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# SUNGEI CHAAH SAVED FROM BANDIT MENACE

## Whole Village Rebuilt

By P. M. RAMAN, Standard Special Correspondent

ABOUT 150 houses of Sungei Chaah are being dismantled and rebuilt near a police station half-a-mile away, because that sprawling village has proved to be the weakest link in the chain of strongpoints in that bandit-infested part of Johore. The present Sungei Chaah lies on both sides of the Labis-Yongpeng Road and is about half a mile in area.

Eight villages around this area have already been fenced off against bandit incursion, but this village which has been known to be frequented by terrorist agents for food supplies had to be protected, but it was impossible for the police to exercise effective supervision in the built up area as it stood.

The defence problem was further complicated by the fact that the village was cut in two by a stream running right in the centre.

Mr. J. S. H. Cunyningham-Brown, the Resettlement Officer for Johore, gave these facts yesterday when his attention was drawn to The Standard columnist "Tabuan's" comments recently that a whole village was being removed to suit the convenience of a police station.

It is neither a repetition of Ledice nor of Jenderam, but is simply case of town planning and better conditions of living for the inhabitants of this sprawling untidy village, he said.

The police station happened to be the only building construct-



ed according to the original plan drawn up in 1936, the rest of the buildings were just ribbon development he added.

This village could not be fenced off, as it existed, and to concentrate the buildings on both sides of one section of the road, involving minimum disturbance to the villagers, would have meant the perpetuation of ribbon development and insanitary living conditions.

So the Government thought to resettle these villagers in a new town on the eastern side of the road, where the police station now stands. Here they could enjoy adequate protection of the security forces and carry on their trade and agriculture in peace and safety, said Mr. Cunyningham-Brown.

Houseowners are being given \$200 each as compensation for the possible loss of trade and to meet incidental expenses in carrying their goods to the new site.

This is besides free aluminium roofings and poles given to them at Government expense to build their new houses, he said.

Mr. Cunyningham-Brown paid a tribute to the leaders of the Malayan Chinese Association for their help in resettling this village.

He said: "Dato Tan Cheng Lock, the President of the MCA, had discussions with representatives of the people of Chaah recently and it has been very greatly due to his support of the Government plan that things are going on smoothly."



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