



Government officials will never ask you to transfer money or disclose bank log-in details over a phone call. Call the 24/7 ScamShield Helpline at 1799 if you are unsure if something is a scam.

Home > Newspaper Catalogue > The Straits Times > 1951 > September > 20 > Page 6 > Behind The Wire



Behind The Wire

The Straits Times, 20 September 1951, Page 6

Share

Save Citation

Microfilm: NL2626

<< Previous Article Next Article >>

Behind The Wire

Allegations against the Federation Police, and the suspicion that detainees are not always given full and unprejudiced opportunity to state their case, were given a fairly thorough airing at question time in the Federal Legislative Council yesterday. Indeed, when the Attorney General made his supplementary statement, question and answer had taken on almost the appearance of debate. It was not wasted time. The Government did not really satisfy its questioners, and it could hardly have entirely satisfied other members of the Council, but some at least of the complaints made or implied were shown to be without foundation, while on other matters the interest which the Council has shown will be a stimulus to discipline and a warning to Government.

More adroit questioning possibly would have put the Government in greater difficulty. No doubt it is true that detainees are informed of their right to appeal, and the figures which the Attorney General gave show that the Committees of Review do their best to hear these appeals as quickly as possible. In Johore, for example, an average of 195 appeals are being heard each month, in South Perak 200 and in Ma-

Recommended Articles

The Straits Times / Article

The Straits Times Singapore, Fri., Aug. 10, 1951. An Inquiry Begins

10 August 1951 - The Straits Times Singapore, Fri., Aug. 10, 1951. An Inquiry Begins It is satisfactory that inquiries have been begun in respect of allegations made against the Federation Police during the trial in Kuala Lumpur of Mr. Jeffrey WattsCarter. Some of the evidence was most disturbing, and the accusations clearly Tiust...

The Straits Times / Article

Mr. R. L. Eber replies to the Governor

17 December 1952 - Mr. John Eber was detained under the Emergency Regulations on Jan. 8, 1951. On Sept. 16 this year we published a letter from his father, Mr. R. L. Eber, on his son's case. This letter was referred to the same day in...

The Straits Times / Article

John Eber And Others

17 February 1953 - The case of John Eber, the Secretary for the Colonies has told Parliament, will shortly come up again for review. John Eber has been interned for two years, the maximum period of the original detention order. His release is automatic unless the Colonial Secretary renews the...

The Straits Times / Article

Singapore, Mon, Mar. 16, 1953. The Malayan Detainees

16 March 1953 - Singapore, Mon, Mar. 16, 1953. The Malayan Detainees A lively if somewhat delayed interest in the detainees held in the Federation and Singapore under the Emergency Regulations is being shown by Un- >ftkials on both Legislative Councils. A.- a result the i Federal Government is to issue this week White...

The Straits Times / Article

The Straits Times. Singapore,



acca 283. But when Mr. Tan Siew Sin, unconvinced, suggested that these hearings are a farce, the Parliamentary retort which his interjection invited did not add to anyone's information and will not remove the suspicion which some members clearly still have. On the other hand, it is satisfactory to learn that the common belief that there are a large number of detainees who have never had an opportunity of appealing is wrong.



As the Jenderam case showed, however, it can happen that the formal order for detention is not made until many weeks after arrest. There should be an order within 28 days, and until there is such an order there is nothing to review. Unfortunately there is reason for believing that interrogation is often prolonged beyond the 28 days and, as other allegations have it, interrogation is sometimes objectionable on other grounds. It was the Government case yesterday that, while charges against the police of brutal behaviour have occasionally been substantiated, there have been many instances in which evidence was lacking and the investigation has taken up time and attention which might have been more profitably devoted to further efforts against the bandits.



This complaint, by the acting Secretary for Defence, was not perhaps the most tactful of statements. More cases of ill-treatment occur than come to the authorities' attention and never is the



burden of proof less than extremely difficult. The police, it may be agreed, are subject to great strain by the vicious and murderous attacks that are made upon them, and they do not get much help from the public, but the Government would be wise not to underestimate the distrust and uneasiness which some recent incidents and trials have aroused. It would be fair to assume that Mr. David did not altogether appreciate the significance of his assurance that if there is more co-operation from the law-abiding



Fri., Mar. 20, 1953. Treatment Of The Detainee

20 March 1953 - The Straits Times. Singapore, Fri., Mar. 20, 1953. Treatment Of The Detainee The Federal White Paper on detention and deportation, and statements made by the Colonial Secretary in reply to the question* of Singapore Councillors, disclose facts which go some way towards assuring the public that the power of detention...

The Straits Times / Article

The Straits Times Singapore, Mon., Jan. 24, 1949. SHOUT AND SHOOT

24 January 1949 - The Straits Times Singapore, Mon., Jan. 24, 1949. SHOUT AND SHOOT A situation which clearly was most unsatisfactory has been remedied with the gazetting by the Federation Government of amending legislation governing the use of force by the police and military against persons attempting to escape arrest or from custody...

The Straits Times / Article

POLICE AND PUBLIC

28 December 1928 - RELATIONS IN LONDON. AN IMPORTANT INNOVATION. Everyone who has followed the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure will have realised by this time, says the Manchester Guardian, that the interrogation of prisoners, or of people who may be able to throw some...

[Show More](#)

members of the public, there will be less risk of untoward incidents arising from the wide powers which have been conferred on the police.

Finally, the much discussed "protective custody," a term which gained notoriety during the Watts-Carter trial. Like "arrested for interrogation", it is apparently a colloquialism which does not mean what it says. The Attorney General explained that the witnesses in the Watts-Carter trial who were spoken of as being in "protective custody" had in fact asked for protection from the bandits after they had been released from arrest. They went voluntarily to the compound of a police station.

It is unfortunate that police witnesses could not make this clear during the trial. But the main point of the Attorney General's statement is that there is no such thing as protective custody. No witness can be held against his will, and no-one can be arrested simply in order to be interrogated. If the police act strictly in accordance with these rules most of the ground for fear and complaint will disappear.



NLB

[Contact Us](#) [Feedback](#) [FAQ](#)



[Report Vulnerability](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Linking Disclaimer](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [Takedown Policy](#)

©2026 Government of Singapore
Last Updated 2023-01-31