

BACK-UP

ticularly those with children, around the swimming pool at the High Commission, which also has an active social club to arrange activities and run such facilities as a 'teen centre'.

People who want to get away for the weekend usually go to Fraser's Hill, a hill station about three hours' drive from K.L. The weather is pleasantly cool and the area caters for golf, tennis and bushwalking, with guest house-style accommodation and an international standard hotel.

For the sailing enthusiast, there is Port Dickson, on the Malacca Straits, about two hours from K.L. The water is not recommended for swimming (the Straits are reputedly the most polluted waters in the world), however there is a resident sailing club and a number of major hotels.

Rail transport is both cheap and good and is becoming more popular. Local air travel is more expensive, but still cheaper than in Australia.

Schooling in K.L. is varied. A number of pre-schools are available and most of the good ones use English as the medium of instruction.

There are three primary/secondary schools. Alice Smith School follows the British curriculum and caters for children aged 4-12. It has a high standard and gives emphasis to academic studies. The Garden School also follows the British system but takes children to High School level (aged 12-17 years).

The International School of K.L. (ISKL) is a non-profit making school run by a board with additional funds provided by the U.S. Government. It follows the U.S. curriculum and takes children from kindergarten to the equivalent of Grade 12 in Australia.

Most Australian High Commission children attend this school. It has excellent facilities, good teachers, including some from Australia, and is generally held in high regard. The High Commission provides a school bus for the Australian children.

The Schramms have both daughters at ISKL, Katie, aged 15, and Fiona, 13.

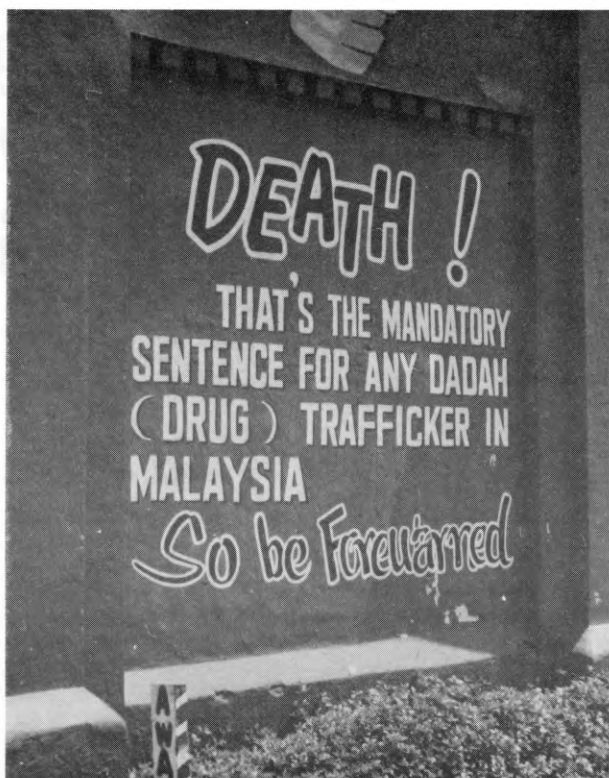
Said Katie: "At first I found it strange. There are kids from many different countries and the system is different from Australia."

"But once I got used to it I really enjoyed it. In fact I like school more here than I did in Australia. The teachers are really good."

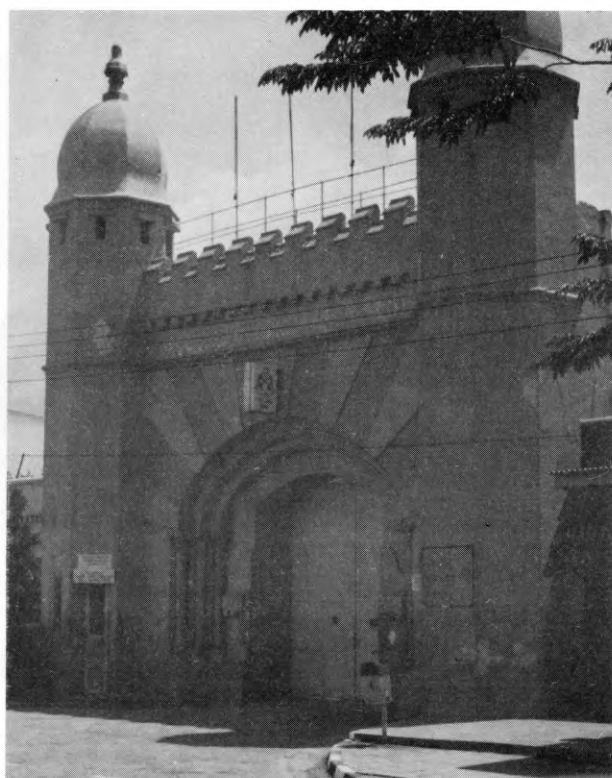
"We start earlier than at home — the bus picks us up at 7 a.m. — and we finish at 2.30 p.m. The school year follows the northern hemisphere, with our long holiday from June to August, and three weeks off at Christmas."

Denis Gray and his wife Sandra, with their 18-year-old son David and 15-year-old daughter Karen, have been in K.L. for seven months and are happy with the schooling. David was in his last year of school in Australia when he moved to K.L. and was able to sit for his matriculation exam at the High Commission. He is presently attending ISKL, taking supplementary subjects and will graduate with an American Graduation Diploma in June.

"The exposure to a new system with children from all over the world is certainly beneficial," Denis said. "However, anyone with children taking their last two years' schooling should seriously consider the alternative of boarding



• Above: A sign warning of the dangers of drug trafficking. Right: Gates to Pudu gaol. In the past 8 years, 26 people have been hanged for drug offences in K.L.



• Outside the Australian High Commission in K.L.

school, particularly if the children are contemplating tertiary education.

"Most people at the High Commission with older children have them in boarding school in Australia. Although it breaks up the family, it is not really as bad as it seems. Overseas conditions of service allow the children to fly to the post three times a year for school holidays and the education costs are met by the Government with a contribution from parents."

Housing standards in K.L. are good with a typical residence being a two-storey, four-bedroom bungalow with servants' quarters.

Sandra Gray has no complaints about her house.

"The High Commission looks after the maintenance which means if something breaks down you can get it fixed quickly," she said. "Our house is quite a deal bigger than the one we have in Sydney and of course there is a lot more to keep clean."

"Thankfully we have an amah (maid) which is a necessity in this climate. Having help in the house allows wives a lot more freedom to get out and for mothers with young children it is a particular benefit."

Sandra Schramm finds her house is very comfortable and good for entertaining.

"Being a housewife in an over-

seas post is very different from Australia. In Malaysia it is impossible for a wife to work, other than at the High Commission, but she certainly won't be bored," she said.

"It took me some time to get used to having staff — we have an amah and a part-time gardener — and running the family budget is not always easy as the cost of food,

particularly Western food, is considerably higher than in Australia.

"Entertaining takes a fair amount of organisation and there always seems to be something on involving the children at school, or High Commission activities."

"I thought I would miss working but find there are usually not enough hours in the day. The last 2½ years have flown," she said.

On living in Asia generally, David Schramm believes people sometimes go overseas with preconceived ideas.

"It is no good thinking you are going to hate it or, alternatively, that everything will be like it is at home. It is different, but if you adapt and enjoy the positive aspects and don't let the frustrations caused by shortcomings get the better of you, it can be very pleasant," he said.

Said Sandra Schramm: "For a woman living in Asia it is perhaps more difficult than for men. Here, it is very much a man's world. Malaysia in particular, because it is predominantly a Muslim country, requires women to be aware of local customs, particularly in relation to dress which is more modest than Australians would wear in a tropical climate."

"But these are not major difficulties and the key is to take a positive approach and enjoy what the country has to offer."

First for Hong Kong

The AFP now has a permanent Liaison Officer stationed in Hong Kong.

He is Detective Inspector Brian Bennett, who took up his appointment as First Secretary (Police Liaison) at the Australian Commission in Hong Kong recently.

Since his arrival, Detective Inspector Bennett has been busy making contacts within the Hong Kong Police Force and with Customs and other Government bodies with whom he will be dealing.

His arrival on the island was heralded as a first by the Hong Kong police newspaper 'OffBeat'.

He told 'OffBeat': "My job here is not operational, it is purely liaison. The posting of an officer to Hong Kong does not reflect any inadequacies in the liaison between here and Australia."

"In fact, it's just the opposite. The

liaison has been so good that it has caused an increased workload of police forces in Australia and it's to help with this that I've been sent here.

"The intelligence and inquiry service provided for Australia by the Hong Kong Police and other agencies such as Customs and ICAC have been excellent."

A native of Coffs Harbour, NSW, Detective Inspector Bennett started his working life as a Customs officer and later joined the Federal Bureau of Narcotics when it opened its Brisbane office in 1971.

In 1978 he was posted as the FBN's Liaison Officer to Kuala Lumpur from where he covered the whole of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Guam, Thailand, Japan and Hong Kong.