SECTION 9: SCIENTIFIC INVENTIONS AND MODERNISATION OF MALAYA

Scientific Inventions

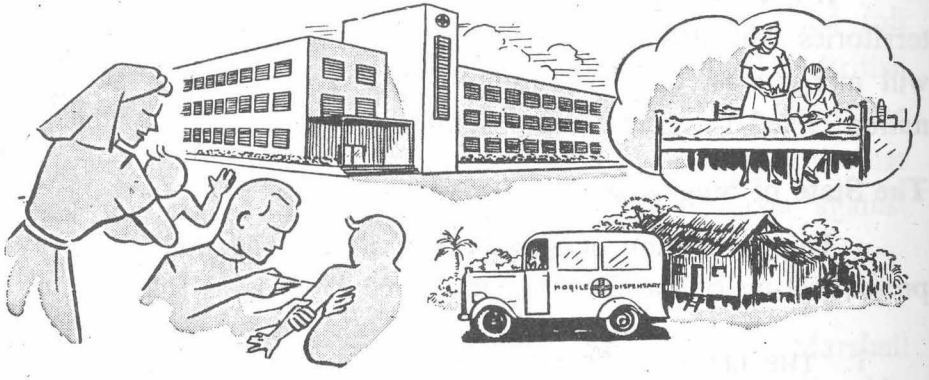
There have been hundreds of inventions all over the world during the last 150 years. Many of them have had a tremendous effect on the progress of mankind. These inventions have lightened human labour and helped to spread knowledge, develop commerce and industry, improve communication and fight disease. They have brought cheap means of entertainment to millions of people. They have modernised many countries, including Malaya.

The Industrial Revolution in Europe and America made Britain, the U.S.A. and Germany the workshops of the world. Their need for raw materials developed trade and commerce in countries able to supply these raw materials. We have seen what effect this development in trade and commerce had on the building of roads, railways and sea-ports in Malaya and Singapore. The Postal and Telegraph system developed rapidly. Then followed faster steamship passenger and cargo services. In time came aeroplane services (local and international), and airports. Cars, trucks and buses, telephones, radios, gramophones, cinemas, talkies, sewing machines, transistor radios, electric irons, refrigerators, cookers, photography, rotary printing, electric lighting, air-conditioning, modern medical and dental treatment, and so on — these are so familiar to us in Malaya and Singapore that most of us take them for granted.

We have become so modernised that we expect improved models and better services year by year and happily we are able to get them. Many of these are no more a luxury to us. We are so used to them in this modernised country that they are now an essential part of our lives. Our shops are stocked with goods from all parts of the world and our commercial facilities like banking, insurance, shipping, etc. are among the best in Asia.

Medical and Public Health services

In the field of medicine and public health Malaya and Singapore have made tremendous progress. Malaria was the chief killer in the Malay Peninsula. In 1898 *Sir Ronald Ross,* an officer of the Indian Medical Service, traced this disease to the *anopheles mosquito,* which breeds in swampy areas. In 1901 *Dr. Malcolm Watson,* District Surgeon of Klang, was given permission by the Federated Malay States Government to test Ross's theory. Dr. Watson had the town of Klang thoroughly drained and within two years this very malarious district became almost free from the disease.



The Federated Malay States Railways decided in 1911 to have a deep-water port on the Klang River to serve Central Malaya. There is no natural harbour on this river and so a port, the present Port Swettenham, was built on a