

THE OPIUM SMUGGLERS

"BLACK HAND" MEETING

ARAFURA HAUL

UNDERWORLD HUNT

INQUIRIES made yesterday in certain channels through which news from the underworld flows, as well as confirming the "Labor Daily's" exclusive reports of vendetta between rival gangs of opium smugglers, and the finding of 1500 tins of opium on the Eastern trader Arafura, revealed that a secret meeting of the Chinese "Black Hand Society," chiefly interested in the introduction of prohibited immigrants and contraband into Australia, has been called for an early date. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ways and means of running to earth the informers suspected of having caused the present debacle among the smugglers. It has also been definitely established that the men who were arrested on Thursday night by the police in Belmore Park; the man who went to the Campbell Street cafe, which appears to be the distributing centre for much of the opium, landed in Sydney and the three men concerned in an opium transaction a fortnight ago, in which a "double cross" was worked by a confederate on other members of the gang, are all in the same underworld swim, and have been known to the police as drug traffickers for some time. A "Tong" Vendetta Men who have had extensive experience in the East, and who have travelled the trade routes between Sydney and Hongkong for half a lifetime, are anticipating that a Tong war of unprecedented ferocity will take place. This will be caused as a result of the heavy losses the Chinese financiers will sustain through the opium seizures, and the threatened breakdown in the vast smuggling organisation that has been built up to defeat the Australian Customs authorities. It is alleged that many Chinese are being secretly spirited into the country through the agency of the branches of the various Chinese societies or "Tongs" in Australian capitals.

The opium traffic, far-reaching though it may be, is actually subordinate to the smuggling in of Chinese, but one depends on the other.

What it Means

The same agents manage both businesses, for businesses they have certainly become. Thus the rout of the opium smugglers must hold up for a time the traffic in Chinese coolies, and as the men controlling the business at this end collect both from the smuggled and the smuggler, their rage at being balked through comparatively petty personal quarrels may easily be imagined. The meeting of the "Tong" this week begins a pitiless heresy hunt, and the outcome will certainly mean death to those suspected of having betrayed the Chinese smugglers.

Chinese Proclamation

This same "Tong" it was that some weeks ago had a proclamation posted in Chinatown offering a £100 reward for the assassination of police informers. This bloodthirsty document was posted following the discovery of an attempt to introduce a few Chinese into Sydney; how much more incensed must the "Tong" be now when thous ands upon thousands of pounds worth of Chinese contraband has gone up in smoke, and a cataclysm is threatened in the underworld which may engulf the leaders of the smugglers council.

Still Watching

Both the police and the Customs officers are now working hand in hand to complete the overthrow of the gangs whose activities have been responsible for the introduction of so much contraband in the past. Patrol Officers Coxon and Bowman were stationed on the Arafura on Saturday night and last night to watch the crew and to see that no thing was taken off the ship. It may be that another cache of the drug will be discovered. To-day a further stem-to-stern search of the vessel will be made. The revelations of a spider-like web of Chinese intrigue, whose centre is in Hongkong and Sandakan (Borneo), will certainly startle Sydney.