

SECRET SOCIETIES

What: Bands of people who vowed to overthrow Qing dynasty in 18th Century.

- Political resistance
- help each other out. (eg. when sick)

✱ This practice came from Chinese immigrants who carried the practice on in SG.

Benefits of Joining

- Poor, lonely, homeless, uneducated
- Care when sick, funeral management
- Protection
- shelter & work search.

How to Join

- Complicated ritual / ceremony
- Blood oath → secret code

Why were they a problem?

- Controlled vice industries
 - Coolie Brokers
 - Opium smuggling
 - Prostitute / Brothel
 - Robbery, Theft, extortion etc.

- Fighting against other secret societies to protect their own members.
 - ⇒ gang fights, armed robberies, etc.

- Police couldn't handle them.

- ↳ didn't know much abt them (Language barriers - police force had no Chinese)

Government response

① 1864 Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance

- Societies had to be registered
- BUT still overlooked so instead authorities go too bad.

② 1877 Chinese Protectorate

- ↳ handle Chinese-related matters.

↳ William Pickering

First protector of the Chinese

Pickering - knew Chinese dialects ⇒ communicate and understand

- ↳ inspect coolie living conditions to make sure they weren't

worked closely ⇐ won their trust ⇐ tried improving their conditions
↓
solved petty quarrelling.

- being mistreated and then they came willingly.

- ↳ Established Po Leung Kuk - save girls who were tricked into prostitution

However

- Pickering was disliked by some Secret Societies for:

- prevent illegal gambling
- undermined their control over prostitution & immigrants

major income sources for SS.

⇒ Attacked with axe by Chee Hin Member.

Government took it seriously.

⇒ 1890 Dangerous Societies Ordinance

- ↳ Complete ban of dangerous societies (but underground operators continued & not all stopped.)
- ↳ but they'd never regain their internal power.

∴ Solved! (partially)