the administrative details had been tidied up. Rules made by the Council of the Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School under Section 19 of the "Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School Ordinance 1905" were approved by the Governor-in-Council and published in the Government Gazette as required by law.<sup>46</sup> These regulations governed:

- (a) The mode and time of convening the meetings of the Council and of transacting business thereat.
- (b) The appointment, suspension, removal, duties and remuneration of professors, lecturers, examining officers and servants.
- (c) The qualifications of applicants for permission to enter the School as students.
- (d) The course of instruction to be followed by students and the examinations to be from time to time passed by them.
- (e) The examinations to be passed and other conditions to be fulfilled by candidates for diplomas and certificates.
- (f) The maintenance of good order and discipline and

the penalties to be imposed on students contravening such rules.

- (g) The granting of Scholarships to students at the School and the withdrawal thereof and the fixing from time to time of the amount of such Scholarships and the period for which they may be drawn.
- (h) The charging of fees to students at the School.
- (i) The keeping of accounts of the income and expenditure, assets and liabilities of the Council.
- (j) Generally all matters regarding the School.

Those regulations concerning qualifications of applicants, course of instruction, examinations, discipline, scholarships and fees may be found in Appendix F. It is of interest to the present generation of young doctors and medical students to know what their grandfathers had to go through, and salutary to compare with their lot today.

The next notification regarding admission to the Medical School was also more specific.<sup>47</sup> The School's administrative work was no longer done in the Chinese Protectorate:

**"Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School.**

The next session begins on March 1st 1906.

Applications to join the School then should be addressed to the 'Principal' so as to arrive not later than the end of January. Applicants should state whether they intend competing for the Scholarships and in what subjects.

Fifteen Scholarships of \$15 a month each are available for those entering the full course for the Diploma.

Attention is drawn to the following rules:

(Entrance examination and Scholarship examination subject — see Appendix F.)

These examinations will be held in the latter half of February and notices of the exact date will be sent to intending candidates."

There was at the same time a notification regarding Regulations for those who intended taking the Hospital Assistants' Course.

This article will end with quotations from the enthusiastic first Annual Report of the Medical School by its Principal, Dr. G. D. Freer, and a postscript by the Colonial Secretary:

*"... The buildings in the whole Female Lunatic Asylum were altered and equipped for the purpose of a Medical School and have so far proved sufficient for present requirements. The situation is excellent, as it is quite close to the General Hospital where the students will later on carry out some of their hospital work. It is also free from noise and dust. If, however, as now seems likely, the number of students goes on increasing, it will be necessary to construct new buildings or enlarge the present ones. All the classes were held there with the exception of those in Chemistry, which were held by the Government Analyst in the temporary laboratories in Coleman Street. New laboratories are about to be built for the Government Analyst, and the advisability of having them in the Medical School premises ought to be considered. At the present time, the students have to walk nearly two miles to their Chemistry classes. ....*

*In addition to the regular course of instruction for the Diploma which will extend over five years and after a qualifying examination in Medicine, Surgery and Mid-*

*wifery, entitle those who pass to be recognised locally as general medical practitioners, the School is undertaking important work in other directions.*

*During August and September last, the School staff prepared and examined in Medicine, Surgery and Mid-wifery, those unqualified practitioners who under the new Medical Registration Ordinance would otherwise have been inadmissible to the Register.*

*A two years' course for Hospital Assistants. ....*

*The Preparation and examination of candidates for the Licence under the Morphine and Poisons Ordinances are being carried out under the auspices of the Medical School. (For syllabus, etc., see Gazette Notification 1045 of 18.8.1905).*

*Classes in Elementary Hygiene and Sanitation are shortly to be held for the benefit of school teachers.*

A number of applications have been received to join the School next session, both for the full course for the Diploma and for the Hospital Assistants Department. For the former, a compulsory preliminary examination is to be held and it is intended as soon as possible to have the same standard for the preliminary examination as that required by the Regulations of the General Medical Council of Great Britain."<sup>48</sup> (The School produced its first graduates in 1910, and its Diploma was recognised by the General Medical Council in 1916.)

*"... The Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School was established during the year and made a very successful start. The School is endowed by a fund raised almost entirely by subscriptions from Chinese of the Colony and the Federated Malay States who responded liberally to the appeal made to them. ...."<sup>49</sup> (For the list of donors, see Appendix G).*

## APPENDIX E

### LIST OF SOME OF THOSE PRESENT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY (28.9.1905).

H. E. the Governor, Sir John Anderson.

Miss Anderson.

Mr. O. Marks, Private Secretary.

Captain Stockley, A.D.C.

*Members of the Council:*

The Principal Civil Medical Officer (President) Dr. D. K. McDowell, C.M.G.

The Secretary for Chinese Affairs (Vice-President), Mr. W. D. Barnes.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. J. O. Anthoniz.

The Principal of the School, Dr. G. D. Freer, M.B., D.P.H.

The nominee of the Resident-General, Dr. M. J. Wright, State Surgeon, Perak.

The nominee of the Straits Branch of the British Medical Association, Dr. Lim Boon Keng, M.B., C.M.

The Hon. Tan Jiak Kim.

Mr. Loke Yew.

Mr. Gan Ngoh Bee.

The Attorney-General, the Hon. W. R. Collyer.

The Acting Colonial Secretary, the Hon. E. L. Brockman.

The Colonial Engineer, the Hon. A. Murray.

The President of the Municipal Commission,

Mr. Broadrick.

*Members of the School Staff:*

- Dr. G. E. Brooke.
  - Dr. R. Dane.
  - Dr. G. A. Finlayson.
  - Dr. P. Fowlie.
  - Mr. P. J. Burgess.
  - Mr. W. G. Ellis.
  - Mr. H. N. Ridley.
  - Mr. A. B. Leicester.
  - Mr. W. G. St. Clair.
  - Dr. E. W. De Tunzelmann.
  - Dr. D. M. Ford.
  - Lt-Col. W. Dick.
  - Dr. T. Murray Robertson.
  - Dr. W. R. C. Middleton.
  - Major J. Ritchie, R.A.M.C.
  - Capt. G. F. Sheehan, R.A.M.C.
  - Dr. J. W. Barrack.
  - Dr. J. W. McIntock.
  - Mr. C. V. Norris.
  - Mr. A. Kule.
  - Mr. J. V. Pestana.
  - Mr. F. Clarke.
  - Dr. H. J. Gibbs.
  - Dr. Dent.
  - Dr. I. D. Nunes.
  - Dr. C. Werner.
  - Dr. G. Von Wedel.
  - Dr. G. P. Rodgers.
  - Dr. J. M. Handy.
  - Dr. Suat Chwan Yin.
  - Dr. Philpotts Lawrence.
  - Dr. F. C. de Souza.
  - Rev. B. F. West, M.B.
  - Dr. J.J.P. Wilson.
  - Dr. Cross.
  - Dr. Nakano.
  - Dr. J. Kirk.
  - Mr. Tan Kheam Hock from Penang.
  - Mr. Tan Jiak Chuan.
  - Mr. Lim Ho Puah.
  - Mr. Chia Keng Chiang.
  - Mr. Yow Ngan Pan.
  - Mr. Goh Siew Tin.
  - Mr. Chee Quee Bong.
  - Mr. J. W. Cashin.
  - Mr. Song Ong Siang.
  - Mr. Tan Chong Yan.
  - Mr. Tan Boo Liat.
  - Mr. Wee Kim Yam.
  - Mr. Seet Lian Seet.
  - Mr. Koh Joo Tock.
  - Mr. Khoo Teng Seng.
  - Mr. Leong Man Sau.
  - Mr. Tum Keng Hoon.
  - Mr. Ho Siak Kuan.
- Several ladies including Mrs. Von de Tunzelmann, Mrs. Dick, Miss Macnair and Mrs. Lawrence.

**APPENDIX F**

Rules made by the Council of the Straits and Federated Malay States Government. Medical School under Section

19 of the "Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School Ordinance 1905", and approved by the Governor-in-Council.

**Meetings and Transaction of Business**

1 — 8. . . . .

9. (1) All Students before admission to the Course for the Diploma, unless they can produce evidence of having passed equivalent examinations, shall be required to pass an entrance examination in the following three compulsory subjects.

- 1. English Composition. { Up to the standard
  - 2. Geography. { of the Junior Cambridge
  - 3. Mathematics { Local Examination.
- (including Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry).

(2) Candidates competing for the Scholarships will be allowed to take up in addition not more than three of the following optional subjects:

- 1. Latin.
- 2. Elementary Experimental Science. { Up to the standard
- 3. French. { of the Junior
- 4. German. { Cambridge
- 5. English History. { Local Examination.
- 6. Chinese or Tamil or Malay.

10. All the Students will be required to conform to the rules relating to the discipline of the School and Clinical Hospitals, as well as to execute the following document to that effect:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned, a student of the Straits Medical School, do hereby agree with the Council of the said School, to conform from this date to the rules and regulations for the time being sanctioned by the Council of the said School for the due maintenance of discipline at the said School and at the several Hospitals set apart for Clinical instruction; and I further agree to make good when called upon to do so, to the Council of the School any damages to furniture, apparatus or other things the property of the School, which may be caused by any carelessness, negligence or wantonness on my part.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1980

Signed by the above-named in the presence of

**Course of Instruction**

11. The Course of Instruction shall be as follows:

- FIRST YEAR
- Elementary Anatomy
- Practical Anatomy (Dissections)
- Botany.
- Chemistry and Physics (Theoretical and Practical)
- Elementary Physiology and Histology.



## SECOND YEAR

Anatomy.  
 Practical Anatomy.  
 Physiology.  
 Practical Physiology.  
 Materia Medica and Therapeutics.

## THIRD YEAR

Medicine.  
 Surgery.  
 Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Infants.  
 General Pathology.  
 Materia Medica and Therapeutics.  
 Practical Pharmacy.  
 Medical and Surgical Practice in the General and Pauper Hospitals.  
 Attendance at the Maternity Hospital.  
 Post-mortem Demonstrations.

## FOURTH YEAR

Medicine.  
 Surgery.  
 Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Infants.  
 Medical Jurisprudence.  
 Practical Pathology and Bacteriology.  
 Public Health.  
 Medical and Surgical Practice in the General and Pauper Hospitals.  
 Attendance at the Maternity Hospital.  
 Post-mortem Demonstrations.

## FIFTH YEAR

Medicine.  
 Surgery.  
 Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Infants.  
 Operative Surgery.  
 Ophthalmology.  
 Mental Diseases.  
 Medical and Surgical Practice.  
 Attendance at the Lunatic Asylum and Quarantine Camp.  
 Vaccination.

12. There shall be two Sessions in each year, a short session commencing on the 1st of March and ending on the 31st of May, and a long session commencing on the 1st of July and ending on the 31st of December.

13. Class examinations shall be held at the end of each Session to test the progress of the students.

**Regulations for the Diploma**

14. Every candidate for the Diploma shall produce evidence:

- (a) that he has been engaged in medical study for at least five years at a Medical School recognised by the Council.
- (b) that he has attended a course or courses of instruction in each of the following subjects of study:

Anatomy,  
 Chemistry and Physics.  
 Physiology.  
 Materia Medica and Therapeutics.  
 Practice of Medicine, Surgery,  
 Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Infants

Medical Jurisprudence.  
 Pathology and Bacteriology.  
 Public Health.  
 Botany.  
 Practical Anatomy including Dissections during 2 years.  
 Practical Physiology and Histology.  
 Practical Chemistry.  
 Practical Pathology.  
 Practical Pharmacy.  
 Clinical Medicine.  
 Clinical Surgery.  
 Eye Diseases.  
 Mental Diseases during three months' attendance at a Public Lunatic Asylum.

(c) That he has attended for at least three years the Medical and Surgical Practice of a hospital recognised by the Council and during this period has been Surgical Dresser in the wards for six months and Medical Clinical Clerk for six months.

(d) That he has performed at least 20 cases of midwifery or 12 cases with three months' attendance at the Maternity Hospital; that he has successfully vaccinated at least 12 persons; that he has been engaged for at least three months in the practical work of compounding and dispensing drugs; that he has himself performed operations upon the dead subject to the satisfaction of his teacher; and that he has attended demonstrations in the Post-mortem rooms, including practical instruction in making post-mortem examinations for three months.

15. Every candidate for the diploma shall be examined both in writing and orally, and also clinically and practically where the nature of the subject admits, on the following subjects and approximately at the periods of study named:

During the 1st year — Botany, Chemistry and Physics, Osteology  
 End of the 2nd year — Anatomy; Physiology.  
 End of the 3rd year — Materia Medica and Therapeutics; Practical Pharmacy.  
 End of the 4th year — Pathology and Bacteriology; Medical Jurisprudence; Public Health.  
 End of the 5th year — Final Examination in Medicine, Surgery and Midwifery.

In the Final Examination, the candidate must pass in Medicine and Surgery at one and the same time. No candidate will be admitted to the Final Examination until he has passed in the subjects of the previous examinations. The examination in Practical Pharmacy may be taken at any time prior to the Final Examination.

16. Any candidate, who can produce evidence satisfactory to the Council that he has passed through a course of study at any other Medical School recognised by the Council, and passed examinations equivalent to those required by these regulations, may be exempted

from examination in any or all of the subjects except those of the Final Examination. Any candidate so exempted will, before admission to the Final Examination, be required to pay examination fees amounting to \$150, and for re-examination in any of the subjects of the Final Examination, a fee of \$25.

**DISCIPLINE**

17. The School buildings shall be open for the use of Students from 6.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. During the hours not laid down for lectures, etc, the Students are expected to devote themselves to study.

18. The attendance of Students at all meetings of classes shall be recorded. In subjects for which no minimum number of attendances is fixed by the Regulations for the Diploma, certificates of attendance shall not as a rule be granted to Students who have failed to attend 80 percent of the meetings.

19. Any Student who has been absent must report the cause of his absence to the Principal on his return. In the event of continued absence from illness or other unavoidable cause, notice must be sent to the Principal as soon as possible.

20. Any Student whose further attendance at the School is considered by the Council to be prejudicial to discipline or detrimental to the studies of other Students may be required by the Council to leave. In the case of serious misconduct a Student may be dismissed.

21. Any Student holding a Scholarship whose conduct or progress is unsatisfactory, shall be liable to a reduction or withdrawal of his Scholarship.

22. All Students are required to obey the orders of the Principal who has power to suspend any Student at any time. Any such suspension shall be reported to the Council without delay.

**BOOKS AND APPARATUS**

22. Books and apparatus shall be provided for the use of the Students. they shall not be removed from the School premises without special permission.

24. Every Student to whom such books or apparatus are entrusted shall be held responsible for their preservation in good condition, and in the event of their being lost or damaged (otherwise than by fair wear and tear) shall be required to replace them or to defray their cost.

**FEES**

25. All Students other than Scholars and those to whom special exemption has been granted, shall pay the following fees:

- (a) A fee of \$15 payable at the commencement of every term.
- (b) An examination fee of \$10 for each subject in the examinations for the Diploma, and a fee of \$5 for re-examination in any such subject. The fees to be payable before the examination.

26. Scholars shall pay a graduation fee of \$100 before the receipt for their diploma.

27. The Council may in exceptional cases grant exemptions from the whole or part of any fee or fees.

**FINANCIAL**

28. — 33 . . . . .

Council Chamber, Singapore. 4th December 1905.

**APPENDIX G.**

**LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS TO THE STRAITS AND  
FEDERATED MALAY STATES GOVERNMENT  
MEDICAL SCHOOL**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| The Hon'ble Tan Jiak Kim                                     | \$12,000.00 |
| The Selangor General Farm, by Loke Yew, Esq.                 | 9,000.00    |
| Gan Ngoh Bee, Esq.   | 5,000.00    |
| Messrs. Wee Bin & Co.  | 3,000.00    |
| Wong Ah Fook, Esq.   | 3,000.00    |
| Low Kim Pong, Esq.   | 3,000.00    |
| Late Mr. Tan Beng Gum, by his son<br>Mr Tan Jiak Chuan       | 3,000.00    |
| Late Mr. Chia Ann Siang's Estate                             | 3,000.00    |
| Yow Ngan Pan, Esq.   | 3,000.00    |
| Seng Chin Ho Bee (Opium and Spirit Farm)                     | 3,000.00    |
| Wee Kay Siang, Esq.  | 3,000.00    |
| Gambier and Pepper Society                                   | 3,000.00    |
| Khoo Teck Siong, Esq., son of late<br>Khoo Cheng Tiong, Esq. | 3,000.00    |
| E. Chin Seng, Esq. (of Siagon)                               | 3,000.00    |
| Khoo Hun Yeang, Esq.   | 3,000.00    |
| Khoo Cheow Tiong, Esq.                                       | 3,000.00    |
| Mrs. Chea Chen Eok   | 3,000.00    |

**THE MARKET STREET CANTONESE  
MERCHANT SCHOLARSHIP:**

|                           |       |          |
|---------------------------|-------|----------|
| By Chop Loh Kee Seng      | \$550 |          |
| By Chop Choo Kong Lan     | 550   |          |
| By Chop Kwong Hang        | 550   |          |
| By Chop Loh Chee Seng     | 550   |          |
| By Chop Choo Kong Yuen    | 300   |          |
| By Chop Choo U Lan        | 200   |          |
| By Chop Choo Foo Lan      | 200   |          |
| By Po On Insurance Co.    | 100   | 3,000.00 |
| Siam Rice Guild.          |       | 1,500.00 |
| Messrs. Ong Ewe Hai & Co. |       | 1,000.00 |
| Goh Siew Tin, Esq.        |       | 1,000.00 |
| Seah Liang Seah, Esq.     |       | 1,000.00 |
| Lee Cheng Yan, Esq.       |       | 1,000.00 |
| Syed Mohamed Alsagoff     |       | 1,000.00 |

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Lim Eow Hong, Esq.                    | 1,000.00    |
| Foo Choo Choon, Esq.                  | 1,000.00    |
| Chung Thye Phin, Esq.                 | 1,000.00    |
| Choong Cheng Kean, Esq.               | 1,000.00    |
| Goh Sin Koh, Esq.                     | 500.00      |
| Tay Cheng Kee, Esq.                   | 500.00      |
| Tan Koon Eng, Esq.                    | 500.00      |
| Hoe Tiang Wan, Esq.                   | 500.00      |
| Lim Mah Chye, Esq.                    | 500.00      |
| Khoo Yew Yong, Esq.                   | 500.00      |
| Goh Boon Keng, Esq.                   | 500.00      |
| Tam Keng Hong, Esq.                   | 300.00      |
| Tan Kiong Saik, Esq.                  | 300.00      |
| Koh Eng Hoon and Sons (Chop Soon Bee) | 300.00      |
| Chop Eng Ghee Seng.                   | 300.00      |
| Hon'ble W. J. Napier.                 | 200.00      |
| Singapore Rontgent Rays Committee     | 177.08      |
| Lim Tuah Tau, Esq.                    | 100.00      |
| Chop Teo Ban Keng                     | 100.00      |
| Song Kee Lian, Esq.                   | 100.00      |
| Song Kee Chuan, Esq.                  | 100.00      |
| Choa Giang Tye, Esq.                  | 100.00      |
| TOTAL                                 | \$87,077.08 |

## REFERENCES

## ABBREVIATIONS USED:

A.R. = Annual Report of the Medical Department, Straits Settlements.

GAZETTE = Straits Settlements Government Gazette.

LEGCO. = Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Straits Settlements.

P.G. = Penang Gazette.

S.F.P. = Singapore Free Press.

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- P. G. (20.6.1905).
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