

Javanese labour migrants in British North Borneo, 1914-1932: a historical perspective

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Abstrak

This article examines the dynamics of Javanese labour immigration to British North Borneo (present-day Sabah) during the colonial period, under the tutelage of the British North Borneo Chartered Company. It seeks to expound the types of labour recruitment schemes available for Javanese emigrants, the variation in the labour contracts, the immigration and repatriation procedures and the issues inherent within the system. By utilising mostly raw primary documents derived from various archives, the article argues that the Javanese labourers were considered to be the backbone of British North Borneo labour force and a major contributing factor in the success of many capitalistic endeavours in the state. Javanese labour immigration took centre stage during the period of study with workers labouring under written civil contracts with penal sanction.